



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee
From: Mike Kirk
GM Corporate Services

Date: February 2, 2009
File:

Re: **Richmond Sister City Committee Invitation to Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra**

Staff Recommendation

1. That authorization be given to the Richmond Sister City Committee, on behalf of the City of Richmond, to invite the Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra to perform in Richmond between October 3-6, 2009.
2. That authorization be given to the Richmond Sister City Committee to partner with The Great Canadian Casino Corporation and seek further corporate sponsors for this event.
3. **That the above noted recommendations be subject to the Richmond Sister City Committee securing a minimum of \$40,000 in sponsorships by March 30, 2009.**

Mike Kirk
General Manager, Corporate Services
(604-276-4142)

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ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER		
Recreation & Culture.....	Y	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	
REVIEWED BY TAG	YES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO
					YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
					NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

In November 2007, Council resolved "that the City of Richmond pursue a Friendship City relationship with one of the following cities in China (Xiamen, Yangzhou, Yantai and Qingdao)." In April, 2008, the City of Richmond, signed a Friendly Cooperation Agreement with the City of Xiamen, China.

The Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra is a professional orchestra currently supported by the Xiamen municipal government and the Gulangyu district government, with contributions from the Fujian and Xiamen Electrical Power Bureaus. The Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra through the Xiamen Municipal Foreign Affairs office has recently offered to visit the City of Richmond as part of a North American tour this year.

In November 2007 an updated Terms of Reference were adopted for the Richmond Sister City Committee. These terms state that "three year Activity Plans be presented to Council for final approval by the end of the first quarter of 2008 and thereafter in accordance with the new Program policies and procedures and updated Sister City Terms of Reference."

Analysis

One of the purposes of the Richmond Sister City Committee is to engage the Richmond community and its Sister/Friendship Cities abroad in projects and exchanges that promote Cultural awareness and joint learning opportunities. A visit from the Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra would create numerous opportunities to engage the local community.

Approval of this event would contribute to the 2010 Arts & Culture Plan's directive to provide increased performance opportunities for local artists; in this case, a local choir will have the rare opportunity to perform on-stage with a world renowned Orchestra. Plans include engaging some of the Xiamen musicians as guest speakers to educate and inspire local classical musicians in a separate event. The Xiamen Orchestra's visit is also in keeping with the 2004 Richmond Arts Strategy which calls for us to "increase the variety and diversity of arts experiences and opportunities" available to the community at-large.

The Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra is intending to visit several cities in the USA. They believe that a visit to Richmond as part of this tour would be a prime opportunity to build on the cultural ties between our two cities. It would be the first time this Orchestra has performed in Canada. Details on the Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra are attached. (see attachment 1)

A current Three Year Activity Plan is being developed by staff in consultation with the Richmond Sister City Committee. However, approval to fund this event is needed immediately in order to secure a commitment from the Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra. The Orchestra is currently coordinating various venues and making travel arrangements.

This Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra has offered to pay for all their own air fare and will provide performances without a fee. The Richmond Sister City Committee has been requested to provide funding for all ground transportation, accommodation and meal costs which are anticipated to be a maximum of \$50,000. Council has approved "a Sister City Program three-year fund of up to \$150,000 for 2008-2010."

Ticket sales for this event are anticipated to generate up to \$40,000. This is based on two performances, one matinee and one evening. There are 1800 seats available with total projected sales of 1000 tickets. There will be a three tier pricing structure with average ticket prices of \$40.00. The Richmond Sister City Committee with assistance from the Xiamen Friendship Society of Canada are intending to solicit further support from the Corporate community to offset the balance of costs for this event.

An appropriate performance venue has been secured. The Richmond Sister City Committee has had preliminary discussions and received approval in kind from The Great Canadian Casino Corporation to use its main theatre for the two performances. The Great Canadian Casino Corporation is prepared to support this event and are willing to waive all base facility fees of approximately \$10,000.00

Option 1 (recommended)

Use the existing Sister City Annual Program budget to fund a portion of the costs of this event subject to the Richmond Sister City Committee securing a minimum of \$40,000 in sponsorships prior to March 30, 2009. This would mean a maximum exposure of \$10,000 to the City. Should that level of sponsorship not materialize, the event would be cancelled.

Option 2

Do not approve the use of the existing Program budget to fund this event. Should this option be chosen, the Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra would not visit the City of Richmond. Other Richmond Sister City Committee activities planned for this year would not be affected.

Financial Impact

There is no net impact to the budget as a result of this recommendation.

Conclusion

This report is necessary in order to send a timely invitation to the Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra.



Richard Toda
Manager, Customer Service
(604-276-4335)

Attachment 1

Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra

The Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra is a professional orchestra currently supported by the Xiamen municipal government and the Gulangyu district government, with contributions from the Fujian and Xiamen Electrical Power Bureaus. It made its debut on September 9, 1998, on the beautiful Egret Island, Xiamen, under the leadership of Professor Zheng Xiaoying, the most prominent female conductor in China, who remains the orchestra's artistic director and principal conductor. Since that time, the weekend symphony concerts have brought to audiences more than 340 well-received concerts that have included more than 90 different programs of classical and contemporary music, domestic and from abroad. During performances, the "Zheng Xiaoying System" of explaining while performing, helps people become familiar with the symphony and become more receptive, and to understand more about the music. They also have made short tours to 19 cities in seven provinces to spread the seeds of philharmonic music more widely. The orchestra actively advocates composition of symphonies with background stories or musical content of concern to China or Fujian for advancing Chinese symphonic achievement. This they view as a duty of Chinese orchestras. As a result of their idea, through promotion and recording, the symphonic poem "Echo of Hakka Earth Buildings," composed by Liu Yuan, was glorious in receiving the only Golden Prize of the First Chinese Music "Golden Bell Awards" for instrumental compositions.

In April 2002, the orchestra successfully toured three cities in Japan with "Echo of Hakka Earth Buildings," the newest accomplishment for Chinese symphonic music. In May, it took part in the opening and closing concerts of the Gulangyu International Piano Festival. In preparation for the Fourth International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians, which was held in Xiamen October 18-31, the young orchestra played 77 concertos in cooperation with more than 70 musicians over the preceding four years. They received high praise from world class juries and were presented an Award for Outstanding Contribution from the Xiamen Government. The orchestra was the only local orchestra to be invited to perform for the opening of the 16th Communist Party Congress in Beijing in November and

its program was of Fujian subjects. Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra was warmly welcomed by the capital's audience, and was called "an orchestra with creativity."

In April 2003, the orchestra began holding its weekly concerts in the Music Island Philharmonic Hall, a new music hall with superb acoustics, designed and constructed on the premises of an Electrical Power Bureau facility, which is now the permanent home for Xiamen Philharmonic Orchestra. More than 70 artists in the orchestra have come from across China to devote their efforts toward building Xiamen and Gulangyu into "Music Islands of the Orient" which can live up to this name.