

PRESS RELEASE
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The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra Returns Triumphant from its Europe Tour of Seven Cities across Five Countries with Music Director Jaap van Zweden, soloist Ning Feng and composer Fung Lam

***Received Rosthorn Award in Vienna
Nominated Innovation Award by Germany-based Classical:NEXT***

“(Quintessence) The orchestra had already demonstrated its technical facility in the shimmering textures of Fung Lam’s *Quintessence*, a piece perfumed with drowsy glissandi and icy chimes and fractured by brilliant shards of brass.”

--- Anna Picard, *The Times*

“(Beethoven Violin Concerto) ... so simple, so mild, so profound... remarkable delicacy...”

--- Anna Picard, *The Times*

“(Prokofiev Symphony no. 5) Prokofiev’s Fifth Symphony highlighted the pungency of the Hong Kong woodwind and the high-gloss finish of the brass.”

--- Anna Picard, *The Times*

“With Dvorak’s 9th Symphony it becomes finally evident, that this concert stands as a monumental achievement. The ‘New World Symphony’ splendidly developed, testifies as a pompous celebration of Life. Finest shades of intonation, the fragile, bewitching sound of the strings. The execution of all entries - exact, sharp and perfectly balanced.”

--- von Udo Badelt, *Der Tagesspiegel*

[18 March 2015, Hong Kong] In late February and early March, the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** returned to Europe for the first time in over a decade, with Music Director **Jaap van Zweden**, renowned Chinese violinist **Ning Feng** and Hong Kong born composer **Fung Lam**, whose *Quintessence* was given its European première during the tour. They performed in seven cities across five countries, with concerts given in London’s Cadogan Hall, Vienna’s Musikverein, Zurich’s Tonhalle, Eindhoven’s Musikgebouw, Birmingham’s Symphony Hall, Berlin’s Konzerthaus, and Amsterdam’s Rijks Museum.

The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Composer-in-Residence Fung Lam gave a composer’s talk with the theme “A Musical Depiction of Spiritual Journey” at the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, before the concert at which his *Quintessence* was premièred in Europe.

All of the concerts were well received with most of them attracting full houses. The concerts were/will be made available to the wider communities through:

- Vienna: Concert in Vienna was filmed by a French company and is planned to be distributed worldwide through different channels including TV, Internet and mobile phone networks.
- Eindhoven / Hong Kong: The concert in Eindhoven in the Netherlands was recorded by MAX and made available to broadcasters through the European Broadcasting Union. Hong Kong’s RTHK Radio 4 has broadcast this concert and the programme is also available on RTHK’s website.
- Vienna/Zürich/Eindhoven/Amsterdam: Dutch TV has filmed footage of concerts and their “making of” during the tour, as part of the documentary on Maestro Jaap van Zweden.

Jack So, Chairman of the Board of Governor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society said, “It is 12 years since the HK Phil last visited Europe and much has happened to raise its stature. We are deeply grateful for the generous support from Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts for sponsoring the London concert, as well as our Principal Patron Swire and many other sponsors and donors who have helped make this tour a success.”

Jaap van Zweden, Music Director of the HK Phil said, “When we play in concert halls in Europe, we are compared to the European orchestras. This helps strengthen the calibre of the orchestra and I am glad that our qualities are recognised by the passionate audiences and critics at every stop on this tour.”

Michael MacLeod, Chief Executive of the HK Phil said, “We started planning this seven-cities, five-countries European tour with the best halls in Europe in 2013. From every aspect – musically, financially and logistically, the tour was a great success. Future years will see more tours.”

As Cultural Ambassador of Hong Kong

The HK Phil would like to express thanks to the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (HKETO) in London, Berlin and Brussels for their kind support. In London, HK Phil’s senior managements and Fung Lam attended the reception hosted by the HKETO with the support of Hong Kong Trade Development Council and Hong Kong Tourism Board at the prestigious Whitehall in London, meeting with figures from the political, economic, social and cultural scenes. In Berlin, orchestra representatives including HK Phil’s musicians, managements and Fung Lam introduced the HK Phil at a reception organised by the HKETO.

Award and Nomination

The HK Phil was awarded Arthur von Rosthorn Medal for its special contribution to the bilateral relationship between Austria and China. An Award Ceremony was held in the Austrian Parliament Building in Vienna on 25 February 2015, where Mr Karlheinz Kopf, the National Council’s Second President, and Dr Helmut Sohmen, former Chairman of Hong Kong-based BW Group, presented the medal to board member Mr YS Liu, representing the HK Phil.

HK Phil was also nominated for the Innovation Award by the Germany-based *Classical:Next* for its promotion campaign, “Virtual Orchestra”, which attracted participants from Hong Kong and across the world.

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01 HK Phil in London’s Cadogan Hall (Photo Credit: Simon Jay Price)



02 HK Phil in Vienna's Musikverein (Photo Credit: Dieter Nagl)



03 Music Director Jaap van Zweden conducting the orchestra in Eindhoven's Musikgebouw



04 HK Phil at Eindhoven – Standing Ovation!



05 HK Phil and Ning Feng at Berlin's Konzerthaus (Photo Credit: Martin Deeley)



06 (From right to left) Mr Jack So, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society; Mr Greg Ward, Vice President, Sales, Regional Sales Office, Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, Mr Michael MacLeod, Chief Executive of the HK Phil and guest at the reception organised by the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts (Photo Credit: Simon Jay Price)



07 Mr Jack So and Mr Michael MacLeod greeted our distinguished guest Baroness Dunn at the reception organised by the Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts (Photo Credit: Simon Jay Price)



08 Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation Composer-in-Residence Fung Lam gave a composer's talk with the theme "A Musical Depiction of Spiritual Journey" (Photo Credit: Simon Jay Price)



09 Reception held in Berlin by HKETO Berlin (Photo Credit: Martin Deeley)

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra Music Director: Jaap van Zweden

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is regarded as one of the leading orchestras in Asia. With a history stretching back to 1895, when it was formed as the Sino-British Orchestra, the HK Phil was re-named in 1957 and became fully professional in 1974. This concert is part of a five-country, seven-concert tour of Europe, with performances in London, Vienna, Zurich, Eindhoven, Birmingham, Berlin and Amsterdam.

Thanks to significant subsidy from the Hong Kong Government and long-term funding from Principal Patron Swire, the Hong Kong Jockey Club and other supporters, the HK Phil now boasts a full-time annual schedule of classical music concerts, pops concerts, an extensive education programme, and opera (staged and in concert).

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Ning Feng, Matthias Goerne, Lang Lang, Yu Long, Yundi Li, the late Lorin Maazel, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Yuja Wang and Edo de Waart, the HK Phil's previous Music Director.

The HK Phil promotes the work of Chinese composers through an active commissioning programme, and has released recordings featuring Tan Dun and Bright Sheng, each conducting their own compositions, on the Naxos label. Its acclaimed community engagement programme brings music to ten of thousands of children annually.

Last season, the orchestra made critically-acclaimed tour performances in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Xiamen and Taipei. Future plans include tours to the USA, Japan and Korea.

This season is Jaap van Zweden's third as Music Director of the HK Phil. With him, the orchestra is undertaking major expansion and new projects, including the first-ever performances by a Hong Kong or mainland Chinese orchestra of Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung*. The four operas are being performed, one a year, in concert and recorded live for the Naxos label.

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 also endeavours to promote artistic excellence, foster access to classical music and stimulate cultural participation in Hong Kong, and to enhance Hong Kong's reputation as one of the great cities of the world.

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