

Suite 2611 Office Tower,

Langham Place, 8 Arygle St,

Kowloon, Hong Kong

Tel: 2858 1771 | Fax 2736 6361

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**Press Release**

For Immediate Release

15th September, 2015

“Soul Mate”

An opera from Korea National Opera with Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra highlighted programs of “Festive Korea 2015”

Venue: Hong Kong Cultural Centre Grand Theatre

Date: 30th-31st October 2015

Time: 19:30pm

One of the highlighted programs in “Festive Korea 2015” this year include a showcase of Korea National Opera’s original theatrical piece, “Soul Mate”, available in Hong Kong Cultural Centre Grand Theatre on October 30th-31st, 19:00pm.

“Festive Korea” has remained a majorly celebrated cultural event in Hong Kong for years, consistently organized by the Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Hong Kong, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea and Home Affairs Bureau of the Government of Hong Kong SAR. Each year it aims to promote Korean culture and foster connections between Korea and Hong Kong, producing meaningful and educative programs in diverse fields such as performing arts, music, cinema, photography and food. Last year, Festive Korea invited had invited more than 17 outstanding performing groups and some internationally known artists to Hong Kong to host over 30 programs.

This year, “Festive Korea” is able to keep up with their efforts in satisfying the audience, as they manage to have invited Korea National Opera to Hong Kong to perform their original opera, The opera showed the human instinct of pursuing “free will of love” against traditional institution of marriage and depicted the theme—marriage is a gift from heaven. At Festive Korea this year, the Korea National Opera would collaborate with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra for the first time, brings the audiences an unprecedented opera performance with the perfect combination of traditional Korean musical instrument, such as gayageum, haegeum, daegeum, and contemporary music.

Critics have always complimented the incorporation of Korean culture and Western musical elements as well as the role of humor in the play, while Korean dresses and costumers in particular, are able to persuade the audience into entering the traditional Korean world. The play explores the notion of happiness and attempts to show free will and resistance as opposed to the traditional constraints of marriage in the Joseoun Dynasty, particularly arranged marriages. The audience is likely to feel grateful for marriage and agree that love could surpass birth and societal limitations after having had a glimpse into Korean history and literature.

Prior to its presentation in Hong Kong, “Soul Mate” had already been performed in different parts of the world, including but not limited to Frankfurt, Germany, the Turkey Antalya, Aspendos Theatre, the Korea festival in Singapore, 2014. However its performance in Hong Kong this time is highlighted due to collaboration with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, involving a grand total of 150 performers, stimulating an ambitious fusion between traditional Korean and Western musical elements. One simply cannot miss out on such massively scaled event!

**SYNOPSIS:**

“Soul Mate”, adapted from the original play “The Joyful Occasion at the Maeng Jin-sa Household”: Mr. Maeng may be the wealthiest man in the Joseon Kingdom (1392-1910), but is deeply resentful that he failed to enter politics despite having passed the state entrance examination. He hopes to raise the social status of his family by marrying his son Mongwan to Seohyang, the daughter of the illustrious Minister Kim. Mongwan is beckoned to return home from studying in Qing China. The elite yet impoverished Minister Kim agrees to the proposal in order to ensure a more prosperous future for his daughter. Mongwan and Seohyang are both unhappy with the arranged marriage but do not wish to disrespect their parents' wishes. Carrying heavy hearts, they both secretly yearn to find true love on their own by disguising themselves as servants...

If you have any enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Ms. Shannon Choi ( English )

Tel: 3620 3377 | email : info@cwc.com.co