

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: 27 November 2013

Hong Kong Philharmonic's “Eastern Europe Postcards with Paul Watkins” (Dec 4 & 5)

[27 November 2013, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic (HK Phil) is delighted to welcome two distinguished musicians – conductor [Martyn Brabbins](#) and cellist [Paul Watkins](#), in a programme discovering the musical landscape of Czechoslovakia, Poland, Estonia and Hungary, in “**Eastern Europe Postcards with Paul Watkins**” (Dec 4 & 5), as part of the “World Cultures Festival 2013 – Lasting Legacies of Eastern Europe” presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

In this musical adventure, the HK Phil and conductor Martyn Brabbins first take you on a ghost walk, to explore Dovřák's *The Noon Witch*, a thrilling dark tale of a witch who arrives at the stroke of midday to take away a naughty child. It then ends with Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, which strange harmonies coloured the horror movie, *The Shining* by director Stanley Kubrick. This programme also pays tribute to two important musical centenaries - Benjamin Britten and Witold Lutosławski – in Arvo Pärt's touching memorial for Britten in his *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*, and Witold Lutosławski's powerful cello concerto, featuring the Welsh cellist Paul Watkins.

Born in 1970, **Paul Watkins** was appointed Principal Cellist of the BBC Symphony at the age of 20. He made his concerto début at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw with the Netherlands Philharmonic and toured in China with the BBC Scottish Symphony. He has collaborated with world renowned conductors and orchestras. A dedicated chamber musician, he was a member of the Nash Ensemble and recently, joined the Emerson String Quartet.

Martyn Brabbins is Chief Conductor of the Nagoya Philharmonic and Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic, and was previously Associate Principal Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

“**Eastern Europe Postcards with Paul Watkins**” will be held on **4 & 5 December 2013 (Wed & Thu), 8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Tickets priced: \$360, \$280, \$200, \$140, are now available at URBTIX. Free Pre-concert talks given by renowned musicologist Dr. Joanna C. Lee in English (Wed, 4 Dec) and in Cantonese (Thu, 5 Dec) will be held at 7:15pm on the 4/F Foyer of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Auditoria Building. For enquiries, please call 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org.

Artists

Martyn Brabbins, conductor [\[full biography\]](#)

British conductor Martyn Brabbins is Chief Conductor of the Nagoya Philharmonic (from 2013) and Principal Guest Conductor of the Royal Flemish Philharmonic. He was previously Artistic Director of the Cheltenham International Festival of Music 2005-2007 and Associate Principal Conductor of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra 1994-2005.

Brabbins is known for his affinity with music of the late 19th/early 20th centuries, to which he brings a Romantic sensibility, unerring sense of pace and an extraordinary ear for detail. He is also closely associated with British music, and has conducted hundreds of world premieres and has close links with many of today's foremost composers.

Recent highlights have included his *début* with the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra; the First Night of the BBC Proms with the BBC Symphony (shared with Elder, Norrington and Gardner); a world premiere by Christian Jost at the Flemish Opera; a rare staging of Vaughan Williams' *A Pilgrim's Progress* at English National Opera; a Brahms cycle in Japan, and Elgar with the Deutsche Symphonie Orchester.

Paul Watkins, cellist [\[full biography\]](#)

Born in 1970 and appointed Principal Cellist of the BBC Symphony at the age of 20, Paul Watkins has collaborated with world renowned conductors including Berglund, Slatkin, Litton, Sir Mark Elder and Sir Charles Mackerras. He performs regularly with all the major British orchestras including the London Philharmonic, Philharmonia and City of Birmingham Symphony. He has made six concerto appearances at the BBC Proms, recently in a televised performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto, conducted by Bělohlávek and recorded live by Deutsche Grammophon.

He made his concerto *début* at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw with the Netherlands Philharmonic, and he has toured to China and the Far East with the BBC Scottish Symphony. Recent highlights include his *début* at Carnegie Hall and premiere of a new concerto written for him by Mark-Anthony Turnage with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Gewandhausorchester Leipzig, among others. A dedicated chamber musician, Watkins has been a member of the Nash Ensemble since 1997. He has given solo recitals at Amsterdam Concertgebouw and South Bank Centre; future highlights include performances at Wigmore Hall and Lincoln Center. Paul Watkins joined the Emerson String Quartet from 2013/14 season.

Eastern Europe Postcards with Paul Watkins

4 & 5 | 12 | 2013

WED & THU 8PM

HK Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$360 \$280 \$200 \$140

Available at URBTIX now

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Martyn Brabbins](#)

conductor

[Paul Watkins](#)

cellist

Click the thumbnails to download press images [Or hold Ctrl then click to open the file]



Programme

Dvořák

Lutosławski

Arvo Pärt

Bartók

The Noon Witch

Cello Concerto

Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten

Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta

Ticketing Information

Credit Card Booking

(852) 2111 5999

Online Booking

www.urbtix.hk

For programme enquiry, please call HK Phil at

(852) 2721 2332

Or go on our website:

www.hkphil.org

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For further press information please contact:

Doris Chan, Director of Marketing

Tel: +852 2721 9035

Cell: +852 9776 8445

Email: doris.chan@hkphil.org

Jenny Lee, Projects Consultant

Tel: +852 2721 1585

Cell: +852 6112 9575

Email: jenny.lee@hkphil.org

Hong Kong Philharmonic

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden

As the city's largest and busiest musical organisation, the Hong Kong Philharmonic is a vital part of Hong Kong's cultural life. In 2013/14 the HK Phil celebrates its 40th professional season, but its roots stretch back well over a century. The HK Phil has now evolved into an orchestral powerhouse of the region, and an acclaimed cultural centrepiece of Asia's World City.

The HK Phil is founded on the belief that a great city deserves a great orchestra. Annually it presents over 150 concerts for 200,000 music lovers. Featuring an enviable roster of international and local artists, with many concerts presented free, among them the annual *Swire Symphony Under The Stars*. Through its acclaimed education programme, over 40,000 young people learned about orchestral music last year.

The HK Phil's members come from every corner of the globe, joining its strong core of Hong Kong musicians. In September 2012, Jaap van Zweden became the orchestra's Music Director. Future years will see an ambitious series of new projects, with major international tours, renewed local partnerships, and large-scale concert events. The HK Phil has recently commenced a multi-CD recording project for Naxos, featuring works by Chinese composers.

The Hong Kong Philharmonic is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

SWIRE is the Principal Patron of the Hong Kong Philharmonic

The Hong Kong Philharmonic is a Venue Partner of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre