

performances in Shanghai, Beijing, London and Hong Kong.

"I received many videos that fans sent me from the live shows," the uploader said. "They asked me to try to verify if the singing was authentic or lip-synced."

He selected some videos with relatively good tone quality and analyzed them with Melodyne, an audio-processing software. He found that Ashin's vocal level was not consistent during the concerts. Sometimes he sang parts or all of the songs in perfect key; other times he was off-key.

The uploader also found that vocal tracks of the song "Forever, Forever," extracted from several concerts, were identical, concluding that Ashin lip-synced to the same pre-recorded audio source in at least three different live performances.

His revelations caused a big stir online, and later an online music blogger calling himself Shengwuke officially filed a complaint with the China Consumers Association.

"Lip-syncing on live shows severely violates consumers' rights, and Mayday should bear both compensation and legal liability," Shengwuke wrote on his Weibo account.

"I call for the government to investigate the issue thoroughly and get justice for consumers."

Mayday's label B'in Music later issued a statement that denied any lip-syncing at live concerts and called the allegations slanderous. The company is now cooperating with authorities to clear up the matter.

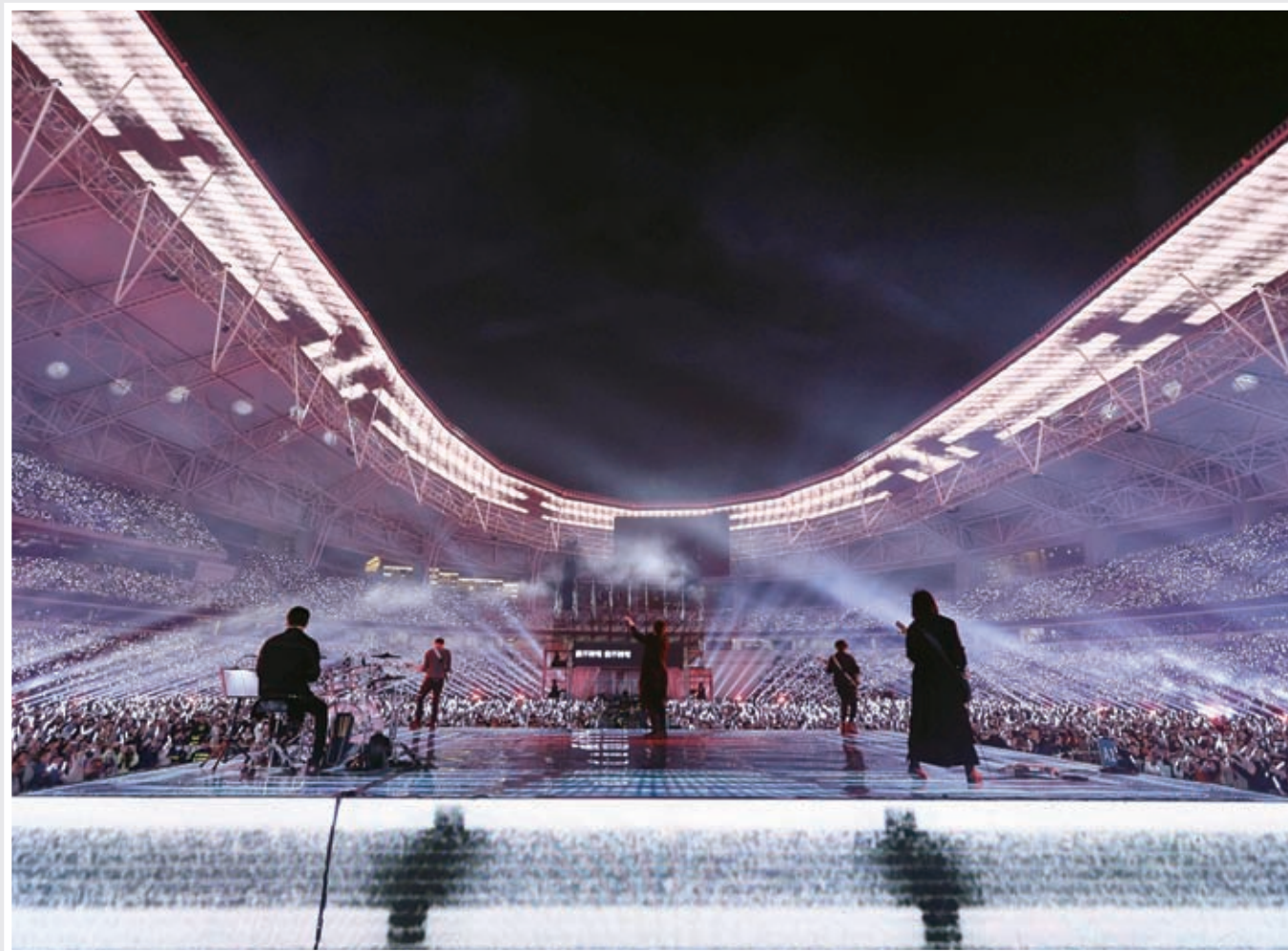
Ashin, in a post on Instagram, insisted that all his singing was authentic.

