

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: 30 December 2015

The HK Phil's journey through Wagner's epic *Ring Cycle* continues with Part II: *Die Walküre* (21 & 23 January 2016)

[30 December 2015, Hong Kong] Following the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra's historic and highly acclaimed performances and live recording of *Das Rheingold* in January 2015, the orchestra continues its journey through Wagner's epic *Ring* with the second opera, *Die Walküre*. HK Phil's Music Director **Jaap van Zweden** will direct the performances which feature great Wagnerian singers **Stuart Skelton** as Siegmund, **Heidi Melton** as Sieglinde, **Falk Struckmann** as Hunding and **Petra Lang** as Brünnhilde. *Die Walküre* is the second instalment of this four-year project to perform all four operas in Wagner's *The Ring of the Nibelung* in concert, one each year from 2015 to 2018. Each will be recorded live for the Naxos label.

"The Ring cycle is completely new for the HK Phil, but still they delivered quite a wonderful *Rheingold*. The nice thing about it is that it is their first time, it is my first time, so we are together in this great journey. The audiences too. They are proud to be part of an orchestra which is making history for itself." Jaap van Zweden said in a December interview with *The Arts Desk*.

Die Walküre lasts approximately five hours, including two intervals, and presents a formidable challenge to all the musicians on stage. Other experienced singers in the cast for *Die Walküre* include **Matthias Goerne** as Wotan and **Michelle DeYoung** as Fricka; and **Anna Burford**, **Aurhelia Varak**, **Elaine McKrill**, **Karen Foster**, **Katherine Broderick**, **Laura Nykänen**, **Okka von der Damerau** and **Sarah Castle** as the Valkyries.

The story of *Die Walküre* centres around the two young lovers – Siegmund and Sieglinde – who are the children of Wotan. Angered at Wotan's approval of their incestuous relationship, Fricka, the goddess of marriage, demands that he destroy their love and return Sieglinde to her lawful husband. Wotan orders Brünnhilde, one of the nine Valkyries whose task is to retrieve the bodies of heroes slain in battle, to carry out Fricka's wishes, but instead she rescues Sieglinde, who is pregnant with Siegmund's child. For her disobedience, Wotan banishes her to eternal sleep on a mountain-top surrounded by fire.

With an enormous orchestra, an all-star international cast and thrilling set pieces - including the exciting "Ride of the Valkyries" and the passionate "Wotan's Farewell" – this is an unmissable musical event for Hong Kong audiences.

Masterworks: *The Ring Cycle Part 2 – Die Walküre* (opera-in-concert) will be held on **21 January 2016 (Thu) at 6PM** and **23 January 2016 (Sat) at 3PM**, in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Tickets priced: HK\$880, \$680, \$480, \$280 now available at URBTIX. For enquiries, please call 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org.

Auxiliary Activities

In early January ensemble performances will be conducted in Hong Kong International Airport and shopping mall to introduce the characters of *Die Walküre*. In response to the positive feedback last year, an array of activities will be held on 16 January 2016 (Saturday) at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, including an open rehearsal and symposium. Stay tuned to www.hkphil.org for details.

Artists

Jaap van Zweden, conductor [\[full biography\]](#)

Amsterdam-born Jaap van Zweden is one of today's most sought-after conductors. Named *Musical America's* Conductor of the Year for 2012, he has been Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra since 2012/13 season. Maestro van Zweden is currently Music Director of the Dallas Symphony, Honorary Chief Conductor of the Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra and Conductor Emeritus of the Radio Chamber Philharmonic. Prestigious orchestras with which he has worked include the Chicago Symphony, London Symphony, Cleveland and Philadelphia Orchestras, and the New York and London Philharmonics.

Stuart Skelton, as Siegmund [\[full biography\]](#)

Stuart Skelton is the winner of the 2014 International Opera Awards for Best Male Singer and two Helpmann Awards. He will open the Metropolitan Opera's 2016 season, singing Tristan in a new production of *Tristan und Isolde*, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. Stuart Skelton is also selected as one of the 20 Greatest Wagner Singers of All Time by Australia's *Limelight* magazine.

