

Asian Youth Orchestra in tune with “Hong Kong Week” in Japan

The acclaimed Asian Youth Orchestra’s (AYO) participation in “Hong Kong Week” in Tokyo (29 Oct-11 Nov) wasn’t just about the remarkable quality of their orchestral music. Equally important was the AYO’s mission to unite young musicians and promote friendship and understanding amongst people of all ages and cultural backgrounds.

The one-off "Asian Youth Orchestra Alumni Special Concert – Celebrating Friendship between Japan and Hong Kong", held at Tokyo Opera City on 31 October, featured more than 20 former AYO musicians based in Japan and Hong Kong. It was a great success.

“It is so very gratifying to see young musicians from different cultural backgrounds building up a strong bond and friendship,” said Chief Executive Carrie Lam. “So when I started to plan for my first official visit to Japan as Chief Executive, I told myself that the best thing I could bring to Japan to showcase our friendship is the AYO.”

Since the AYO’s founding in 1987, both Hong Kong and Japan have been instrumental in the success of the orchestra, which gathers top young talent from around the region to rehearse and perform together in a programme of international concerts.

Over the years, the AYO has won critical acclaim for its world-class performances at prestigious performing arts venues around the globe.

The AYO was awarded Japan’s Praemium Imperiale Grant for Young Artists in 2010 in recognition of its outstanding contributions to the development of young artistic talent. It was also awarded the Nikkei Asia Prize for Culture and Community in 2015 for promoting friendship and understanding of young people across Asia through the common language of music.

While Hong Kong is regarded as the spiritual home of the AYO, its first public concert in 1990 was held in Kumamoto, Japan. Since then, Japan has been one of the destinations for the AYO tour almost every year, while players from Japan and Hong Kong are a regular feature of the orchestral ensemble.

The "Asian Youth Orchestra Alumni Special Concert – Celebrating Friendship

between Japan and Hong Kong" echoed the goal of "Hong Kong Week", to promote closer ties and mutual friendship between Japan and Hong Kong – not only closer musical and cultural links but also closer collaboration in other areas including business, finance, research and technology. The concert also proved to be an example of the great things that can be achieved through harmonious co-operation between Japan and Hong Kong.



Chief Executive Carrie Lam welcomes guests to the "Asian Youth Orchestra Alumni Special Concert – Celebrating Friendship between Japan and Hong Kong" in Tokyo on 31 October



Chief Executive Carrie Lam (centre) and founder of the Asian Youth Orchestra Richard Pontziou (third from left) join AYO alumni musicians in Tokyo



Musicians from Japan and Hong Kong join together for the concert