

A world première, the return of cellist Jian Wang, and Strauss' *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1 & 2 April)

[4 March 2016, Hong Kong] The **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** presents an out-of-this-world concert! We begin with a world première – an event not to be missed. *Seven Nights* is a HK Phil commissioned work by Beijing composer **Du Wei**, The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation 2015/16 Composer-in-Residence. Then we are joined by star cellist **Jian Wang** in Haydn's joyous Cello Concerto in C. And finally we journey through Strauss' thrilling tone poem *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, unforgettably used in the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Performances take place on 1 & 2 April in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall.

HK Phil Principal Guest Conductor **Yu Long** conducts this concert of contrasts beginning with Du Wei's *Seven Nights*, a piece inspired by Argentinian poet and author Jorge Luis Borge. "Composition has thus become the most ideal form of therapy for phobias and fears. Unexpectedly, Pina Bausch's slender fingers that reach towards hopelessness of the future, Ingmar Bergman's long take filled with silent tears, the ambiguity and hypocrisy of relationships between men and women... all these have turned up in *Seven Nights*", said Du Wei.

The music shifts from contemporary to Baroque when cellist Jian Wang performs Haydn's Cello Concerto in C. At once regal, gentle and vivacious, the piece was only discovered 60 years ago but has since become a staple of the solo cello repertoire. Jian Wang returns to the stage with the HK Phil after his highly acclaimed concert with us in the 2013/14 season.

Then, we will be musically transported to outer space with Strauss' thrilling tone poem *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, the main theme of which is now inextricably linked to the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Richard Strauss was inspired by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's book *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and the tone poem was a tribute to Nietzsche's genius. The music was later used in Stanley Kubrick's film, making it one of classical music's biggest hits.

The Composer-in-Residence Programme and the Commissioning of New Works are sponsored by The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation.

Classics: Thus Spake Zarathustra will be held on **1 & 2 April (Fri & Sat), 8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Ticket prices: HK\$480, \$380, \$280, \$180 are now available at **URBTIX**. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org.

Free Pre-concert talks are available on both concert nights, stay tuned for details at www.hkphil.org

Date:	1 April 2016 (Fri)	2 April 2016 (Sat)
Time:	7:15 – 7:45pm	7:15 – 7:45pm
Venue:	TBC	TBC
Speaker:	Prof Qin Rong Professor of Sibelius Academy of Music & Concert Pianist	Prof Qin Rong Professor of Sibelius Academy of Music & Concert Pianist
Language:	English	Cantonese

Artists

Yu Long, conductor [\[full biography\]](#)

Yu Long was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in 2015. He is also the Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the China Philharmonic Orchestra. Yu was appointed *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* of France for his role in strengthening China's cultural connections with other nations around the world.

Jian Wang, cello [\[full biography\]](#)

Jian Wang has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Munich Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra and Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich. He has worked with notable conductors such as Dudamel, Abbado, Eschenbach, Dutoit, Chailly and Harding.

Du Wei, composer [\[full biography\]](#)

Du Wei graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music Beijing in 2005 and obtained a Master Degree in Composition. Her works have been performed by The Philadelphia Orchestra with Charles Dutoit, MDR Leipzig Radio Orchestra with Kristjan Järvi, L'Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, Orchestra of Royal Danish Ballet, China National Center for the Performing Arts Orchestra, the Nieuw Ensemble (The Netherlands), TIMF Ensemble (Korea) and Ensemble Dialog of Switzerland.

About The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Composer-in-Residence

With the support of The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, the HK Phil's Composer-in-Residence programme was launched in 2013 to support Chinese composers by encouraging them to create new works and explore the links between Chinese culture and the western orchestra. The HK Phil presents a unique platform for The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation to pursue their goal of promoting Chinese culture and supporting Hong Kong's cultural development. Presenting a series of commissioned works of Chinese symphonic music will broaden the orchestra's repertoire in a way which better reflects the cultural roots of Hong Kong.

Classics: Thus Spake Zarathustra

1 & 2 | 4 | 2016

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$480 \$380 \$280 \$180

Tickets are now available at URBTIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Yu Long](#)

conductor

[Jian Wang](#)

cello

[Du Wei](#)

composer

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



Yu Long



Jian Wang

Photo Credit: Xu Bin



Du Wei

Photo Credit: Han Shi



The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo Credit: Philip Chau/HK Phil

Programme

DU WEI

Seven Nights

(Commissioned work world première)

HAYDN

Cello Concerto in C

R. STRAUSS

Thus Spake Zarathustra

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden

Principal Guest Conductor: Yu Long

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is recognised as Asia's foremost classical orchestra. The Orchestra presents over 150 concerts within a 44-week season and attracts more than 200,000 music lovers annually.

Jaap van Zweden, one of today's most sought-after conductors, is the Orchestra's Music Director, a position he has held since the 2012/13 concert season. Maestro van Zweden was recently announced as the next Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. This appointment will not affect his tenure with the HK Phil; his commitment to the HK Phil extends at least to the summer of 2019.

Yu Long was appointed for an initial three-year term in the 2015/16 season as Principal Guest Conductor.

Under Maestro van Zweden, the HK Phil is undertaking a variety of initiatives including a four-year project to perform and record the complete *Ring of the Nibelung* (Richard Wagner). The Orchestra is in year two of this four-year journey, performing one opera each year in concert. The performances are being recorded live for the Naxos label and mark the first performances by a Hong Kong or mainland Chinese orchestra of the entire *Ring* cycle.

Also under van Zweden, the orchestra undertook a highly successful five-country, seven-city tour of Europe in the 2014/15 season, with concerts in London, Vienna, Zurich, Eindhoven, Birmingham, Berlin and Amsterdam. Performances were met with enthusiasm and universally positive reviews. The concert in Vienna's Musikverein was filmed for broadcast on TV.

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 and Yuja Wang.

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*.

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.

Thanks to a 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.

The Orchestra's history stretches back to 1895, when it was formed as the Sino-British Orchestra. It was re-named in 1957 and became fully professional in 1974.

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.