

## **Hong Kong – Asia Pacific Harmonica Festival (2004)**

Hong Kong has made a definite progress in the application for hosting the Asia Pacific Harmonica Festival (“APHF”) in 2004.

In a meeting, right at the close of the 3<sup>rd</sup> APHF (Aug 2000 in Seoul of South Korea), which was attended by representatives of various countries within the region, the proposal of Hong Kong to host the 5<sup>th</sup> APHF in 2004 was endorsed and recommended. Preliminary preparation work has been started in anticipation of a smooth organization. As a matter of fact, in the last 6 years, the standard of harmonica playing attained by Hong Kong has highly appealed to many of the other countries around the world, as a result of the various prizes obtained as well as the marvelous performances in international harmonica events. These have formed a solid foundation for the concurrence of other countries to the application for the hosting of such a Festival in Hong Kong in 2004.

Since the appearance in the 1<sup>st</sup> APHF held in Taipei in 1996, Hong Kong has been actively participating and promoting. Members of the King’s Harmonica Quintet continued to be invited as adjudicators, guest performers as well as speakers in seminars. Their effort in the refinement of harmonica ensemble should never be neglected. With the promotion of the Quintet, participation from Hong Kong in these festivals has been increasing. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> APHF (Aug 2000 in Seoul, South Korea), there were more than 50 participants from Hong Kong. In terms of ratio of participants to the population, Hong Kong should be one of the highest. The historic results of 2 GOLD, 3 SILVER and 2 BRONZE medals have established the status of Hong Kong in the international harmonica community.

While harmonica activities in the region are growing, the Asia Pacific Harmonica Festival has already become one of the most sizeable and important events of such not just in the region, but also in the World. With the geographical advantage of Hong Kong, it was estimated that number of competitors to the 2004 APHF might exceed 1,000 while the total participants may end up with 1,500 or even more than 2,000. This will certainly be another cultural event of international significance that Hong Kong is proud of.

For the 2004 APHF in Hong Kong, the following objectives could be preliminarily identified :-

1. To attract more countries to participate, further internationalizing the Festival.
2. To gather all the top players of all countries to produce high quality concerts, making harmonica a high esteemed instrument in the greater musical world.
3. To invite more internationally renowned players, further raising the standard of harmonica playing in Hong Kong.
4. To consolidate the harmonica forces in Hong Kong, broadening and deepening the local development of harmonica music.

In the organization of international events, Hong Kong is definitely well equipped with the pre-requisites. Examples are proficiency in communication (Cantonese, English and Mandarin and more); advent in information technology and communication infra-structure (thus facilitating the close communication with countries in the region and even the world); high quality of the venue for concert performance (both in terms of acoustic and the support from technical personnel). It is believed that should such be organized in Hong Kong, this will be one of the best in the Region.

Nevertheless, the successful organization of such an international festival in Hong Kong relies very much on the support from the HKSAR Government and organizations committed to the promotion of music. The support can be in the form of provision of venue, sound system, technical support, and last but not least, financial support. All these can help to further demonstrate the ability of Hong Kong in the organizing of international event.