

MID-AUTUMN HARVEST MOON CELEBRATION

The five photos depict Mid-Autumn in London Chinatown - taken by Roy Reed, and commissioned by Inter-Artes (my performing group). In 2023, Mid-Autumn falls on Friday September 29, with Celebration Viewing 7-9pm at St Andrew's, with refreshments .

The Mid-Autumn festival (Harvest Moon to the English) is rather serene in the UK. When I was a child in Hong Kong, the Mid-Autumn Festival was vibrant and a good memory. Children carried lanterns in various forms, especially in the form of a white rabbit. Some shops set up a small stage outside their shop with puppets in period costumes, repeatedly performing mechanical movements to pre-recorded percussive sound of "dong-dong-qiang-qiang". I ate raw water caltrops and water chestnuts (I don't like cooked ones). There were chess cakes, piglet cakes inside pig cages... People prepared many more dishes for dinner, and admired the moon at its roundest and brightest. Of course, there were all kinds of mooncakes being sold everywhere. Some of which I loved, such as brown lotus seed paste with olive kernels and sweet black bean paste. I haven't eaten all these for a long time. I disliked the sweet and salty nuts and ham mooncakes, which are not sold in the UK. Hong Kong mooncakes continue to have novel inventions which are very different from traditional mooncakes. In comparison, mooncakes in the UK have few varieties. When I was a school child in Hong Kong, a teacher told us that during the Yuan Dynasty, when people were strictly controlled by the authority, and forbidden to do/say this or that, the suppressed people hid paper strips in the mooncakes, with messages that could not be shared publicly.

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