

**“A Tribute to the Golden Anniversary of His Majesty the King of
Thailand’s Visit to New Zealand”**

Aotea Centre, Auckland

Thursday 30 August 2012

At Reception in Limelight Room prior to concert:

Good evening everyone.

I’d like to say just a few things before we go in to the concert – though I will be saying a little more at the start of the concert itself.

Firstly, a big thank you to Mr Bradley Fenner, Headmaster of King’s College, and all the staff and students of the College who have helped with providing the drinks and snacks that we are presently enjoying. I do regret that I wasn’t able to join you at King’s College for the concert yesterday, due to some other prior engagements in Wellington.

I am also very grateful that you hosted the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra for its first ever full orchestral concert performed in New Zealand. And I am very appreciative of the willingness of King’s College to foster ongoing cooperation between Thailand and New Zealand in promoting musical excellence.

Tonight’s performance by the TPO will therefore be the second ever in New Zealand. However, in Wellington on Monday evening at a Gala Dinner held in the Beehive Banquet Hall, we were treated to several pieces – by only four members of the orchestra, playing as a string quartet. It was wonderful to see those four musicians enjoying their performance - but I am very much looking forward to hearing the full orchestra perform here this evening.

I really am very honoured that the TPO have chosen to come to New Zealand to help celebrate the Golden Anniversary of His Majesty’s Visit. I want to just quickly mention that this visit by the orchestra to New Zealand has only been made possible by through the very generous sponsorship of several private persons. So thank you to them all.

Last but not least, I would like to acknowledge the presence here of:

His Excellency Mr.Viroon Tejapaibul, Deputy Minister of Finance; who has travelled here with the orchestra to represent the Government of Thailand.

And: **Mr Bhanapot Damapong**, the first Honorary Chairman of the Board of the Orchestra.

Thank you both for making the effort to travel here for this occasion. And thanks also to all of you for coming out tonight. And I'm sure that you will all appreciate the performances tonight.

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On stage in ASB Auditorium at start of the concert:

Sawasdee krap and good evening.

As Ambassador of Thailand, I feel much personal pleasure and pride to be able to stand here before you all to introduce this performance by the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra; particularly since this event is being held on the occasion of the Golden Anniversary of His Majesty the King of Thailand’s visit to New Zealand.

The Royal Visit in 1962 was an important historical event for both New Zealand and for Thailand. It brought our two countries that much closer together: through the visit we came to know each other as two peoples. Over the past few weeks in particular, I have heard from many New Zealanders their own recollections of the event, and how it impressed them personally.

His Majesty the King of Thailand has served His people throughout his long reign with energy, enthusiasm and sincerity. He has contributed so much to the development of the nation over the past 65 years, particularly in agricultural development, land and resource management, the eradication of poppy cultivation, and, with a touch of genius, the specially patented Royal Rainmaking Technology.

For us Thais, wherever we may be, He remains our most beloved Monarch, and this motivates us to honour Him at every opportunity, as we are doing here tonight. His Majesty the King is also a very keen musician. He particularly likes the jazz genre, and is very accomplished with the saxophone.

When I was quite young, I was very proud and lucky to be able to see His Majesty perform saxophone at a concert held at Chulalongkorn University, in Bangkok. At that time, His Majesty participated in concerts at the University on an annual basis, as a way to encourage the music students to strive towards excellence.

However, His Majesty was not only a musician, he was also a composer of almost 50 pieces of music: a selection of which you will be hearing later on tonight. For many Thais, His Majesty’s contribution to the

world corpus of music, participates in and touches the chords of one of the very important functions of music in the human experience: to bring peace of mind, calmness and clarity, and through that, to guide us in the path of becoming fully human and fully alive. I hope that you will all feel a sense of that through the performances brought to you here tonight.

And, because of His Majesty's contribution to the development of musical performance excellence in Thailand, it is a particularly meaningful tribute to His Majesty for the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra to perform here in this ASB Theatre, on their first visit ever to New Zealand.

The Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 2005 and has developed a distinguished reputation for the highest quality of both Thai and western classical music performance. The orchestra also attracts musicians from many other countries to join its ranks: the current membership of the orchestra includes more than 15 different nationalities. I would like to acknowledge each one, for they are each entirely worthy; but time will not permit: so please allow me to acknowledge for now Dr Sugree Charoensook, the Director, and Major Prateep Suphanrojn, Conductor.

And, on behalf of the Thai community in New Zealand, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to His Worship Mr Len Brown, Mayor of Auckland, and the Auckland Council, for facilitating the use of this very grand venue for tonight's performances. Thank you, Mr Brown.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the members of the Thai Society Charitable Trust, based here in Auckland, for their hard work behind the scenes in organizing many of the details of this evening's event.

I would also like to acknowledge the many very generous sponsors of this trip by the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra: without their involvement, this event would not have become possible.

On Their Majesties' tour of New Zealand in 1962, they were honoured by the then Mayor Mr D. M. Robinson and the people of Auckland, at a Civic Reception and Supper in the Auckland Town Hall, on Wednesday 22 August 1962. We very sincerely appreciate the tribute to His Majesty that you all have made to be here for this concert tonight.

Thank you.
