

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: 24 November 2016

The HK Phil's journey through Wagner's epic *Ring Cycle* continues with Part III: *Siegfried*

[24 November 2016, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra's (HK Phil) internationally acclaimed performances of Wagner's complete *Ring Cycle* reaches its third part with *Siegfried* on 19th and 22nd January at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Conducted by HK Phil's Music Director **Jaap van Zweden** and with **Simon O'Neill** in the role of Siegfried, the cast includes some of the great Wagnerian singers of our time.

Familiar voices to those who have been following this epic production since it opened with *Das Rheingold* in 2015 include **Matthias Goerne** as Wanderer, **Falk Struckmann** as Fafner, **Deborah Humble** as Erda, **Heidi Melton** as Brünnhilde and **David Cangelosi** as Mime. Additionally, **Werner van Mechelen** sings the role of Alberich, and **Valentina Farcas** as the voice of the woodbird.

The first ever opera-in-concert performance of Wagner's epic *Ring Cycle* in Hong Kong, this four-year journey is also the first live production to be recorded and released on CD by an orchestra from Hong Kong or Mainland China. Released under the Naxos label, the previous two parts—*Das Rheingold* and *Die Walküre*—have been a huge success with audiences and critics alike. *Gramophone* magazine described *Die Walküre* as “compelling” and an “impressive achievement”, going on to describe the HK Phil as “a consistently fine orchestra”.

Having ended *Die Walküre* with Brünnhilde cast into a magic sleep by Wotan, and surrounded by fire high on a mountain top, *Siegfried* opens with the dwarf Mime working at his forge. He is attempting to make a sword for his foster son, Siegfried. Mime hopes Siegfried will use the sword to slay the dragon, Fafner, who guards a hoard of gold which includes a magic ring stolen by Mime's brother, Alberich. Siegfried eventually forges the sword himself, slays the dragon and is told by a woodbird about a beautiful woman asleep on a mountain top. Enchanted, Siegfried rushes to the mountain, passes through the ring of fire and awakens Brünnhilde.

With dragons, dwarves, superheroes and gods, not to mention love and treachery, the third part of the *Ring* is a thrilling and breath-taking musical spectacle. The huge orchestra—which incorporates anvils and hammers—and all-star cast promise a magnificent continuation of this once-in-a-lifetime event for Hong Kong audiences.

Performance length is approximately 5 hours and 15 minutes including two intervals.

Masterworks: The *Ring Cycle* Part 3: *Siegfried* will be held on **19 January (Thu) at 6PM & 22 January (Sun) at 3PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Ticket prices: HK\$980, \$780, \$480, \$280 are now available at URBTIX. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org

Artists

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

Jaap van Zweden has risen rapidly in the past decade to become one of today's most distinguished conductors. Starting with the 2018/19 season, he will be the Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. Currently, he is Music Director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra since 2008, and has been Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra since 2012. Van Zweden was named Musical America's 2012 Conductor of the Year. Born in Amsterdam, Jaap van Zweden was the youngest ever concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. He began his conducting career in 1995.

Simon O'Neill, as Siegfried [\[full biography\]](#)

A native of New Zealand, Simon O'Neill has established himself as one of the finest helden-tenors on the international stage. He is a principal artist with the Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Teatro alla Scala and both the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals. His performances as Siegmund in *Die Walküre* at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden with Pappano, Teatro alla Scala and Berlin Staatsoper with Barenboim, at the Metropolitan Opera with Runnicles and at Deutsche Oper Berlin with Rattle were performed to wide critical acclaim. He was described in the international press as "an exemplary Siegmund, terrific of voice", "The Wagnerian tenor of his generation" and "a turbo-charged tenor".

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

Young American dramatic soprano Heidi Melton has been called "the Wagnerian voice we have been waiting for since Flagstad and Nilsson" (*La Presse*), a voice that is "big, gleaming and tonally resplendent" (*San Francisco Chronicle*). In the 2016/2017 season, she makes her role debut as Brünnhilde in new productions of *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, both at Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe. She also debuts with the London Symphony Orchestra and Berlin Philharmonic in Ligeti's *Le grand macabre* under Simon Rattle. She returns to the Hong Kong Philharmonic in concert performances of *Siegfried* which will be recorded for Naxos.

David Cangelosi, as Mime [\[full biography\]](#)

David Cangelosi has firmly established himself as an artist who combines both excellent singing with winning characterisations; he is highly acclaimed by major opera companies and symphony orchestras in the U.S. and abroad. In 2004 he made his Metropolitan Opera debut as Mime in *Das Rheingold*, conducted by James Levine.

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

Matthias Goerne is one of the most internationally sought-after vocalists and a frequent guest at renowned festivals and concert halls. He has collaborated with the world's leading orchestras, conductors and pianists. Born in Weimar, he studied with Hans-Joachim Beyer in Leipzig, and later with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Matthias Goerne has appeared on the world's principal opera stages, including the Royal Opera House, Teatro Real, Madrid, Paris National Opera, Vienna Staatsoper, and the Metropolitan Opera in New York.

Deborah Humble, as Erda [\[full biography\]](#)

Deborah Humble began her musical education in Adelaide and continued her studies in Melbourne completing a Master of Music and Diplomas of Arts and Education. In 1995 she was a Young Artist with the Victoria State Opera and in 2002 became a principal artist with Opera Australia where her roles included Dido (*Dido and Aeneas*), Mercedes (*Carmen*), Clarissa (*The Love For Three Oranges*, recorded for Chandos Records), Sonyetka (*Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), Rosette (*Manon*) and the title role in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*. In 2004 she was awarded the prestigious Dame Joan Sutherland Scholarship and, the following year, became a Principal Mezzo with the State Opera of Hamburg.

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

Falk Struckmann made his début at the Bayreuth Festival in 1993 as Kurwenal in Heiner Müller's production under Daniel Barenboim. In the following years he worked at the Staatsoper Berlin where he sang in new productions of *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin*, *Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, *Parsifal*, *Fidelio* and *Elektra*. He sang in numerous premieres at the Wiener Staatsoper, including *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Lohengrin*, *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and *Otello*. In recent years he has been increasingly active at the Hamburg State Opera, where he sang *Mathis der Maler*, and later the whole *Ring des Nibelungen*.

Valentina Farcas, as Woodbird [\[full biography\]](#)

Valentina Farcas was born in Bucharest. She made her début at the 2006 Salzburg Festival singing Blonde in Mozart's *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* to wide critical acclaim: "The petite soprano with the pliant voice threatened at times to physically and vocally upstage the real heroine". As a member of the ensemble at Komische Oper Berlin she has sung numerous leading roles including Gilda (*Rigoletto*), Queen of Shemakha in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Le Coq d'Or*, Hermione in Handel's *Oreste* with Maestro Thomas Hengelbrock as well as Pamina, Blonde and Sophie (*Rosenkavalier*).

Werner van Mechelen, as Alberich [\[full biography\]](#)

Belgian bass-baritone Werner Van Mechelen studied with Roland Bufkens at the Lemmens Institute in Leuven, where he was awarded the vocalist's diploma. In 1988 he was a finalist of the Queen Elisabeth International Competition for Vocalists in Brussels, and later as the International Vocalists Competition in Hertogenbosch, the Concours International de Chant in Toulouse and the Concorso Vinas in Barcelona. Van Mechelen has performed the great Mozart roles and his list of guest appearances includes credits in Zürich, Liège, Antwerp, Wiesbaden, Braunschweig, Bielefeld, Coburg and Limoges.

MASTERWORKS: THE *RING* CYCLE PART 3: *SIEGFRIED*

19 & 22 | 1 | 2017

THU 6PM & SUN 3PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$980 \$780 \$480 \$280

Tickets are now available at URBTIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Jaap van Zweden](#)

[Simon O'Neill](#)

[Heidi Melton](#)

[David Cangelosi](#)

[Matthias Goerne](#)

[Deborah Humble](#)

[Falk Struckmann](#)

[Valentina Farcas](#)

[Werner van Mechelen](#)

Conductor

Siegfried

Brünnhilde

Mime

Wanderer

Erda

Fafner

Woodbird

Alberich

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



Jaap van Zweden

Photo Credit: Cheung Chi Wai/
HK Phil



Simon O'Neill as Siegfried



Heidi Melton as Brünnhilde



David Cangelosi as Mime



Matthias Goerne as Wanderer

Photo Credit: Goerne Borggreve



Deborah Humble as Erda



Falk Struckmann as Fafner



Valentina Farcas as Woodbird



Werner van Mechelen as Alberich



Jaap van Zweden and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo Credit: Cheung Wai Lok HK Phil

Programme

WAGNER *Siegfried*

--- 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, has been the Orchestra's Music Director since the 2012/13 concert season, a position he will continue to hold until at least 2022. In addition, Maestro van Zweden will also be the next Music Director of the New York Philharmonic starting with the 2018/19 season.

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 third 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 has undertaken tours to Taiwan, Europe and, for a second time to Mainland China, with recent concerts in Shanghai, Tianjin and Beijing.

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 celebrated its 40th season as a professional orchestra in 2013/14.

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.