

PSHA's speech at opening ceremony of "A Capella in Town" (English only)

Following is the speech by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Yau, at the opening ceremony of the "A Capella in Town" today (March 22):

Dear Dr Wong, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for giving me this wonderful opportunity to be part of "A Capella in Town" this evening.

When I first got the invitation to this concert, I naturally asked "what is a capella"? The answer to me is "you will know when you get there". Well indeed, the stage speaks for itself. There are no instruments to go with the singing tonight – no piano, no cello, no nothing. Our children simply showcase their best instrument given by their parents – their own voice.

Every time I go to a concert I learn something. This time round I learnt that "a capella" though first originated from religious music has by now gained a new life in other forms including jazz and pop music and has become very popular amongst college students.

I would like to congratulate the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups for hosting the first "A Capella Festival 2009" in Hong Kong. Thanks for choosing a capella which is a brilliant form of music in unleashing the creativity amongst young people. Also the way the Festival is organised provides cultural exchange opportunities between our children here with young people overseas. Together they also form teams to outreach to local schools. As parents, I am sure you'd love to send your children to a capella singing because they would need to cherish their voice – the star instrument in any show on stage – hence good sleep (i.e. no more web surfing past midnight) and a balanced diet (i.e. not too much chili sauce) must form part of the discipline in order to excel in front of our audience!

With more and more people interested in a cappella singing and increasingly high standards, I look forward to "A Capella Festival" becoming one day a signature cultural event in Hong Kong, similar to the international sports events like Rugby Seven or Marathon Run. I also look forward to The Hong Kong Melody Makers becoming a home-grown a cappella group with world class fame.

Finally, I wish to thank Dr Wong and the Hong Kong Federation and Youth Groups for bringing such wonderful audience to enjoy lovely music here in this Hall as well as in yesterday's Open Air Piazza at Sha Tin. I wish you all a wonderful and memorable evening. Thank you.

Ends/Sunday, March 22, 2009