



Bringing Vienna home - Presentation of Austrian Award to Ms Irene AU

Ms Irene Au, as the General Representative of Vienna Boys Choir (VBC), has been awarded the “Decoration of Honour in Gold for the Services to the Republic of Austria” (Knight’s Cross, 1st Class) on 26 April 2017.

Irene Au is the Founding Director of I Creation, a Hong Kong consultancy specializing in arts and cultural events. She has endeavored intensively to diffuse the music culture of Austria at the Asia's World City, including the choral tradition and education system of the Vienna Boys Choir, which is a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The cooperation between Irene and VBC started in 2001 when she put up two sold-out concerts for VBC in Hong Kong as a private presenter. Throughout the years, Irene has arranged a great many music programmes for students and organizations, from kindergarten to universities, music teachers, community choirs as well as the general public. In response to the rising demand of quality music education in Hong Kong, she has founded the Vienna Boys Choir Music Academy in 2011 where music programmes taught in VBC Method are offered to children aged 1-14 on a regular basis.

In 2015, under the auspices of Dr Claudia Reinprecht, Consul General of Austria. and Mrs Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive-designate (who was Secretary for Administration at that time), the Vienna Boys Choir Music Academy Foundation was founded. The aspiration and overall objective is to support and cultivate talents through cross-cultural education and community events. Among all the highlights are the “Hong Kong – Vienna Music Festival” started in 2016 and the future International School Project.

In response to the laudatio by Dr Reinprecht, Irene thanked the Federal Government of Austria for the decoration and the Austrian community she has had the opportunity to work with. She would like to share the honour with her colleagues at I Creation, Vienna Boys Choir, Vienna Boys Choir Music Academy and Vienna Boys Choir Music Academy Foundation. Special thanks were given to all the advisors, supporters, volunteers and friends who have helped the noble cause of VBC in different ways.



Press Release by the Austrian Consulate General

The Austrian Consulate General informs that the Austrian Consul General Dr Claudia Reinprecht, MBA has presented to Ms Irene Au on Wednesday, 26 April 2017 the “Decoration of Honor in Gold for Services to the Republic of Austria” at the Austrian Residence.

The “Decoration of Honor in Gold for Services to the Republic of Austria” was awarded by the Presidents of the Austrian National Council exercising the functions of the Federal President by resolution of 25 November 2016.

The Decoration of Honor is Austria’s highest decoration. The reasoning for this Decoration of Honor in Gold is as follows:

Ms Irene Au as General Representative of the Vienna Boys Choir has been a close and trusted partner of the Austrian Consulate General in Hong Kong and of the former Vienna Representation Office. Her reputation is legendary: she is much appreciated due to her ever positive, professional and pragmatic approach to find ways and solutions for success with an abundance of charm and cordiality.

For years, Ms Au has endeavored intensively to make the Austrian music tradition a household name in Hong Kong. This has been documented in a myriad of activities she has championed. One example is the music education provided by Austrian teachers to train local music pedagogues and to Hong Kong children. She is ever committed to further new contacts by regular visits to Austria with a view to strengthening and enhancing the quality of music education in Hong Kong. Furthermore, Ms Au has organised study visits of students and young musicians from Hong Kong to Austria and thus has contributed to raising Austria’s profile among the Hong Kong community.

It’s Ms Au’s voluntary engagement as founder and executive director of the Vienna Boys Choir Music Academy Foundation that deserves particular mention. In addition to advancing the founding of a Vienna Boys Choir School in Hong Kong, Ms Au has been instrumental in organizing the Hong Kong Vienna Music Festival in 2016 for the first time. This festival brought together some 1000 participants, artists, music lovers and students. Both strategically important projects are critical to enhancing Austria’s reputation and standing in Hong Kong as globally leading cultural hub as well as to furthering the bilateral relations with Hong Kong.



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In conclusion, Ms Au's longstanding and intensive endeavors to deepen the cooperation between Austrian and Hong Kong artists have critically contributed to the objectives of the Austrian Consulate General to enhance the bilateral relations. Her activities have been important elements in the implementation of the Joint Declaration for the Enhancement of cultural cooperation, signed by the Hong Kong and Austrian Governments in March 2015.

It is in view of these aforementioned tireless and longstanding accomplishments that this Decoration of Honor in Gold for Services to the Republic of Austria was awarded to Ms Irene Au.

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Photo:

Dr Claudia Reinprecht, Consul General of Austria (right), presented the Decoration of Honour in Gold to Ms Irene Au (left) at the Austrian Residence on 26 April 2017.

