

**Press Release**  
**For Immediate Release**

**Honorary Awards Ceremony of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts 2023**

(Oct 20, 2023) – The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (the Academy) has conferred Honorary Awards on five outstanding individuals today in recognition of their remarkable achievements and contributions to the performing arts and cultural industry and also the development of the Academy. The ceremony held at the Academy Lyric Theatre was officiated by the Academy Council Chairman, Mr. Edward Cheng Wai-sun *GBS JP*. Academy Director, Professor Gillian Choa, expressed her heartfelt gratitude for the Honorary Awardees' exemplary services and valuable support to the Academy and the community.

Recipient of Doctorate of the Academy *honoris causa*:  
Dr. Tisa Ho Kar-kuan *MH*

Recipients of Honorary Fellowship:  
Mr. Lau Yiu Kuen (Law Kar) *MH*  
Mr. Sang Jijia  
Mr. Tse Kwan Ho  
Professor John A Williams

Page 3 to 4: Citation of the recipient of Doctorate of the Academy *honoris causa*  
Page 5 to 8: Citations of the recipients of Honorary Fellowship

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**About The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) ([www.hkapa.edu](http://www.hkapa.edu))**

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), established by The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts Ordinance in 1984, is a leading tertiary institution in the performing arts in Asia. It provides professional undergraduate education and practice-based postgraduate studies. The study encompasses Chinese Opera, Dance, Drama, Film and Television, Music, and Theatre and Entertainment Arts. Its educational philosophy reflects the cultural diversity of Hong Kong with emphasis on Chinese and Western traditions, and interdisciplinary learning.

Since 2008, the Academy has attained the Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) status awarded by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) to self-monitor and accredit its own undergraduate and post-secondary programmes in the five programme areas of Dance, Drama, Film and Television, Music, and Theatre and Entertainment Arts. Since 2016, the PAA status has been extended to cover Master's Degree programmes and below; and since 2023, the programmes operated by the School of Chinese Opera accredited by HKCAAVQ has also received PAA status for its post-secondary and undergraduate programmes.

Besides the main campus in Wanchai, Béthanie, the site of the Academy's Landmark Heritage Campus in Pokfulam, has housed training facilities for the School of Film and Television since 2006.

In the QS University Rankings announced in 2023, the Academy ranks 1<sup>st</sup> in Asia and 13<sup>th</sup> in the world in the Performing Arts category.

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**Dr. Tisa Ho Kar-kuan MH - Doctorate of the Academy *honoris causa***

Dr. Tisa Ho Kar-kuan is a leading figure in the arts world, both locally and internationally. Upon graduation from The University of Hong Kong, she studied arts administration in Britain and subsequently took up key positions in the performing arts field in Singapore.

After working in Singapore for more than a decade, Dr. Ho returned to her home town of Hong Kong. She served as executive director of the Hong Kong Arts Festival (HKAF) from 2006 to 2022. Under her visionary leadership, the Hong Kong Arts Festival has become one of the most notable international arts festivals. During her tenure as executive director, the HKAF strengthened its capacity as a producer and publisher of original work, adding significant new works to the local repertoire, while the festival continued at the same time to present and co-produce high-level international productions. Dr. Ho has also extended the HKAF's scale and scope to include large-scale and site-specific works and *No Limits*, the annual series co-presented with The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust to promote inclusiveness in the performing arts. During this time, she also revitalised the Hong Kong Arts Administrators' Association, launched its work in training aspiring young managers and initiated the Cultural Leadership Summit, now an established highlight in the annual calendar.

In 2020, Dr. Ho initiated and oversaw the presentation of a digital version of the Festival, in response to restrictions posed by the pandemic. During the three years of the pandemic, Dr. Ho led her HKAF team to overcome challenges and successfully launch the Festival by bringing hybrid programmes of live and online performances, which received very positive feedback from the arts community as well as from audiences.

