

PRESS RELEASE
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The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra Proudly Presents The First Arts Tech Programme – World Premiere of *The Metaverse Symphony*

[18 November 2022, Hong Kong] To extend the horizon of creativity in arts with innovative technology, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is pleased to launch a series of Arts Tech programmes in its 2022/23 and 2023/24 Seasons. The inaugural programme will be the world premiere of *The Metaverse Symphony* by Hong Kong composer [Elliot Leung](#), which will be held in May 2023 at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall.

Co-commissioned by the HK Phil and Asia Society Hong Kong Center, *The Metaverse Symphony* will be the world's first symphonic work to be performed in both a concert hall and the metaverse. In partnership with Artifact Labs, the symphony will make its virtual debut in The Sandbox metaverse. The metaverse performance will take place in a re-creation of Hong Kong's iconic Statue Square, and will be a fully immersive experience that showcases the unlimited possibilities of music in a virtual world.

Benedikt Fohr, HK Phil Chief Executive, said, "Innovative technology may lead arts of all kinds to new horizons. The HK Phil is proud to present our first-ever Arts Tech programme, connecting emerging composer Elliot Leung and our valued partners in creating the first metaverse-inspired symphony. Down this path we are committed to exploring the world of music with innovative, creative use of technology."

With the support of Ora-Ora, the project invites renowned digital artist [Henry Chu](#) to create a historic piece of digital artwork to be displayed in the concert hall and mapped onto the metaverse. It is hoped that the exhilarating programme will bring the audience an immersive trans-media experience, involving new technological developments, music and digital art.

As the Education Partner, a series of education programmes about the metaverse, digital art and symphonic music will be organised by the Asia Society Hong Kong Center to engage new generation and arts and music lovers.

The Metaverse Symphony will be held in May 2023 in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Please stay tuned for further details.

Education Partner: Asia Society Hong Kong Center

Metaverse Partner: Artifact Labs

Gallery Partner: Ora-Ora

Project Manager: MetaKapital

Artists

Elliot Leung, composer



Photo: Create HK
([Click the thumbnail to download image](#))

A Forbes 30 under 30 inductee and 3-time ASCAP Award winner, Elliot Leung has composed the score for 3 of the top 10 highest-grossing non-English films and is the first composer to break through from Hong Kong to Hollywood. His music has been described as being "audio-graphically visual" by *The Standard*, and being able to "tug the audience's heartstrings" by *Sina News*. *The South China Morning Post* observed him as "a seasoned composer who enhances the magic of cinema."

Henry Chu, digital artist

Henry Chu is a Hong Kong-based new media artist. He graduated from the Electrical and Electronic Engineering programme at the University of Auckland, and he founded digital design studio pill & pillow in 2004. Henry's digital creations received more than 200 local and international awards including recognition at the Cannes Lions, Webbys, and One Show. Henry always works with data, music and body movements. His iPad music app "Squiggle" was exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, New York in 2011. In 2020 Henry created a karaoke generator "Canto Cocktail" for the M+ Museum commission. In 2021 he presented "Blockchain Piano" in the Digital Art Fair Asia, which converts crypto price into music in real-time, and allows visitors to buy crypto through playing a song. In 2022, he received multiple commissions, which includes "Wind Piano" - Audemars Piguet 50 Years of Royal Oak exhibition, "I'm waiting to blossom" - HSBC Open to Art, "Portrait Play" - Hong Kong Museum of Art, "Quadtree series" - Bank of China HK and "SURIV" - HKU Faculty of Medicine. His video work "Flower World" was sold at a Sotheby's auction on 1 Nov 2022. He has been a speaker at Business of Design Week, TEDxKowloon, and TEDxTaipei.

