

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: 27 May 2024

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra Concludes Mainland Tour Across Seven Cities to Thundering Applause With Conductor Long Yu, Paloma So and Jian Wang

“In the second half of the concert (Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*), the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra presented its powerful and beautifully layered strings, warm and gentle woodwinds, as well as the robust brass section, spellbinding the audience with the artistic charm of the ‘HK Phil sounds’.”

— Meng Qi, *Music Weekly* (Beijing)

“Cellist Jian Wang took the stage, blending his virtuosity perfectly with the orchestra, resulting in a lyrical and genuine interpretation of the piece (Tchaikovsky’s *Variations on a Rococo Theme*).”

— *Beijing Daily*

“With her imaginative playing, Paloma So’s first stage performance of a Chinese symphonic work (He Zhanhao and Chen Gang’s *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto*) was a breath of fresh air for the audience.”

— *Wen Wei Po* (Shanghai)

[27 May 2024, Hong Kong] From 8 to 18 May 2024, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) held a successful large-scale tour across seven cities in Mainland China, receiving enthusiastic support from audiences at every concert. Under the baton of HK Phil Principal Guest Conductor Long Yu, the orchestra presented a captivating East-meets-West programme alongside young violinist Paloma So and internationally renowned cellist Jian Wang. The concerts were held at Wuxi Grand Theatre on 8 May, Shanghai Oriental Art Center on 9 May, Wuhan Qintai Concert Hall on 11 May, Changsha Concert Hall on 12 May, Harbin Concert Hall on 15 May, Shenyang Shengjing Grand Theatre on 16 May, and the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing on 18 May. The HK Phil extends special thanks to the Beijing Office, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Shanghai, the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Wuhan, and the Liaoning Liaison Unit of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for their support.

Violinist Paloma So performed He Zhanhao and Chen Gang’s *Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* in Wuxi and Shanghai. Cellist Jian Wang showcased Tchaikovsky’s *Variations on a Rococo Theme* in Shanghai, Wuhan, Changsha, Harbin, Shenyang, and Beijing. Most concerts opened with selections from Bao Yuankai’s orchestral suite *Chinese Sights and Sounds*, including “Flowing Stream”, “Going to West Gate”, and “Dialogue on Flowers”, all of which vividly depict traditional Chinese culture with folk songs. Composer Bao Yuankai attended the concert held at the National Centre for the Performing Arts, praising the HK Phil’s performance for its consistent style and smooth execution under Long Yu’s baton.

The concerts concluded with either Dvořák’s Symphony no. 9, which blends folk melodies from the composer’s Czech homeland with energetic sounds from America, or Rimsky-Korsakov’s *Scheherazade*, well-known for its rich orchestration and exotic melodies that bring the exotic tales of *One Thousand and One Nights* to life.

In addition to the stage performances, the HK Phil held a series of educational and outreach events in multiple cities, with an aim to promote orchestral music in schools and communities. On 14 May, Long Yu, Jian Wang, HK Phil Concertmaster Jing Wang, First Associate Concertmaster Leung Kin-fung, Principal Horn Lin Jiang and Associate Principal Cor Anglais Kwan Sheung-fung shared their musical experiences with nearly 200 teachers and students at the Harbin Conservatory of Music. Before the performance, the HK Phil had a joint open rehearsal with the Harbin Symphony Orchestra on 15 May, fostering musical exchange. On 16 May, HK Phil Second Associate Concertmaster Wang Liang conducted a violin masterclass at the Shenyang Conservatory of Music, providing advice on performance techniques and musical interpretation to over 50 students majoring in orchestral

music. The HK Phil also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Shenyang Conservatory of Music to foster collaborations. In Beijing, Long Yu and the orchestra's Principals visited the Central Conservatory of Music, conducting well-received masterclasses for over 100 students.

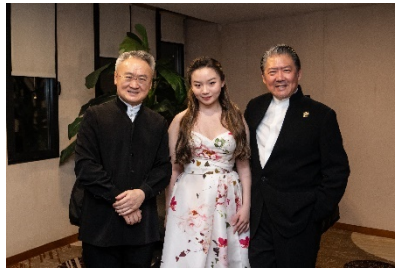
HK Phil Principal Guest Conductor Long Yu remarked, "We have been truly inspired by the enthusiastic audience in each city! I am delighted to lead the HK Phil on its largest Mainland tour in recent years. Besides Beijing and Shanghai, the orchestra visited the other cities for the first time. This tour is significant as it allows the HK Phil to connect with the Mainland audiences and showcase their exceptional musical talents."

As a cultural ambassador of Hong Kong, the HK Phil is dedicated to fostering cultural exchange and showcasing the artistic excellence of Hong Kong locally, nationally, and internationally. In celebration of its 50th anniversary in the 2023/24 Season, the HK Phil toured Europe, Asia, and various cities of China, performing in 22 cities across ten countries.

[Download](#) press photos



1. Paloma So performs at Wuxi Grand Theatre
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



2. (From left) Jian Wang, Paloma So and Long Yu
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



3. Jian Wang performs at Shanghai Oriental Art Center
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



4. Wuhan Quintet Concert Hall
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



5. Changsha Concert Hall
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



6. Harbin Concert Hall
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



7. Harbin Concert Hall
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



8. Long Yu, Jian Wang, HK Phil Concertmaster Jing Wang, First Associate Concertmaster Leung Kin-fung, Principal Horn Lin Jiang, and Associate Principal Cor Anglais Kwan Sheung-fung share their musical experiences with the teachers and students at the Harbin Conservatory of Music
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



9. Joint open rehearsal with the Harbin Symphony Orchestra
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



10. HK Phil Second Associate Concertmaster Wang Liang conducts a masterclass at the Shenyang Conservatory of Music



11. Shenyang Shengjing Grand Theatre
 Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



12. Beijing National Centre for Performing Arts
 Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



13. Long Yu and the orchestra's Principals visit the Central Conservatory of Music and conduct masterclasses
 Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



14. Beijing National Centre for the Performing Arts
 Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil

--- END ---

For further press information please contact:

Dennis Wu, Director of Marketing

Tel: +852 2721 9035 Email: dennis.wu@hkphil.org

Emily Hui, Media Relations & Communications Manager

Tel: +852 2721 1585 Email: emily.hui@hkphil.org

Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden, SBS

Principal Guest Conductor: Long Yu

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. Long Yu 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 embarks on global tours to 22 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.

The Swire Group has been the Principal Patron of the HK Phil since 2006. Through this current sponsorship donation, which is the largest amount received in the orchestra's history, Swire endeavours to foster access to classical music and stimulate cultural participation in Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland – a critical aspect of this is to engage with the community, especially young people. The sponsorship will also help promote local artistic excellence 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.