Dr. Ho's previous leadership roles in the performing arts included the supervision of government owned venues in Singapore, as well as the management of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and Victoria Concert Hall. She also held portfolios in arts policy and infrastructure development and served on the boards of numerous arts organisations. Her special achievements include establishing the Singapore International Piano Festival, setting up the Alliance of Asia-Pacific Region Orchestras, and building the first Shaw Foundation concert stage at Symphony Lake, in the Botanic Gardens. With regard to her commitment to community work, she was president of the Association of Women for Action and Research, chair of the Singapore Council of Women's Organisations, represented the NGO sector in United Nations meetings on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and was active in the ASEAN Women's Network as well as the International Women's Forum.

In addition, Dr. Ho was the chair of the board of directors of the International Society for the Performing Arts, the first arts administrator from Hong Kong to ever hold this position. She was a member of the board of The Hong Kong International Literary Festival and the chair of the Hong Kong Arts Administrators Association. She has also chaired the International Advisory Committee of the Tong Yeong Concert Hall in South Korea, served as a member of the Alliance of Asia-Pacific Region Orchestras, and on the International Faculty of the Accademia Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Italy.

Dr. Ho was voted Master of the Arts by the American Chambers of Commerce in Hong Kong in 2020, and elected member of the Hong Kong branch of the All China Literature and Arts Association in 2022. She also received a merit award from the Hong Kong government in 2021 for her distinguished services to the arts field. She was awarded an honorary doctorate from Griffith University in Australia in 2019, and also an honorary fellowship from Hong Kong Baptist University in 2022. Dr. Ho is always a loyal supporter of the Academy, giving valuable advice on performing arts education, arts and cultural developments as well as offering Academy students performance opportunities through various initiatives.

### Mr. Lau Yiu Kuen (Law Kar) MH - Honorary Fellowship

Mr. Lau Yiu Kuen, better known by his pseudonym Law Kar or his nickname “Uncle Kar”, is a veteran film critic and well-known film-research scholar. Mr. Lau has devoted much of his career to programming and film-history research, while always remaining a staunch promoter of Hong Kong cinema and its development. He is well-respected by film scholars in Hong Kong, the Mainland, and abroad. At the 41<sup>st</sup> Hong Kong Film Awards, in 2023, he was honoured with the professional-achievement award in recognition of his exceptional service to the field of film culture.

In the 1960s, Mr. Lau served as editor-in-chief of *The Chinese Student Weekly*. The publication introduced world cinema and film theory to readers, critiqued non-mainstream art films from overseas, and shone a light on local moves in Chinese films. In 1974, he joined a television station where he scripted and co-directed drama series for and with up-and-coming directors including Patrick Tam Ka-ming, Ann Hui On-wah, Yim Ho and Alex Cheung Kwok-ming. Mr. Lau co-founded the Hong Kong Film Culture Centre in 1978 alongside like-minded individuals from the Hong Kong film industry, seeking to promote and educate the public about Hong Kong’s film culture.

Mr. Lau’s contributions to Hong Kong film culture and history include his curation of publications and exhibitions that shed an in-depth light on these areas. He was heavily involved in the planning and coordination of the Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) in its early years. In the 1990s, he served as the programmer of the *Hong Kong Cinema Retrospective* section of the HKIFF as well as editor of the special issue of its official publication. He is also known for partnering with different generations of authors and scholars, promoting and guiding young people through joint discussion and research. Between 2001 and 2005, Mr. Lau was the programmer of the Hong Kong Film Archive, and in this capacity, helped to deepen public understanding of Hong Kong film history.

Mr. Lau is a prolific film researcher with numerous publications to his name. He also had a hand in the making of various documentaries related to film and cultural history. Among his best-regarded works are *Lai Man-wai: The Man, The Time, Cinema* (co-authored with Lai Shek, 1999), *Hong Kong Cinema: A Cross-Cultural View* (co-authored with Frank Bren, 2004), *Hong Kong Cinema: Dots and Lines* (2006), and his semi-biographical documentary, *Documemory* (2022).

Mr. Lau is a passionate educator who uses his professional knowledge and experience to nurture the young and support the development of the Academy, especially its film and television academic programmes. In the 1990s, he taught courses in scriptwriting and the history of film in Hong Kong, the Mainland, and Taiwan at the Academy. Mr. Lau earned the deep respect of students and colleagues for his relentless efforts in preparing talent for the film industry and his indisputable professionalism, which has had a long-lasting influence on the development of the entire industry.

### Mr. Sang Jijia - Honorary Fellowship

With more than 30 years of experience dedicated to the dance industry, Mr. Sang Jijia has established a reputation as a well-regarded choreographer and dancer on the international dance scene. He is currently serving as the Resident Choreographer at the City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC).

Mr. Sang became the first Asian dancer to be selected for the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative. As a result, he had the opportunity to work with renowned choreographer William Forsythe, and went on to become a dancer and choreographer at The Forsythe Company. Thanks to Mr. Sang's exceptional artistic talent and innovative approach, he has created captivating works that have mesmerised audiences around the world. His creations blend Eastern philosophies with contemporary techniques and multimedia elements, resulting in powerful and visually striking performances that explore complex themes.

Over the course of his career, Mr. Sang has created numerous works for prestigious institutions including the Academy, CCDC, Beijing Dance/LDTX, the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, and various local and international dance ensembles. His works have graced stages across the Mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Europe. Noteworthy international commissions include *Standing Before Darkness* (2004); *Not Here / Not Ever* (2013); *Pa/Ethos* (2015); *As It Were* (2018) and *Re-mark* (2018).

Mr. Sang is a staunch supporter of the Academy. He has been a guest choreographer at the School of Dance since 2014, providing him with a pivotal role for advancing the School's development and for nurturing dance talent. One impressive testament to his artistic prowess is the groundbreaking cross-stream production *Pathos*, created for the Academy's dance programme. It represented the School of Dance at the Academy's symposium in honour of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014, then embarked on a successful tour in Beijing as part of the Beijing Dance Academy's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration event. Mr. Sang's collaborations with the School benefited many of its students and helped deepen its approach to performance.

Apart from choreography, Mr. Sang serves as a mentor guiding aspiring dancers and choreographers, sharing his knowledge and expertise. He has inspired generations of young performers, encouraging them to follow their passion and unleash their potential. Meanwhile, Mr. Sang plays a significant role in helping the students of the Academy's School of Dance to forge successful careers in the performing arts, meshing well with the School's commitment to excellence in performing arts education.

By dedicating himself to the performing arts, Mr. Sang has cultivated an environment of cultural exchange, while supporting the development of the performing arts in Hong Kong, the Mainland, and beyond. He continues to be a fervent advocate for deeper cultural understanding while contributing his talents to the diverse global arts community.

## Mr. Tse Kwan Ho - Honorary Fellowship

Mr. Tse Kwan Ho, a highly accomplished and respected actor in the Hong Kong film industry, graduated from the Academy's School of Drama in 1989. What has unveiled since then amounts to a remarkable acting career.

After graduating from the Academy, Mr. Tse became one of the youngest chief actors at the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre. For the next eight years, he dedicated himself to refining his skills and laying a solid foundation on which to build with his acting. Transitioning into the film industry, his impressive portfolio includes numerous acclaimed works, such as *I Have a Date with Spring* (1994) and *The Mad Phoenix* (1997), for which he was recognised with the Golden Horse Award for Best Leading Actor in 1997. His recent works have also garnered significant attention, with *Hong Kong Family* (2022) grossing nearly HK\$13 million at the box office and *A Guilty Conscience* (2023) breaking the Hong Kong cinema record, surpassing HK\$114 million in box office revenue. In October 2023, Mr. Tse received an award of Best Actor in a Leading Role at the 7<sup>th</sup> Chinese Theatre Awards, in recognition of his exceptional and stellar performance in *The Top Restaurant*, which is a production of the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre.

