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Passing the Torch and Wishing for A Bright Future Ahead with Gratitude

歲月匆匆，六載光陰倏然而過，2021年4月，我將卸任臺北市立國樂團(下稱北市國)團長一職。6年前來到北市國乃是我人生中的意外插曲，並不在原來生涯規劃內；但也因此，我得以和許多優秀的音樂家與行政同仁一起共事，這又是命運賦予我的幸運禮贈。

這些年來，我與北市國完成了一次次拓展國樂環境的試煉。北市國的節目企劃向來風格多元，針對不同觀眾群的「分眾」概念，將每一樂季的演出節目設計為8-10個不同系列，讓所有演出資源都能收最大化的效益。此外，青年人才培育和樂譜出版深耕也是北市國這6年著力發展的重點。例如2016年推出的「青年作曲家培育計畫」、2020年結合其他3個公部門職業樂團及3個專業院校共同合作推出的「誰來接班—國樂青年演奏家繁星計畫」、大量的客席指揮邀請，都提供了青年音樂家實戰的機會，讓臺灣人才嶄露頭角。我們也在2018年出版了全球第一套「國樂秘笈捌佰式—樂團片段精選」曲譜，可說是青年學子磨練技藝的練功寶典。

與深耕工作相應的，是行銷策略的強化以及樂團國際知名度的提升。我們逐步捨棄傳統的宣傳方式，強化新世代網路社群的經營，讓演出票房逐年成長，疫情興起前的2019年成為創團40年來票房最佳的一年。2020年雖因疫情而導致演出環境緊縮，但隨之緊急催生的網路直播音樂會，卻吸引了數以萬計的線上觀眾欣賞、近200家國外媒體報導，既提升北市國的國際能見度，更展現了臺灣優異的防疫成果。2018年在紐約卡內基音樂廳的登台及2020年拿索斯唱片公司(Naxos Records)的CD發行，都為臺灣樂壇寫下紀錄。

最後，職業樂團的經營，終須回歸演奏的本質。6年來透過各種風格迥異的演出磨練，北市國的演奏聲響及細膩，相較於其他樂團，已有獨特性與辨識度，這是所有團員不斷精進、最終鍛造而出的「臺北之聲」，我為此深感驕傲。北市國成立至今已逾40年，歷經了陳墩初、陳澄雄、王正平、鍾耀光與我共5位團長。諸位前賢與我的工作一棒接一棒，兢兢業業地為了深化國樂環境、玩轉國樂品牌而努力。然而，此等志業光憑6年光陰、光憑一人一團之力都是遠遠不夠的，期待新任團長的接續領航下，與樂界更加緊密相偕，推動臺灣國樂更上一層樓。

Time has flown by so fast and 6 wonderful years has come to an end. I am to leave the position as general director of Taipei Chinese Orchestra (TCO) in April 2021.

I stumbled upon the opportunity to become a part of the TCO family 6 years ago. Though taking such a position was never in my original career plan, it was an unexpected journey I am nothing but grateful for. I have learned so much from so many talented musicians and staff members. It was a precious gift and I basked in every moment of it.

TCO and I strived to make a difference in the world of Chinese music for the past few years. TCO was never content with putting on monotonous events all year long. We dedicated 8 to 10 respective series across a wide spectrum to different audience groups, maximising the impact and exhausting all possibility.

TCO has also entered into talent education projects and publishing quality sheet music for the past 6 years. We conducted the 2016 Youth Composer Cultivation Project and in the 2020, Who Will Be the Successors - The Young Multi-Star Project was initiated in collaboration with another 3 government professional orchestras, 3 professional academic institutions, and a large number of outstanding guest conductors. The effort was to provide youth musicians an opportunity to sharpen their skills and gain valuable experience in the music world going forward. We have also published the very first Chinese music practice guide - 800 Tips for Chinese Orchestra - Excerpts. It has been considered the Bible for aspiring musicians.

Aside from cultivating young talents, TCO has also devised a winning marketing strategy and increased international exposure. We decided to embrace social media where the new generation thrives and shift out attention away from traditional marketing strategy step by step. The move steadily drove up our ticket sales. Right before the outbreak of the pandemic in 2019, TCO has seen the largest volume in ticket sales in 40 years. In 2020, though the pandemic has caused the performing industry to come to a screeching halt, live concerts on-line still attracted thousands and thousands of watchers and over 200 medias overseas to cover the success. This greatly enhanced the exposure of TCO on the international level and acknowledged Taiwan's capability in fighting the pandemic. In 2018 TCO performed at Carnegie Hall in New York and released an album with Naxos Records in 2020. All these made a difference in the music world in Taiwan.

That been said, musical performance is, after all, the priority of professional orchestras. For the past 6 years TCO members performed an eclectic mix of music, fine-tuning the details and giving the performance remarkable pliability and nuance. We have finally developed a unique style and identity which separates us from other music ensembles after strenuous practicing and perfecting. The birth of Sound of Taipei is not the result of mere fluke and for that I am filled with gratitude and pride.

TCO has been established for over 40 years and under the tutelage of 5 directors: CHEN Tun-Chu, CHEN Tscheng-Hsiung, Wang Zheng-Ping, CHUNG Yiu-Kwong, and me. We all fought for the same things - to exploit and increase the potential of Chinese music industry and build an amazing brand. This is not something that can be done in 6 years by one single director. It is my most sincere wish that the new director would be able to lead TCO to an even brighter future in collaboration with the music industry and bring Taiwan Chinese music to the next level.