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The new centre
standing up for
comic art

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Books

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Write stuff! The stars (clockwise from centre) Willy Shawcross, Joanna Kawenna, Chair, and Jung Chang, and Benigno, Jung Chang.

Booking ahead

Athena Chiu looks at the exciting events at this year's upcoming Hong Kong Book Fair

Books

Literature lovers – it's almost that time of year again. The Hong Kong Book Fair is on the near horizon – a seven-day event which celebrates all things literary between July 17 and 23. Every year, it's a huge extravaganza of the written word at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre and there's an exciting programme ahead this time round. The plans for the 24th edition of the fair are being released this month and we're taking a look at what to expect.

The fair, organised by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, is expected to see almost a million visitors wandering through more than 530 stalls at the HKCEC.

immersing themselves in masses of English and Chinese books, magazines and other publications in five designated areas over a range of floors. This year's theme is Reading the World – Reading for a Better World, and there's an array of seminars and events being organised in and around the fair.

The HKTDC says it hopes to provide 'an occasion where people can enjoy reading'. 'Every year, I wish the week-long fair could last longer,' says HKTDC's deputy executive director, Benjamin Chau, 'so visitors could spend even more time reading. When I walk through

the fair, so many people indulge in reading. Some people are able to find books that are not often seen in stores. During the fair, renowned authors are invited to speak at seminars – and I always hope that more people can join those fascinating events. For this

The book fair promotes reading and facilitates cultural exchanges

debating literary subjects. Last year it didn't happen – but it's back this time, with Hong Kong businessman Sir David Tang once again at the helm. Literary names like British biographer William Shawcross, Wild Swans author Jung Chang and American novelist and poet Erica Jong are tackling the question 'How and What and Why do Writers Write?' on Friday July 15, between 5.15pm and 7.30pm, in HKCEC's Theatres 1 and 2.

This year's 'author of the year' is celebrated Chinese novelist Chan Koonchung, who appeared as guest speaker in the 2005 and 2010 fairs. He says he finds the literary

extravaganza 'unique'. 'The Hong Kong Book Fair is a very special convention for literature,' he says. 'People from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong come on purpose to join in this big event. Many Chinese tourists come intentionally to buy books. None of the book fairs in China are as participative as the one in Hong Kong.' Chan, who released his new book *The Unbearable Dreamworld of Champa the Driver* in Chinese in January, takes part in three different writing seminars at the fair. He was recently interviewed by *Time Out* – and that can be seen on the HKTDC's promotional video for the fair at bit.ly/HKTDCpromo. Other videos involving authors taking part over the festival are to be made available on the official HKTDC YouTube channel over the coming days.

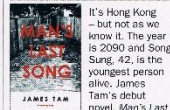
Other events worth checking out over the week include public sessions with award-winning British authors Louis de Bernières (*Captain Corali's Mandolin*) and Joanna Kawenna (*The Ice Museum*), as well as seminars with writers Nury Vittachi, John Burdette, Mark O'Neill and Dufloy Datta. And the *Pure Love* inside the Migra! Erotics at *Dunhuang* exhibition is also worth a peek for its 3D true-to-life experience of being inside a cave temple. Not so literary-based but a welcome new addition to the fair nevertheless. So start planning your week now for the biggest literary event of the year in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Book Fair Jul 17-23, HKCEC. For a full rundown on events, tickets and other details, see bookfair.com.

Man's Last Song

James Tam

BOOK OF THE FORTNIGHT



Proverse Hong Kong
It's Hong Kong – but not as we know it. The year is 2090 and Song Sung, 42, is the youngest person alive. James Tam's debut novel, *Man's Last Song*, is a complex-yet-compelling exploration into the balance of mankind – for individuals, as well as for humanity as a whole. This superbly written dystopian novel is appealing on many levels: for its dramatic use of Hong Kong, for the intriguing characters, for the questions raised and, more importantly, for those which are left unanswered. A highly recommended read. **Laura Besley**

Unsavory Elements

Edited by Tom Carter

Many of the tales in this anthology are about people living in China are thought-provoking. All are candid. Some anecdotes are overly licentious and a couple are poorly written. The average reader will be at fault with Chinese customs, meaning repeated explanations of 'saving face' and the like may wear thin. Regardless, the majority of stories are individual gems and an enjoyably diverse range of issues are found in the book, from biodiversity to baijiu. Unlike baijiu, this book often leaves you wanting more. If you've ever lived it up in the motherland you will enjoy (most) of this. **Anna Cummins**

Forever Young

Roonita Malhotra Hora

Focusing on the inner beauty and well-being that comes from natural healthcare practices, this informative read takes the Indian traditions of Ayurveda and presents them in an accessible way. The author explains how to care for the skin, hair, body and diet with natural spa treatments, massage therapies and invigorating yoga routines, all within the comfort and ease of your home and budget. The instructions and recipes are detailed and thorough – but more assignments have been welcome to prevent the reader getting pretty lost in some of the complicated descriptions. **Julia Tobin**

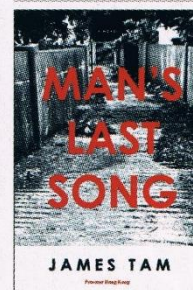
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