"Every note of it came from the throat that I have been relying for 24 years," he wrote.

But not all fans buy the explanation, leaving the online realm of Mayday fans divided on the issue.

"I have some friends that have been their fans for years and go to their concerts every year," Yan said. "They told me they have always known about some lip-syncing during concerts but they just accepted it."

Legal experts told Shanghai Daily that it is against law in China to lip-sync in concerts. According to the country's Regulations on the Management of Commercial Performances,



Mayday held eight live concerts in Shanghai recently, attracting more than 360,000 fans. — IC

commercial performances should not deceive audience by lip-syncing or fake playing of instruments. It's up to concert organizers to ensure that all performances are genuine.

"According to the law, an artist found to be lip-syncing for the first time is subject to public disclosure; a second violation may result in the loss of performing permits," said Liu Chunquan, a lawyer based in Shanghai.

"The artists and the organizers could also face fines of between 50,000 and 100,000 yuan. At the same time, audiences may also seek compensation under the Consumers' Rights Protection Law," he added.

However, very few cases of lip-syncing are officially publicized or penalized.

In 2010, in a live concert by Chinese actress and singer Huang Shengyi, two obscure guest performers were found have been lip-syncing and were fined 50,000 yuan each. Both subsequently left the entertainment industry.

Last month during a gala organized by Hunan Satellite TV, 41 performers, including some top-flight names, were suspected of lip-syncing but nothing came of the suspicions. No other cases have been officially verified.

Indeed, lip-syncing isn't particularly big news in the entertainment industry worldwide, amid a widespread perception that the practice is not all that uncommon.

It was reported that Grammy Award-winning singers Jennifer Hudson and Faith Hill both lip-synced when performing the US national anthem at Super Bowl football games.

And with the development of modern technology, it is getting harder to draw clear lines separating lip-syncing and actual singing.

In South Korean pop, recordings may carry the term AR, or All Recorded, which signifies that the record contains the sound of a singer's voice and the singer basically just dances to the record. A second label, LAR, or Live All Recorded, means the

recording contains not only the accompaniment and singers' voices but also the sounds of singers' labored breathing. And LMR, or Live Music Recorded, means the singers sing live on some parts of their songs.

While AR and LAR are mostly panned, LMR is quite controversial — and Mayday's performances are apparently included in LMR category.

Music critics said it's hard to completely confirm or debunk if LMR is equivalent to lip-syncing.

"You can't say that an artist doesn't make efforts if using LMR," a music critic whose pen name is Sanshiyisheng said during an interview with Jiemian Culture.

"The artists sometimes make more efforts when using LMR because they need to make sure that their real voice doesn't collide with the recorded one. And in fact, the technology is usually used only in fast-paced songs but rarely in ballads."

Is Mayday guilty? Did the band just take advantage of modern technology? We await the final verdict.