**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HK Phil back on stage to preview its exciting 2020/21 season**

First audience-admitted concert broadcast live in 4K through 5G network

for music-lovers in HK and worldwide since January

**[6 July 2020, Hong Kong]** The **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** made its joyous return to the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall on 4 July after five months of venue closure. It was the orchestra’s first performance to a live audience since the re-opening of the concert hall in June. Over 70 orchestral members, under the baton of **Lio Kuokman**, together with Hong Kong pianists **Rachel Cheung** and **Colleen Lee**, as well as our own Concertmaster **Jing Wang**, were onstage to present an impressive preview of HK Phil’s 2020/21 season with their enthusiasm and artistry.

Chief Executive of the HK Phil, Mr Benedikt Fohr, expressed his pleasure at having the orchestra back on stage. “It has been a long time since the HK Phil last performed for a live audience. The 2020/21 season is fuelled by hope and resilience, with the theme ***From note to hope; In music we rejoice***. Through music-making, we bring people together; through music, we bring hope.” Conductor Lio Kuokman and the HK Phil performed alongside Hong Kong pianists Rachel Cheung and Colleen Lee in Beethoven’s Rondo and Mozart’s Piano Concerto no. 26, *Coronation*: 1st movement, and HK Phil Concertmaster Jing Wang in Beethoven’s Romance no. 2. The orchestra also performed masterworks by Ravel, Schumann and Stravinsky.

This concert presented a sampling of music from the upcoming 2020/21 season. Music-lovers from around the world enjoyed free access to this concert with an ultimate visual quality in 4K via 5G network on the HK Phil’s website, Facebook and YouTube channels, supported by 3 Hong Kong jointly with technology partner TFI. The concert was also live broadcast by RTHK Radio 4. Mr Fohr thanked our partners – 3 Hong Kong, TFI Digital Media Ltd and RTHK – for making this season preview concert accessible to thousands around the world, to engage our audience in our music-making through creative means.

Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of Hutchison Telecommunications Hong Kong Holdings Limited, Mr Kenny Koo said, “The live broadcast of the HK Phil 2020/21 Season Preview Concert in 4K ultra high-definition via 3 Hong Kong’s advanced 5G network was another success showcase of 5G applications in the performing arts. Through innovation and technology, we are delighted to bridge arts to the wider communities together with the HK Phil, and let music be experienced in a very unique way.”

Founder & CEO of TFI Digital Media Ltd., Mr Wilson Yuen said, "Video streaming technology continues to explore new ground. We are very excited to team up with the HK Phil and 3 Hong Kong to transform the making and sharing of music during this special period of time, and to bring people together."

The HK Phil puts the health and well-being of our audience, players and staff at the forefront. We, together with the venue, have worked as a collaborative team in making special arrangements both onstage and offstage. For onstage, we have come up with a different seating plan to provide enough space between the players, along with plastic shields for the wind players. For offstage, dedicated measures, such as temperature checks at admission and special seating arrangements, have been taken to ensure the well-being of the audience members. Deputy Director of Leisure & Cultural Services (Culture), Ms Elaine Yeung stated, “As the HK Phil’s venue partner, we are excited to welcome back the orchestra as well as our dear audience to the concert hall. Through effective social-distancing measures, we hope our audience feels safe as well as at ease as they engage with cultural activities.”

The HK Phil 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 Asia and Europe, showcasing Hong Kong’s artistic excellence to the world!

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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 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.