

Speech by CS at Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra 2018/19 Season Opening

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, at the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) 2018/19 Season Opening today (August 31):

Chairman Y S Liu (Chairman of Board of Governors of the HK Phil), Mr Merlin Swire (Chairman of Swire Pacific), Ms Christine Ip (Chief Executive Officer of Greater China, United Overseas Bank), Mr Michael MacLeod (Chief Executive of the HK Phil), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. It is my great honour to join you all here at the opening concert of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. First and foremost, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Orchestra on the commencement of its 45th season.

The HK Phil is one of the finest orchestras in Asia. It has delivered performances of the highest artistic quality and offered music enthusiasts a series of fantastic programmes over the years. Last year, in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, and with support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, the orchestra performed in Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and at the Sydney Opera House.

In January this year, under the dynamic leadership of Music Director master Jaap van Zweden, HK Phil completed the universally critically acclaimed epic "Ring Cycle", taking the orchestra to a new height of artistic excellence.

The HK Phil annually touches the lives of over 200 000 music lovers through more than 150 performances including a full-time annual schedule of core classical repertoire and innovative popular programming, extensive education activities and community outreach activities for people of all ages, free concerts including the popular Swire Symphony under the Stars and regular broadcasts and telecast, as well as collaboration with Opera Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Hong Kong Ballet, enriching the cultural life of the Hong Kong community and bringing the joy of classical music to our people and visitors alike.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government is committed to promoting arts and cultural development in Hong Kong and has been providing funding for the nine major performing arts groups, including the HK Phil. This year, we have allocated an additional funding of \$55 million to support these nine performing arts groups and other small and medium arts groups funded by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. We have also injected an additional \$500 million into the Art Development Matching Grants Pilot Scheme and have relaxed its matching parameters to encourage donations from the business and private sectors in support of the development of arts groups.

However, Government's efforts alone are never enough. I am pleased to note that the Swire Group in particular has been the Principal Patron of the HK Phil since 2006. I would also like to pay tribute to UOB for sponsoring the Opening Night. The Orchestra also receives long-term funding from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and other supporters of the local community. The enduring support from music lovers and different sectors of the community will certainly continue to propel the HK Phil forward and scale new heights in the years to come.

On this encouraging note, I wish the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra again a resounding success in the new season and all of you a very pleasant and melodious evening.