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Chinese organizers cancel NBA fan event amid free speech row



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Editor: John Robbins

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U.S. Senator Rubio calls for review of TikTok's merger with Musical.ly



FILE PHOTO: People are seen at the ByteDance Technology booth at the Digital China exhibition in Fuzhou, Fujian province, China May 5, 2019. REUTERS/Stringer/File Photo

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. Senator Marco Rubio on Wednesday asked the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to review TikTok owner Beijing ByteDance Technology Co's acquisition of Musical.ly.

FILE PHOTO: People are seen at the ByteDance Technology booth at the Digital China exhibition in Fuzhou, Fujian province, China May 5, 2019. REUTERS/Stringer/File Photo
In a letter to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Rubio said Chinese-owned apps "are increasingly being used to censor content and silence open discussion on topics deemed sensitive by the Chinese Government and Communist Party."

ByteDance, one of China's fastest growing start-ups, owns the country's leading news aggregator Jinri Toutiao as well as TikTok, which has attracted celebrities like Ariana Grande and Katy Perry along with legions of U.S. teenagers.

A U.S. TikTok spokeswoman said the company "stores all U.S. user data in the U.S. Our content and moderation policies are led by our U.S.-based team and are not influenced by any foreign government. The Chinese government does not request that TikTok censor content, and would not have jurisdiction regardless, as TikTok does not operate there."

Treasury did not immediately comment.

The company's Chinese ownership and sudden spike in

popularity have raised national security concerns among U.S. lawmakers, who are still reeling from revelations that Russia used social media platforms to meddle in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. Congress cannot compel CFIUS to review individual cases, but the powerful committee does have jurisdiction to review prior deals in perpetuity.

Rubio said China "is using these apps to advance their foreign policy and globally suppress freedom of speech, expression, and other freedoms that we as Americans so deeply cherish."

Chinese gaming company Beijing Kunlun Tech Co Ltd (300418.SZ) earlier this year agreed to a request by CFIUS to sell popular gay dating app Grindr, which it had owned since 2016.

Kunlun drew U.S. ire after it gave some Beijing-based engineers access to personal information of millions of Americans such as private messages and HIV status.

ByteDance bought Musical.ly for nearly \$1 billion in December 2017. It later shuttered Musical.ly and moved users to a revamped version of its own TikTok app, which serves non-Chinese markets.

Musical.ly, released in 2014, and TikTok, launched in

2016, both enable users to create and share short singing and dancing videos that are set to well-known songs, with numerous special effect filters.

The company's original app Douyin is similar to TikTok but is only available in China and complies with local censorship requirements.

ByteDance counts venture firm Sequoia Capital and big private-equity firms such as KKR, General Atlantic and Hillhouse Capital Group as backers, sources have told Reuters.



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Chinese organizers cancel NBA fan event amid free speech row

SHANGHAI (Reuters) - Chinese organizers on Wednesday canceled a fan event on the eve of a National Basketball Association (NBA) exhibition game in Shanghai, the latest fallout in a growing dispute over a tweet by a team official supporting the recent protests in Hong Kong.

Chinese sponsors and partners have been cutting ties with the NBA after the Twitter post by Houston Rockets General Manager Daryl Morey last week supporting anti-government protests in the Chinese-ruled city.

The Shanghai Sports Federation said the cancellation of the fan event ahead of Thursday's game between the Brooklyn Nets and Los Angeles Lakers was due to the "inappropriate attitude" of Morey and NBA Commissioner Adam Silver.

Chinese fans fume at NBA as fallout from free speech row spreads

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A Wednesday afternoon news conference with both teams was indefinitely delayed, organizers said. Outside the team hotel, workers tore down massive banners advertising the game, according to a Reuters witness.

The Hong Kong protests were sparked by opposition to a bill allowing extradition to mainland China, but have evolved into broader calls for democracy. China has accused the West of stirring up anti-Beijing sentiment in Hong Kong. The NBA controversy also comes against the backdrop of the U.S.-China trade war that escalated after Washington imposed visa restrictions on Chinese officials on Tuesday.

Silver said on Tuesday the league supported Morey's right to exercise his freedom of expression, further angering authorities and some fans in China and threatening the NBA's business there, said to be worth more than \$4 billion.

