

Ms. YIP Wing-Sie BBS, JP

Citation

Given her family's impressive musical heritage, it is no surprise that Ms. YIP Wing-Sie grew up to become a highly respected musician in her own right, ably using her baton to bring alive the music she loves for her beloved audience. A firm believer in "no pain, no gain", Ms. Yip continues to leverage the diligence and perseverance her training and career have given her to nurture and inspire new generations of musical talents.

Ms. Yip's family moved to Hong Kong from Guangzhou before her first birthday. Having begun learning piano aged just four, she took up the violin at 10. She was then taught conducting by her eminent composer and music educator father, Dr. YIP Wai-Hong, the founder of Hong Kong's first children's choir.

Ms. Yip set her heart on a musical career at 15 when she made her public debut conducting a children's choir performance. She then began her professional training in 1978 after winning the Hong Kong Jockey Club scholarship to study violin and conducting at London's prestigious Royal College of Music. She later went on to earn a Master's Degree in Violin Performance and Orchestral Conducting from the Indiana University at Bloomington, USA in 1985, also winning the First Prize as well as "Lyre d'Or" in the 35th Concours International de Jeunes Chefs d'Orchestre de Besançon, France.

Upon graduation, Ms. Yip decided to pursue a conducting career. A year later, she was appointed the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra's Resident Conductor. Grounded and industrious, Ms. Yip continued to challenge herself and was fortunate to be able to learn from world-famous conductors such as Seiji OZAWA and Leonard BERNSTEIN when participating in the conducting programme of the Tanglewood Music Center in 1986 and 1992. Her hard work eventually paid off when she was offered the position of Principal Conductor and later Music Director of Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra in 1996.

In 2002, Ms. Yip realized the dream of leading her own orchestra as Music Director at the fledgling Hong Kong Sinfonietta, which had only turned professional three years earlier. She promptly set about supplementing the ensemble with experienced full-time professionals and enchanting local audiences with a growing classical repertoire of impressive quality and variety.

Great music directors must not only be gifted artists, but also highly capable managers and marketers. While mastering the latter skills initially proved challenging, Ms. Yip's "can-do" attitude ensured the Sinfonietta has grown into a headline attraction which now gives over 100 local performances annually. Its pioneering

Artist Associate scheme also provides a valuable collaborative platform for emerging composers, performers, dancers, choreographers, actors and painters. Internationally, the Sinfonietta's performances have been hailed in over 40 cities and at globally renowned festivals across Asia and around the world.

In promoting classical music, Ms. Yip focuses on the twin goals of expanding the artform's popular appeal and creating more platforms for young musicians to showcase their talent. She has relentlessly put her creative and innovative ideas into cross-over performances with artists from ballet, jazz and visual arts as well as fun-filled educational programmes for students and children of all ages.

Ms. Yip has built her international reputation through her appearances at numerous venues and festivals, and collaborations with world-renowned artists and performing arts groups. Leading orchestras she has worked with include the China National Symphony, China Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, Osaka Philharmonic, New Japan Philharmonic, Melbourne Symphony, Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse and Warsaw Philharmonic.

Over the years Ms. Yip has received numerous accolades for her tremendous contribution to her chosen field. In addition to Hong Kong's coveted Bronze Bauhinia Star, her honors include France's "Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite" and "Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres". Other significant recognitions include Fellowship of the Royal College of Music and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and the Hong Kong Federation of Women's "Women of Excellence in the Six Arts Award".

In 2020, Ms. Yip stepped down from her position as Music Director after serving the Sinfonietta for 18 years. Gratifyingly, her passion for classical music remains undimmed and she continues to serve as Hong Kong Sinfonietta's Music Director Emeritus. When COVID-19 disrupted live performances, she led its musicians in soothing people's worries with online performances and concert films.

Council Chairman, on behalf of the Council of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, I have the high honor of presenting to you, Ms. Yip Wing-Sie, Music Director Emeritus of Hong Kong Sinfonietta, for the award of Doctor of Humanities *honoris causa*.