

**The History of Wind Bands in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

by

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B. Mus., University of Victoria, 1999

A Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the area of Music Education

In the Department of Curriculum and Instruction

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## **Abstract**

This work documents various aspects of Hong Kong wind band history and examines values that emerge from these areas, including the music beliefs in society, and the fusion of Western and Chinese mentality. An overall picture of the creation of wind bands is initiated, including economic, social, political, historical, and musical influences, and a review of the literature that has been written about bands in a few other countries is presented. First, the historical background is discussed, emphasizing the emergence of communal values which enable the wind band to congeal as a movement. Second, the formation of wind bands is examined, again with careful attention to communal values and a solidifying tradition. This study reveals the wind bands' true social importance and lays the groundwork for much-needed future investigations into their development in Hong Kong.

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## **Acknowledgements**

The author is grateful and deeply indebted to many knowledgeable and talented musicians. First, I would like to thank my research supervisor, Dr. Steven J. Capaldo for his support, patience, and guidance, who inspired me to understand valuable insights toward wind band music and more importantly music education, and whose passion for wind band literatures has inspired me to conduct this study. Thanks also to my reader, Dr. Sheila Sim for helping me to complete the project in such a short period of time. I also greatly appreciate the contribution from all the interviewees and music institutions. I must recognize the unswerving effort of Dr. Stuart Niermeier and Mrs. Sheila Niermeier. My in-laws have given me tremendous support in many ways for the past three years. Last but not least, I would like to thank Dave, my husband, for his invaluable support.

**Dedication**

To Dave and Katie

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **The Investigation**

#### **Introduction to the Study**

This is a study of the creation of wind bands in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Throughout history the wind band has been a defining feature of cultured societies. In the United States, England and Japan, wind bands have become a standard educational ensemble in schools, although they evolved differently for various reasons. About a month ago, HKSAR said goodbye to the first decade of post-colonialism. On July 1, 2007, the HKSAR government, which is now under Chinese rule, celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hong Kong's reunification with the motherland – China. Three years ago, I was hired to be a band teacher at my current school in Hong Kong, and at the very same time, I started to work on my Master's degree in Canada in order to enhance my knowledge in teaching. Initially, I wanted to conduct a comparative study between the two countries for I was born in Hong Kong but grew up in Canada. As my interest in wind band literature and history grew stronger, I decided to conduct historical research on the creation of wind bands in Hong Kong instead. Given the post-colonial status of Hong Kong and its peculiar geo-political situation, the wind band development is not as fast growing as the economy in Hong Kong. Is there a particular reason for its moderate growth? Before I discuss the formation of wind bands in Hong Kong, the political, economic, social and cultural influence on wind bands will be examined as they interrelate to each other. According to Mitchell (1972), pupils in Hong Kong enjoy

success on all fronts and their beliefs are shaped by various contextual factors in society. Wong (1999) claimed that it is also vital to understand the beliefs and value systems of educators and parents since they form the basis for educational practices. Therefore, music educational beliefs will be discussed.

In the 1970s, the opening of the mainland Chinese market and rising salaries drove many manufacturers to Hong Kong. This economic growth gradually allowed music to enter everyone's household. In the interview I conducted with Mr. Christopher Pak, Senior Music Officer at the government-funded Music Office, he explained the difference of living standards in the past thirty years and how it limited the growth of bands. The first full-time professional music group established by the Hong Kong government while it was still under British rule thirty years ago was the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HKPO). One of the first hired professional musicians in the orchestra, Mr. Joe Kirtley, stated that band music was a very new idea to Hong Kong society back then. The orchestra has been popular in the middle and high classes for decades and yet wind bands in Hong Kong have only become recognized in the past ten years. One essay was written by Ms. Lau Yan Yan in 2005 as a partial fulfillment of her undergraduate study, however, a thorough orderly study of wind band history in Hong Kong does not exist.

## **Rationale**

In *A Philosophy of Music Education*, Reimer (1989) expressed his point of view that “music and the other arts are a basic way that humans know themselves and



their world” (p. 11). This statement is not merely a philosophy. Much research has proven that music education plays a prominent role in children’s lives. In order to refine the educational system, educators constantly seek ways to improve their teaching skills, advance their knowledge, and explore other methodologies. One of the best ways of achieving this development is to learn from history. We learn from history so we don't repeat our mistakes. This is the common reason that educators, parents, and just about any other adult would give for learning history. This reason then, makes perfect sense to me.

As well as having an interest in history from an educational perspective, I am keenly interested in the history of the wind band movement in Hong Kong on a personal level. Perhaps some of the specifics from my personal story will help the reader understand my interest in this topic.

While I was in Hong Kong, my parents had taken me to piano lessons at the age of seven. In those days, Hong Kong was still a colonial city and the educational system was closely tied to the British model of education. Given this, Hong Kong’s schooling was heavily based on examinations like the British system. Thus, certifications opened a lot of doors. My piano teacher, who was originally from the UK, prepared me to enter a grade seven practical examination at the Royal School of Music within a year and I earned distinction with a mark of 148 out of 150. After intensively and mechanically drilling the same three pieces and technical requirements for nine months, my teacher told me I had potential. My parents were thrilled when they received my certification by mail. Being young and naïve, I

thought I was a natural in music. Soon enough, I found out that I was merely a good quality copy machine. Sadly, I also thought music was boring at the time.

When I emigrated from Hong Kong to Canada in the 1980s, my life took an entirely new direction. I decided to take piano lessons again a couple years after I moved to Vancouver. My new piano teacher, Ms. Celia Wu, who was originally from Shanghai and had resided in Vancouver since she was a teenager, was a child prodigy who started performing worldwide as a pianist. Ms. Wu completely changed the way I thought and felt about music. Although Ms. Wu was very hard on me, through her mentoring I found out how little I understood music. For the first time, I realized that playing the piano is not only drilling technique for hours, practicing the same pieces like a machine, and imitating gestures and movements. I figured that the biggest barrier to moving on in musical learning was to internalize musical ideas. Although I did not turn out to be a piano virtuoso, I am fortunate to be able to *experience* music.

Because of my family situation, I was in five different high schools and unfortunately, I was never involved in school band. I only learned about orchestral music after I completed high school. My parents supported me by providing private piano lessons as well as music history and theory lessons, but no one on either side of my family plays an instrument. My father is a typical Hong Kong businessman who works more than 16 hours a day if not more.

When I thought I might be interested in pursuing a career in music, my parents were not pleased. Music is not an impressive career choice in a traditional Chinese family. My mother's reasoning for opposing me going into music at

university was that I had already completed an ARCT and I had started giving piano lessons when I was 16. “Why bother,” she said. “Isn't that enough of learning music?” I then suggested that if I could not succeed in the corporate world in the future, I could use my music education as a safety net. My mother used to say that it is good to have a back up plan.

After I finished high school, I taught piano for over a year in order to continue studying music. At that time, I took part-time music courses at college in order to apply to university. I needed to accompany other instruments in these courses and that was my first introduction to band instruments. I accompanied students playing French horn, saxophone, oboe and clarinet. I was fascinated with their pieces and found it so much more fun to play with someone else. This experience sparked my interest in band and I started taking courses regarding teaching band instruments in my first year of university. I then learned the basics of every instrument. My first band instrument was flute but I went on to learn to play all the band instruments except for the tuba. Despite the reservations of my parents, all has worked out well. I am now teaching music as a career and I am particularly interested in wind band music.

As a teacher, I am interested in how wind band education might have a positive effect on children's musical development. I believe I developed a strong piano technique at a young age, but there was no creativity or flexibility during the process of learning. Can wind bands arouse interest in music during the progress of learning? If so, can wind bands evolve into an influential sub-culture in Hong Kong society? In addition, how does the social and cultural context of society affect young

musicians? These are the questions I asked myself over the last ten years. In order to gain a better understanding of the creation of wind bands in Hong Kong, I was keen to explore the social, cultural, political, economic, and educational aspects of Hong Kong society that contributed to the development of wind bands.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This historical study is undertaken so as to provide a general understanding of the creation and development of wind bands in Hong Kong including local school bands, special or elite bands, community bands, professional bands, and the Band Directors Association. Although this sounds extensive, the growth of the wind band ensemble in Hong Kong is limited in scope. The explicit purpose of this study is to identify the organizations and individuals that influenced its growth and make recommendations to facilitate the development of wind band programs in Hong Kong. The implicit purpose is to address the importance of wind bands in Hong Kong's society and educational system.

Band directors' personal experiences and educational background will be carefully examined. As I believe Hong Kong wind bands have begun to flourish, it is my hope that this study will illustrate the relationships and processes advanced by local band directors who nurture a culture of band achievement. My goal is to open the eyes of many to the limitless possibilities of wind bands.

## **Analytical Framework (Methodology)**

To obtain the needed information for this study, personal visits to the government funded Music Office and the music library of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts were made. Personal interviews were conducted with prominent conductors, significant founders, and pioneers during the formative years. The oral histories were documented as to how wind bands have come to their current form. When I conducted an interview, I followed a checklist of questions focusing on elements that particularly related to the historical factors of the wind band movement.

## **Research Purpose Problems**

This purpose of this historical study is to document the creation and development of the wind band movement in Hong Kong. In broad terms the research question is: “What organizations and individuals contributed to the development of the wind band in Hong Kong?” This study will explore six categories of interests that reveal how wind bands in Hong Kong have gradually become popular and how other factors have impacted their development:

1. Wind bands before the 1970s
  - a. How did the brass band influence the British Educational System?
  - b. When were wind bands introduced into the music educational system in Hong Kong? What is the setting of wind band programs at local schools?

- c. Where were local band directors trained before the 1970s? Was the band program valued by educators and parents?
  - d. Did parents encourage or support their children to play in bands before the 1970s?
2. Wind bands in the 1970s
  - a. How did the Music Office promote wind bands?
  - b. How did the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HKPO) contribute to the wind band movement?
3. Wind bands in the 1980s
  - a. How did the Hong Kong Band Directors Association (HKBDA) come about?
  - b. How has the Hong Kong Performing Arts Academy (HKAPA) contributed to the wind band movement?
  - c. Having the first ever performance-based post-secondary Wind Band Department at HKAPA, who are the significant people behind the scene?
  - d. How did the graduates at HKAPA become new advocates in wind band movements and who are they?
4. Political changes, economic crisis, social norms and cultural context in the 1990s with regards to the changes of wind bands in the 1990s
  - a. How did cutbacks affect wind band programs in local schools due to political changes and economic crisis?

- b. How did the social and cultural context impact wind band programs at local schools?
- c. How did band being an extra-curricular activity struggle in a financially-oriented city?
- d. How do parental achievement and levels of aspiration in this culture push forward the development of wind bands?
- e. How does the competitive nature of Hong Kong culture enhance wind band development?
- f. How was a band culture formed in society and in what ways do the school bands either construct or contest Chinese culture generally?

5. Wind bands in the new millennium

- a. When was the first professional wind band established and how did it come about?
- b. Who were the leaders and what were their contributions to the band movement in the past ten years?
- c. When were the professional wind band and wind orchestra founded and who are behind these movements?
- d. Why did the children's wind orchestra and youth wind band reemerge soon after the professional wind band and wind orchestra were established?
- e. Insight into the attitudes of special band groups: How, when, and why were the groups organized?