Morey deleted the tweet and apologized on Monday, but Chinese broadcasters, sportswear companies and sponsors have said they are reviewing their ties with the NBA, which has had a presence in China since 1992.

The NBA initially described the anger over Morey's post as "regrettable," drawing criticism from U.S. politicians, who accused the league of putting its China business ahead of free speech.

Silver, speaking in Japan before a preseason game between the Rockets and Toronto Raptors, said it was not up to the league to regulate what players, employees and team owners



Security personnel are seen at the venue that was scheduled to hold fan events ahead of an NBA China game between Brooklyn Nets and Los Angeles Lakers, at the Oriental Sports Center in Shanghai, China October 9, 2019. REUTERS/Aly Song

said.

On Tuesday night, during a preseason game between the NBA's 76ers and the Guangzhou Loong Lions of the Chinese Basketball Association, security at Wells Fargo Center in Philadelphia confiscated signs from a couple that read "Free Hong Kong" and "Free HK." Security later removed the couple from the game after they yelled, "Free Hong Kong," a local NBC affiliate reported.

Security personnel are seen at the venue that was scheduled to hold fan events ahead of an NBA China game between Brooklyn Nets and Los Angeles Lakers, at the Oriental Sports Center in Shanghai, China October 9, 2019. REUTERS/Aly Song

Security officials warned the couple following multiple complaints from guests and verbal confrontations with others in attendance, the team said in a statement.

"Ultimately, the decision was made by Wells Fargo Center personnel to remove the guests from the premises, which was accomplished without incident," the team said.

On Wednesday, an editorial in the official English-language China Daily accused Silver of "brazenly endorsing Morey's secessionist-supporting tweet" and giving "a shot to the arms of the rioters of Hong Kong."

"If Silver thinks endorsing the indiscriminate violence the radical Hong Kong protesters are resorting to ... is supporting freedom of expression, then he should think again," it said.

'I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND'

Some fans expressed dismay at the way the controversy had spread, while voicing their support for Beijing's view.

"I'm patriotic of course. I support that Hong Kong is part of China, but I just don't understand this," said Yu Jie, a fan waiting to see the players in Shanghai.

The Global Times, a Chinese tabloid published by the ruling Communist Party's People's Daily newspaper, accused Silver of caving in to political pressure, saying the NBA was treating the Chinese market with disregard.

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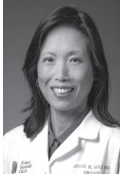
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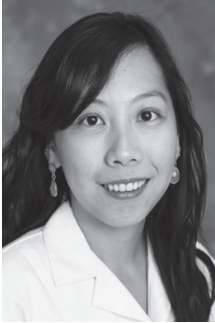


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Editor’s Choice



25th Anniversary screening for the film “Natural Born Killers” in Los Angeles



Pope Francis wearing Alpini’s hat greets faithfuls during the weekly general audience at the Vatican, October 9, 2019. REUTERS/Remo Casilli TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A Hikvision surveillance camera is seen on the Drum Tower in downtown Beijing



Cuban asylum seekers, who are partners, consol each other after they were sent back after Democratic presidential candidate and former HUD Secretary Julian Castro tried to have them exempted from the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP) in Matamoros



Canadian-American scientist James Peebles speaks to well-wishers after he shared the 2019 Nobel Prize for Physics



Indian Air Force (IAF) soldiers march as advanced light helicopters fly during the Indian Air Force Day celebrations at the Hindon Air Force Station on the outskirts of New Delhi



Protests against Ecuador’s President Lenin Moreno’s austerity measures in Quito



NDP leader Jagmeet Singh makes an election campaign stop in Toronto

Sometime soon, millions of people may find themselves unwittingly involved in a test that could profoundly change their daily routines, local economies and civic lives. They'll have to figure out how to keep up with City Hall, their neighborhoods and their kids' schools — as well as store openings, new products and sales — without a 170-year-old staple of daily life: a local newspaper.

At least one city — possibly San Francisco, Miami, Minneapolis or Cleveland — likely will soon lose its last daily newspaper, analysts say. And it "could be a lot more widespread than people have been predicting," says Mike Simonton, who tracks media debt for Fitch Ratings.

