



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
VICTORIA

**MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA'S  
CHINESE NEW YEAR CONCERT  
Saturday 8 February 2025**

**Acknowledgments**

**Keith Wolahan MP**, Federal Member for Menzies

**Fang Xinwen**, Consul-General of the People's Republic of China

**Tim Kane**, Director, Victoria State Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

**Dr David Li AM**, Chair, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Board and **Angela Li**

**Edgar Myer**, Chair-elect, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Board

**Richard Wigley**, CEO, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

**Members of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Band**

**Distinguished guests**

Let me also add my acknowledgement to the Traditional Owners – the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nation – and pay my respects to their Elders, past and present.

As Patron of this truly marvellous Orchestra, I would like to congratulate the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra on another very successful Chinese New Year Concert.

This annual concert – now in its twelfth year – is fast becoming an important cultural marker in Melbourne's arts scene, and I really thank tonight's artists for the captivating performance.

Each time that I've had the opportunity to come here, the variety of the program, as well as the excellence of the performances, is what makes it truly an enjoyable evening.

The performing arts and cross-cultural connections are at the heart of much that makes our State so special – and they truly do go hand in hand.

The enjoyment of music is found in all cultures across the world, and importantly, it speaks without language, as it has tonight, and acts as a bridge between all cultures.

The *East Meets West* program is another step in Victoria's longstanding and continually growing cross-cultural exchange with China.

On my first Official Visit as Governor to China last year, I saw firsthand how collaboration between our institutions is helping students and artists to learn from one another.

The MSO's partnership with the Sichuan Symphony Orchestra is testament to these benefits.

As we enter the Year of the Snake – a time for transformation – it is fitting to acknowledge the changes that are occurring at the MSO.

This year the Orchestra farewells Dr David Li as Board Chairman after having served in the role since 2021, and as a Board Director for more than a decade.

Dr Li's legacy to the MSO can be defined by an approach that looks outwards as well as forward.

A view to look abroad to grow the MSO's global influence through strategic partnerships.

And also to look to the future to secure financial stability as well as foster the next generation of musical talent.

Initiatives such as this wonderful concert that we've been a part of, the *East meets West* series and *The Now and Forever Future Fund*, will leave a lasting impact for the MSO and benefit them for years to come.

Perhaps Dr Li's most enduring contribution is his longstanding commitment – indeed his deep passion – for the arts and sharing that joy with the community at large.

And I know he shares that with his wife Angela, and he has been generous in his love of the arts and the way he commits to it.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Li for his service – which I believe has benefitted already countless people in Victoria and beyond – and I'm sure it's a service that he will continue to build on. I wish him well.

I would also like to extend a welcome to Edgar Myer, the Board Chair-elect, and wish him all the best as he commences in the role.

He brings a breadth of professional experience and also a passion for music, and so he is well-placed to follow in Davis Li's footsteps and guide this important cultural institution into the future.

It is really important that we have Board Chairs who care so deeply, and are so deeply committed to the form that they are overseeing.

I think that really deeply enhances the commitment of all, including the Board and community, to the wonderful cultural institution of the Orchestra.

As we look to the year ahead, I would like to thank the musicians of the MSO, whose wonderful performances we experienced tonight.

I have already mentioned the stellar performances of conductor and guest performers that really enhanced the experience – I think that was a special moment.

And I'd like to thank the Board, the staff and all the supporters who are here for their wonderful work in contributing to the vibrancy of Victoria's musical culture.

Because, in the end, it's through these forms that we forge our deepest connections to one another, and it's often through the words we don't say that we get our greatest understanding.

So let me finish by saying:

蛇年大吉

Great luck in the Year of the Snake.

I now invite Dr David Li to address us.