

DAS INSTITUT FÜR OSTASIENWISSENSCHAFTEN/ SINOLOGIE

The Department of East Asian Studies/Chinese Studies is pleased to invite you to the lecture of



Prof. em. Dr. Lap Kwan KAM

Institute of Music

National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (NYCU)

Taiwan

Hong Kong Cinema and the Sense of an Ending, 1997: Sound, Music, and the “Real” in the Closing Credits

Announced as early as 1984 but traumatized by the incidents of 1989, Hong Kong 1997 generated a profound eschatological anxiety. This project examines how that sense of ending was registered in the contemporaneous cinema, taking film as a major collaborative cultural artifact that bears the imprints of its time, while also taking the handover itself as a Lacanian “Real” that resists symbolization and cannot be looked at directly. I focus specifically on the sight and sound of the closing credits—*paratexts* (Gérard Genette’s “thresholds of interpretation”) that frame and (un)settle our reading. Drawing on an analysis of twenty films, including *Happy Together* and *Made in Hong Kong*, with Todd McGowan’s Lacanian taxonomy (cinemas of fantasy, desire, integration, intersection), I argue that films adhering to conventional closure tend to avoid or domesticate the Real and thus fail to answer the call of the day, whereas those experimenting with aesthetic ruptures may “shock the spectator into freedom” (McGowan) to encounter the unrepresentable finality of Hong Kong 1997.

KAM Lap-Kwan is an alumnus of this University (MPhil, PhD) and the Vienna University of Music and Performing Arts (MA). He has taught at NYCU and National Taiwan University (as adjunct), and held visiting appointments at the University of Hong Kong (2010) and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (2011). He previously served on the international advisory board of *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* (2014–19) and currently on the editorial board of the *Formosan Journal of Music Research* (2017–present). His research focuses on comparative music historiography (Austria, Taiwan, Canada), Mahler and Viennese modernism, and film sound and music. His recent work includes chapters in *Dreams of Germany: Musical Imaginaries from the Concert Hall to the Dance Floor* (New York, 2019) and *Decentering Musical Modernity: Perspectives on East Asian and European Music History* (Bielefeld, 2019). Kam regards musicology not merely as the construction of knowledge, but fundamentally as a pursuit of meaning.

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DATE: Thursday, 4th December, 2025

TIME: 17:00 - 18:30

LOCATION: SIN 1, at the Department for East Asian Studies/Chinese Studies,
Altes AKH, Campus, Spitalgasse 2, Yard 2, Entrance 2.3