It's hard to ignore that possibility as the pace of newspaper closings accelerates. Starting Wednesday, Hearst's 146-year-old Seattle Post-Intelligencer survives as a scaled-down online publication offering mostly commentary. That leaves The Seattle Times as the city's only major paper-and-ink daily.

Gannett gci, parent of USA TODAY, may shutter the 140-year-old Tucson Citizen, which competes with the Arizona Daily Star, if a buyer can't be found.

Last month, E.W. Scripps ssp closed the Rocky Mountain News, leaving The Denver Post as the city's sole major daily.

Are these symptoms of a miserable economy that's pulverizing a handful of high-profile papers, including some owned by companies with unusually crushing debt loads? Or have we reached a tipping point where advertisers and readers are flocking so quickly to digital media that most of the nation's 1,400 dailies may end up in the morgue?

Industry watchers aren't sure, although some say it's too early to start hanging crepe. "Publishers and journalists have become their own worst enemy," says Robert Picard, a media economics scholar who edits the Journal of Media Business Studies. "They are running around arguing that the sky is falling. And they're making the situation appear far worse than it is."

About 80% of newspaper revenue comes from advertising, and the Newspaper Association of America expects those sales to drop 9.7% in 2009 to \$34.2 billion, after falling 16.5% in 2008.

"Advertising has fallen off a cliff," says Randy Bennett, senior vice president of business development at the NAA. "The question is how much of that will come back when things pick up again. And the expecta-



Newspaper Closings Raise Fears About Industry

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



tion is, certainly not all of it."

Business models

Almost everyone agrees that newspapers must reinvent their business models. Experiments include The New York Times' plan to enlist journalism students to help cover some neighborhoods in Brooklyn and New Jersey. The East Valley Tribune in Mesa, Ariz., recently began to offer free home delivery four days a week to neighborhoods with families that appeal to advertisers.

Some experts say that it's time to consider extraordinary measures, including government bailouts, to ensure that no community has its newsrooms go dark.

"We need to view journalism in the same way that we view libraries and public schools, as absolutely essential to any prospering community," says Theodore Glasser, professor of communications at Stanford University. "A lot of good stuff is published by newspapers so that public officials see it and act accordingly. That's the power of the press. And that's the first thing being cut."

Others say not to worry: The Internet and the market will empower professional journalists, bloggers and interest groups to independently provide all the local news anyone could want.

"There's going to be an ecosystem, a network of different players involved in news for different reasons," says Jeff Jarvis, who runs the City University of New York's interactive journalism program.

Traditional newspapers won't be part of the mix, though: They "aren't willing to cannibalize and disrupt themselves,"

Jarvis says. "It's too late. ... It's going to be a post-Armageddon rebuilding."

Over the past few months:

- The Detroit Free Press and The Detroit News announced plans to cut home delivery to three days a week beginning March 30 and urged readers to go online to follow the news on other days.
- Virtually every major newspaper announced staff cuts. McClatchy mini—which owns The Miami Herald, The Kansas City Star and the Fort Worth Star-Telegram—said in February that it would slash 15% of its workforce, on top of a 10% cut late last year. "By the end of 2009, a quarter of all the newsroom jobs that existed in 2001 will be gone," the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism said this week in its annual "The State of the News Media" report.
- Those keeping their jobs have seen salaries cut. Gannett required virtually all employees to take a one-week unpaid furlough in the first quarter.
- Publicly traded publishers collectively lost about 39% of their market value since Jan. 1, underperforming the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 index, which is down 16.5%. Looked at another way, the \$5.4 billion that Rupert Murdoch paid in 2007 for Wall Street Journal parent Dow Jones nwsa could buy Gannett, McClatchy, New York Times Co. nyt, Washington Post Co. wpo, A.H. Belo ahc and E.W. Scripps with about \$750 million to spare, based on current values.
- Publishers in Philadelphia and Minneapolis as well as the Journal Register, a chain in the northeast and



Michigan, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. That followed a similar filing in December by Tribune Co., publisher of Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times and The Sun in Baltimore.

Double-digit profit margins

Tough times? You bet. But one has to imagine an epic social and economic transformation to conclude that the newspaper industry is at death's door.

Nearly half of all adults read a newspaper every day and spent \$10.5 billion last year to do so. The average newspaper generates about a 10% profit margin.

