

PRESS RELEASE
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HK Phil Music Director Jaap van Zweden awarded the Silver Bauhinia Star of the HKSAR

[8 October 2020, Hong Kong] The **Music Director** of the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)**, **Jaap van Zweden**, has been awarded the Silver Bauhinia Star by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in recognition of his significant contribution to the development of the HK Phil and classical music in Hong Kong.

Maestro Jaap van Zweden has been the orchestra's Music Director since the 2012/13 concert season. In June 2020, the HK Phil announced that Jaap van Zweden had agreed to extend his Music Director contract through to 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.

Jaap van Zweden is one of today's leading international conductors. 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 have received this prestigious international award.

Jaap van Zweden said, "I am deeply moved and proud to receive this prestigious award. I sincerely thank the Hong Kong Government for acknowledging the successes that the orchestra and I have achieved together in the last 8 years. I shall continue to serve the Hong Kong community, to lead this wonderful orchestra of Hong Kong, and to showcase our finest music-making to the world."

On behalf of the HK Phil, Y. S. Liu, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society, has sent sincere congratulations to Maestro Jaap van Zweden for his award. He added that it is our privilege to work with Maestro van Zweden. Being a cultural ambassador for Hong Kong, the HK Phil and Maestro van Zweden will continue to scale new heights in artistic excellence for our home city Hong Kong, as well as the orchestra in the years ahead.

At the moment, Maestro van Zweden is back to Hong Kong undergoing quarantine, and he will be back to the stage with his orchestra, the HK Phil, performing for you five Beethoven symphonies on three nights over two weeks. Stay tuned for more details to be announced on Friday!

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: 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 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. In 2020, van Zweden has been awarded the Silver Bauhinia Star by the Hong Kong SAR Government, in recognition of his significant contribution to the development of the HK Phil and classical music in Hong Kong.

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, SBS

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 through to the end of the 2023/24 season. Following his tenure as Music Director, he will hold the title of Conductor Laureate. Maestro van Zweden has also been 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 annually 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 undertake tours to 10 cities in Europe in May 2021, with debuts in Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the German cities of Cologne and Dresden. The HK Phil will also be making its debut at the prestigious Royal Concertgebouw's Mahler Festival 2021, the first Asian orchestra to perform at this monumental event which is held every 25 years in Amsterdam.

Thanks to a significant subsidy from the HKSAR Government, as well as 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, Hong Kong Arts Festival, and 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, Katia and Marielle Labèque (the Labèque sisters), 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.