

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Date: 28 December 2023

## HK Phil Celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with Beethoven | Choral Fantasy Concert



**[28 December 2023, Hong Kong]** The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is thrilled to announce its upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Heritage Concert, titled “Beethoven | Choral Fantasy”. Taking place on 12 and 13 January 2024, this event will commemorate the orchestra's rich history and achievements.

### **Beethoven | Choral Fantasy (12 & 13 January 2024)**

Once known as the Sino-British Orchestra, the HK Phil became formally professionalised five decades years ago. To herald in this new chapter of the orchestra's history, the HK Phil performed Beethoven's *Egmont* Overture and Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 5 at its inaugural concert on 11 January 1974. Now, on the same weekend 50 years later, the HK Phil will commemorate its golden jubilee by performing those two works alongside Beethoven's *Choral Fantasy*. Conducted by Andris Poga, the performances will be joined by sopranos Louise Kwong and Yuki Ip, mezzo-soprano Samantha Chong, tenors Chen Yong and Freddie Tsang, bass-baritone Apollo Wong, pianist Rachel Cheung and the HK Phil Chorus.

“Beethoven | Choral Fantasy” will be held on 12 & 13 January 2024 (Fri & Sat) at 8PM in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets priced at HK\$480, \$380, \$280 and \$200 are available at URBTIX. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](http://hkphil.org).

### **Sing Along: Beethoven Symphony no. 9 (13 January 2024)**

As an exciting addition to the anniversary festivities, the HK Phil invites vocal enthusiasts to participate in its first-ever sing-along session, “Sing Along: Beethoven Symphony no. 9”, featuring the iconic finale “Ode to Joy” from the Ninth Symphony. This unique opportunity allows choristers to sing along with the orchestra, soprano Louise Kwong, mezzo-soprano Samantha Chong, tenor Chen Yong, bass-baritone Apollo Wong, and the HK Phil Chorus. The open rehearsal will commence at 3PM, followed by the orchestra session at 5PM. The performance will take place at 5:30PM.

“Sing Along: Beethoven Symphony no. 9” will be held on 13 January 2024 (Sat) at 3PM in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets uniformly priced at HK\$50 as “HK Phil Jubilee Tickets” are available at URBTIX. Audience members are recommended to select a category that correspond to your voice to better follow your voice part in the sing-along. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](http://hkphil.org).

## **50 Years of Harmony: The HK Phil in Posters (28 December 2023 – 14 January 2024)**

To complement the concert-going experience and foster community engagement, the “50 Years of Harmony: The HK Phil in Posters” exhibition will be held from today until 14 January 2024, in the foyer of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The exhibition will feature 50 sets of classic posters that reflect the orchestra's growth and transformation over the years. From the early retro designs to the recent innovative ones, each poster embodies the dedicated pursuit of musical art, while also illustrating significant moments in the orchestra's journey of development.

Join the HK Phil as it celebrates the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, paying homage to its past while embracing a future filled with artistic excellence and musical innovation.

\*\*\*

### **Artists**

#### **Andris Poga, conductor** [\[full description\]](#)

Andris Poga is the Chief Conductor of the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra. He was the Music Director of the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra (LNSO) from 2013 till 2021 and continues to collaborate with the LNSO as its Artistic Advisor. Recent highlights include concerts with the leading orchestras of Germany, France, Italy, Japan and Scandinavia. After the first successful collaborations he has been invited back to the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester Hamburg, WDR Symphony Cologne, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, NHK Symphony Orchestra Tokyo and many others. He has also conducted the Wiener Symphoniker, Saint Petersburg Philharmonic, Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, the HK Phil and Sydney Symphony.

#### **Louise Kwong, soprano** [\[full description\]](#)

Louise Kwong's musical achievements are recognised by being awarded one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons Awards in 2019, and the Young Artist Award by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council in 2014. Internationally, she made debuts at the Rome Opera House as Mimì in *La Bohème*, and as Micaëla in *Carmen* at Caracalla Rome. She has performed in different opera houses such as the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam and the Graz Opera House of Austria.

