

International Travel - Sydney Symphony Highlight - Nanjing Art Festival, China

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Summary

Councillor Robert Kok has been invited to lead a delegation from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to the 2018 Nanjing Art Festival in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China, at the invitation of the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Culture, Broadcasting, TV, Press and Publication.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra will be in Nanjing from 13 to 19 October and will perform two free public concerts on the nights of 15 and 16 October 2018. They will also provide an outreach program at Nanjing Arts University to meet with students, and visit cultural centres to meet with local music groups.

Councillor Kok will travel to Nanjing from 15 to 19 October 2018.

The 19-member delegation from the Sydney Symphony includes musicians from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's prestigious Fellowship program. Mr Roger Benedict, the Artistic Director of the Fellowship Program, will also join the visit.

This is the first time that the Sydney Symphony Orchestra is sending such a big delegation to an arts festival in China. Sydney Symphony Orchestra embraces this great opportunity to promote their connections and collaboration with China. This will bring unique performing opportunities for the talented young Fellowship musicians to gain experience in international events.

Councillor Kok met with the Nanjing Municipal Bureau of Culture, Broadcasting, TV, Press and Publication in 2016 during his participation in the China Cultural Trip organised by the China Cultural Centre in Sydney. In the meeting, the Nanjing Government expressed its intention to invite Sydney-based performing groups to perform at the Nanjing Art Festival.

Councillor Kok brought this request to the Chief Executive Officer of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Ms Emma Dutch, who strongly supported the participation of the Fellowship musicians. This is the culmination of two years' work putting together this cultural exchange.

The City has a long-standing relationship with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Councillor Kok's participation as the leader of the delegation will be valuable to support the Sydney Symphony's ambition to further its international influence, particularly in China and Asia.

Councillor Kok has also been invited on a potential side trip to Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, with Sydney Symphony Orchestra representatives to meet with the Hangzhou City Government to discuss further cooperation in culture, especially in the music and performing arts industries. Sydney Symphony Orchestra welcomes the potential trip, as this can bring opportunities for performances in China.

The costs of international flights between Sydney and Nanjing for Councillor Kok and one staff member, and all local costs in Nanjing, will be met by the Nanjing Art Festival.

Recommendation

It is resolved that Council:

- (A) endorse international travel to Nanjing (including a potential side trip to Hangzhou) for Councillor Robert Kok;
- (B) endorse one staff member to travel with Councillor Kok and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra; and
- (C) note that Councillor Kok will provide a report to Council after the travel.

Attachments

Attachment A. Invitation to the Nanjing Art Festival

Attachment B. Translation of the Invitation to the Nanjing Art Festival

Background

1. Councillor Robert Kok has been invited to lead a delegation from the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to the 2018 Nanjing Art Festival in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province, China, at the invitation of the Nanjing Cultural, Broadcasting, TV, Press and Publications Bureau.
2. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra will be in Nanjing from 13 to 19 October and will perform two free public concerts on the nights of 15 and 16 October 2018. They will also provide an outreach program at Nanjing Arts University to meet with students, and visit cultural centres to meet with local music groups.
3. Councillor Kok will travel to Nanjing from 15 to 19 October 2018.
4. Nanjing, with more than 2500 years of history, is the capital city of Jiangsu Province. It is the culture, economy, communication, and transportation hub of eastern China.
5. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra Fellowship is recognised as one of the world's leading orchestral training programs.
6. Each year, exceptional young musicians are selected through a national audition process to participate in the intensive, year-long program. During this time, they are immersed in the world of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, to learn from those who are already making their living as professional orchestral musicians.
7. Under the guidance of Sydney Symphony Orchestra Principal Viola and Fellowship Artistic Director, Roger Benedict, the Fellows are provided with the training and experience they need to secure full-time positions in professional orchestras. This training includes rehearsing and performing with the orchestra, coaching from touring international artists in master classes and professional development workshops. The Fellows also perform together in an extensive chamber music series and participate in a variety of outreach projects.
8. Each of the Fellows receives a scholarship and professional support to allow them to fully commit to their year with Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Since the program's beginnings in 2001, Fellowship alumni have won positions in some of the finest orchestras in Europe, Asia and Australia, including twelve past Fellows who now hold permanent positions with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.
9. The Fellowship has doubled in size in recent years and in 2018 welcomes thirteen Fellows on strings, winds, brass and percussion.
10. Roger Benedict's career encompasses work as a conductor, soloist, orchestral player, chamber musician and teacher. He is currently Principal Viola of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Director of the Fellowship Program.
11. Councillor Kok visited Nanjing in 2016 as part of the China Cultural Trip organised by the China Cultural Centre in Sydney. The report on this trip is available with the 12 December 2016 Council Meeting Papers via this link:
https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Data/Council/20161212/Agenda/161212_council_item14_attachments.pdf#search=%22nanjing%22
12. Hangzhou, as the capital city of Zhejiang province, is the economic and cultural centre in Yangtze River Delta Area in eastern China.

13. Hangzhou was the host city of G20 in 2016. It has been ranked as the most liveable city in China, with abundant cultural and arts resources.

Key Implications

Strategic Alignment - Sustainable Sydney 2030 Vision

14. Sustainable Sydney 2030 is a vision for the sustainable development of the City to 2030 and beyond. It includes 10 strategic directions to guide the future of the City, as well as 10 targets against which to measure progress. This report is aligned with the following strategic directions and objectives:
 - (a) Direction 1 - A Globally Competitive and Innovative City -
 - (i) the City will remain Australia's most significant global city; home to globally oriented people, jobs and businesses and an international gateway with world-class tourism attractions and sustained investment in cultural infrastructure, icons, amenities and public spaces.
 - (ii) the City is committed to be part of global networks and an active participant in global knowledge exchange, because Sydney's global connections are an essential component of our past, present and future.
 - (iii) the City's global orientation and connection will lead to local opportunities and benefits.
15. Participation in the delegation will assist with the City's goals of supporting local businesses, which includes leveraging our international relationships to strengthen knowledge and investment exchange.
16. The Nanjing Art Festival provides an excellent platform for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to promote Sydney's music industries.

Budget Implications

17. The costs of international flights and local costs for Councillor Kok and one staff member between Sydney and Nanjing, and all local costs in Nanjing, will be met by the Nanjing Art Festival.
18. It is proposed that one staff member travel with Councillor Kok to provide logistical and translation assistance..
19. The City may need to cover some incidental expenses, estimated at up to \$1200 per person for the period of travel.
20. Funds are available within existing operational budgets.

Critical Dates / Time Frames

21. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra will be in Nanjing from 13 to 19 October and will perform two free public concerts on the nights of 15 and 16 October 2018.
22. Councillor Kok's travel dates will be from 15 to 19 October 2018.

MONICA BARONE

Chief Executive Officer