Heidi Melton, as Sieglinde [\[full biography\]](#)

Heidi Melton has performed with notable companies such as the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Oper Frankfurt and Opéra National de Bordeaux. She has performed with eminent conductors including Sir Simon Rattle.

Petra Lang, as Brünnhilde [\[full biography\]](#)

Petra Lang performed worldwide with renowned conductors including Claudio Abbado, Pierre Boulez, Sir Colin Davis, Sir Simon Rattle, Christoph Eschenbach and Christian Thielemann. She has performed on the greatest stages including the Royal Opera House, Deutsche Oper Berlin, Vienna State Opera, Zurich Opera House and La Scala Milan.

Matthias Goerne, as Wotan [\[full biography\]](#)

Matthias Goerne has appeared on the world's principal opera stages since making his début at the Salzburg Festival in 1997. He is also the Honorary Professor of song interpretation at the Robert Schumann Academy of Music in Düsseldorf and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music in London in 2001.

Michelle DeYoung, as Fricka [\[full biography\]](#)

Multi-GRAMMY® award-winner Michelle DeYoung is a regular performer at the Metropolitan Opera, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Teatro alla Scala and Theater Basel. She has also worked regularly with the Chicago Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic and Royal Concertgebouw orchestra.

Falk Struckmann, as Hunding [\[full biography\]](#)

Falk Struckmann has performed on prestigious stages including the Theater an der Wien, Staatsoper Hamburg, Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Metropolitan Opera New York and the Bayreuth festival. He was nominated "Kammersänger" by both the Wiener and the Berliner Staatsoper.

Masterworks: *The Ring Cycle Part 2 – Die Walküre*

21 & 23 | 1 | 2016

THU 6PM & SAT 3PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$880 \$680 \$480 \$280

Tickets are now available at URBTIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Jaap van Zweden](#)

conductor

[Stuart Skelton](#)

as Siegmund

[Heidi Melton](#)

as Sieglinde

[Petra Lang](#)

as Brünnhilde

[Matthias Goerne](#)

as Wotan

[Michelle DeYoung](#)

as Fricka

[Falk Struckmann](#)

as Hunding

[Katherine Broderick](#)

as Helmwig

[Laura Nykänen](#)

as Rossweisse

[Karen Foster](#)

as Gerhilde

[Okka von der Damerau](#)

as Grimgerde

[Aurhelia Varak](#)

as Siegrune

[Anna Burford](#)

as Schwertleite

[Sarah Castle](#)

as Waltraute

[Elaine McKrill](#)

as Ortlinde

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Jaap van Zweden

Photo Credit: Keith Hiro/HK Phil



Stuart Skelton as Siegmund



Heidi Melton as Sieglinde



Petra Lang as Brünnhilde

Photo Credit: Ann Weitz



Matthias Goerne as Wotan

Photo Credit: Borggreve



Michelle DeYoung as Fricka



Falk Struckmann as Hunding



Katherine Broderick as Helmwigie
Photo Credit: Paul Foster-Williams



Laura Nykänen as Rosswesse



Karen Foster as Gerhilde



Okka von der Damerau as Grimgerde
Photo Credit: Daniel Schäfer



Aurhelia Varak as Siegrune



Anna Burford as Schwertleite
Photo Credit: Brian Tarr



Sarah Castle as Waltraute



Elaine McKrill as Ortlinde



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

Programme

WAGNER *Die Walküre* (Opera-in-concert)

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra Music Director: Jaap van Zweden

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) has recently returned from an extremely successful five-country, seven-city tour of Europe, with concerts in London, Vienna, Zurich, Eindhoven, Birmingham, Berlin and Amsterdam. Most concerts were sold out, there were standing ovations, and the reviews were universally positive. The concert in Vienna's Musikverein was filmed for broadcast on TV. 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.

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 collaborations for staged opera with Opera Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

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 Hong Kong and 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 tens of thousands of children annually. A recording was issued free to schoolchildren throughout Hong Kong of Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Leopold Mozart's *Toy Symphony*.

This season is Jaap van Zweden's fourth 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

SWIRE is the Principal Patron of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

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