"It's not the 20% to 30% they were enjoying several years ago," Bennett says. "But it's still an enviable profit margin for many businesses."

That's overlooked with all of the attention on large local papers that are especially vulnerable to the soft economy.

Advertisers in big cities have plenty of options to reach consumers, and newspapers are one of the most expensive. They typically charge about \$25 for every 1,000 people who might see an ad covering one-third of a page. That's a lot more than the cost to reach a similar audience via radio, magazines, billboards and websites. Advertisers outside of big cities have far fewer alternatives. As a result, "Smaller-market newspapers are in better financial shape," Bennett says.

Most large publishers also are straining to pay off heavy debt they took on before the economy fell into a tailspin.



Although large local newspapers have the biggest problems, everyone is struggling to keep ad sales and readers. That includes national dailies led by USA TODAY, The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, although they benefit from economies of scale and strong brand identities.

Nearly 67% of homes have an Internet connection. That opens them to sites offering almost everything found in newspapers, including national and global news, business, opinion, entertainment, sports, comics and horoscopes.

That's why some experts say local newspapers should concentrate on local news and events and become less stuffy.

"This was a much more fun business years ago when people didn't hold themselves to such high standards," says former Merrill

Lynch analyst Lauren Rich Fine, now at Kent State University. "There are different ways to (report the news) and not be so hard on yourself if you get it wrong."

It's hard to predict how many people want local news enough to pay a price that, as ad sales shrink, could be much higher than now — or to pay any fee to read stories online, where most papers now offer them free. "If you look at public radio and the troubles their outlets have raising money for public affairs journalism, it might give you pause," says James Hamilton, who runs Duke University's DeWitt Wallace Center for Media and Democracy.

Before about 1840, when the Penny Press turned newspapers into an inexpensive mass medium, 15% of the population spent the equivalent in today's dollars of as much as \$4 a day for a newspaper, Picard says.



Digital media evangelists say the future will be much different. About 85% of a newspaper's costs go to things such as presses, paper, ink and trucks. Without those costs, even modest ad sales could support lots of people to provide local news and information without charge.

"There's a market demand for quality journalism and reporting," Jarvis says. What's the evidence? "Based on democracy. Based on the intelligence of the audience. Based on the fact that my son reads more news than ever. Based on the fact that we need it."

Some journalists agree, working with non-profit online publications including Voiceofsandiego.org, the St. Louis Beacon and Minneapolis' MinnPost.com.

'Several former Rocky Mountain News employees plan to start InDenverTimes.com in May if they can persuade 50,000 people to pay \$4.99 a month for a year.

Glasser doubts that such ventures can compensate for the loss of newspaper newsrooms. "I've seen nothing in the blogosphere that provides the sustained, systematic coverage that a good newsroom provides. Not even close," he says.

If he's right, then the consequences from current trends could be ugly.

"We'll know if things don't work out if there's an increase in corruption," Hamilton says. "When the watchdog goes away, what happens? That's the experiment we're starting to run." (Courtesy abcnews.go.com)



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Most Americans have filed their income taxes by midnight Monday, April 15, and employers will report their payroll taxes later this month. But companies that have replaced or expanded their flesh-and-blood staff with robots will get a free pass.

What's new: Amid fears of automation-fueled job loss, a once-fringe debate is exploding into public view: Why don't we tax the bots?

The big picture: For over a century and a half, the United States has taxed income, first to fund war and later to build up the country's coffers. But now, some experts say it's time to reevaluate who — or what — should be taxed.

•**The idea is** to use money raised from companies carrying out automation to help retrain or support people who lose their jobs because of it.

•**Among the robot levy's** most ardent — and improbable — supporters is Bill Gates, who in a 2017 interview said robots should be taxed “at a similar level” to the humans it replaced, even if that slows the speed of automation.

•**Pumping the brakes** will give policymakers more time to counteract potential unemployment, proponents argue.

“It's a bit like polluting the environment,” says James Manyika, director of the McKinsey Global Institute. Companies will choose cheap, dirty fossil fuels over clean energy unless there are incentives not to — just like they'll likely choose to automate away jobs.

