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兩首香港巨著考驗新晉指揮 閻惠昌 談香港中樂團指揮家節

Two Hong Kong Masterpieces The Touchstones for Young Conductors in HKCO Conductors' Festival

閻惠昌總監認為指揮對傳統作品有到位的演繹以外，更要領導樂團演奏對指揮要求愈來愈高的現代作品。
Conductors have to conduct the traditional pieces in a certain level of effectiveness and also have a quest of creativity and an open mind of accepting challenges, said Maestro Yan Huichang.

今年香港中樂團舉辦指揮家節，其中除了邀請了張國勇、湯沐海、陳佐湟及樂團的藝術總監閻惠昌指揮專場音樂會外，更舉辦了國際中樂指揮大賽。

The Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (HKCO) is presenting its first Conductors' Festival, with featured concerts conducted by the renowned Zhang Guoyong, Tang Muhai, Chen Zuohuang and the orchestra's Artistic Director Yan Huichang. One of the highlighted events, other than the featured concerts, is the International Chinese Orchestra Conductor Competition.

為甚麼在今年舉辦指揮節？香港中樂團藝術總監閻惠昌認為，這是早前舉辦的作曲家節的後續。「作曲家節是基礎。而當我們有好的樂手、有好的作品後，接下來就是要有好的指揮。」閻惠昌認為，舉辦指揮節，是促進音樂文化更長遠、更深入的發展。

舉辦指揮大賽，最直接的益處就是發掘新晉指揮，為中樂、華樂團的藝術領導注入更多新血。然而，閻總監認為，指揮大賽除了提拔新指揮，其實亦有助鼓勵創作。中樂團以現時編制的形式，雖然只有半個世紀的歷史，但是這半個世紀以來，我們卻見證了大量新作的誕生。

Artistic Director Yan Huichang conceived the Conductors' Festival as a sequel to the Composers' Festival, presented by the HKCO in 2010. 'The Composers' Festival had laid a foundation which made this Conductors' Festival possible. After having accomplished musicians and good compositions, what we need next are accomplished conductors,' Mr. Yan says, and further thinks that the festival is catalysing musical and cultural development in the long term.

The direct outcome of a conductor festival would be the discovery of young, accomplished conductors, and putting new talents in the leadership roles of Chinese orchestra. Moreover, there is an interaction between these new talents and composers, therefore nurturing new compositions. Chinese orchestra, modeled after the Western symphony orchestra, has a history that is half a century old. There is, however, an explosive amount of new works being created specifically for the ever-growing Chinese orchestra.

優秀作品與優秀指揮 相輔相成

指揮家對於理解樂譜所下過的功夫，或許不為人知。閻總監說：「面對新的作品，指揮需要花大量時間，理解樂譜上每個音符、每個指示。指揮家與作曲家一樣，要對每個細節都有充份掌握和豐富的想像力。」這些功夫，都真正考驗了指揮家對音樂的理解能力和修養。新作品當中，不少用上西方音樂現代的寫法和效果，更有些要挑戰樂器的極限，以非常新穎的方法發聲，以不尋常的複雜方式重新組合樂隊的音響。這些不單考驗了樂團的樂手，更大大考驗了樂團的領導者：指揮。

林樂培1978年寫《秋決》，用上不少自由節拍，以及隨樂手意願演奏的即興音型和複雜的織體；而羅永暉的《星河潑墨》，更是全曲大篇幅地以時間值，而不是以拍子標示。這些有別傳統的手法，令指揮在協調整個樂團上的角色尤為重要。

其實，指揮不單對樂團協調產生作用，對怎樣演奏每一個音符更要有清晰明確的見解。西方管弦樂團的指揮，主要浸淫在古典浪漫樂曲之中，大多數時間面對的，是經典作品演繹層面上的取舍，而無需花很長時間去與樂手討論音符如何演奏。但中樂的作品，有風格迥異的各地民間音樂、傳統音樂變身作現代大樂隊的作品，也有新派破格的創作，樂手相應要面對多種截然不同的音樂，比起管弦樂團面對的變化要大得多。面對新穎創作，指揮更需要與樂手共同在技術層面探索出路。很多時候，指揮家要當上樂手與作曲家的橋樑，與作曲家交換意見，以達致音樂的最佳效果。