6. How did the major music institutions contribute to the recent wind band development?
- a. The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts – HKAPA
  - b. The Hong Kong Institution of Education – HKIED
  - c. The Hong Kong Baptist University – HKBU
  - d. Chinese University of Hong Kong - HKCU

### **Delimitations and Limitations**

This study will focus mainly on the creation of wind bands in Hong Kong. The history of different school bands, wind organizations, and professional wind groups in the last decade will be carefully examined. The intention is to only document wind band growth in the region of Hong Kong, China. Research into wind band history needs to be completed prior to the interviews with band directors and founders of organizations. This study is not to identify a prescriptive definition of the purpose of wind bands in music education. Instead, it seeks to uncover the important growth and development of wind bands in the society.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following are the abbreviations of the music association in Hong Kong:

ABRSM – Associated Board Royal School of Music (London)

APBDA – Asia and Pacific Band Directors Association

BO – Band One (Band one comprises those who have performed best whilst the band 5 pupils have performed least successfully)



CU - Chinese University

EC – Education Commission

EMB – The Education Manpower Bureau

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

HK – Hong Kong

HKAPA - The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts

HKBDA - The Hong Kong Band Directors Association

HKBU - Hong Kong Baptist University

HKCU – Chinese University of Hong Kong

HKFWO – Hong Kong Festival Wind Orchestra

HKHS – Hong Kong Housing Society

HKIEd – Hong Kong Institute of Education

HKIS – Hong Kong International School

HKPO – Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

HKS - Hong Kong Sinfonietta

HKSAR – Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

HKSB – Hong Kong Symphonic Band

HKSMSA - The Hong Kong Schools Music and Speech Association

HKSW – Hong Kong Symphonic Winds

HKU - The University of Hong Kong

HKWP – Hong Kong Wind Philharmonia

HKYMWO – Hong Kong Young Musicians' Wind Orchestra

HKYMB – Hong Kong Youth Marching Band

HKYWP – Hong Kong Youth Wind Philharmonia

HKYWCAB – Hong Kong Youth Women Christian Association Band

LSD – Leisure and Cultural Services Department

LU – Lingnam University

MYO – Metropolitan Youth Orchestra

QEF – Quality Education Fund

GDP – Gross domestic product which is one of the ways for measuring the size of a country's economy.

SARS - Severe acute respiratory syndrome

WKCD – West Kowloon Cultural Development

### **Assumptions**

The intended readers could be music students, wind band directors, educators, historians, and the HKSAR government.

### **Organization and Overview of the Remaining Chapters**

There are eight chapters in this project. The study is based primarily on data collected and interviews with outstanding musicians and prominent founders of wind band groups in Hong Kong. The first chapter has introduced the background, rationale, and purpose of the study. Chapter 2 provides a review of relevant publications in several other countries, describing how wind band histories outside of Hong Kong have contributed to knowledge of this subject area. The methodology chapter clarifies research techniques, interviews, methods, and samples of questions.

In chapter 4, an overview of the historical, political, economic, social, cultural and educational system of Hong Kong SAR has been provided. The main body of this project comprises chapters five to seven. The fifth chapter explores the formation of wind bands. The sixth chapter investigates the special bands in the new millennium. Chapter 7 introduces the significant figures in the wind band movement in Hong Kong. The result is presented through review of each of the guiding questions, followed by a reorganization of the findings in chapter eight. The study concludes with proposing directions for future research, followed by references and appendices consisting of interview questions.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of the Literature

According to Flaes (2000), the western brass band is one of the first forms of wind and percussion ensembles. Interestingly enough, the first band performance in Hong Kong was by a brass band. Taylor (1979) stated that the brass band movement has a rich and colorful history going back over a hundred and fifty years; but even among many brass bandsmen, their history is little known or is amiably distorted into legend or folk-myth. To understand the wind band history in Hong Kong, we must look at the brass band movement worldwide. Although books about the development of brass bands in Hong Kong are scant, there have been numerous studies on the history of wind bands in just about every country in the world except for Hong Kong. According to Heller & Wilson (1992), George Hood's *A History of Music in New England*, 1846, was perhaps the first published history of American music. According to Taylor (1979), the most thoroughly researched previous book on brass bands was written in 1934. It was *The Brass Band Movement* which was written by Russell and Elliot. It is my hope to systematically investigate the creation of wind bands in Hong Kong so as to understand how they can be best developed from their current situation.

In terms of instrumental learning, wind bands have served the most significant role in the North American educational system for generations. In contrast, during the last three decades in Hong Kong, bands became standard after-school extra-curricular activities but not part of the regular curriculum. Interestingly enough, after more than a hundred and fifty years as a British colony, which is the same number of years of

brass band history in Hong Kong, Hong Kong was returned to Chinese rule in 1997. Hong Kong had undergone tremendous change and prior to the arrival of the British, Hong Kong was merely a small fishing community and a haven for travelers and pirates in the South China Sea. With the political uncertainties in Hong Kong in the late 1980s and early 1990s, many residents of Hong Kong chose to emigrate to other countries.

The events of colonization, western education and global cultural transformation have contributed to Hong Kong's cultural development including the music scene. The Hong Kong Band Directors Association (HKBDA) was established in 1982 and yet special bands and professional wind bands did not exist until a few years ago. The founders of these wind band groups are prominent local school band directors. Including the founders themselves, the majority of the musicians in those wind band groups are part-time local school band teachers as well. Some of them are active in various community ensembles and professional bands. In addition to the special bands, the youth wind band group was established soon after the first professional wind band formed. There seem to be more children's wind groups and more inter-school competitions as well. Their remarkable growth in recent years is astonishing. Children in this generation are offered the opportunities to experience band music at a higher level.

Instruction in the Hong Kong local school band has differed from Western models of effective music teaching. It uses techniques associated with Chinese moral education and traditional pedagogy. Can Chinese traditional moral education

somehow strengthen the wind band development like Japanese band education?

The following review of the literature explores wind bands in Hong Kong with particular reference to: social context, cultural impact, education, and political and economic structures.

### **Social Context**

McCarthy (2002) stated that consideration of social and cultural influences has always been important to understanding music teaching and the learning process. Brand (1979) claimed the social developments of the mid-nineteenth century directly impacted the movement of brass bands. I believe it's vital to explore the social perspective of how history is documented and explored. Hoffer (1992) expressed that sociological views treat music as a form of human behavior that is subject to the same influences as other forms of behavior ranging from selecting clothes to preparing food to engaging in conversation. As I grew up in the 1970s, band was viewed as a less important subject in Hong Kong schools. This probably still remains true today; however, music beliefs have changed over time as a high percentage of people are well-educated due to the 9-year compulsory education established in the 1970s. Ng (1997) claimed that this hierarchy was a result of music being a marginal subject in the secondary curriculum, influenced by the school context and society's expectation of schooling.

In the past twenty years, Hong Kong has become one of the world's leading cosmopolitan cities. Because it is one of the fastest paced cities in the world, people in Hong Kong are aggressively competitive. For parents in Hong Kong, it is common

to start preparing for their children's future at a very young age. Apart from focusing on academics, educators, parents and students are all working toward globalization and the majority of students are fluent in three if not more languages. The HKSAR government promotes trilingual schools in the new millennium. Another goal is to equip students with musical skills and wind band instruments are now in demand. Bruner (1996) regards education as one of the most important social institutions that reflects the essence of culture as well as preparing the individual for it. The interaction between the individual and culture depends on a society's education system. Many people in Hong Kong who emigrated to other countries prior to the handover moved back to Hong Kong once the political situation was more certain. The new generation of parents is overseas educated. Those parents in Hong Kong recognize the value of music education to instill nonmusical values, whereas some parents still believe music education is merely a stepping stone or a part of the ticket for their children's future. Anyhow, the rationale for music education in Hong Kong schools has taken a drastic change and wind bands subsequently have benefited from this change.

Hoffer (1992) expressed that because music is learned, it is manifested in a wide variety of ways for a wide variety of purposes. Chen (2000) expressed that three groups have a direct impact on a wind band program: wind band teachers, students, and students' parents. Regardless of the reason behind learning music, parents in Hong Kong will introduce private music lessons to their children often at the age of four if not earlier. Asian countries seem to start band at an earlier age than band

programs in North America. Chen (2000) stated that Taiwanese students start band in fourth grade. All schools in Hong Kong encourage students to take band in grade one with the exception of international schools, which follow the North American curriculum and start band in grade five.

There is no question about the effect of competitions on the brass band movement. According to Brand & Brand (1979), the greatest effect on brass bands, which set the future pattern, was made by the competition held at the Hall of Burton Constable near Hull, in 1845. Contests have somehow become one way for educators to prove their teaching abilities and more importantly, to obtain job security. Obata (1975) stated that the national Japanese competitions started two years after the All Japan Band Association was founded in 1939, and their impact on the Japanese wind band movement is significant. Similarly in many other countries, music festivals and various national competitions are widely held to measure students musically. Chen (2000) stated that the Taiwan National Music Competition held in 1991 was the first of its kind designed to showcase elementary school wind bands both as concert bands and as marching bands. In Hong Kong, a few festivals and competitions are held annually and wind bands at local schools are encouraged to enter every year.

Mark (2002) explained that the business of music education helps build community spirit. There are other Asian countries that are also well aware of the importance of music education. As mentioned, Japan is the most successful Asian country in developing wind bands in the last decade. According to Hebert (2005) wind bands in Japan started to flourish in 1975. According to Brand (1979), Japan



was one of the countries whose brass bands looked to the United Kingdom for stimulation and inspiration. Wilson (1992) reports that between 1975 and 1986, Japanese school bands improved at a pace equivalent to over 40 years of development in the United States. Sociologist White (1987) observed:

We need to understand the Japanese schools and the experience of the Japanese child as rooted in deep psychological and cultural realities; in borrowing European and American models of schooling Japan did not borrow Western conceptions of learning and childhood. (p. 4)

### **Cultural Impact**

Culture is a collection of complex symbols, behaviors, attitudes, ideologies, systematic uses of language and definitions of roles that shape the forms of a particular society and in turn determine what the society expects from individuals and the community. (Geertz, 1973; LeVine, 1984; Ulin, 1984). Chen's 2000 study for Taiwanese school wind band programs showed that students like music and that they continue in a wind band program simply because they like to perform on their instruments: This finding shows that the students themselves are motivated to join a wind band rather than following their teachers' and parents' suggestions. Unlike Taiwanese wind bands in schools, Hong Kong wind bands are mostly parent-driven, whereas Japanese wind bands are motivated by societal standards and expectations. For the Japanese, wind bands contribute to patriotism and nationalism. According to Obata (1975), the purpose of wind band education is to eliminate the idea of developing individuality. Chen (2000) expressed that, due to the great cultural

difference between the United States and Taiwan, research on wind band programs in the United States has limited usefulness to persons seeking to develop wind band programs in Taiwan.

In Campbell's (1989) research, she determined that music learning in American schools tends to emphasize music literacy, while Chinese music learning tends to emphasize orality. In Japan, students are fusing the traditional values of Japanese education with Western music pedagogy. Students in Japan are well known to be dedicated and committed musicians due to their traditional education. It is believed that the combination of Asian and Western education pedagogies benefits the development of wind bands in Asia. Hebert (2005) explored the aspects of instruction in the Japanese band which differed from Western models of effective music teaching and which made use of techniques associated with Japanese moral education and traditional music pedagogy. In [banddirector.com](http://banddirector.com), Ray Cramer, director of Indiana University for 36 years, acknowledged that even the Director of Bands at Indiana University was "totally amazed at the enthusiasm and activity of the band movement throughout Japan". According to Hebert (2001), Japanese school bands surely represent an important case of music transculturation in an educational context.

As mentioned earlier, Hong Kong students are required to take up at least one band instrument in grade one at Band One schools, and the intention of these wind band programs is to identify talented players early. Teenagers in Hong Kong are under a substantial amount of pressure. Peer pressure and social pressure are great determiners of students' self-esteem and future success. Most students believe their

futures are pretty much ruined if they are academically weak by grade six.

Achievements outweigh anything else in a teenager's life in Hong Kong and so some students are highly self-motivated in learning wind instruments. Mitchell (1972) would concur: "Achievement and social influence play an important role in determining the way a person evaluates himself or herself" (p. 46).

Hebert (2005) expressed that "Peer tutoring in Japanese wind band programs played a fundamental role in the learning process, as band member interactions negotiated an ethos of cooperation, competition, and duty." Peer tutoring does not seem to be widespread in Hong Kong; however, taking private lessons with one or more teachers is quite common. In Brozak's (2004) history of bands at Ohio University, Athens, "the close association with music students had an overwhelmingly positive effect on the student/mentor relationship of music education majors." The quality of private instrumental teachers is varied, so it is a question whether these teachers can provide the musical experience students need.