Beyond his acting talent, Mr. Tse has also contributed substantially to the advancement of the Hong Kong film industry. As an advocate for its development, he engages with the Hong Kong Film Development Council to promote and enhance both the local film industry and its international reputation.

Besides his efforts in advocacy, Mr. Tse extends his influence by mentoring aspiring actors through collaborations with a variety of organisations and programmes, offering training and support to young talents to grow as promising artists. In 2016, he held the position of guest lecturer at the Academy of Film of Hong Kong Baptist University, where he imparted his expertise in acting to master's degree students. In 2019, Mr. Tse served as an ambassador for the Arts Ambassadors-in-School Scheme organised by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, inspiring young individuals to pursue careers in the performing arts. Working with local schools and community organisations, Mr. Tse highlights the importance of arts education and creates opportunities for younger generations.

Mr. Tse's career exemplifies the importance in the film industry of versatility and adaptability. From action movies to intimate dramas, he has demonstrated his skills as a multifaceted and talented actor, thanks to the flexibility and creativity fostered by the Academy's training. Mr. Tse is keen to contribute to the Academy as one of its renowned alumni, and is always willing to share his acting experiences and valuable career advice with students, showing his commitment to nurturing the performing arts talents in Hong Kong. He has persevered in honing his craft and pursuing his passion for acting. His dedication and commitment make him an excellent role model. Through his continued devotion to the industry and contribution to the community, Mr. Tse establishes himself as an exemplary and respected figure for aspiring actors, as well as an ardent advocate for performing arts education.

## **Professor John A Williams - Honorary Fellowship**

Professor John A Williams is a world-renowned lighting designer and performing arts educator. His hundreds of lighting-design works spanning from intimate theatrical productions to large-scale events, and have won him accolades worldwide.

Professor Williams began his professional career with the Bristol Old Vic, honing his craft at one of the leading theatre companies in England. He eventually became its head of lighting, creating lighting designs for its productions for 12 years. That led to lighting-design commissions from major repertory companies and producers around the world. Professor Williams now has more than 300 shows to his name including productions in London's West End and on Broadway in New York.

As an accomplished lighting consultant and designer, Professor Williams has won numerous awards including the Indiana Theatre Critics Awards for Best Lighting Design with *Twelfth Night*, while in Hong Kong the daily show *A Symphony of Lights* set a record for the largest permanent light and sound show in the Guinness Book of Records in 2005. It has been enjoyed by millions of locals and tourists for two decades. Professor Williams also designed similar large-scale multimedia productions in Macau and Thailand, in addition to numerous productions in Hong Kong. In 2008, Professor Williams was included in the *International Who's Who of Professionals* in recognition of his professional excellence.

Prior to joining the Academy, Professor Williams worked as a part-time lecturer for the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School for many years, and was invited to lecture at a number of prestigious schools including the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, Yale University, California Institute of the Arts, Bangkok University, Chulalongkorn University and the Theatre Academy in Finland.

Professor Williams joined the Academy in 1988 as the head of lighting design for the School of Technical Arts. He was appointed Dean of the School in 2003. He led its transformation from the School of Technical Arts as it grew into what's now the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts, amalgamating various departments and programmes to meet the ever-changing demands of the fast-moving performing arts industry. He spearheaded the establishment of the School's fast-track programme to provide training so that recruits can transition to entry-level positions within the industry. Professor Williams played a vital role in shaping the School in its early years, laying strong foundations that served it well in its growth and advancement.

Following his retirement in 2016, Professor Williams was appointed Emeritus Professor of the Academy, continuing to share his expertise regularly in masterclasses. Supporting the School as a scholarship donor, a patron of the School's productions, and a staunch supporter of the School's graduates through employment and mentoring, he also took on students in internship positions to work with international productions. Professor Williams had made great contributions and provided longstanding services to the School as well as to the Academy.