



香港中樂團  
HONG KONG CHINESE ORCHESTRA

HKCO/ED/027/2010

**(By fax 2537 1204 and e-mail)**

Jun 8, 2010

Ms Macy Ng  
Clerk  
Public Accounts Committee  
Legislative Council  
Hong Kong

Dear Ms Ng

**Re: The Director of Audit's Report on the  
Results of Value for Money Audits (Report No. 54)  
Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra Limited ("HKCO") (Chapter 6)**

Thank you for your letter of June 1, 2010 requesting for information. Adopting the same numbering as set out in your letter, we are pleased to present the required information as follows:-

- (a) (i) Despite about 90 years of Chinese orchestral music development, it is still much less established in the global arts world compared to its western counterparts, where the development of symphony orchestras dates back over 300 years. As such, the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra has to adopt an aggressive marketing strategy to vigorously promote Chinese orchestral music and to broaden audience base.

The two cases stated in the Audit Report as "private functions" were regular concerts which had been planned as part of the programmes in the orchestral season.

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2002 最傑出弘揚現代中樂榮譽大獎  
THE MOST OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT IN ADVANCING CONTEMPORARY CHINESE MUSIC

2004 傑出董事獎 - 法定 / 非分配利潤組織董事會  
DIRECTORS OF THE YEAR - STATUTORY/NON-PROFIT-DISTRIBUTING ORGANIZATION BOARD

2004 最佳企業管治資料披露大獎 - 公營 / 非分配利潤類別  
BEST CORPORATE GOVERNANCE DISCLOSURE GOLD AWARD OF PUBLIC SECTOR/NON-PROFIT CATEGORY

2001 健力士世界紀錄 - 最大型胡琴合奏  
GUINNESS WORLD RECORD - LARGEST HUQIN ENSEMBLE

2003 健力士世界紀錄 - 最大型鑼樂合奏  
GUINNESS WORLD RECORD - LARGEST DRUM ENSEMBLE

2005 健力士世界紀錄 - 最大型笛子合奏  
GUINNESS WORLD RECORD - LARGEST DIZI ENSEMBLE

2005 第二十八屆十大中文金曲金針獎  
THE 28<sup>th</sup> TOP TEN CHINESE GOLD SONG AWARD - THE GOLDEN NEEDLE AWARD


HKCO accepted private sponsorship for the two concerts in view of the following principles/consideration:-

1. To bring in extra income, which, in turn, would help reduce government subsidy;
2. It is an opportunity to tap/broaden into new/potential audience through networks of the sponsors; there would be a guaranteed number of audience through the sponsors' network;
3. The sponsors' brands could be leveraged to enhance HKCO's own brand and marketing efforts in seeking more sponsorships in the future.

In terms of the use of the venue, HKCO had complied with all requisite requirements in these two concerts as with all other concerts.

- (a) (ii) Regarding the distribution of complimentary tickets, a set of guidelines has been laid down in the Marketing Handbook by the Marketing Sub-Committee and endorsed by Council: an agreed number of complimentary tickets would be given to the sponsors according to the size of the sponsorship with flexibility to be exercised as stated in the Handbook. The number of tickets to be offered is based on the following criteria:-
1. The brand value and relevance of the sponsor to HKCO;
  2. Profile of clients/guests to be invited by the sponsor to the concert and HKCO;
  3. New opportunities for HKCO to promote Chinese orchestral music to non-regular concert goers;
  4. The potential to establish long-term partnership with the sponsor.
- (b) The Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra played a total of 1,148 and 1,183 pages of new score music for the 31<sup>st</sup> (August 2007 – July 2008) and 32<sup>nd</sup> season (August 2008 – July 2009) respectively.

As to the question of 'average time required to analyze and become familiar with one page of the new score', it is a highly complex consideration which may be risky to generalize. This is because the creativity, complexity and difficulty of each composition vary, often drastically, from one to another. Even for the same composition, different conductors may interpret the music differently according to the different orchestras and occasions in question. Their requirements on the



musicians, which are often linked to the practice time required, are thus different. The following 2 cases may, however, illustrate the point:

Case 1

Number of pages of new score: 2

Performance duration: 24 minutes

The two-page score consists of avant garde techniques and symbols which require controlled improvisation of each instrument group directed by the conductor. The rendition of the score would be different at each rehearsal and performance. Thus the “chemistry” between the musicians and conductor was crucial to get a satisfactory result. Many rehearsals were needed for that purpose. In addition, individual musicians would need extra practice hours as it involved unconventional methods for the performances.

Case 2


Number of pages of new score: 80

Performance duration: 15 minutes

The first draft of the new score was heavily revised after the first reading session of the orchestra. Even though the piece is only 15-minute long, because of some highly complicated sections of the score - from bar 5 to 45 and from bar 248 to 264 – which consist of mixed meters (highly complicated rhythms), it took considerable time for HKCO musicians to practise to the standard required by the conductor.

Added to that, the extremely fast passages from bar 293 to 358 for *gaohu*, *erhu* and *zhonghu* sections required the musicians to do extra respective sectional practices to achieve the technical fulfillment.

The fact is that sectional practice is also essential, making it all the more difficult to fairly and comprehensively quantify the time required for musicians to familiarize with new score music.



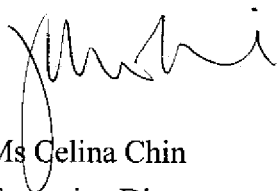
In addition to newly commissioned pieces, musicians are also required to prepare for other pieces and practise on their own before coming to group rehearsals. Even for 'old' pieces, there will be new interpretations by different conductors and/or on different occasions and musicians still need to practise to achieve artistic excellence. In order to ensure that musicians are up to artistic standards and requirements, HKCO has introduced a 360 degree performance assessment scheme encompassing assessment not only by peers in the same orchestral part but also by other orchestral parts.

We hope that the above has highlighted some characteristics of the work faced by HKCO musicians. We respectfully submit that in view of the dynamism and complexity of orchestral music, which is subject to the creativity of composers and conductors, it is very difficult to generalize for all concerts and all pieces on the average time required for musicians to analyse and become familiar with music scores.

A Chinese translation of this letter will be separately provided in due course. Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely

HONG KONG CHINESE ORCHESTRA LIMITED



Ms Celina Chin  
Executive Director

c.c. Secretary for Home Affairs  
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury  
Director of Audit