### **Educational Approach: Chinese and Japanese Pedagogies**

In traditional Chinese education, children should obey their parents without questioning. According to Wong (1999), in reality, culture evolves from and in turn, influences people's daily life. According to the conventional Chinese teaching approach, children are not encouraged to express their feelings or to speak their mind. Adults plan out the whole year after-school and weekend activities. Many of them are tutored in school subjects, as well as taking piano and/or violin lessons, other arts,

and sports activities. Everyone tries to get ahead of the game and learn everything before the average age. Children are taught to be competitors. Cheng, Chow, and Tsui, (2001) stated that the Hong Kong educational system has always been teacher centered. The wind bands competitions often become individual band directors' competitions. Band teachers in local schools are hired on a part-time basis and they usually teach at more than one school. Due to school competitions, prestigious local school principals often allow band teachers to enroll grade one students in band and in many cases, it is a school requirement. It is their hope that the larger number students in band can help balance instrumentation and improve quality.

Rohlen and LeTendre (1998) identified "12 Themes in the Japanese Culture of Learning," as follows: (1) Play, (2) Group lifestyle, (3) Mutuality and imitation, (4) Energy, (5) Brightness, (6) Form, (7) Experience, (8) Repetition of basics, (9) Authority of teachers, (10) Effort, (11) Struggle, (12) Perfectibility Art as a spiritual quest. According to Hebert (2005), this mode characterizes traditional Japanese approaches to learning. The concept of play and its relationship to both music and education needs to be investigated more. There are quite a few similarities between the learning and traditions of the Japanese and Hong Kong education systems. The influence of Chinese philosophies regarding teaching will be explored in chapter four.

### **Political and Economic Structure**

According to Obata's (1974) historical research on Japanese wind bands, it is necessary to know something of the political history of a country when studying its

music. A significant political evolution occurred in Hong Kong in the last decade. This evolution not only affected the educational system but also all of Hong Kong's people. Cheong (2005) expressed that Hong Kong is a post-colonial port city historically central to the global circulation of capital, culture, and knowledge. Hong Kong's political transition directly affected its economy and is closely related to many other aspects of the culture. Political and economic changes have had substantial impact on Hong Kong's educational system and more importantly on the wind band movement. The cutbacks from government have reduced school funding, availability of performing venues, and changed the direction of school administrators.

Although Hong Kong and China have two separate monetary systems, they are located next to one another and their economies are closely intertwined. But just as the two monetary systems will remain separate, so will the two monetary authorities and the Chinese government has repeatedly made it clear that it will not take over the role of the Monetary Authority after 1997. Lee and Postiglione (1995) state that "research has addressed that there is no casual relationship between the development of education and science and economic growth" (p. 25). Because it is a financially-oriented city, it is important to investigate the relationship between the political and economical changes with regards to wind band movements. Fagerlind and Saha's (1989) comparative study of education and national development concluded that: "the relationship between education and development is complex and contingent on the economic, social, and political development goal" (p. 255).

## **Summary and Further Research**

Battisti (2002) stated that the transformation of the nineteenth century wind band from a vehicle primarily providing music for entertainment and civic/public functions/celebrations to a musical organization contributing to twentieth century classical music culture is an interesting history with many diverse strands. Due to the tremendous changes in Hong Kong over the past few decades, it is important to systematically document the historical development of wind bands. Much research remains to be done regarding the development of music education in Hong Kong. Will there be major changes in this postcolonial period? The rapid growth of wind bands over the last 10 years is extraordinary. Will Hong Kong wind bands flourish in the next ten years? It is my hope this literature review can arouse educators' interest in Hong Kong's music education, and in particular wind bands.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

Interview is one of the most common methods in gathering qualitative data in educational research that explores history. The aim of this study is to document the oral history of Hong Kong wind bands from leading band directors involved in its development.

#### Purpose of the Interview

The purpose of the interviews was to discover and document the history of wind bands in Hong Kong and to trace their activities and the various influences that affected the movement along the way. The interview was designed to collect personal experiences in the wind band movement over the past thirty years. As the wind band movement in Hong Kong has not been systematically documented, it is essential to gather as much information as possible from important bandmasters in Hong Kong. The sample questions were designed for individual interviewees. Those questions were all slightly altered for the different individuals but the purpose of the interview remained the same.

#### Sample

The five experienced and reputable local and overseas band directors were selected to share their insights and oral histories with the aim of gathering data concerning the creation of wind bands in Hong Kong. These interviews were broken down into these topics areas: personal experiences in band, wind band programs in

specific institutions and wind band curricula. The sample questions listed below were developed by reading various historical or descriptive studies: Chen (2000), Frederick (2004), Hebert (2005), Lau (2005), Obata (1975), Richardson (1999) and Wong (1999). They were designed to elicit valuable information in the following areas:

1. Who were some of the members/students in the first band that was established in 1979 by the Music office?
2. When did you join the program?
3. How did you hear about this program?
4. Who was/were the band director(s)?
5. How many members were in the band?
6. What was the instrumentation like?
7. How much did you have to pay for enrolling in the band?
8. Was the program funded by the government?
9. Did you buy your own instrument(s)?
10. Was it easy to purchase band instruments and where did the instruments come from?
11. Did the band perform in public on a regular basis?
12. Were you influenced by the band director(s)?
13. What is your current job?
14. Do you still play?
15. Have you seen a big change in wind band music in Hong Kong in the last decade?



16. Do people in Hong Kong appreciate wind bands in general? Are they familiar with wind band music?
17. What do you think about wind bands in Japan? Do you think Hong Kong will have the second best wind band in Asia? Do you see any resemblance in wind band movement from Japan to Hong Kong?
18. What do you think the future of wind bands in Hong Kong will be?

### **Procedure**

This research started with gathering and analyzing historical evidence. Creswell (1998) stated that there are mainly four types of evidence: primary sources, secondary sources, running records, and recollections. This study relied mostly on archival data which are kept in archives, libraries, and private collections. The secondary source is Lau's (2005) essay written about the history of wind bands before the 1970s. Running records are documentaries or official websites maintained by government-owned or private organizations. Recollections are autobiographies, memoirs, or oral histories.

The first band director I contacted was the Head of the Brass Department at HKAPA, Mr. Joe Kirtley. Mr. Kirtley was eager to be interviewed. His extensive experience with the local wind bands was very beneficial to this study. The interview took place at his office in the HKAPA. Mr. Kirtley also acted as a sponsor for my HKAPA library access request. Within a couple of weeks of requesting it, I was granted three months access to the library. At the HKAPA library, I was able to view archival records which have been invaluable to this study. As well as Mr. Kirtley's oral history of the past 28 years in Hong Kong and insights into the wind band

movement, he gave me several other important band directors' phone numbers. I then started to call and arrange more interviews.

I met Mr. Victor Tam approximately five years ago. He came to the previous school where I taught to give an oboe workshop to my students. Knowing Mr. Tam as the founder of HKPO, I knew he was one of the most important figures in the wind band movement in Hong Kong. In the interview with Mr. Tam, he generously shared his personal experiences, thoughts, and insights with me. Both Mr. Kirtley and Mr. Tam prompted me to interview another prominent band director, Mr. Danilo Delfin. As the chairman of the Hong Kong Band Directors Association, Mr. Delfin again was very helpful and knowledgeable with regards to the wind band movement in Hong Kong for the past thirty years. On top of the interviews, I went to the Hong Kong main library to search for more primary sources. Unfortunately, the wind bands movement in Hong Kong was not documented. The official government websites however offer some valuable information regarding the Police Brass Band and Education reformations.

Shortly after interviewing Mr. Kirtley, Mr. Tam and Mr. Delfin, I had another interview with Mr. Homer Lee. According to the one essay completed by Ms. Lau Yan Yan in 2005 regarding wind bands in Hong Kong, Mr. Lee was the first local musician hired by the HKPH. He is a well recognized local musician and band teacher, and the interview was done after his rehearsal with HKPO in the City Hall.

Mr. Christopher Pak's name came up numerous times during the interviews with the previous band directors. As the senior music officer at the Music Office, Mr. Pak was very kind to accept the interview. As a band director, music administrator, and educator, Mr. Pak shared memoirs of his experience with me. The interview was conducted at his office at the Music Office. During the interview, Mr. Pak showed me a file of wind bands concerts that included many program notes from the first symphonic youth band festival in 1979 to the most current one. He also had a collection of many newspaper articles regarding wind band growth over the past thirty years.

Factors which contribute the success of the development of wind bands in Hong Kong relate to the success of this city. Hong Kong has experienced economic prosperity owing to favorable demographics, outsourcing, consumption, and political stability which allow music to gradually flourish in the last 50 years. The ensuing chapter is an essential backdrop that highlights the evolution of Hong Kong which serve as a brief overview of this vibrant city.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Hong Kong's Evolution: Setting the Scene

The history of the wind band movement in Hong Kong was impacted by the political, economic, social and cultural climate of the past. This chapter reveals the unique relationship between political and economic contexts as well as the relationship between social and cultural contexts with regards to wind band development. In addition, the educational framework will be discussed.

#### Political Context

The Central Band of the Royal Air Force was the first professional band that was invited to perform in 1978 in the third Festival of Asian Arts. The government under British rule not only brought wind bands to local schools; the British influence was apparent in the general public. The signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration promised that when China took over Hong Kong, the results would be "*one country with two systems.*" for another fifty years. The colony's economic and political vitality would be preserved. Britain and China agreed on terms for the transfer of power over this territory, wrested from China in the 19<sup>th</sup> century wars over the opium trade. This transfer ushered in a time of uncertainty over whether China would honor its pledge to maintain Hong Kong's way of life for the next fifty years. However, the people of Hong Kong seemed skeptical. According to statistics compiled by the Canadian Consulate in Hong Kong, from 1991 to 1996, "about 30,000 people in Hong Kong emigrated annually to Canada, comprising over half of all Hong Kong

emigration and about 20 percent of the total number of immigrants coming into Canada. The people emigrated due to the fear of operating under communism instead of capitalism. Only minor changes in the society materialized: the political uncertainty quickly subsided and many people have moved back to Hong Kong. The overseas educated parents are open-minded and westernized to a certain extent. The wind band, as an art form, is being largely accepted by the current generation and its popularity has quickly spread. This unexpected outcome of political change has helped the wind band movement. The Hong Kong government has provided funding for local schools for several years although some projects have not continued since the hand over.

The Quality Educational Fund Scheme was introduced to schools in 1998 by the HKSAR government. This funding enabled many local schools to establish their programs. Unfortunately, in 2001 the funding to wind band programs was no longer approved by the government and since then the school wind bands have had to rely on other sources for funding. The quality of school wind bands has decreased in the past three years due to the cutbacks.

### **Economic Context**

How do economic conditions affect music programs? Hanley (2002) gives us a Canadian perspective when she states that, from the early years, economic conditions often determined whether Canadians merely struggled to survive the harsh living conditions in many parts of the country or whether they felt they could afford

to support music. How does the economy in Hong Kong affect its music programs?

In the 1970s, the population could not afford to purchase instruments and music was considered a luxurious hobby. Today, Hong Kong is arguably the most fiscally successful developing territory in the world. Its people are financially driven: aggressive, ambitious, and hard working. They do not want to settle for second best. Parents work hard to make more money in order to provide quality education for their children.

Hong Kong has the globe's most capitalist economy, to the point where some consider it almost laissez-faire. Hong Kong maintains no minimum wage, no national health program, no Social Security, no union-boosting laws, no unemployment benefits, and almost no welfare. According to the Global Politician Magazine on August 19<sup>th</sup> 2005, Storobin stated that just 1.2% of the GDP goes to helping the poor. And yet, life expectancy is higher than in the United States and infant mortality is roughly the same. With just 0.1% of the world's population, in 1997 when China took over, Hong Kong was the world's 8th largest international trader and 10th largest exporter of services. The economic growth enables the general public to afford purchasing band instruments. All local school students are required to purchase their own instruments and rental of instruments does not exist in the school system.

