

PRESS RELEASE
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Jaap van Zweden, Lio Kuokman and the HK Phil Concluded Guangzhou and Shenzhen Tours with a Resounding Success

[6 December 2023, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil), led by Music Director Jaap van Zweden and Resident Conductor Lio Kuokman, recently concluded its successful tours in the Greater Bay Area. Following a four-year hiatus, the orchestra delivered spectacular performances at three concerts held at the Xinghai Concert Hall in Guangzhou on 10 and 24 November 2023, and at the Shenzhen Concert Hall on 25 November 2023 respectively. These performances garnered immense praise from the audience, earning thunderous applause. The concerts were made possible with the support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Guangdong of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Xinghai Concert Hall 25th Anniversary Season **Jaap van Zweden & HK Phil: Mahler Symphony No. 1 (10 November)**

To commemorate the golden jubilee of the HK Phil and the 25th anniversary season of Xinghai Concert Hall, Jaap van Zweden delighted the Guangzhou audience with a symphonic feast. The concert commenced with Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture no. 3, a captivating orchestral adventure distilling the essence of his opera *Fidelio*. Tchaikovsky's *Capriccio Italien* followed, capturing the carnival atmosphere on the streets of Italy. The journey culminated with Mahler's monumental First Symphony, often referred to as the "Titan", commanding an augmented orchestral presence to bring forth the awe-inspiring sound of nature.

Xinghai Concert Hall 25th Anniversary Season **Lio Kuokman & HK Phil: From Gershwin to Williams (24 November)**

Under the baton of Resident Conductor Lio Kuokman, the HK Phil presented an unforgettable evening of iconic hits from blockbuster movies by John Williams, Bernstein's Broadway musicals, and Gershwin's concerto of the Jazz Age New York. The performance featured HK Phil Principal Cello Richard Bamping, along with sopranos Louise Kwong and Vivian Yau. Lio Kuokman's multi-talent shone through both as a conductor and a piano soloist in Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*.

Shenzhen Concert Hall **Lio Kuokman and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra Concert (25 November)**

In celebration of its 50th anniversary, the HK Phil enthralled the audience with Dvořák's Ninth Symphony, *From the New World*. Lio Kuokman took on the role of a piano solo, leading the orchestra in Gershwin's iconic concerto *Rhapsody in Blue*, bringing to life the glamorous Jazz Age New York of the roaring twenties. Opening the concert was Bernstein's popular Broadway classic *Candide* Overture and Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town*.

As a cultural ambassador of Hong Kong, the HK Phil is dedicated to participating in cultural exchange, showcasing the artistic excellence of Hong Kong locally, nationally, and internationally. In May 2024, HK Phil Principal Guest Conductor Long Yu will lead the orchestra on a journey to Mainland China again, presenting an enticing East-meets-West programme to the audience.

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Xinghai Concert Hall 25th Anniversary Season
Jaap van Zweden & HK Phil: Mahler Symphony No. 1 (10 November)

(photo: Xinghai Concert Hall)



Xinghai Concert Hall 25th Anniversary Season
Lio Kuokman & HK Phil: From Gershwin to Williams (24 November)

(photo: Xinghai Concert Hall)



Lio Kuokman



Louise Kwong



Richard Bamping



Lio Kuokman



Vivian Yau

Shenzhen Concert Hall

Lio Kuokman and Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra Concert (25 November)

(photo: Shenzhen Concert Hall)



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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 one of Asia's foremost classical orchestras. Presenting more than 150 concerts over a 44-week season, the HK Phil attracts more than 200,000 music lovers annually. 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. Following his tenure as Music Director, he will hold the title of Conductor Laureate. Jaap 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, was appointed Resident Conductor in 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 well received, 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. The orchestra 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. In the 2023/24 Season, the orchestra will embark on global tours to more than 18 cities.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Anja Bihlmaier, Stéphane Denève, Christoph Eschenbach, Paavo Järvi, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Tarmo Peltokoski, Vasily Petrenko, Krzysztof Urbanski, Ning Feng, Boris Giltburg, Leonidas Kavakos, Olivier Latry and Akiko Suwanai. 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, each conducting their own compositions.

The HK Phil runs diverse education and community programmes in schools, hospitals and outdoor spaces, bringing 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 HKAPA's School of Music and facilitating 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.