

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: 15 June 2016

HK Phil Season Finale with Ashkenazy and Behzod (1 & 2 July) Great pianists of two generations on stage for Prokofiev's Piano Concerto no. 3

[15 June 2016, Hong Kong] **Vladimir Ashkenazy** has long been considered one of the great pianists of our time, and his career as a conductor has left audiences no less enthralled. In July, he returns to close the season of the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** with Elgar's noble first Symphony. This concert combines his musical mastery with the talents of phenomenal young pianist **Behzod Abduraimov** who returns to Hong Kong by popular demand, this time to perform Prokofiev's dazzling and hugely exciting Piano Concerto no. 3.

Prokofiev clearly had a particular affection for his Piano Concerto no. 3, as it was the only one of his five piano concertos which he recorded. The concerto was ecstatically received by American audiences at its premiere, and, has become a mainstay of the piano repertoire. Its dynamism, rhythmic intensity and technical bravura are unfailingly thrilling. Between Abduraimov, with his amazing technique and musicianship, and Ashkenazy with his understanding of the work as both pianist and conductor, Hong Kong audiences are in for a rare treat.

In the second half of the concert, Ashkenazy will lead the orchestra in Elgar's Symphony no. 1. Elgar's music is characterised by the instruction 'nobilmente', and is indeed the definition of noble. He dedicated it to Hans Richter, the Austro-Hungarian conductor who directed the work's triumphant premiere, and who declared it "the greatest symphony of modern times". From its hushed opening, a solemn march, to its rousing finale, this symphony shows Elgar's sublime powers of invention. This will be the HK Phil's first performance of the work since 2008.

Masterworks: Ashkenazy & Behzod will be held on **1 & 2 July (Fri & Sat), 8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Ticket prices: HK\$680, \$480, \$380, \$280 are now available at **URBTIX**. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org.

Free Pre-concert talks are available before both concerts.

Date:	1 July 2016 (Fri)	2 July 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:	Ms Synthia Ko Music Director and Chief Conductor Guangxi Symphony Orchestra	Ms Synthia Ko Music Director and Chief Conductor Guangxi Symphony Orchestra
Language:	English	Cantonese

Artists

Vladimir Ashkenazy, conductor [\[full biography\]](#)

Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser to the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Chief Conductor of the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, Music Director of NHK Symphony Orchestra and currently Conductor Laureate of The Philharmonia Orchestra. He maintains strong links with major orchestras including The Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony and Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin.

Behzod Abduraimov, piano [\[full biography\]](#)

Abduraimov's captivating performances are rapidly establishing him as one of the forerunners of the younger generation of pianists. He has worked with orchestras including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Symphony, London Philharmonic and Sydney Symphony. He has close relationships with conductors including Vladimir Ashkenazy, Valery Gergiev, Vasily Petrenko and Charles Dutoit.

Masterworks: Ashkenazy & Behzod

1 & 2 | 7 | 2016

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$680 \$480 \$380 \$280

Tickets are now available at URBTIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Vladimir Ashkenazy](#) conductor
[Behzod Abduraimov](#) piano

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



Vladimir Ashkenazy
Photo Credit: Keith Saunders



Behzod Abduraimov
Photo Credit: Ben Ealovega and Decca



The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo Credit: Cheung Chi Wai/HK Phil

Programme

PROKOFIEV Piano Concerto no. 3
ELGAR Symphony no. 1

--- END ---

For further press information please contact:

Deborah Hennig, Director of Marketing

Tel: +852 2721 9035 Email: deborah.hennig@hkphil.org

Becky Lee, Media Relations Manager

Tel: +852 2721 1585 Email: becky.lee@hkphil.org

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 to 2022.

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.