

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: 14 April 2016

HK Phil Presents 1001 Nights – Scheherazade (27 & 28 May) And Jing Zhao performs Shostakovich Cello Concerto no. 1

[14 April 2016, Hong Kong] The **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** and guest conductor **David Atherton** bring great Russian works to our stage on 27 & 28 May.

The concert features the excitement of Borodin's Polovtsian Dances from *Prince Igor* and Shostakovich's brooding 1st Cello Concerto played by rising Chinese star **Jing Zhao**. The Russian spirit takes an exotic turn with Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, a musical re-telling of the beguiling stories told by the beautiful Scheherazade in the epic tale, *1001 Nights*.

During the winter of 1887, Rimsky-Korsakov decided to compose a four movement orchestral symphonic poem based on *1001 Nights*. The composer's experience of travel to exotic lands as well as his mastery of orchestral colour provides a magnificent showcase for the HK Phil players. Look out for the alluring violin solo that represents Scheherazade herself, the young wife of the despotic sultan, who tells mesmerising stories in an effort to spare her life.

The concert will begin with the Polovtsian Dances from Borodin's opera *Prince Igor*, probably his best-known composition. Borodin died before the opera was completed so Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Glazunov completed the work and prepared its first performance. It is today regarded as one of the truly great works in Russian musical history – and is certainly one of the most exciting.

Between the two pieces, cellist Jing Zhao will perform Shostakovich's Cello Concerto no. 1, which is considered one of the most difficult concert works for the instrument. Shostakovich wrote it for legendary cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, with whom Jing studied privately in Berlin. With her profound musicality and virtuosity, Jing Zhao is considered one of the most promising artists internationally. She has performed with noted conductors Seiji Ozawa, Lorin Maazel, Ricardo Muti, Andris Nelsons, Myung-whun Chung and Mikhael Pletnev.

Classics: 1001 Nights - Scheherazade will be held on **27 & 28 May (Fri & Sat), 8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Ticket prices: HK\$480, HK\$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.

Date:	27 May 2016 (Fri)	28 May 2016 (Sat)
Time:	7:15 – 7:45pm	7:15 – 7:45pm
Venue:	4/F Foyer, Auditoria Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre	4/F Foyer, Auditoria Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre
Speaker:	Dr Maureen Buja, Musicologist	Mr Dennis Wu, Music Writer and Critic
Language:	English	Cantonese

Artists

David Atherton, conductor [\[full biography\]](#)

David Atherton is one of the most distinguished conductors of our era. Atherton was Music Director of the HK Phil from 1989 to 2000 and was awarded the OBE upon his retirement. He was also the youngest conductor in the history of the BBC Proms and subsequently appeared there in 30 continuous seasons. His recordings were awarded with many Grammy Award nominations, the Grand Prix de Disque and the coveted International Record Critics' Award.

Jing Zhao, cello [\[full biography\]](#)

Jing Zhao is considered one of the most promising artists now establishing an international career. A leading Chinese cellist of her generation, Zhao has performed with noted conductors Seiji Ozawa, Lorin Maazel, Ricardo Muti, Andris Nelsons, Myung-whun Chung and Mikhael Pletnev. She is also a sought-after chamber music partner, collaborating with notable artists including Martha Argerich, Vadim Repin, Lang Lang, Trevor Pinnock and Emmanuel Pahud.

Classics: 1001 Nights – *Scheherazade*

27 & 28 | 5 | 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

[David Atherton](#)

conductor

[Jing Zhao](#)

cello

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David Atherton

Photo Credit: Cheung Chi Wai/HK Phil



Jing Zhao



The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo Credit: Cheung Chi Wai/HK Phil

Programme Include

BORODIN

Prince Igor: Polovtsian Dances

SHOSTAKOVICH

Cello Concerto no. 1

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Scheherazade

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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 more than 150 concerts over 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 the second of this four-year journey, performing one opera annually 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.