這正是音樂生氣蓬勃的時期。寫在紙上的音樂，轉變成聲音，再從聲音中汲取經驗，改寫樂譜上的音符。創作與演奏並行，在西方正統音樂中逐漸流失，卻在中樂團裏時常發生。

而這種傳承創新的良好生態，正需要優秀的指揮、作曲家和樂手去維持。

A Symbiosis of Great Works and Great Conductors

A conductor uses much of his time out of rehearsal to prepare and read the music of a particular performance. It is more daunting work to do for a new work. 'A conductor spends a lot of time studying every single detail of a new work. One has to know every note, every instruction well – equally well as the composer – then the conductor has to use his imagination to translate the notes on papers to sound,' Mr. Yan says. Contemporary composers are not shy about using modern Western compositional techniques in Chinese orchestral music, creating special effects and challenging the limits of the instruments. These new elements are constantly stretching the boundaries of music, posing a great challenge to musicians, and particularly, to conductors.

Doming Lam wrote 'Autumn Execution' in 1978, a stunning piece with free tempo, figurations at the discretion of the musicians and a complex texture. Law Wing Fai lays his music on a horizontal time line instead of regular vertical bar lines in his 'Flowing Phantasm' which premiered in 2008. Pacing far from the traditional notion of orchestral music, conductors become the critical person to keep the tour-de-force in one piece.

Down to a practical level, a conductor is also involved in the working of the notes. Overseeing stylistic issues at most of the rehearsals, a conductor does not often find himself stuck in how to play what is on the paper with members of a symphony orchestra, especially when the repertoire on hand is from the classical-romantic tradition. There is a great diversity of styles in the Chinese orchestral repertoire from arrangements of folk music, orchestrated versions of traditional ensemble music, to new compositions deploying avant-garde techniques and notations. Chinese orchestral musicians are more likely to face a great diversity of music in their season roster or in a single concert than their Western counterparts. Not only serving as stylistic guidance, a conductor of Chinese orchestra often discusses the new work with musicians on how to technically execute the notes and instructions, and sometimes works and discusses with the composer in creating the best possible sound of the composition on hand.

This is a vibrant era of how musical works come to be. The notes on paper are transformed into sound, and after hearing the sound, alterations are put back onto paper. This organic approach to musical creation and performance, contrary to playing the inviolable, unalterable canons as in a common symphony concert, is an everyday phenomenon in Chinese orchestral music. Composers, conductors and musicians are all key players in sustaining this creating-performing symbiosis.



樂團一向積極委約新作品以推動中樂發展，香港藝術節「樂旅中國」系列已成為樂團的品牌，為呈現21世紀作品新發展的大型民族音樂「活化」盛會。
The Orchestra is dedicated to the development of Chinese orchestral music through commissioning new works of various types and styles. Its Music About China series has become an eagerly anticipated segment of the Hong Kong Arts Festival as an annual showcase of the latest trends in contemporary music-making on China or Chinese themes.

《秋決》與《星河潑墨》

突顯現代風格與香港氣息

閻總監說：「我們要求參賽指揮演奏多元化的樂曲，不但要對傳統的作品有到位的演繹，更要領導樂團演奏香港作曲家林樂培、羅永暉的現代作品，目的就是要讓年輕的指揮在新音樂上有所追求、有所發揮。中樂曲庫愈來愈豐富，對指揮的要求亦愈來愈高。新作品要有好的指揮去把握、展現，而指揮家亦需要好的作品讓他們一展所長。」