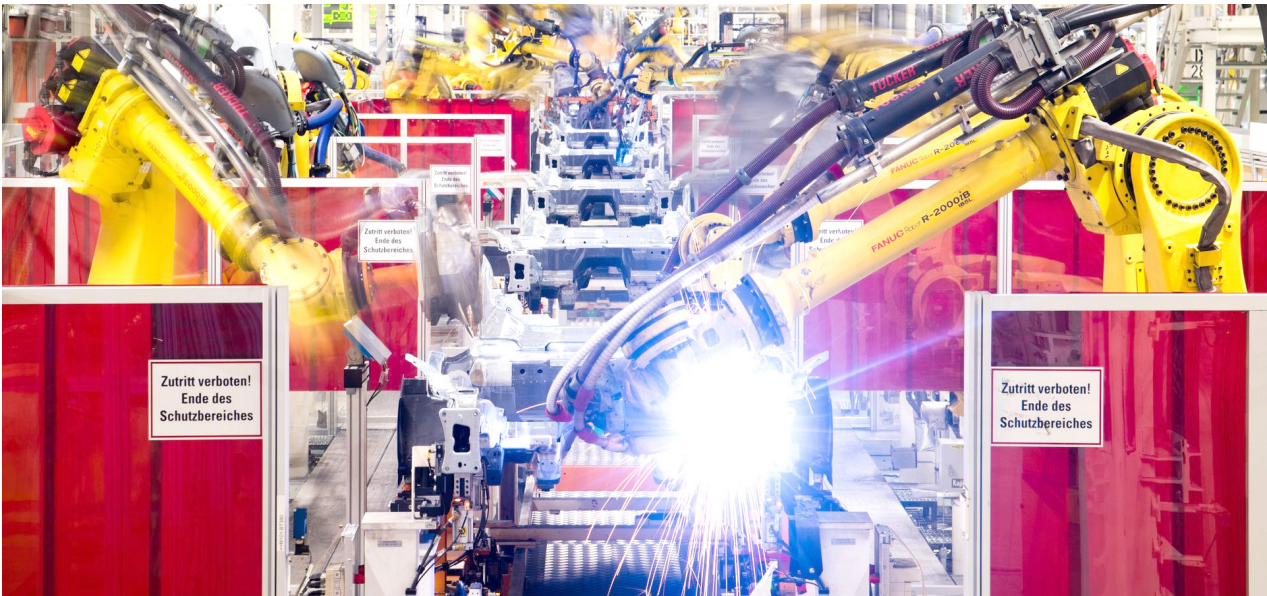


Detractors, however, say a tax could stall innovation at a time when China is unwaveringly pushing to dominate AI and robotics.

•In a report last week, the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a think tank, argued that the robot tax would slow GDP and wage growth.

•**ITIF president Rob Atkinson** instead

**Robots May Be Taxed In The
Future To Fund Human Services**
**Experts Consider Taxing Robots
To Pay For The Jobs They Took**



(Photo/Getty Images)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

called for a tax credit for investing in robots, calling predictions of job loss from automation overblown.

**Related
Why robots should be taxed if
they take people's jobs**

**Bill Gates says governments could
use a robot tax to fund human
services – it would also help remedy
income inequality**

The idea of a tax on robots was raised last May in a draft report to the European parliament prepared by MEP Mady Delvaux from the committee on legal affairs. Emphasising how robots could boost inequality, the report proposed that there might be a “need to introduce corporate reporting requirements on the extent and proportion of the contribution of robotics and AI to the economic results of a company for the purpose of taxation and social security contributions”.



**A tax on robots might provide revenues
to finance retraining schemes for dis-
placed workers. (Photo/Reuters)**

The public reaction to Delvaux's proposal has been overwhelmingly negative, with the notable exception of Bill Gates, who endorsed it. But we should not dismiss the idea out of hand. In just the past year, we have seen the proliferation of devices such as Google Home and Amazon Echo Dot (Alexa), which replace some aspects of household help. Likewise, the Delphi and nuTonomy driverless taxi services in Singapore have started to replace taxi drivers. And Doordash, which uses Starship Technologies miniature self-driving vehicles, is replacing restaurant delivery people.

If these and other labor-displacing innovations succeed, surely calls to tax them will grow more frequent, owing to the human problems that arise when people lose their jobs – often jobs with which they closely identify, and for which they may have spent years preparing. Optimists point out that there have always been new jobs for people replaced by technology, but, as the robot revolution accelerates, doubts about how well this will work out continue to grow. A tax on robots, its advocates hope, might slow down the process, at least temporarily, and provide revenues to finance adjustment, like retraining programs for displaced workers.

