

# Asian Youth Orchestra performs in Kumamoto (with photos)

The Asian Youth Orchestra (AYO) gave a concert at the Kumamoto Prefectural Theater in Kumamoto, Japan, today (August 27) as part of its concert tour across Asia.

Comprising about 100 young musicians from various parts of Asia, including 14 from Japan, the AYO had earlier performed in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Nanjing, Tianjin, Beijing, Taipei, Chiayi City and Seoul during this season's tour. After the concert in Kumamoto today, the AYO will perform in Fukuoka on August 28 followed by concerts in Tokyo on August 30 and 31, which will conclude this season's tour.

Speaking at a reception before the concert, the Principal Hong Kong Economic and Trade Representative (Tokyo), Ms Shirley Yung, said that the concert in Kumamoto was of particular significance because the AYO started in Kumamoto with its first rehearsal camp and concert in 1990.

"Tonight is a precious opportunity for friends in Kumamoto to renew their friendship and connections with the AYO, as well as for many others to become acquainted with this orchestra," Ms Yung said.

Based in Hong Kong, the AYO attracts many bright young musicians from all over Asia to Hong Kong every year, and takes them to different parts of the world for performances and cultural exchanges.

The AYO has played a significant role in promoting arts and cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and Japan. Since its first public concert in Kumamoto in 1990, Japan has been one of the destinations for the AYO tour almost every year. 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 among young people across Asia through the common language of music.

The performances by the AYO in Korea and Japan are supported by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Tokyo), which is currently the official representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in Japan and Korea.