香港中樂團委約了超過二千首新作及新編。那麼，為甚麼要選林樂培和羅永暉的作品呢？林樂培的作品，雖然寫在三十年前，但對現在的樂團依然充滿挑戰，聲音依然充滿新鮮感。《秋決》取材自六月飄雪之故事，故事雖然傳統，卻以非常突破傳統的手法呈現。1993年，《秋決》被選為二十世紀華人經典作品。而羅永暉的《星河潑墨》，是香港中樂團2008年委約，除了寫作手法現代，對指揮要求極高外，更有着深刻意境。羅永暉早前的另一首作品《潑墨仙人》，以宋朝畫作為靈感，音樂引來面對古畫的深邃思考和遼闊的想像空間。《星河潑墨》承繼作曲家的一貫寫作風格，這首作品更帶有時代感：作曲家回憶兒時乘搭渡輪，霓虹燈海面隨波搖曳的氛圍，藉此抒發對舊碼頭的懷念。這豈不是極具本土情懷的作品？

Two Works of Modern Spirit and Hong Kong Locality

'We hope young conductors in the competition will conduct the traditional pieces with a certain level of effectiveness. We also expect them to have a drive for creativity and an open mind to accepting challenges by having them conduct two pieces by Doming Lam and Law Wing Fai,' Mr. Yan says, 'The Chinese orchestral repertoire is constantly growing and getting more and more demanding. New compositions require accomplished conductors to realise them, in the same regard that conductors need good compositions to flex their musical muscles.'

HKCO has, over the years, commissioned composers to write over 2,000 new creations and arrangements. The selection of Doming Lam's 'Autumn Execution' and Law Wing Fai's 'Flowing Phantasm' out of the vast repertoire, according to Mr. Yan, wasn't made lightly. The story behind 'Autumn Execution' is a traditional folklore about a miscarriage of justice on an unfortunate, innocent young woman in empirical China. Being a wide-spread story which was made into numerous Chinese operas of different dialects, Doming Lam's orchestral version is daringly modern and unconventional. Its freshness persists even 30 years after its creation. A revolutionary work, 'Autumn Execution' was named 'Classical Chinese Composition of the 20th Century.' 'Flowing Phantasm', also commissioned by the HKCO, draws inspiration from ink paintings of the Song Dynasty from the 10th to 13th century, known for its flourish of literature and art. Combining the art of painting and calligraphy, these medieval artifacts hold the keys to a world of imagination, nature and art. 'Flowing Phantasm' is particularly nostalgic, not only because of the ancient past but also because of the here-and-now of Hong Kong: flickering lights on the two sides of the harbour and their reflections on the waves as seen from a sailing ferry very much parallels what we have in a painting. With the memory of the old ferry pier, this music has its roots in Hong Kong.

樂於擔任香港文化大使

指揮大賽的其中一個獎項，是「最佳香港作品演繹獎」。中樂團似乎刻意地讓香港作品突出在指揮大賽中，當然無可厚非，而觀乎參賽者來自世界各地，有些更來自越南、美國、奧地利等地。是不是有心要突出香港作品呢？閻惠昌說：「整個指揮節，是立足香港，面向世界的大節。我們一方面希望發掘出具有中國音樂修養、富有國際視野及精湛指揮技藝的青年指揮，將中國音樂走向國際，但另一方面，我們亦自覺肩負起香港文化大使的使命。」

Hong Kong's Cultural Ambassador

One of the prizes in the conducting competition is 'Best Interpretation of Works of Hong Kong'. Having a competition squad coming from many countries of the world, including non-Chinese-speaking countries like Vietnam, the United States and Austria, the purpose of having Hong Kong music as the competition piece is clear. 'The Conductors' Festival is a festival which starts in Hong Kong and reaches out to the world. In the competition, we want to meet young conductors with a good understanding of Chinese culture and a clear vision of international cultural scenes. We also want to meet young admirable musicians with sound conductorship and a bright appearance on the podium. These young musicians are to bring Chinese music to the international audience, and this is what we, as Hong Kong's cultural ambassador, always do,' says Mr. Yan.

三月中，樂團與香港演藝學院合辦「中樂指揮大師班」，為青年指揮及有興趣投身指揮工作之音樂愛好者提供進修平台，共有十一名參加者，十九位旁聽生參與。
In mid March, the Orchestra organised a Master Class on Chinese Music Conducting in order to provide training for young conductors and music enthusiasts. There were a total of 11 students and 19 audit students participated.