#### **Yuki Ip, soprano** [\[full description\]](#)

Soprano Yuki Ip's major performances include being the featured soloist with José Carreras for the inaugural season of the National Centre of the Performing Arts, Beijing, China; her European debut at the Basilica di San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy, singing Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* in a special concert commemorating the landmark meeting between the Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church; Villa-Lobos' *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5* in Verona and Cremona, Italy; Bach's Mass in B Minor and Haydn's *The Creation* under the baton of Helmuth Rilling; guest solo appearance at the Shanghai Expo with Shanghai Opera House Orchestra; debut in New York City and Toronto as soprano soloist in An-Lun Huang's *Revelation*; her debut with Macau Orchestra in the Macau Handover Anniversary Concert; Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Trancredi e Clorinda* and Bach's *Coffee Cantata* at the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

#### **Samantha Chong, mezzo-soprano** [\[full description\]](#)

A native of Sabah, Malaysia, mezzo-soprano Samantha Chong's repertoire spans early music, oratorio, songs, opera and contemporary works. She was the winner of the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Vocal competition, organised by Singapore Lyric Opera in 2016. She also won the 1<sup>st</sup> prize at the 41<sup>st</sup> National Singing Competition of Malaysia in 2015. After her graduation, she started her career as a soloist with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Opera Hong Kong, Musica Viva and Global Symphony Orchestra. Samantha has made her Italian debut in 2019 with Teatro Petruzzelli, singing Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Recently, she has been invited to perform with Erasmus Orchestra, Hong Kong Art Festival, Hong Kong – Vienna Music Festival, Kuala Lumpur City Opera, Singapore Lyric Opera, Virama Music Malaysia, China Sichuan Music Conservatory and Mozart Festival in Shenzhen, China.

**Chen Yong, tenor** [\[full description\]](#)

Chen Yong is one of Hong Kong's leading lyric tenors, and a familiar local presence in both opera and recital. He has sung lead roles in operas by Bellini, Gounod, Donizetti, Mozart, Rossini, Bizet, Offenbach, Verdi, Lehár, Leoncavallo and Puccini produced by Opera Hong Kong, Opera Shanghai, the French May Arts Festival, the Italian Cultural Institute, the Asia Society and has starred in two opera films broadcast on Hong Kong television and screened in cinemas. His performance of Beppe in Donizetti's *Rita* has been released on CD by DaVinci. The *South China Morning Post* noted his "vigour and character", while the *Asian Review of Books* has called his performances "suave" and characterised by "vaudevillian verve".

**Freddie Tsang, tenor** [\[full description\]](#)

Tenor Freddie Tsang is a graduate of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA), from which he attained his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music under the tutelage of Soprano Nancy Yuen and tenor David Quah. He is the recipient of several prestigious scholarships, including the HSBC Hong Kong Scholarship, the Royal Commonwealth Scholarship, Cecil Leong Scholarship and The APA Society Scholarship. He has attended masterclasses with world-acclaimed singers including Francisco Araiza, Nelly Miricioiu, Mario Diaz, Shen Yang, Warren Mok and more. Tsang was one of the finalists in Concorso Lirico Internazionale "Gaetano Donizetti" in Como, Italy.

**Apollo Wong, bass-baritone** [\[full description\]](#)

A native of Hong Kong, Apollo Wong is a conductor and operatic bass. He has sung operatic and musical roles including the Superintendent Budd and Bottom in Britten's *Albert Herring* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Frère Laurent in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette*, Colline and Simone in Puccini's *La Bohème* and *Gianni Schicchi*, Don Alfonso, Sarastro and Masetto in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, *Die Zauberflöte* and *Don Giovanni*, Geppetto in Valtinoni's *Pinocchio*, and Javert in *Les Misérables*, among others. Amongst his concert and oratorio repertoire, he has notably both sung the bass solos and conducted Brahms' *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Mahler's *Symphony no. 8 "Symphony of a Thousand"*, Verdi's *Messa da Requiem* and Fauré's *Requiem*.

**Rachel Cheung, piano** [\[full description\]](#)

2017 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition Finalist & Audience Award Winner pianist Rachel Cheung is hailed as "a poet, but also a dramatist" displaying "the most sophisticated and compelling music-making" (*The Dallas Morning News*). Also a Young Steinway Artist, she continues to build a reputation for giving sensitive and refined performances across three continents. She has appeared with the St Petersburg Philharmonic, Jerusalem Symphony, Sydney Symphony, London Chamber and Fort Worth Symphony Orchestras. She has also given recitals and chamber music concerts in New York, Toronto, Paris, Hamburg and London, collaborating with world-renowned musicians like violinist Ning Feng, violist Vladimir Mendelssohn, cellists Jan-Erik Gustafsson and the Brentano String Quartet.

**Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus** [\[full description\]](#)

Established in 1980, the HK Phil Chorus has collaborated with the HK Phil to perform a range of works over the years. In 2013, the Chorus undertook a new recruitment drive, and over 450 singers were attracted to attend the auditions. The first performance by the newly reformed Chorus was Handel's *Messiah*. Since then, the Chorus has performed with the HK Phil in major works by composers including Britten, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Haydn and Mahler under renowned conductors Lorin Maazel, Jaap van Zweden and Nicholas McGegan. The Chorus' Fellowship programme was inaugurated during the 2020/21 Season, setting the stage for aspiring professional singers to join this distinguished ensemble.

