

**“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

On stage in ASB Auditorium at start of the concert:

***His Excellency Mr. Viroon Tejapaibul, Deputy Minister of Finance of
the Kingdom of Thailand,***

His Worship Mr. Len Brown, Mayor of Auckland,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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 Their Majesties the King and Queen of Thailand’s visit to New Zealand.

The visit of Their Majesties took place in late August 1962. It was an important historical event for both New Zealand and for Thailand. It brought our two countries much closer together. In particular, over the past few weeks, I have heard from many New Zealanders, including government officials, about their own recollections of the event, and how it impressed them personally, even though they were teenagers or even younger at that time.

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, our appreciation for His Majesty’s hard work and dedication throughout his long years of reign can not be described in

words. To reflect our love and respect for him, we use every opportunity we can to honour him, as we are doing here tonight.

His Majesty the King is also a very keen musician. He particularly likes the jazz music, and is very accomplished with the saxophone, as well as the clarinet.

I clearly recall when I was quite young, that I was very proud and lucky to be able to see His Majesty play the saxophone at a concert held at Chulalongkorn University, in Bangkok; the same university from which I later graduated. At that time, His Majesty performed in concerts at the University on an annual basis, as a way to encourage the music students to strive towards excellence.

Furthermore, His Majesty was not only a musician; he was also a composer. Throughout his life he composed almost 50 musical pieces, a selection of which you will be hearing later on tonight. This selection will include the pieces named: Phra Maha Mongkon; No moon; When; Blue Day; and H.M. Blues.

The soothing effect of music and how it is embedded in human nature is universal. There is a well-known saying that if you can walk, you can dance. And if you can talk, you can sing. Music can heal and comfort and create positive change. My favourite quote about music is by Plato, who said; Quote “Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything” end quote.

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 though the performances brought to you here tonight.

Because of His Majesty the King’s love and invaluable contribution to music in Thailand, this performance by the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra here in the ASB Theatre, on their first visit ever to New Zealand, is a particularly meaningful tribute to our king.

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 the Orchestra's director, Dr Sugree Charoensook; and the Conductor, Major Prateep Suphanrojn.

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 and please enjoy the show.