The city's economy was struck by the Asian economic crisis in 1997. The 1997 global stock market crisis shattered many Hong Kong people's dreams with a severity not seen in other countries. According to the Hong Kong Yearbook 2000, Hong Kong is six times wealthier than China today and has an even higher GDP per

person than its colonial power, Great Britain. During the progress of recovering, the economy took another dive in 2003. A few months after the handover, Hong Kong was grappling with an outbreak of H5N1 bird flu, the first time the virus had jumped the species barrier to humans. For many people, the Sars outbreak cost hundreds their lives, and hundreds of thousands of workers their jobs. For almost six months, wind band teachers were asked to stop running their bands and private teachers were asked not to give lessons. Some private teachers need to tutor English and other subjects in order to make a living. The economy of Hong Kong directly ties into the wind band movement as the wind band program is not part of the school curriculum.

### **Social Structure**

There has been a growing interest in examining the relationship between the society and music education. In her book *Foundations for Music Education*, Hanley (2002) wrote that sociologists look at patterns of collective behavior, the interaction between groups, and the forms of behavior between individuals that become institutionalized over time. Hanley acknowledged that one of the main questions sociologists ask is “How does membership in a society or social group affect musical behavior?” Hong Kong has a rather unique social structure: the welfare and medical systems in Hong Kong barely protect people in need. The public stigmatizes welfare recipients, saying their problem is one of personal failure. Worse still, the majority of people share this view. This idea is rooted in the nature of Chinese society. The Chinese believe that welfare makes people lazy. If people work hard, everything will

work out fine. As a result, people are constantly competing to get ahead. The sense of commitment is strong in the society.

As for the medical system, the aim of the government's health care policy is that no one should be denied adequate medical treatment through lack of means. Fees in the thirty-nine public hospitals and clinics are heavily subsidized. The general wards of public hospitals charge less than \$20 Canadian a day. However, long waiting lists for treatments are inevitable. Twelve private hospitals offer immediate care in any circumstances; however, the cost goes from 3 to 9 times the cost of public hospitals. Although it is not so much an issue of rich versus poor, social class or status can be easily defined in many ways. Scholars, musicians, and artists are well respected in Hong Kong society. This status is a great external motivator for students. As learning a wind band instrument has gradually been a requirement at top schools in this new millennium, the rise of wind band school programs has already begun.

### **Cultural Context**

Hanley (2002) wrote that the text of history is not frozen in time: it is a changing story in which the meanings of events are understood differently as cultural values shift. Conservation has bloomed as an issue in social and political circles in the past ten years as campaigns pushed for a better quality of life, respect for history, and balance between nature and humankind. As attitudes towards conservation changed, artists, musicians, cultural critics, and university students took up the cause. They became influential advocates, urging ordinary people to join the crusade for more



open space, better air quality, heritage conservation, and cultural awareness. This new role advocating conservation has improved the general public's attitude toward wind bands.

The selection and allocation of students to particular schools and the grouping of students according to ability has constructed sub-cultures in school communities. The top schools hired experienced, qualified teachers and accepted students with high academic history. Thus, parents in Hong Kong start mapping out their children's future from pre-reception. A child's academic achievement has a clear and significant effect on levels of self-esteem in Hong Kong. Academic success in high quality schools is especially likely to increase levels of self-esteem. A clear association with self-esteem and economic success is shown in the schools and society in general and has become a distinctive cultural characteristic. According to Mitchell (1972) Traditional Chinese society assigned a special position to learned men and to those who successfully passed their examinations for entrance into the national civil service. Elitism involves more than superficial opinion, for it is part of a general orientation toward life. The most elitist students are the most likely to identify themselves as "upper" class, and they also tend to give somewhat more importance to coming "from a family that has a good reputation." Children in Hong Kong feel that they have little chance in society if they are not successful at school. A piece of paper is the ticket for success in this competitive city.

## **Educational Context**

What follows is an overview of the educational systems and educational thoughts, as well as the idea of music education. Understanding of these contexts is essential in documenting this historical study.

### *School System*

According to the Hong Kong Government census, the population was approximately 2 million in 1951, and it increased to a little over 6.9 million by the end of 2006. All educational activities were expanding aggressively since the 1970s due to the “baby-boom.” The HK educational system is marked by its diversity but schools are generally categorized as local public, local private schools, and international. Wind band programs at local schools were first founded in 1953 at Tang King Po School. The first principal of the school Rev. Fr. G. Roozen S.D.B. organized a band for the better advancement of music in school. In 1966, the first international school was established in Repulse Bay, called the Hong Kong International School (HKIS). Its band program has been in existence since the founding of the institution.

The HKSAR government press in 1997a stated that the 9-year free and compulsory education system for the 6 to 14 age group has been in place since 1978. Since the 2002/03 school year, subsidized senior secondary education or training to all Secondary 3 is provided to students who are willing and able to continue studies. The government educational department, named Educational Manpower Bureau

(EMB), aims to provide quality school education for students, to develop their full potential and to prepare them for the challenges in life. Lau and Wong (1991) stated that parents in Hong Kong typically expect their children to reach at least university level education. Students need to complete many requirements before they enter universities. The *school places allocation system* starts once a child starts schooling. According to the EMB, a child will go through the primary one admission system before the age of 6, followed by the Junior Secondary education assessment system by the time a child finishes primary 6. After Form 3 (Grade 9) in secondary school, a child needs to go through the secondary school places allocation system, and the compulsory free education offered by the government ends at this point. By Form 5 (Grade 11) in secondary school, students need to attend the standardized, area-wide benchmarking examination, HKCEE, conducted by the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA). After finishing secondary school, a Form 7 (formerly Grade 13 in the Ontario system) student will then attend the A-level exam which is the same as the British educational system.

On leaving primary schools, pupils are placed in one of five bands according to a test of their academic aptitude, which is derived from a combination of internal school assessments and academic aptitude tests in Mathematics and Chinese. Band 1 comprises those who have performed best whereas the Band 5 pupils have performed the least successfully. Parents must opt for schools in the network defined by where they live. Morris (1997) stated that the more prestigious schools have a further opportunity to reinforce their reputation at the end of secondary year five where a

market operates for pupils who wish to study in forms six and seven. Classes of fifty students per class have gradually diminished in the last couple of decades. In primary and secondary schools, the average student-teacher ratio improved to 1 to 17 in 2006/07.

### *Teacher Training Program*

There were teacher training programs in the 1970s; however, many untrained teachers were hired due to the rapid growth of populations and excessive numbers of schools. In the past twenty years, teaching qualifications have become a requirement in the educational field. Teacher training programs are offered by the University of Hong Kong (HKU), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (HKCU), the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) and Lingnam University (LU). The largest institution that provides an education program however is the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd). The historical roots of the HKIEd can be traced back to 1853. Various music training programs are conducted at HKIEd and yet a wind band teacher training program does not exist.

### *Primary, Secondary and Post-Secondary Schools*

In 1987, the *Syllabus for Primary Schools* stated that the duration of music lessons in primary schools ranges from 30 minutes to 40 minutes and schools are recommended to allocate “two periods a week” for music lessons that “should be supplemented by an extra-curriculum provision.” Wong (1999) expressed that, at the primary level, music is one of the seven core subjects in the curriculum. In both

primary and secondary schools, music can be taught by either a music specialist or a general classroom teacher. In most cases, schools hire other subject teachers, who possess the grade 5 piano certificate offered by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), to teach music. Wind band programs function independently as extra-curricular activities and are not mentioned in the syllabus.

The progress report on education reform 2 announced education reform in October 2000. The goal is to help children establish a whole-person development. The objective of the new education is not only academic centered. In the *Education Commission Report No.7* under “Quality School Education,” one of the goals in the developmental plan is to have all students attaining a specified standard in sports, art and music activities. Surprisingly, the music curriculum that is found on the EMB official website stated that the music activity “everyone has a festive song” was launched to ensure that all students could at least sing one song in tune. Although a standardized curriculum has not yet been developed for band, band programs are quite commonly found in local schools.

In 1965, the music department was established at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK). It offered the first music program in Hong Kong which is also the first music degree program. Unlike HKAPA, most graduates become school teachers instead of professional players and unfortunately, the development of the wind band program at HKCU is not documented. The Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) offers a similar program as CUHK and both of the institutions have wind band groups although the focus of them is mainly orchestral, piano or strings works.

The Hong Kong University (HKU) also offers an academic based program and the center of the program integrates musicology and composition. The HKAPA however offers a performance based program and the institution greatly influences the Hong Kong music culture and pushes wind band music forward. According to the interview with Mr. Pak, formal music training at the HKAPA has significantly improved teachers' qualifications and knowledge in music. The HKAPA will be further discussed in the next chapter.

### *Band*

Band is offered as an after-school activity in the local school setting. Classes meet twice a week for 45 minutes each. Children from Year One onwards are eligible to join the band and there is no shortage of enthusiastic players each year. Schools offer full instrumentation band and in grade one, instruments are assigned to students. Students regularly perform at school functions and festivals. According to Mr. Pak, most schools are either partially or fully funded by the government to develop the framework of a band program for several years. For some schools, the aims and objectives of implementing Band as one of the after school activities are to have fun, learn music, perform, and make friends. As for students, they are usually interested in playing in a group for pleasure, both for themselves and for the school community at large. On the other hand, Band is used to boost a school's reputations, and many Band One schools have high hopes in music festivals and competitions. Some band directors attempt to raise the standard of students' playing by preparing students for various public competitions (such as the HK schools Music Festival) and by calling

for more academic and publicly assessed syllabuses (Associated Royal School of Music [ABRSM] or Trinity College of Music).

Under the one guideline on extra-curricular activities in school from the EMB in the *Hong Kong Yearbook 2005*, the school can, according to its own needs, hire part-time (professionals) to run activities such as musical instrument playing. Teaching qualifications, class size, number of classes, duration of classes and curriculum have not been mentioned. According to Mr. Tam, the founder of HKWP, band directors usually hire clinicians to teach sectionals, and full band rehearsals usually happen once or twice a week. Both students and teachers are committed to band activities and students are usually pleased to attend weekend rehearsals. Mr. Tam expressed that part of the job of band director is to screen clinicians according to their qualifications. With over two hundred school bands in Hong Kong in 2007, students are taught by professional musicians in sectionals rather than by band directors as in the past ten years. With this change of teaching, the standard of wind bands has increased tremendously.

### *Chinese and Western Pedagogies*

Hong Kong's educational system distinctly differs from the traditional Chinese educational system and yet the influences of both Western and Chinese Confucian ideas can be found in the current music education scene. Confucian philosophies focus on self-cultivation, ritual, commitment and education. Music and poetry are important mediums where philosophical ideas are expounded. In Chinese,

the word “music - *yüeh* ” literally means “Happiness”. Hooker (1996) wrote that one can create within oneself this wisdom by properly performing music.

In conclusion, the schools in Hong Kong differ widely in the quality of education they provide and in the quality of the pupils they attract (Mitchell, 1972). All prestigious schools offer and emphasize extra-curricular activities that help develop their students’ academic and non-academic interests. Those schools are well equipped and teachers usually hold qualified certificates with rich educational experience. Simply put, it is part of the package of what high quality school offers. The top schools, commonly known as “Band One Schools,” place more emphasis on extra-curricular activities, and therefore instrumental classes have been offered since the 50s. The following chapter delineates the rise of wind bands in Hong Kong. Some school wind band groups have been involved in one of the first wind band festivals in history.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Formative Years of Wind Bands in Hong Kong**

The wind band movement in Hong Kong was not documented previously and nothing much seems to have happened until the 1970s. This chapter discusses how the wind bands all began.

#### **The Rise of Wind Bands**

Hanley (2002) wrote that in a historical inquiry, the focus is on what can be learned from the past. In many cases, historians have found that the past informs the present. According to *The Friend of China and Hong Kong Gazette*, IV, 43 on May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1845, the Royal Irish Regiment held a band concert for the public in Hong Kong. According to Lau (2005), this event is believed to be the first ever, instrumental concert for the public. As well, Lau asserts that the early Hong Kong Philharmonic Society was founded in 1903 by a group of amateur musicians who were passionate about Western instrumental music. There were also several small amateur groups that existed from time to time.