\*\*\*

## BEETHOVEN | CHORAL FANTASY

12 & 13 | 1 | 2024

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$480 \$380 \$280 \$200

Tickets now available at URB.TIX

For ages 6 and above

### Artists

[Andris Poga](#)

conductor

[Louise Kwong](#)

soprano

[Yuki Ip](#)

soprano

[Samantha Chong](#)

mezzo-soprano

[Chen Yong](#)

tenor

[Freddie Tsang](#)

tenor

[Apollo Wong](#)

bass-baritone

[Rachel Cheung](#)

piano

[Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus](#)

### Programme

BEETHOVEN

Overture to *Egmont*

BEETHOVEN

*Choral Fantasy*

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony no. 5

[Download](#) press images



**Andris Poga**

Photo: Jānis Deinats

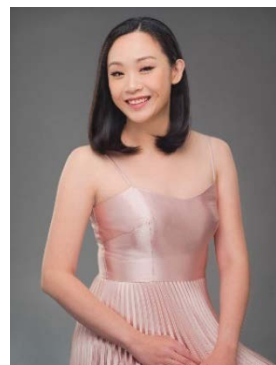


**Louise Kwong**



**Yuki Ip**

Photo: Topaz Leung



**Samantha Chong**



**Chen Yong**

Photo: Mr Wong, Yankov's



**Freddie Tsang**



**Apollo Wong**



**Rachel Cheung**





**Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus**  
Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil



**Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra**  
Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil

\*\*\*

## SING ALONG: BEETHOVEN SYMPHONY NO. 9

13 | 1 | 2024

SAT

3PM Piano rehearsal with audience

4:30PM Intermission

5PM Final rehearsal with conductor, orchestra, soloists, chorus and audience

5:30PM Performance

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$50

Tickets now available at URBIX

For ages 6 and above

### Artists

[Andris Poga](#)

conductor

[Louise Kwong](#)

soprano

[Samantha Chong](#)

mezzo-soprano

[Chen Yong](#)

tenor

[Apollo Wong](#)

bass-baritone

[Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus](#)

### Programme

**BEETHOVEN**

Symphony no. 9: movement IV

[Download](#) press images

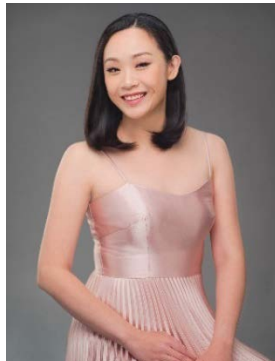


**Andris Poga**

Photo: Jānis Deinars



**Louise Kwong**



**Samantha Chong**



**Chen Yong**



**Apollo Wong**



**Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus**

Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil



**Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra**

Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil

\*\*\*

## 50 YEARS OF HARMONY: THE HK PHIL IN POSTERS

28 | 12 | 2023 – 14 | 1 | 2024

9AM – 11PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Foyer

Free admission and all ages welcome

[Download](#) press images



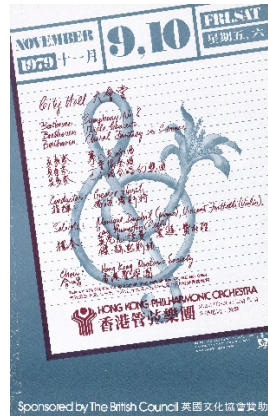
**50 Years of Harmony: The HK Phil in Posters**

Photo: HK Phil



On 27 & 28 April 1979, Nancy Loo performed as a solo pianist with the HK Phil in Saint-Saëns' Piano Concerto no. 2 under the direction of the then Principal Conductor and Music Director Hans Günter Mommer.

Photo: HK Phil



Prior to the establishment of the HK Phil Chorus, the HK Phil relied on outside collaborators for choral performances, including the joint concert on 9 & 10 November 1979 with the Hong Kong Oratorio Society.

Photo: HK Phil



The HK Phil launched subscription plans early in 1981/82 Season. Early on, it was available on a half-yearly basis. Not until the 1990s were subscribers able to book tickets for an entire season in advance.

Photo: HK Phil

--- END ---

For further press information please contact:

**Dennis Wu, Director of Marketing**

Tel: +852 2721 9035 Email: [dennis.wu@hkphil.org](mailto:dennis.wu@hkphil.org)

**Emily Hui, Media Relations & Communications Manager**

Tel: +852 2721 1585 Email: [emily.hui@hkphil.org](mailto:emily.hui@hkphil.org)



## 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.