

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: 19 February 2020

Postponement of the HK Phil Japan and Korea Tour March 2020

[19 February 2020, Hong Kong] In view of current developments related to the coronavirus outbreak, along with discussions with our tour presenters, performing venues and related partners, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra's (HK Phil) tour to Japan and Korea has been postponed to a later time of the year. The tour was originally scheduled for 5 March to 13 March 2020 in Osaka Symphony Hall, Tokyo Suntory Hall, Deajeon Arts Center, Seoul Arts Center, Chuncheon Culture & Art Center, and Gwangju Culture & Art Center. New dates for the tour will be announced on relevant performing venues' websites shortly.

Mr Benedikt Fohr, Chief Executive of the HK Phil, says, "We are disappointed with the postponement. As a cultural ambassador for Hong Kong, the orchestra and its Music Director Jaap van Zweden were really looking forward to performing for audiences in Japan and Korea. However, we also put the health and well-being of our players, staff and audiences at the forefront of our priorities. We sincerely hope that the orchestra's home city, as well as other parts of the world, will recover soon and overcome the current challenging situation. Meanwhile, the HK Phil team is making every effort to schedule new dates for this tour and is committed to touring in Japan and Korea in the near future."

The HK Phil would like to thank our tour presenters in Japan and Korea, our performing venue partners, as well as sponsors, for their ongoing support.

Ticket holders for the affected concerts, please visit websites of relevant performing venues for ticketing assistance.

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For further press information please contact:

Meggy Cheng, Director of Marketing

Tel: +852 2721 9035 Email: meggy.cheng@hkphil.org

Flora Fung, Media Relations and Communications Manager

Tel: +852 2721 1585 Email: flora.fung@hkphil.org

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden

Principal Guest Conductor: Yu Long

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is recognised as Asia's foremost classical orchestra. Presenting more than 150 concerts over a 44-week season, the HK Phil attracts more than 200,000 music lovers annually. In 2019, the HK Phil received the prestigious *Gramophone* Orchestra of the Year Award – the first orchestra in Asia to receive this distinction.

Jaap van Zweden, one of today's most sought-after conductors, has been the orchestra's Music Director since the 2012/13 concert season, a position he will continue to hold until at least 2022. Maestro van Zweden is also Music Director of the New York Philharmonic since the 2018/19 season.

Yu Long has been Principal Guest Conductor since the 2015/16 season.

Under the dynamic leadership of Jaap van Zweden, the HK Phil has attained new heights of artistic excellence, garnering international critical acclaim. The orchestra successfully completed a four-year journey through Wagner's Ring Cycle, performing and recording one opera from the cycle each year from 2015 to 2018. The concert performances and live Naxos recordings were enthusiastically received by audiences, praised by critics at home and abroad and garnered Gramophone Orchestra of the Year Award 2019.

The HK Phil tours extensively across Mainland China and, with the support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, undertook a major tour in 2017 to Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and Sydney in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The orchestra will perform in Japan and Korea in 2020.

Thanks to a significant subsidy from the Hong Kong SAR Government and long-term funding from Principal Patron Swire, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and other supporters, the HK Phil presents an annual schedule of core classical repertoire and innovative popular programming, extensive education and community programmes, and collaborations with, among others, Opera Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Hong Kong Ballet.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Joshua Bell, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Matthias Goerne, Stephen Hough, Evgeny Kissin, Lang Lang, Yo-Yo Ma, Ning Feng, Leonard Slatkin and Yuja Wang.

The HK Phil promotes the work of Hong Kong and Chinese composers through an active commissioning programme, and has released recordings on the Naxos label featuring Tan Dun and Bright Sheng conducting their own compositions. Its acclaimed education and community engagement programmes in schools, hospitals and outdoor spaces bring music into the hearts of tens of thousands of children and families every year.

The Swire Group has been the Principal Patron of the HK Phil since 2006. Through this sponsorship, which is the largest in the orchestra's history, Swire endeavours to promote artistic excellence, foster access to classical music, stimulate cultural participation in Hong Kong, and enhance Hong Kong's reputation as one of the great cities in the world.

Originally called the Sino-British Orchestra, it was renamed the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in 1957 and became fully professional in 1974. The HK Phil is a charitable organisation.

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and is a Venue Partner of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. SWIRE is the Principal Patron of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.