

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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HK Phil announces extension of Jaap van Zweden's Music Director tenure through 2023/24 season

[13 June 2020, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) today is very pleased to announce that **Jaap van Zweden** has accepted to extend his Music Director contract for two more years, through the end of the 2023/24 season. This will bring Maestro van Zweden's extraordinary tenure as Music Director with the orchestra to an impressive 12 years. The HK Phil is thrilled that following his tenure as Music Director, he will hold the title of Conductor Laureate.

Jaap van Zweden, one of today's leading international conductors, has been the orchestra's Music Director since the 2012/13 concert season. Under his dynamic leadership, the HK Phil has attained new heights of artistic excellence, earning international critical acclaim. The orchestra successfully completed a four-year journey through Wagner's *Ring Cycle*. The concert performances and live Naxos recordings were enthusiastically received by audiences, praised by critics at home and abroad and garnered the *Gramophone* Orchestra of the Year Award 2019. The HK Phil is the first Asian orchestra to receive this prestigious international award.

"We are most fortunate to have Jaap as our Music Director since 2012. Within a few years of his leadership, he has transformed the HK Phil into a major world-class orchestra," said Y. S. Liu, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society. "Representing the entire Board of Governors, I am extremely proud of the achievements made by Jaap and all the musicians. We share the commitment to continue striving for the highest artistic excellence, locally, nationally and internationally." The spokesman of the Home Affairs Bureau stated, "The HK Phil is the flagship orchestra in Hong Kong, we are all proud of the marvellous achievements the orchestra has made under the leadership of Music Director Jaap van Zweden."

Jaap van Zweden said, "When I was asked to extend my Music Director tenure with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, I was very happy to do so by two more years. I am very proud of the work we have done together, especially the historic completion of the Wagner *Ring Cycle* which led to being singled out by *Gramophone* as the 2019 Orchestra of the Year. Building on our new history of firsts, in May 2021, we will be the first Asian Orchestra to ever appear at the prestigious Concertgebouw Mahler Festival in Amsterdam. We look forward to continuing to scale new heights in the years ahead."

Benedikt Fohr, Chief Executive of the HK Phil said, "The 2023/24 season is an important milestone in the orchestra's history as it will be the 50th anniversary of the HK Phil turning professional. We are excited that the Maestro's directorship of the HK Phil can be extended for another two years so that he can celebrate such a monumental season with us."

Jing Wang, Concertmaster of the HK Phil said, "It is our privilege to work with Maestro van Zweden, as he truly brings the best out in everyone." Lorenzo Losco, Chair of the Artistic Committee, and Benjamin Moermond, Chair of the Players Committee added, "The HK Phil is proud of its international reputation and the artistic achievements reached with our Music Director Jaap van Zweden. We look forward to continuing this successful partnership with many exciting projects in the coming seasons."

The orchestra just announced its exciting 2020/21 season, presenting 35 fantastic programmes featuring over 80 international and local guest artists. Five newly commissioned works by Hong Kong composers will be premiered. In the new season, Jaap van Zweden will lead the orchestra to tour to both Asia and Europe, showcasing Hong Kong's artistic excellence to the world!

Media Photos of Jaap van Zweden (Click the thumbnail to download photos)



Jaap van Zweden
Photo credit: Cheung Chi-wai / HK Phil



Jaap van Zweden
Photo credit: Wong Kin-chung / HK Phil



Jaap van Zweden and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo Credit: Christine Cheuk / HK Phil



Jaap van Zweden and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo Credit: Eric Hong / HK Phil



The Ring of Jaap van Zweden and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo Credit: Ka Lam / HK Phil



Jaap van Zweden video acceptance of Orchestra of the Year Award at the Gramophone Awards 2019.
Photo Credit: Askew Miller



Jaap van Zweden and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo Credit: Cheung Wai-lok / HK Phil

About Jaap van Zweden, Music Director

Over the past decade, conductor Jaap van Zweden has become an international presence on three continents. Currently Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, he is also Music Director of the New York Philharmonic – a post he has held since the 2018/19 season. Guest engagements this season include the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony and Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. Maestro van Zweden has appeared as guest conductor with many other leading orchestras around the globe, among them the Orchestre de Paris, Leipzig Gewandhausorchester, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Berlin Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra.

Jaap van Zweden has made numerous acclaimed recordings, the most recent of which is a September 2019 release with the New York Phil of the world premiere of Julia Wolfe’s *Fire in my mouth*, continuing the New York Phil’s partnership with Universal Music Group’s Decca Gold label. In 2018 with the HK Phil, he completed a four-year project conducting the first ever performances in Hong Kong of Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, which have been recorded and released on Naxos Records.

Maestro van Zweden was awarded the prestigious 2020 Concertgebouw Prize, given to musicians who have contributed to the artistic profile of the Concertgebouw over an extended period of time. Born in Amsterdam, van Zweden was the youngest ever concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. He began his conducting career in 1996 and in 2012 was named *Musical America’s* Conductor of the Year. In 1997, he and his wife Aaltje established the Papageno Foundation. The foundation supports families of children with autism.

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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 symphonic 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 earned the *Gramophone* Orchestra of the Year Award 2019. The HK Phil's performance of Beethoven's only opera *Fidelio* in October 2020 will be recorded live for the Naxos label.

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 undertake tours to 12 cities in Asia and Europe in the 2020/21 season, with the debut in Indonesia, Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the German cities of Cologne and Dresden; and the HK Phil will be having its debut at the prestigious Royal Concertgebouw's Mahler Festival 2021, the first Asian orchestra to perform at this prestigious event held every 25 years in Amsterdam.

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, Renée Fleming, Matthias Goerne, Stephen Hough, Evgeny Kissin, Lang Lang, Yo-Yo Ma, Ning Feng, Leonard Slatkin, The Labèque Sisters, 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.