Wind band development stagnated during WWII due to the Japanese invasion in 1941. Due to the limitations of the educational system and the lack of quality in teachers' education, the wind band movement did not begin to grow again until the new millennium. The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HKPO) was formed as a professional ensemble in 1974 and it helped the wind band movement to progress as

overseas professional musicians were hired to make music in Hong Kong. In collaboration with the English Council, the HKPO offered individual instrumental lessons and ensemble classes in 1976 for a short period of time. Mr. Homer Lee, one of my interviewees, was one of those students who enrolled in both private and ensemble training at the time. According to Mr. Pak, the British government brought in three or four British Army bands to Hong Kong each year. Some band members even offered to give lessons to young musicians.

I was very fortunate to be able to locate program notes for the Third Festival of Asian Arts which was held on the 14<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> of October in 1978 when the Central Band of the Royal Air Force was invited to perform. The Central Band of the Royal Air Force is believed to be the first overseas professional band that performed in the “Hong Kong Arts Festival.” The band was led by Eric Banks and the first piece on the program was the Irish tune “County Derry” by P. A. Grainger. Apart from being the Director of Music in the Royal Air Force, Banks was an examiner for the London College of Music, the London Trinity College of Music, and the London Guildhall School of Music, and acted as an adjudicator and guest conductor at massed band and choral concerts.

Although Mainland China started to develop music education in the 1920s, formal music teacher education and performance-based programs in schools did not exist until the 1950s. Due to the Cultural Revolution in China between 1966 and 76, intellectuals, artists and musicians fled to other countries and Hong Kong was the nearest country which was under British rule. The cultured class came to Hong Kong

and some of them were well-trained wind band musicians. Mr. Wong Yat Chiu was one of the well-known band directors who emigrated from China to Hong Kong. Mr. Wong has been teaching band in the same local school in Hong Kong for over 30 years and has made great contributions to wind band development during that time. One other important figure who strongly supported music education was the longest serving governor of Hong Kong, Mr. Murray Maclehorse. Apart from introducing the 9 year compulsory education policy, Maclehorse himself is passionate about music and he brought many forms of arts to Hong Kong. The Hong Kong Arts Festival (1973), Hong Kong Music Office (1977), Hong Kong Music Academy (1978 - later the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts), Hong Kong Arts Center (1977) and numerous performing venues were established under his leadership.

Hong Kong City Hall was the only venue that was well equipped for concerts before the 1980s. Performing venues were scarce until Tsuen Wan City Town Hall and Hong Kong Cultural center were built in late 1980s to accommodate the growing arts community and their musical events. The Hong Kong Art Development Council (HKADC) is a statutory body which has taken over the Council for Performing Arts. The nature of the council has drastically changed from counseling to promoting, planning, and developing projects. The HKADC subsidized the International Hong Kong Band Fair in 1996, the Korea tour in 1998 and numerous events since then. Although HKADC is pledged to serve and support the arts community in Hong Kong, it only approves funding for individual events. Lau (2005) expressed that an ensemble

like “City Brass” (no information was found) was not able to expand due to a lack of funding.

Regardless of the quality of school bands, there were over two hundred such band by the end of the 1980s. According to Lau (2005), a band instrument repair man named Lam Chi described how the increase in the number of school bands in the 1980s immensely helped his business. Not only did the graduates from HKAPA become band directors and teachers but many of them formed amateur and semi-professional wind band groups. According to program notes from the 1<sup>st</sup> Youth Symphonic Band Festival in 1978, the first amateur community band was formed a decade earlier in 1967 by the Scout Association.

The following examples of repertoire give some insight into the variety of music performed at this festival. For instance, the Scout Association Band of Hong Kong played, “Under the Double Eagle” by Wagner and “Moon River” by Mancini. The HKYWCAB performed, “First Suite in E-flat major for Military Band, Op. 28, No. 1” by Holst and “Folk Festival for Band” by Walters. “Summer Festival” by Reck and “Feelings” by Morris was played by the HKSU. The Scout Association Band of Hong Kong was initially known as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Service Scout Unit.

In 1969, another band was founded by the Hong Kong Young Women’s Christian Association: the HKYWCAB. In the 1970s, the Hong Kong Youth Symphonic Band was led by Mr. Cheng Kai-chou and there were 40 members at the

time. In the 1980s, Tai Woo Hau Youth Band, Hong Kong Brass, Hong Kong Symphonic Winds (HKSU), and Tom Lee Wind Orchestra were formed.

*Government Support in the 1970s, 1990s, and New Millennium*

In the late 1970s, the Hong Kong government aimed to promote youth musical training according to British consulate David Stone's educational proposal. Wind bands were mainly conducted by amateur musicians, some of them without musical background, but passionate about band. Many brass bands in different towns were established; however, the standard of those bands did not move forward due to the lack of professionally trained teachers. In 1998, the Hong Kong SAR government announced a Quality Educational Fund (QEF) and after-school band programs at local schools received tremendous support. The QEF consists of a QEF steering committee that was set up under the Education Commission (EC) to advise on the policies and procedures regarding the operation of the QEF. The steering committee is supported by a Secretary of Administrative from the HKSAR government and professional staff from the EMB. It is chaired by a non-government official and supported by members from the Education Commission and the schools/business/professionals sectors. School bands received more funding and made a quantum leap forward in the latter years of the 1990s. Many new school bands were formed and so Band One schools were not the only schools with band programs. Sadly, band program funding discontinued in 2001. Currently, some school bands receive practically no funding from the government and many school bands have

suffered. Mr. Kirtley said that the standard of the school bands has dramatically decreased in the last three years.

Mr. Pak, the Senior Music Officer at the Music Office, was very generous and helpful with this research. Not only did he share his experiences in the wind band movement over the past 30 years, he also showed me a collection of programs and posters for wind band concerts and competitions that included the 1st Youth Symphonic Band Festival which was held between the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 1978. The programs and posters provided a lot of evidence of wind band history. The festival was founded in 1972 and was mainly supported by receiving grants from one of , the government departments, namely, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department as well as the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. The latter is a charitable, non-profit organization featuring overseas and local artists and musicians. The festival offers a month long cultural feast annually from February to March. The festival serves as a catalyst to arouse wider public interest in the arts and to encourage artistic dialogue and cultural exchange. One of the difficulties of holding musical events in the 1970s was finding a proper venue. One of the annual services that the Festival provides is a free concert venue and coordination services for school bands.

The 1st Youth Symphonic Band Festival in 1978 marked the start of the Festival with eleven local bands and was held at the Sha Tsui Road Playgroud in Tsuen Wan. The following day was named as the Festival Concert. It was held in the Academic Community Hall at the Baptist College (known as Hong Kong Baptist University). The Festival Concert featured the guest band, Nakamura Gakuen Girls

High School Band from Japan, which was directed by Hiroshi Matsuzawa. Nakamura Gakuen Girls High School Band performed three pieces including “Festival Overture” by Shostakovich, “Kazoa-uta” by Iwai and “Divergent” by Macbeth. The Gala Finale was held at the Maple Street Playground in Sham Shui Po and all attending bands performed. The massed band performed *Auld Lang Syne* as the last piece of the three days Festival.

The HKSAR has launched a new cultural district for the city in this new millennium. The West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) will be a landmark development that enhances Hong Kong's position as a world city of culture. The new cultural district will bring together a vibrant mix of performing and visual arts. The objective of the development is to showcase the urban design and provide a meeting place for the local and international arts communities. The government of HKSAR believes this development will enrich the city's cultural life by attracting internationally acclaimed performances and exhibitions. In addition, this meeting place will nurture local talent, create more opportunities for arts groups to perform, and enhance international cultural exchange. Events organized through the WKCD will be "community-driven" and "people-oriented," encouraging a lively arts scene for generations to come.

### **The First Band - Hong Kong Police Band (Brass)**

The Hong Kong Police Band marched into its 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year with a postal cover, a concert, and a gala dinner held at the Police Sports and Recreation

Club in March 2007. The Royal Hong Kong Police Band (now known as Hong Kong Police Band) was established in 1951. The developments and achievements of the band were chronicled by the Hong Kong Police Archives Department in a publication named *Offbeat* early this year due to the celebration of the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary. There was an interview conducted by an officer at *Offbeat* with Superintendent Philip Ng, Director of Music, and four bandsmen (two of them having retired) to find out how the band developed from strength to strength. According to SP Ng, the Police Band came into being in 1951 as the Police Silver Band, a brass band consisting of 21 officers who also performed policing duties. As the band grew in size, it became increasingly difficult for these part-time musicians to reconcile their police duties with their rehearsals and engagements. A majority of these musicians did not even have their own instruments; As a result, the initial band consisted of poorly-conditioned instruments. A decision was taken by SP Ng late in the 1980s that the police band should turn into a full-time band with full-time musicians, as it is today. The Police Band now comprises 55 members. Seventy-eight-year-old Ku Kung-ching was one of the band's first generation musicians. He was in the interview with the archival officer. Ku admitted he could hardly play any musical instrument and could barely read music when he first joined the band in 1951. Until the 1980s, most band teachers at local schools unfortunately have a similar lack of music qualifications. According to Mr. Kirtley, overseas band teachers at the time were from China, Britain, or occasionally, Japan. Mr. Pak described how people could easily get a music teaching job as long as they could hold the instrument properly.



Mr. Foster, the first Director of Music at the Hong Kong Police Band, assigned bandsmen instruments according to their physical structures. Mr. Ho Chun-yung, retired bandsman, who joined the band in 1960 stated that his musical training was mostly obtained from senior bandsmen. In 1982, the leader SP Ng set a requirement that new recruits should be proficient in at least one band instrument. In the 1990s, the band took a further step forward by adopting a multi-skills scheme, which encouraged all musicians to master more than one instrument. On top of that, some members of the band have obtained diplomas from the Royal School of Music (London). Thus, the standard and professionalism of the bandsmen improved immensely.

The police band performs 500 times each year on average, including police force and community functions, as well as overseas tours. The police band participates at all significant government ceremonies including the recent 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Chinese rule. The police band was solely male until last year. There is now a female percussionist named Lau Sze-Lok playing in the current police band.

### **The First Amateur Band - The Hong Kong Symphonic Winds**

The Hong Kong Symphonic Winds (HKSU) was established in May 1987 by Alfonso Wong. It is believed that HKSU is the first amateur band in Hong Kong of considerable size and structure. Wong recruited many brilliant musicians to the HKSU, including students he had trained in his teaching life of over thirty years and youngsters trained by his students, as well as those who share the same vision in

promoting wind music. Since its establishment, the HKSW has performed in more than 230 concerts, including over 300 masterpieces in their repertoire.

### **The First Youth Band – The Hong Kong Youth Symphonic Band**

The Hong Kong Youth Symphonic Band was formed in 1978. Over its 29 year history, the band has successfully nurtured several generations of young musicians. The HKYSB has had the privilege of performing with a number of distinguished guest musicians and bands both in Hong Kong and overseas, such as The Toyama Technical High School Band from Japan. This ensemble is considered the first youth band in Hong Kong. During the past 15 years, the band embarked on numerous highly successful concert tours to Japan, Hawaii, Australia, Korea and beyond. The band has, at present, a total of around 70 members between the ages of 12 and 25 and is trained and managed by the Senior Music Officer at the Music Office, Mr. Christopher Pak Wing-Heng, and two other musicians named Lee Sing-Wan and Chan Pak-Ying. Prior to other special bands established in the past 5 years, this group has been the only elite youth band that has endured. On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2007, the band performed “To a New Dawn” by Sparke, “March to Scaffold” from *Symphonique Fantastique* by Berlioz, “A Klezmer Karnival” by Spake, and “Pomp and Circumstance Marches, No. 1” by Elgar at the Shatin Town Hall Auditorium. The band was conducted by Mr. Pak, Mr. Cheng, and Mr. Lee, the three wind band instructors at the government-funded Music Office.