**If the robots are coming for our jobs,
make sure they pay their taxes
—John Naughton**

Such programmes may be as essential as our work is to healthy human life as we know it. In his book Rewarding Work, Edmund S Phelps emphasized the fundamental importance of maintaining a “place in society – a

calling”. When many people are no longer able to find work to support a family, troubling consequences ensue, and, as Phelps stresses, “the functioning of the entire community may be impaired”. In other words, there are externalities to robotisation that justify some government intervention.

Critics of a robot tax have emphasized that the ambiguity of the term “robot” makes defining the tax base difficult. The critics also stress the new robotics' enormous, undeniable benefits to productivity growth.

But let's not rule out so quickly at least modest robot taxes during the transition to a different world of work. Such a tax should be part of a broader plan to manage the consequences of the robotics revolution.



**Robots won't just take our jobs – they'll
make the rich even richer**

Discussion of a robot tax should consider what alternative we have to deal with rising inequality. It would be natural to consider a more progressive income tax and a “basic income”. But these measures do not have widespread popular support. If support is not widespread, the tax, even if imposed, will not last.

So, taxes must be reframed to remedy income inequality induced by robotisation. It may be more politically acceptable, and thus sustainable, to tax the robots rather than just the high-income people. And while this would not tax individual human success, as income taxes do, it might in fact imply somewhat higher taxes on higher incomes, if high incomes are earned in activities that involve replacing humans with robots.

A moderate tax on robots, even a temporary tax that merely slows the adoption of disruptive technology, seems a natural component of a policy to address rising inequality. Revenue could be targeted towards wage insurance, to help people replaced by new technology make the transition to a different career. This would accord with our natural sense of justice, and thus be likely to endure. (Courtesy the guardian.com)

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理查德·克莱德曼”号列车北美巡演抵达休斯顿 上周日在 Arena Thertter 拉开休市首演的帷幕



图为「美南报业传媒集团」董事长李蔚华（左二、左三）与童草老师（右三）及学生陈亭（左一）等人在剧场不期而遇。及本报记者秦鸿钧（右一）合影



本报记者秦鸿钧摄影

理查德·克莱德曼（后排左二）颁发奖状给与他同台共演的四位小琴童并合影。



理查德与观众互动、讲话。



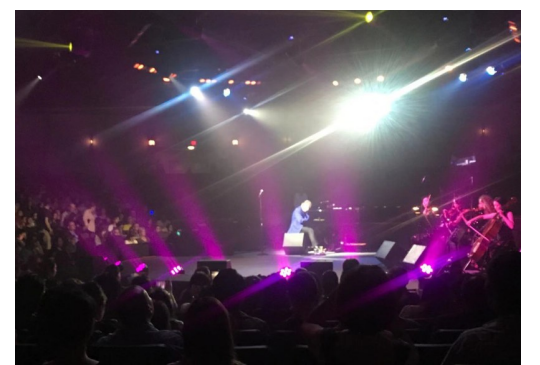
理查德与观众互动、讲话。



理查德与观众互动、讲话。



理查德与观众互动、讲话。



图为理查德上周日在休市 Arena Thertter 演出的盛况。



理查德·克莱德曼（右）与旅居休市著名音乐家、作曲家吴晓萍老师（左）合影。



理查德（右）向同台共演的小琴童 Coco（左）致意。Coco 现年七岁，学琴才二年，是著名音乐家、作曲家吴晓萍老师的学生。她全程丢本（不看谱）演奏，显示用心和功力。



理查德·克莱德曼（左）介绍与他同台共演的四位小琴童。

2019 艾多美 Atomy 传福音活动集锦回顾



艾多美 Atomy 休斯顿分会于日前在中国城希尔顿花园酒店举办了 2019 传福音活动，由活动组织人 Judy 董小英和 Lily 李蔡淑英率领团体联合来自韩国圣经科学研究院的著名科学博士金明贤博士 Dr.Kim.Myung Hyun，以及著名神学博士尹永成牧师 Dr.Yoon.Young Sung 专程远道而来

