

Secretary for Home Affairs attends orchestra rehearsal

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, attended a rehearsal of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in the Concert Hall of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre this evening (September 18). He observed how the rehearsal was conducted in adherence to the anti-epidemic measures implemented in the venue, in particular whether the social distancing measures in place were effective.

"In view of the relatively stable epidemic situation and the need of the performing arts sector to continue practising for the sake of keeping in shape and maintaining standards, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) decided to reopen performance venues for priority use by performing groups. While the fight against the epidemic remains the top concern, we still hope to find different ways in the next stage to bring audiences back to the live performances, with a view to resurrecting the vibrant local culture scene," said Mr Tsui.

Mr Tsui was briefed by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Mr Benedikt Fohr, and Senior Director of Administration and Finance of the Orchestra, Mrs Vennie Ho, on the work of the Orchestra. There were 65 players participating in the rehearsal today, with a distance of at least 1.5 metres between each of them, as well as partitions placed to separate the wind instrument players.

Starting from September 14, major facilities of the LCSD's performance venues such as concert halls, theatres, auditoriums, cultural activities halls and arenas have been opened for hirers' rehearsal use and performances or activities without live audiences. Moreover, having regard to the development of the epidemic situation, the LCSD's performance venues are expected to be opened for performances or activities with live audiences from October 1 onwards, with special seating arrangements. The number of audience members will be limited to half of the original capacity.

The number of users in minor facilities of the performance venues such as rehearsal rooms, music/dance studios and lecture/function/conference rooms will be limited to half of the original capacity in most cases. For activities to be held in minor facilities, no more than four participants including the instructor in a cluster could be conducted, with appropriate distance maintained between groups. For details, please refer to the notifications of individual venues.

URBTIX will maintain Internet and mobile app ticketing and hotline services. URBTIX outlets and ticket dispensing machines at LCSD performance venues have resumed operation together with the reopened venues from September 14 onwards with special opening hours (from noon to 6.30pm daily). Ticket holders of cancelled events are advised to contact the respective

event organisers or check their latest announcements on refund arrangements. For events that organisers choose to arrange refunds at URBTIX outlets, details will be announced on the URBTIX webpage in due course.