## **Hong Kong Band Directors Association**

One of my interviewees was Mr. Danilo Delfin, the current director of the Hong Kong Band Directors Association (HKBDA). According to him, HKBDA is a non-profit organization registered under the Societies Ordinance of Hong Kong founded in 1982. Although the association was not active for several years, its current goal is to promote band music culture and band development in Hong Kong; to advance the education of the public in the appreciation and knowledge of music with particular reference to bands; to establish a closer link and fellowship among members, other music lovers and performing groups; to attain a higher standard of artistic excellence for bands, their performers, their conductors, and their literature; to serve as a central advice and information bureau to assist in local band activities; and to participate and co-operate with international and foreign band music bodies.

HKBDA has been a member of Asia and Pacific Band Directors (APBDA) since 1992. The APBDA was formed in 1967 by the Japan Band Directors' Association (JBA) in the hope of becoming a vehicle for international music exchange. The first gathering between JBA and the American Band Masters Association was held in Hawaii in 1974 and later on, many Asian countries such as Korea, Taiwan and Singapore joined. Conferences are held every two years in different countries in order to have music exchange between conductors. Japanese bands are well-known internationally and Hong Kong wind bands can use knowledge and pedagogy of the internationally respected Japanese wind group to improve. In 1994, a Marathon Wind band music gala concert was held in the lobby and the

promenade of the Hong Kong Cultural Center. It was claimed to have an audience of more than 20,000 in this seven hour concert in which fourteen wind band groups from local schools and Macao schools attended. The purpose was to allow wind band music to be performed outside schools.

The first Band Fair hosted by HKBDA was held in 1994 and only local schools were involved. In 1995, the second Band Fair included primary, secondary, and college groups from China, Taiwan, and Macao. It was the first ever music exchange among the three countries in history. The 9<sup>th</sup> conference of APBDA was held together with the Band Fair in Hong Kong in 1996. It was the first time school groups from China were invited to attend the Band Fair. Amateur, semi-professional, and professional groups originating from Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Singapore, and Australia attended this event.

In 1997, Band Fair's theme was celebrating the handover to Chinese rule. Children's Band Fair came along in 1998 and ever since then two Band Fairs were held each year. In 1999, the program of Band Fair extended to two 5 hours sections held consecutively over two days. In 2005, Band Fair was renamed the Hong Kong International Band Festival and has also been held in Singapore. Renowned musicians and ensembles including Boston Brass, saxophonist Jean-Yves Fourmeau, Euphonium player Adam Frey and conductor Dr. Paula Holcomb were invited to conduct workshops with students and band teachers.

## Music Office

The Music Office was founded in 1977 by the government of Hong Kong when it was still under British rule. It strives to promote knowledge and appreciation of music, especially to young people, through instrumental and ensemble training, and a variety of music activities. Since January 2000, the Music Office has come under the management of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LSD), shortly after the handover. Three of my interviewees, Mr. Pak, Mr. Tam and Mr. Lee, all obtained their first formal musical training at the Music Office. Mr. Pak recalled he was as one of the very first group of children who enrolled in band class. Mr. Kirtley, the Head of the Brass Department at HKAPA, was one of the instructors who taught the professional class. According to Mr. Kirtley, the Music Office was supervised by Ms. Libby Wong, a government administrator in the 1970s.

In 1979, a hierarchical structure of classes was suggested by Mr. Darwin Wong. Basic level classes were open to every child. Those classes usually have a teacher –student ratio of 1:10. There were also intermediate and advanced classes. Children needed to meet a certain standard in order to progress to the next level. Also, a professional class was taught by professional musicians who played in the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. Only the best students were admitted to the professional classes. Although this system is subsidized with weekly hour-long group lessons conducted in five music centers, tuition fees are affordable due to the support of the government. This program is open to local young people between the ages of 6 and 23. Some 5,000 trainees, from beginners to grade 8 (ABRSM) level, are

currently enrolled in the classes that provide training in musicianship, along with a comprehensive curriculum on ensemble rehearsal to master classes, music theory, and music appreciation lectures. The program also makes available a number of instruments for loan at a monthly charge of \$10.00 Canadian. Learning music is no longer a luxury to middle or higher class families.

The Hong Kong Youth Music Camp is an annual event, sponsored by the Music Office since 1970. The Music Camp aims to enhance the performance skills of young musicians by providing them with intensive training in a summer camp. Campers receive training from eminent local and overseas musicians. Mr. Pak recalled that one of the overseas musicians was Mr. Bruce Pearson, the author of the band method book, *Standard of Excellence*. Mr. Pearson was invited to adjudicate and conduct master classes. Day camp programs are also organized for members of the public. Their primary objective is to provide quality musical experiences and the opportunity of performing for the benefit of the community.

The annual Gala is another major event that is hosted by the Music Office and bands are one of the three main groups showcased. In the gala, outstanding trainee members of the Music Office's bands receive awards and honors. This annual gala has been held since 1989. Both Mr. Pak and Mr. Tam fondly recalled their experiences with overseas groups from Japan, Singapore, and England. As music students at the Music Office in the 1970s, Mr. Pak and Mr. Tam were shocked by the high standards of those overseas groups.

## **The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA)**

The HKAPA was established by the Hong Kong Government in 1984. It is the only tertiary institution in the territory which provides professional education, training and research facilities in the performing arts, theatre technical arts, and film and television. One of the six departments is the School of Music. The HKAPA is, in fact, the combination of the Hong Kong Conservatory of Music and the Hong Kong Academy of Ballet. The Academy was granted degree awarding status in 1992 following an accreditation by the Hong Kong Council for Academic Accreditation. Apart from the one-year certificate program, two-year diploma program, and four-year Bachelor degree program, HKAPA have recently offered post-graduate degree programs and invited musicians from the Julliard Music School to hold master classes. The heart of training for the performing arts is performance itself, and the Academy is one of Hong Kong's most important performance centers. The Academy plays host to visiting local and international musicians. This city has longed for an artistic institution which provides outstanding leadership. One of the objectives of HKAPA is to cultivate the musical tastes of the people of Hong Kong. The president of the HKAPA is the Chief Executive of HKSAR, Mr. Donald Tsang. The government of Hong Kong is well aware of the importance of arts in this cosmopolitan city.

As mentioned earlier, lack of suitable venues was a major obstacle in the 1970s for the 1st Youth Wind Band Festival and as Mr. Pak recalled, the Hong Kong Conservatory of Music occupied only one floor at the Hong Kong Arts Center unlike

the well-appointed HKAPA building. The campus site of the Academy was provided by the Hong Kong Government, which meets the annual capital and recurrent costs of the Academy. At the inception of the institution, the Hong Kong Jockey Club (previously known as the Royal Jockey Club) donated HK\$300 million to cover the construction costs of the buildings which opened in 1985.

The Academy assists the career development of the graduates and also promotes a life-long interest in the arts amongst Hong Kong people and more importantly, nurtures musical development in young children. The objective of the Academy is to train and educate competent professionals. In the 1990s, music became more familiar to the general public and the graduates from HKAPA have started to feed into the music education scene. Many of the organizers and conductors of the bands are HKAPA's graduates, who have formed a culture of wind bands in Hong Kong's schools in the past 10 years.

### **Tom Lee Music Foundation – Yamaha Music Education**

#### *Music Education Classes*

The Yamaha Music Foundation was established on August 29, 1966 in Japan, with the aim of providing music education as a means of contributing to the public well-being. One of the thirty-six Yamaha Music School International representatives was Thomas Lee. Mr. Thomas Lee established the Tom Lee Music Foundation in 1977 and stated that his vision was to make music accessible and develop skill and appreciation for music. The Tom Lee Music Foundation was briefly introduced to the



public in program notes at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Arts Festival in 1978. Side by side with the Music Office, the foundation aims to foster a new music culture in Hong Kong. The Tom Lee Music Foundation has brought many overseas music groups to Hong Kong over the last forty years. The Foundation plays a key role in nurturing the love and joy of music in Hong Kong. Seventeen music centers are well equipped and operate throughout the territory, providing a wide range of music courses for children and adults. The teachers at the Foundation are highly qualified professionals dedicated to bringing out talent in their students and teaching them the joy of music-making. The professional groups, community groups, and elite high school groups that the Foundation has brought in have inspired many young musicians in Hong Kong.

The Tom Lee Music Foundation provides music education through courses designed for a broad range of students including children, youths, and adults, from beginners to those who wish to acquire a high-level of musical ability. The education of pre-school children remains as the foundation of its programming. The first “Music Class for Pre-school Children” began in Tokyo in 1954. Later, this class developed into the Yamaha Music School, designed to teach the fundamentals of music to all ages. As of 2007, Yamaha Music Schools have developed into a large system with 700,000 students and 20,300 teachers at 7,200 locations in the world. More than 5 million students have graduated from these schools.

### *Tom Lee Wind Orchestra*

In 1987, the Tom Lee Wind Orchestra was founded. It was a self-programming organization affiliated with the Tom Lee Music Foundation. The organization provided ensemble training and performing opportunities for local wind and percussion players. The main purpose of the group was to facilitate the interflow of wind playing techniques and promoting cultural music activities. Membership was open to anybody who wanted to pursue their love of band music. The orchestra started with 60 members including amateurs, semi-professional, and professional musicians from all walks of life. Besides regular weekly rehearsals, the orchestra gives performances and presents musical entertainments periodically, as invited by the Music Office, schools, and other private organizations. The Tom Lee Music Foundation offers about fifteen types of wind ensemble training courses and individual lessons, although piano and violin have been the most popular instruments in Hong Kong since the 1960s. As the wind instruments have become popular, a great variety of ensemble courses are provided and individual lessons in wind pedagogy are offered throughout the year.

### **Band Festivals and Competitions**

The Youth Symphonic Band Festival was the first band competition in Hong Kong. According to program notes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Youth Symphonic Band Festival, the idea of an annual band festival was conceived in January 1977 by Mr. Thomas Lee, President of the Tom Lee Music Foundation. However, the inaugural festival,

scheduled for 6 November, 1977 did not materialize because of the difficulty in finding a suitable venue. In November 1977, Mr. Thomas Lee made a fresh proposal to the then newly formed Music Administrator's Office and an Ad Hoc Committee with representatives of the Music Administrator's Office, the Tom Lee Music Foundation, and interested private individuals to organize an annual youth band festival for Hong Kong. The Festival's aims are to stimulate local interest in band music, to raise the standard of performance of wind ensemble and solo performance, and to encourage schools and youth organizations to form bands. Subsequent efforts by the Ad Hoc Committee resulted in invitations to the All Japan Band Contest Winner, the Nakamura Girls High School Band and twelve local wind bands to participate in the Inaugural Hong Kong Youth Symphonic Band Festival, held from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> of November, 1978. Under the baton of Mr. Lee Fu-ngon, the Hong Kong Lutheran Youth Band performed its first ever program: "Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1" by E. Elgar followed by the "English Folk Song Suite" by R. Vaughan Williams. Three performances were given for an audience of over 15,000 people. In the second year of the festival, the joint organizers (the Music Administrators' Office and the Tom Lee Music Foundation) invited the Fowlie School Band from Singapore and the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band to come and join 21 local bands to give five public performances for the enjoyment of the audience in Hong Kong.

The 60<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Schools Music and Speech Festival (HKSMSA) will be held again next year from February the 18th to March the 20th, 2008. Like past years,

it will attract thousands of groups and individuals from all schools in the city.

According to Lau (2005), eight school bands entered the competition in 1975. In 2005, there were 57 school bands in the competition and two different divisions were offered to competitors. Both primary schools and secondary schools are enthusiastic about this annual music event. Apart from school bands competitions, the HKSMSA offers many individual and small ensemble competitions. Adjudicators are mostly from the United Kingdom, United States, and many European countries.

The movement of wind bands in Hong Kong started half a century ago and it has grown exponentially. Support from the government, interest from general public as well as the tireless efforts music educators put into wind bands has paid off. The successful creation of special bands in the new millennium speaks for themselves.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **Special Bands in the New Millennium**

Wind band elite groups are in demand. Mr. Tam and Mr. Delfin, who are HKAPA graduates, provide more opportunities for young musicians to experience quality music by forming special wind groups.

