M+

5 years
五周年

We Send Music:
The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura

westK
西九文化區



Table of Contents

- Curator’s Note
- Programme Schedule
- About the Concert
- Performers
- About the Documentary
- About The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura
- Acknowledgements
- House Rules and Survey
- About M+

Curator's Note—
The Power of Making

The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura came into official existence in 2012. Its founder, Favio Chávez, is an Argentinian environmental technician and musician. After several formative years of engaging with the local community through music, Chávez created the orchestra for children living in the Cateura landfill in Asunción, Paraguay. This is an area marked by profound socioeconomic challenges, where many essential needs remain unmet. Every day, about 1.5 tonnes of solid waste are dumped there. Residents eke out a living by scavenging the landfill for waste they can sell. Children are regularly pulled out of school to help. As a result, Cateura's young people suffer from a lack of education, support, and most of all, hope.

Chávez started with a handful of students and violins. Before long, the number of students swelled. He had no funding to buy more instruments, however, and it would have been unsafe to have so many, anyway—a violin cost more than a house in Cateura. Demonstrating the power of imagination, Chávez and the community came up with the ingenious idea of making instruments from rubbish. They made violas, cellos, drums, saxophones, and trumpets out of tins, oil cans, kitchen utensils, water pipes, X-ray films, and scrap wood from the landfill. Crafted with inventive care, the distinctive instruments are extraordinary in their quality and tone.

In 2012, the orchestra was invited to play at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro. The young musicians embarked on a life-transforming journey there. Since then, the orchestra has gained international recognition, visited over thirty-five countries, and performed with stars such as Stevie Wonder and Megadeth and opened for Metallica. (The orchestra members love heavy metal music!)

The project has brought joy, pride, and cohesion to a community. It also demonstrates how humble resources can be turned into truly creative outcomes and significant cultural change. Cateura's life-transforming programme could have been something other than music, such as sport or theatre. But the orchestra was born out of the landfill, a project that saw a bottomless rubbish dump as a source of inspiration and raw materials. Therein lies the very real power of making.

As part of M+'s fifth anniversary celebrations, The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura will make its Hong Kong debut, presenting a series of programmes that explore the transformational power of creativity, music and sustainability. The events include concerts, workshops, pop-up performances, and screenings.

The Recycled Orchestra's Hong Kong concert also marks a very special reunion. The performance features four of the orchestra's handcrafted, trash-to-treasure instruments that became part of the M+ Collection in 2024. They are currently on view in the exhibition *Making It Matters*.

Ikko Yokoyama,
Senior Curator,
Head of Design and Architecture

Programme Schedule

6 Nov (Fri)

Concerts and Screenings	Workshops
19:30 **M+ at Night: Five with Us** Horizon Terrace	

7 Nov (Sat)

Concerts and Screenings	Workshops
14:00 **Making Music:** **A Concert by The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura** Grand Stair, free seating (With post-performance talk, conducted in Spanish and English with simultaneous interpretation in Cantonese)	**16:30–17:45** **Creative Workshop: Make Your Own Recycled Instrument** The Forum, Workshop 1
16:00 **Grand Stair Screening: Landfill Harmonic** Grand Stair, free seating	

8 Nov (Sun)

Concerts and Screenings	Workshops
14:00 **Making Music:** **A Concert by The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura** Grand Stair, free seating	**16:00–17:15** **Creative Workshop: Make Your Own Recycled Instrument** The Forum, Workshop 1
15:30 **Grand Stair Screening: Landfill Harmonic** Grand Stair, free seating	
18:00–18:30 **Pop-up with The Recycled Orchestra** Artist Square	

About the Concert

Making Music: A Concert by The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura

Join us for an explanatory didactic concert presented by The Recycled Orchestra and experience how sustainability can cultivate beautiful music. Performing with instruments crafted by local craftsmen out of discarded landfill materials, the orchestra transforms waste into music and hardship into opportunity.



During the performance, the musicians will share their personal journeys and stories behind these ingeniously crafted instruments. Through live demonstrations, the audience will be able to experience the distinctive tonal qualities of these custom-made instruments and discover how imagination and creativity unlock endless possibilities.



The performance lasts for approximately 1 hour, with no intermission.

The concert on 7 November concludes with a post-performance talk featuring Ikko Yokoyama, Lead Curator of Design and Architecture, Favio Chávez, the founder and music director of The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura, and Mimi Brown, Member of M+ Council of Design and Architecture and Founder of Dewpoint.

Stay after the concert for the special screening of *Landfill Harmonic*, a documentary that captures the stories behind the orchestra.