About Asia Society Hong Kong Center

Asia Society Hong Kong Center (ASHK) is an independent non-governmental educational organisation established in 1990. It is one of 14 centers of Asia Society's diverse network across the globe, with the mission to navigate shared futures for Asia and the world in the fields of arts and culture, business and policy. Since 2012, ASHK is situated at the Former Explosives Magazine of the Victoria Barracks, a site steeped in history, cultural significance and natural beauty. Through conservation, restoration and adaptive reuse, the heritage site has been transformed into a cultural and intellectual hub, combining heritage preservation with a distinct modern aesthetic complete with world-class performance and conference facilities that offer a broad range of arts and culture, business and policy programmes, and exhibitions to the community.

About Artifact Labs

Artifact Labs is an independent web3 and NFT company building blockchain strategies, products, and platforms that serve organisations with historical IP. The company is on a mission to 'Preserve and Connect History' on the blockchain, and enable all guardians of history to maximise the impact of their most valuable assets by tokenising them as 'ARTIFACTs'. Artifact Labs is a one-stop solution for partners looking to launch unique NFT projects and build in web3, providing support through advisory services, product development, blockchain engineering, and community management. All 'ARTIFACTs' are connected via a proprietary metadata standard that is governed by the non-profit Artifact Foundation, which allows for the verifiable authentication and global discovery of historical NFTs. Artifact Labs was originally incubated by the *South China Morning Post*, a global news media company that has reported on China for the world since 1903.

About Ora-Ora

Ora-Ora began in Hong Kong in 2006 and quickly established itself as a force and catalyst for innovation and openness of expression. Academically rigorous and philosophically-minded, our artists embody a fresh spirit of curiosity and enquiry. By interpreting and re-evaluating established frameworks of thought, they pursue unforeseen perspectives on the world around us. Ora-Ora believes in the power of eschewing boundaries and limitations, and combines an esteem for ancient traditions with a passion for the most contemporary and ground-breaking artistic media. Long recognised for our successful development of Asian creative talent, we have grown to represent artists from Asia, Europe and the US. Restlessly broadening our horizons, we continue to develop

alliances and partnerships with institutions worldwide to enable discovery of our artists in new environments. Dr. Henrietta Tsui-Leung, co-founder of Ora-Ora, is also co-founder of the Hong Kong Art Gallery Association, which has played a lead role in nurturing the diverse and thriving art ecosystem in the city.

About MetaKapital

MetaKapital offers an all-encompassing, one-stop product suite to enable companies, institutions and brands to launch their presence in the Metaverse, supporting all aspects of the journey from inception to monetisation. Our capabilities include the creation of NFTs and other digital assets, tokenisation, IP creation, and the developing of entire digital ecosystems in the Metaverse. MetaKapital is a worthy partner to global cultural institutions, international corporations and trusted brands. Founded and managed by experts from the worlds of banking, art and NFTs, MetaKapital is itself supported by diverse blockchain pioneers and specialists. Its extensive network and experience provides clients with the resources, support and advice they need to initiate, maintain and amplify their presence in the digital world.

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden, SBS

Principal Guest Conductor: Yu Long

Resident Conductor: Lio Kuokman, JP

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. Recently the HK Phil won the prestigious UK classical music magazine *Gramophone's* 2019 Orchestra of the Year Award – the first orchestra in Asia to receive this accolade.

Jaap van Zweden, SBS, one of today's most sought-after conductors, has been the orchestra's Music Director since the 2012/13 Season, a position he will hold until the end of the 2023/24 Season. 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.

Lio Kuokman, JP has been appointed Resident Conductor since December 2020.

Under the dynamic leadership of Jaap van Zweden, the HK Phil has attained new heights of artistic excellence, receiving 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 were enthusiastically received by audiences, and the live Naxos recordings were praised by critics and garnered the *Gramophone* Orchestra of the Year Award 2019.

The HK Phil has toured extensively across Mainland China and, with the support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, it 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 of the People's Republic of China.

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

The HK Phil promotes the work of Hong Kong and Chinese composers through an active commissioning programme, and it 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. Founded in 2021, "The Orchestra Academy Hong Kong", funded by "TrustTomorrow" of The Swire Group Charitable Trust and co-directed with The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, aims at enhancing professional training for graduates from The HKAPA's School of Music to facilitate their career development in the orchestral field.

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.

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

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 registered 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.