#### **Hong Kong Wind Philharmonia**

The Hong Kong Wind Philharmonia (HKWP) is a distinguished group of 50 Hong Kong-based professional musicians specializing in the performance of music written for wind orchestra. This orchestra has had the most profound effect on the general wind band movement. Symphony orchestral music has been deemed superior, leaving wind band music behind. Although Hong Kong boasts professional orchestras and chamber ensembles, until the formation of the Wind Philharmonia in 2002, it has not had a professional wind orchestra. The primary goal of this group is to perform wind music of the highest professional caliber for a broad-based and diverse audience in Hong Kong. In July 2004, the HKWP was invited by the Macao Band Director Association for a performance in Macao, and in August 2004 performed at the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Asia & Pacific Band Director's Association (APBDA) which was held on Jeju Island, South Korea. In 2005, HKWP performed at the 12<sup>th</sup> international WASBE conference in Singapore and the ensemble started the night with "Gran Partita" by Mozart. One of the other missions of this group is to showcase this

accessible and beloved music, to bring it to the widest possible audience, and thus return a missing note to Hong Kong's cultural life.

Interestingly enough, the musicians of the group, who all currently reside in Hong Kong, have studied abroad and most have had significant musical careers around the world before returning to offer their talents to Hong Kong. Many of them are music teachers at local schools. As both educators and musicians, their secondary goal is to inspire and educate Hong Kong's future virtuosi.

### **Hong Kong Youth Wind Philharmonia**

Shortly after the formation of the HKWP, the Hong Kong Youth Wind Philharmonia was formed (HKYWP) by Mr. Victor Tam in September 2004. HKYWP is operated under the umbrella of the HKWP. Young musicians at HKYWP are all under the age of 25 and are selected by audition. The aim of this new ensemble is to train and provide guidance to future generations of young Hong Kong wind, brass, and percussion players by continuing to maintain the highest level of performance possible in this great tradition of wind band music making in Hong Kong.

After their successful performance at the WASBE international band music festival, the orchestra commissions new works written by local composers. The current resident composer, Dr. Lo Hau Man was born and raised in Hong Kong. He obtained the highest diploma in composition at the Hong Kong Conservatory of Music (former HKAPA), continued his study at HKCU, and graduated with a

doctoral degree in 1988. According to Obata (1975), one of the most important moves ever made by the All-Japan Band Association after World War II was the decision, taken in 1962, to encourage Japanese composers to write works for band. Similarly, Dr. Lo Hau Man has raised the stature of wind bands in Hong Kong by being one of the first composers commissioned to write wind music in Hong Kong. His wind composition includes “The League of Marduk,” “Seeking Dream” (translated from Chinese title), and a concerto for trumpet, percussion and symphonic band.

### **Hong Kong Youth Neo-Winds Orchestra**

According to Mid-Europe Schladming’s newsletter, the Hong Kong Youth NeoWinds Orchestra was formed by the Tom Lee Foundation in April 2004 and is led by distinguished band director, Danilo Delfan, instructors Martin Choy and Lap Tak Choi. This is one of the special bands that was formed in Hong Kong in the past five years. This ensemble offers higher level orchestral training to wind players. The orchestra currently has more than 40 members ranging in age from 10 to 25. Many renowned artists and maestros such as Hiro Noguchi, Florent Heau, and Nicolas Baldeyrou were invited to conduct master classes and workshops to broaden the members’ skills. The orchestra presented its debut concert in February 2005 with Masami Takakura, the former conductor of Yamaha band “Tokyo” as the guest conductor. In the summer of 2005, the orchestra was invited to participate in the “12<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles” (WASBE) held in Singapore and the “Hong Kong International Band

Festival 2005.” In the summer of 2006, the orchestra had a European tour and participated at the “9<sup>th</sup> Mid Europe – Conference for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles.”

### **Laughing Brass**

Laughing Brass was found by Mr. Scott Liu and another wind band supporter Mr. Fung Ka Hing in October 2004. This elite group recruits young musicians from local schools. Both Mr. Liu and Mr. Fung led the group to their debut at the Macao Band Fair in 2005. This is one of the special youth groups that was formed in the past few years in order to provide more opportunities for young wind players in the society. Mr. Liu not only brings back his passion of wind band music to the local school bands, he is often found in wind band festivals. He is also one of the committee members of the HKBDA.

Special bands are a venue for high skilled musicians. It has given a place for talented musicians to make wind band music. Interestingly enough, they were found almost simultaneously within the last three years. Who laid the groundwork? Who is behind the scene as a driving force to this phenomenon?



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### **Significant Figures in the Hong Kong Wind Band Movement**

This chapter provides biographical information on six wind band directors who have made a significant contribution to the wind band movement in Hong Kong. They include: John Cheng, Christopher Wing-Heng Pak, Joe Kirtley, Victor Tze-Fai Tam, Danilo Delfin, Scott Liu Siu Kwok, and Martin Kwok Tin Choy.

#### **John Cheng**

One of the pioneers of the wind band movement in Hong Kong is Mr. John Cheng. Mr. Pak described him as the first local professional wind director in Hong Kong. He brought in foreign teaching skills and pedagogy. According to his profile, Mr. Cheng first went to school in Macao and later studied music in the United States and the United Kingdom. He joined the Music Section of the Department of Education of Hong Kong in 1962 and later transferred to the Music Office in 1977 as a Training Officer of the Wind Section. He was the first to be promoted to the grade of Senior Music Officer of the Wind Section of the Music Office, where he served until his retirement.

Mr. Pak said that Mr. Cheng has been a driving force behind wind music education in Hong Kong and has contributed tremendously to the improvement of standards in the genre. During his tenure in the Music Office, he played an essential role in applying systematic methodologies for instrumental and orchestral training.

This resulted in rapid improvements in training standards for wind instruments at the time and the subsequent pool of wind music virtuosi we have in Hong Kong today. According to program notes of the “To a New Dawn Symphonic Band Concert,” Cheng was also the brains behind the highly imaginative programming of the "Four Tracks Band," and "Computer and Wind Orchestra" concert series in Hong Kong. At the time of their inception, such musical performances were so distinct from traditional formats that they created a phenomenal impact on the community and offered a refreshing experience for music enthusiasts in Hong Kong.

In his dedicated effort to popularize and promote wind music, Cheng has transcribed a huge repertoire of works for wind instruments, some of which have since become the stock program in concerts for young Hong Kong wind players. The woodwind arrangement by Cheng for the Music Office anthem, “Music for Millions,” is still used to this day. “Red Azalea,” the compulsory piece for the Wind Section competition in this year's Hong Kong Schools Music Festival, is another of his arrangements.

Cheng founded the Hong Kong Band Directors Association in 1982 and served as its inaugural chairman. The establishment of this Association has had a far-reaching influence on the development of wind music in Hong Kong.

### **Christopher Wing-Heng Pak**

Mr. Pak began his studies with Mr. Lee Fu-ngon, who was the bandmaster of his secondary school named Tak Ming School. He received lessons from Mr. Seiku

Nobusuke, the Principal Trombonist of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HKPO), Mr. Cheung Chun-wor, and Mr. R. Cooper. According to program notes of the 11<sup>th</sup> Youth Symphonic Band Festival, he became a contract trombonist of the HKPO in 1978. In 1979, he received a scholarship from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Music Fund and furthered his studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. During his four years of studies there, he was awarded a licentiate (L.G.S.M) and a bronze medal for his outstanding academic achievements. He became an associate (A.G.S.M.) of the G.S.M.D. upon graduation.

Mr. Pak began working as an Assistant Music Officer at the Music Office in 1981 and now he is the Senior Music Officer. He has also been coaching the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Chen Zao Men College Symphonic Band since 1984. According to program notes of the 12<sup>th</sup> Hong Kong Youth Band Festival, Mr. Pak was invited to be the guest conductor of the Tom Lee Wind Orchestra in 1989. In May of the same year, he and the orchestra were invited to join the Japan Band Directors' Clinic. Currently, Mr. Pak also teaches the Junior and Senior Bands at the HKAPA. Apart from being a music administrator at the Music Office and a band director at Tung Wah Group of Hospital Chen Zao Man College and HKAPA, Mr. Pak is also an active player. Mr. Pak expressed that his high school colleagues who enrolled in band still get together and make music. They call themselves, "The Old Man Band."

**Joe Kirtley**

Mr. Joe Kirtley was one of the first professional musicians hired by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HKPO) in 1979. He was the orchestra's Associate Principal Horn until 1996. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from Oklahoma State University and a Master's Degree in Performance from the University of Washington where he studied with Christopher Leuba, former Principal Horn of the Chicago Symphony. Since 1975 he has performed many times with the Seattle Symphony, the Seattle Opera, and the Seattle Ballet. Mr. Kirtley has also performed in many chamber music concerts with the Philharmonic's Woodwind and Brass Quintets.

In his current position as Lecturer (Brass) at the HKAPA, his responsibilities include teaching the horn, coaching chamber music, and conducting the Academy Brass Ensemble and Academy Concert Band. Mr. Kirtley has worked to raise performance standards with the bands. In the interview, he expressed the goal of breeding new generations of quality local wind musicians and teachers. Under his tutelage, the standard of wind musicians has greatly improved. Mr. Kirtley said that the combination of the limitation of the educational system and the poor quality of teacher education has been an obstacle for the wind band movement. He pointed out the necessity of having quality wind band teachers instruct children from the beginning, as old habits are hard to break. As head of the brass department at HKAPA, Mr. Kirtley's input into the wind band movement is tremendous. In spite of the lack of quality in wind band teacher training and cutbacks from the government to

local school bands over the past three years, wind bands continue to thrive due to the efforts of advocates like Mr. Joe Kirtley.

### **Victor Tze-Fai Tam**

Mr. Victor Tam is the founder and chairman of the Hong Kong Wind Philharmonia and the Hong Kong Youth Wind Philharmonia. He is one of the notable graduates from HKAPA who persistently supported and expanded the wind band movement in Hong Kong in the last decade. After graduating from the HKAPA in 1992, Victor was awarded the Hong Kong Jockey Club Scholarship (then the Royal Jockey Club Scholarship) to study at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music as a student of James Caldwell. Upon graduation, he received the “Oboe Artistry Award.” Mr. Tam furthered his graduate studies at the Indiana University School of Music with a full scholarship and teaching assistantship with Marc Lifschey. As a student, Mr. Tam had the opportunity to participate in numerous international music festivals including the Asian Youth Orchestra and the Mozarteum at Salzburg in Austria. Moreover, he worked with Joseph Robinson and William Bennett at the Hansjorg Sarasota Music Festival.

After graduating from Indiana University, Victor was appointed Principal Oboe of the Suwon Philharmonic and performed extensively throughout Korea and on concert tours to Thailand, England, and Spain. He has also served as guest principal oboe with the HKS, the Guagnzhou Symphony Orchestra, and the Vietnam National Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Tam is currently on the faculty of the HKAPA,

the Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU) as well as being band director and faculty tutor at various school bands. He is both an active wind band educator and professional performer. Mr. Kirtley mentioned that there are a few HKAPA graduates who have made remarkable contributions to the wind band movement in the past ten years. Mr. Tam is definitely categorized as one of the leading wind band advocates.

### **Danilo Delfin**

Mr. Danilo Delfin is currently a member of the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and the Hong Kong Oriental Brass. His teachers were Henry Nowak, Aigi Hurn, and Judith Saxton, former trumpet players of the HKPO. He received his Advanced Diploma (trumpet performance) and the HKAPA Director's Scholarship and achieved the Professional Diploma (trumpet performance) at the Hong Kong Performing Arts Academy (HKAPA). In addition, he was a member of the Asian Youth Orchestra, the Hong Kong Youth Symphonic Band, and has performed overseas in Japan, Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Singapore, Beijing, Shanghai, and the United Kingdom. Apart from being one of the leading members at the HKBDA, Mr. Delfin as a conductor, conducts many school bands and the HKAPA Junior Wind Band.