Date and time

7 NOV 2026 (Sat), 14:00;
8 NOV 2026 (Sun), 14:00

Venue

Grand Stair (free seating)

Language

Conducted in Spanish and English
(with simultaneous interpretation in Cantonese)

Performers

Music Director/Acoustic Guitar
Favio Hernan Chávez Moran

Violin 1	Amara Jazmin Rojas Ruiz Diaz
Violin 1	Mathias Joaquin Gamarra Ocampo
Violin 2	Luana Siomara Rojas Caballero
Violin 2	Alisson Jhanet Troche Torres
Viola	Analia Beatriz Soto Noguera
Viola	Fiorella Monserrath Rojas Caballero
Cello	Ayelen Antonella Sanabria Roa
Double bass	Willian Wilson Lopez
Double bass	Paula Maria Natalia Perez Lopez
Soprano Sax	Johann Alejandro Morrison Kajatt Grande
Tenor Sax	Thiago Enrique Irala Perez
Alto Sax	Leonardo Antonio Gonzalez Drudis
Trumpet	Jonathan Alexander Escobar Acuña
Percussion	Angel Emmanuel Ortiz Perez
Harp	Matias Adrian Rojas Morales



About the Documentary

Grand Stair Screening: Landfill Harmonic

Brad Allgood, Juliana Penaranda-Loftus, Graham Townsley
2015 | 84 min.

Landfill Harmonic tells the inspiring origin story of The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura, a youth orchestra which performs with instruments made from materials salvaged from a landfill near Asunción, Paraguay.

When Luis Szarán and Favio Chávez came to Cateura to start a music school, they soon realised that they had many more students than available instruments. However, by partnering with a resourceful trash picker they managed to turn hardship and environmental waste into a story of resourcefulness and hope, by creating instruments from trash.









Later as their story went viral and under Chávez's guidance, the orchestra soon travelled the world playing to sold out arenas and concerts, showing the resilience and transformative power of music and the resilience of the human spirit.

Date and time

7 NOV 2026 (Sat), 16:00;
8 NOV 2026 (Sun), 15:30

Venue

Grand Stair
(drop-in, free seating)

Language

Spanish
(with Chinese and English subtitles)

About the Orchestra

The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura, directed by Argentinian environmental technician and musician Favio Chávez, is formed by children and young people from the communities near the Cateura landfill in Asunción, Paraguay. Performing with instruments crafted by local artisans out of discarded landfill materials, the orchestra transforms waste into music and hardship into opportunity. Its wide-ranging repertoire spans classical, folk, Paraguayan and Latin American music, film scores, symphonic metal, and more.



Through music education, the orchestra fuels creativity, confidence, and future possibilities for the youth of Paraguay empowering over 450 current students and celebrating more than 1,000 graduates since 2012.



The group has performed internationally at events such as The Promise of Music series presented by the Glenn Gould Foundation at the Aga Khan Museum, at Family Day events at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), World Youth Day Madrid 2011, and at South by Southwest (SXSW), among others across Europe, Asia, and the Americas.

The story of the orchestra was made into a documentary film, *Landfill Harmonic* (2015), and has inspired *Basura* (Spanish word for rubbish), a new musical debuting at the Alliance Theatre in Atlanta in 2026 before a planned move to Broadway.

All images courtesy of The Recycled Orchestra of Cateura

Acknowledgements

This event is generously supported by:

Ms Mimi Brown / Dewpoint
Ms Wendy Lee
Wing Tai Holdings Limited

And those who wish to remain anonymous

Our thanks to the generous donors in the M+ Council for Design & Architecture (2021–2023), who made the acquisition of the instruments for the M+ Collection possible.

House Rules

1. Please set your mobile phone in silent mode and switch off other beeping or light emitting devices before the performances.
2. Please refrain from recording, filming, photographing, eating or drinking during the performance.
3. Recording, filming, photographing, are welcomed during curtain calls.
4. Photo-taking and Filming in Progress. Please inform our staff prior to your participation if you do not wish to be filmed.
5. Latecomers and those who leave their seats during the programme will only be admitted and allowed to return to their seats at a suitable break.
6. Please follow the instructions from the staff on site.

We value your feedback.
Please share your thoughts with us
in this questionnaire:

Click here for questionnaire

About M+

M+ is Asia's global museum of contemporary visual culture. Located in Hong Kong's West Kowloon Cultural District (WestK), it is dedicated to collecting, exhibiting, and interpreting visual art, design and architecture, moving image, and Hong Kong visual culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The landmark M+ building on Hong Kong's Victoria Harbourfront was designed by the world-renowned architectural firm Herzog & de Meuron in partnership with TFP Farrells and Arup. It spans a total floor area of 65,000 square metres, featuring thirty-three galleries alongside a Learning Hub, Moving Image Centre, Research Centre, and Roof Garden, among other event and programming spaces. The M+ Facade is one of the largest LED screens in the world, showcasing commissioned artworks on the Hong Kong skyline every evening. The museum stewards a multidisciplinary permanent collection that includes objects from regions across Asia and beyond. A highlight is the M+ Sigg Collection, one of the world's most comprehensive collections of Chinese contemporary art. Today, M+ is a nexus for researching and presenting contemporary visual culture, inspiring thought and curiosity.