In December 2004, Mr. Delfin was the guest conductor of the 4<sup>th</sup> Junior Band Festival in Singapore. He was invited to conduct the HKAPA Symphonic Wind Ensemble for the concert tour Asia Pacific Band Festival in Japan and Australia. In July 2003, he was given a scholarship in conducting by the World Association for Symphonic Band and Ensembles (WASBE) and attended the conducting symposium

in the State University of New York at Fredonia, New York. He is also currently a trumpet instructor at the HKAPA and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. As an active wind band advocate, Mr. Delfin devotes an enormous amount of time to the wind band movement. One of his greatest influences has been the well-known conductor, Glenn Price. Earlier this year, Mr. Delfin invited Price to Hong Kong for masterclasses and cultural exchange. Mr. Delfin is currently a member of the WASBE.

### **Scott Liu Siu Kwok**

At the age of fourteen, Mr. Liu studied tuba with Stuart Roebuck and Brian Kingsley at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) in the United Kingdom in 1992. In 1995, he was involved in the 7<sup>th</sup> WASBE conference with the RNCM Wind Orchestra in Hamamatsu, in Japan including performing in various countries all over the world. After graduating with a professional performance diploma in 1996, he joined the Warwickshire County Youth Orchestra, the Warwickshire County Wind Orchestra, the Brass Band, the Brass Ensemble, the Wind Orchestra, as well as the Symphony Orchestra of RNCM. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Liu returned to Hong Kong and began his career as a wind band educator. He was a freelance player at the HKPO, HKS and the Music Office. With his formal and international wind band musical training and experience, Mr. Liu has had a significant influence on the quality of wind band music in Hong Kong. As well as being an active professional player, he is also the conductor of the “Laughing Brass” and the Junior Wind Band of the HKAPA.

**Martin Kwok Tin Choy**

With regards to local wind repertoire, Dr. Lo Hau Man was mentioned earlier as one of the few local composers who have written music specifically for wind band. According to the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra, Mr Martin Kwok Tin Choy, a clarinet and saxophone player and teacher at various institutions and primary school bands, has been encouraging cooperation with local composers to write new works for school band. It is very exciting to see a local band director pushing wind band music forward.

The leading band directors in wind bands history in Hong Kong are discussed. The next chapter summarizes the history of wind band movement and discusses possible future research.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### **Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations for Future Research**

After documenting the history of the wind band movement in Hong Kong and identifying the key individuals and organizations that have guided this development, it seems appropriate to reflect on the achievements of the movement and identify the challenges that lie ahead. This last chapter will also provide a direction for future research.

#### **Summary**

As the growing interest in wind bands rapidly progressed over the last decade, the wind bands in Hong Kong have achieved notable recognition. Wind bands have gained considerable popularity in schools and the community, although funding has always been a major obstacle. With the WKCD project in place and support and dedication from the local wind band directors, wind band development in Hong Kong is promising.

Through my interviews with the major personalities involved in wind band programs, the following factors were revealed as significant in the development of wind bands in Hong Kong:

1. High academic pressure is paramount in Hong Kong society. Playing instruments increases the chance of entering top schools.

1. Enrolling in bands was initially parent-driven but as music gains status in society, young musicians are supported by their parents. Hong Kong parents in this new millennium genuinely believe in music education.
2. Playing in band is not compulsory for each school and indeed it is only one of the extra-curricular activities. Still, in order to raise the reputation of schools and the increasing popularity of wind band programs in this decade, many schools feel that they need to have a wind band program in place.
3. The colonial government of the past era laid the groundwork for implementing band programs in the educational system and yet cutbacks have occurred at various times. In other cases, some projects were not continued.

## **Conclusion**

Though not a required component of the music education program as such, wind bands have made significant contributions to student life and to a school's overall academic program. Playing in band is fun and rewarding. Unlike the conventional music classes that focus on competition and examination, the objective of playing in band is not merely for personal fulfillment, confidence, or achievement but for developing friendship and teamwork. A band is like a small community where students have their own roles and everyone upholds the team spirit, breaks down the self-centered ego, and works together as a whole and in some cases sacrifices self-interest and serves the community. As a post-colonial city, it is often hard for Hong Kong people to find their roots after one hundred years of British rule; music can perhaps help uniting the society.

Professor Kevin Thompson, the director of the HKAPA, asked in his welcome note at the HKAPA website, “What must we do to empower new generations of performing..., to anticipate the needs of a rapidly changing world?” I believe that by continuing to bring reputable conductors from outside of Hong Kong, musicians and educators can expand and inspire young musicians and educators. The education and training of university and college wind band conductors must be strengthened and improved.

One can conclude that the HKSAR government has respected the value of music education as evidenced by supporting the HKAPA and the Music Office. On the other hand, one disturbing feature of music education is the lack of continuity, coherence, and development. According to Ng and Morris (1998), school subjects are primarily justified by reference to the aims and objectives from which a worthwhile and purposeful curriculum is derived. The cutback several years ago in school wind band programs has negatively affected the progress of the wind band movement.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This project has given me the chance to examine and document the history of wind bands in Hong Kong. Through my conversations with those individuals directly involved in its development, I have become aware of how much the society has changed over the past decades, how enthusiastic band musicians and directors are about their music, and how development in this genre has continued despite its status as an extra curricular activity in schools and its subsequent lack of financial support.

Although Hong Kong wind bands can still develop a great deal, band advocates in the last generation must have done something right to breed so many young band directors.

I believe formal band teacher training is very essential in wind band development. Hong Kong has attracted many expatriates over the past fifty years; many investors, experts, professionals, and even musicians are interested in working in Hong Kong. As well, talented student musicians are sponsored for study abroad and many outstanding musicians are invited to give workshops and master classes at the HKAPA. Given all these, the future of wind bands in Hong Kong looks promising.

In the WASBE 2003 newsletter regarding the 11<sup>th</sup> WASBE conference in Sweden, the chairperson, Kirchhoff, has stated that if the wind band is to flourish as a viable artistic entity, we, as a profession, must carefully delineate the upcoming challenges that might interfere with its growth. I would suggest that the following areas represent the main challenges for the continued development of wind bands in Hong Kong. These areas also highlight important topics for further research:

1. Developing curriculum, financial support, and increased status for bands programs in schools.
2. Establishing governmental and private sector funding for wind bands in Hong Kong.

3. According to Hebert (2005), the Asia-Pacific Band Directors Association was founded in 1978, gathering band directors from Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan and Singapore. A cross-cultural, comparative study of wind band development in these countries would be beneficial.
4. Commissioning works from local composers must be further explored in order to insure the development of quality literature for the medium.
5. Future research could focus on how wind band music can be more accessible, particularly through radio and television broadcasts.

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## Appendix A

### Sample of Consent Form

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**     *Participant Consent Form*  
*OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, RESEARCH*  
*HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE*

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#### **The Creation of Wind Band in Hong Kong SAR**

You are being invited to participate in a study entitled “The Creation of Wind Band in Hong Kong SAR” by Ada Niermeier who is a Master’s student in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria. Ada is conducting this research as part of the requirements for a Masters of Education. You may contact Ada if you have questions by email at [aniermeier@hkis.edu.hk](mailto:aniermeier@hkis.edu.hk) or by phone at 9863-8493.

The purpose of this research project is to explore the history of wind bands in Hong Kong.

Research of this type is important because there is no documented history of the development of wind bands in Hong Kong, and since the history is a short one, it is feasible to document its history with reliable sources of first-hand information regarding its development.

You are being asked to participate in this study because your own knowledge and experience are especially relevant to this project.

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include being interviewed by the researcher. You should not feel influenced or obliged to participate in the study because you are colleagues.

Though there are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this research, you are asked to let the researcher know before you are interviewed whether participating may present problems or risks to you, or inconvenience to you. This is to enable steps to be taken to deal with problems, risks, or inconvenience. If this isn’t possible, the interview or discussion will not proceed.

You will be interviewed for an hour initially, with additional contact as required. Additional contact will most likely not require more than a few minutes of your time as such contact will be to clarify or follow up on interview answers. The interview will be recorded as an audio file saved in my laptop.

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include receiving any part of your interview that has been transcribed and gaining greater understanding of the social implications of the construction of a band program. The researcher will also be willing to give you feedback on the findings of the research. Additionally, the researcher may request to see texts particular to your work. Those texts may include posters, program notes, and calendars as well as newsletters of particular organization.

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study, permission for your data to be used will be requested. You also have the option to remove your data and have it destroyed.

Since this will be historical research, your name and data will be used in this study. You have the option of remaining anonymous, or being identified; please check the appropriate box below to indicate your preference:

- please check this box if you would like to remain anonymous;
- please check this box if you would like to be identified.

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected: 1) by keeping it as a password protected file; (2) by restricting access to data to the instructor and the supervisor and graduate supervisory committee, if applicable; (3) by committing to destroy any audio tapes after their use as data is completed.

The data that you will contribute will be included in the writing of a thesis. I anticipate disseminating the research results directly to participants, my colleagues, thesis/class presentation, published article, chapter or book, the internet as well as any other educators who show interest in this study.

Audio-taped of interviews will be destroyed electronically after the data has been used.

In addition to being able to contact the researcher at the above phone numbers, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria, 250-472-4545, [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

---

*Name of Participant*

---

*Signature*

---

*Date*

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.***

## Appendix B

### Sample Interview Questions

1. Who were some of the members/students in the first band that was established in 1979 by the Music office?
2. When did you join the program?
3. How did you hear about this program?
4. Who was/were the band director(s)?
5. How many members were in the band?
6. What was the instrumentation like?
7. How much did you have to pay for enrolling in the band?
8. Was the program funded by the government?
9. Did you buy your own instrument(s)?
10. Was it easy to purchase band instruments and where did the instruments come from?
11. Did the band perform in public on a regular basis?
12. Were you influenced by the band director(s)?
13. What is your current job?
14. Do you still play?
15. Have you seen a big change in wind band music in Hong Kong in the last decade?
16. Do people in Hong Kong appreciate wind bands in general? Are they familiar with Wind Band music?
17. What do you think about wind bands in Japan? Do you think Hong Kong will have the second best wind band in Asia? Do you see any resemblance in the wind band movement from Japan to Hong Kong?
18. What do you think the future of wind bands in Hong Kong will be?

## Appendix C

### Sample of Authorization Letter

The Hong Kong Performing Arts Academy  
Music Library  
1 Gloucester Road,  
Wan Chai,  
Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Ling Wai King,

As requested, I am writing this to state my purpose in applying for a temporarily library card at the Performing Arts Academy. I am a Master of music education student at the University of Victoria, B.C. Canada and am currently working on my thesis. There are useful resources in the library which are tremendously helpful in my research. The research is of interest to Hong Kong Wind Band directors and hopefully this research will serve as a resource for Wind Band directors in the future. I would be grateful if the library would grant a temporary access card to me between the periods from now until June 30<sup>th</sup> 2007 and hopefully waive the \$3,000hkd annual fee as well. For your reference, below is my supervisor's contact.

I can be reached either by phone at 98648493 or by e-mail at [aniermeier@hkis.edu.hk](mailto:aniermeier@hkis.edu.hk)

Sincerely,

Ada Niermeier  
Graduate student at University of Victoria  
Music Education

Supervisor  
Dr. Steven J. Capaldo  
[capaldo@uvic.ca](mailto:capaldo@uvic.ca)  
Telephone number: (250) 721-7837

## Appendix D

### Sample of Permission Letter

The Hong Kong Music Office  
25/F WanChai Tower,  
12 Harbour Road,  
WanChai  
Hong Kong  
(852) 2582-5314

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this to apply for permission to interview the Senior Music Officer, Mr. Pak Wing Hing at the Music Office. I am a Master of music education student at the University of Victoria, B.C. Canada and am currently working on my thesis. His knowledge and experience are especially relevant and the interview would be tremendously helpful in my research. The research is of interest to Hong Kong Wind Band directors and hopefully this research will serve as a resource for Wind Band directors in the future. For your reference, below is my supervisor's contact.

I can be reached either by phone at 98648493 or by e-mail at [aniermeier@hkis.edu.hk](mailto:aniermeier@hkis.edu.hk)

Sincerely,

Ada Niermeier  
Graduate student at University of Victoria  
Music Education

Supervisor  
Dr. Steven J. Capaldo  
[capaldo@uvic.ca](mailto:capaldo@uvic.ca)  
Telephone number: (250) 721-7837