

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Jaap van Zweden's Mahler Six Symphony and a World Premiere

[23 March 2017, Hong Kong] With Mahler's Sixth – a *tour de force* for virtuoso orchestra – Maestro [Jaap van Zweden](#) and the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** continue their musical journey through Mahler's symphonies. On one night only – 22 April 2017 – and in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall, we will hear that great symphony along with a World Premiere performance of a newly-commissioned work from the young American-Chinese composer [Conrad Tao](#), supported by The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation.

Conrad Tao is The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Composer-in-Residence for the 2016/17 season. His newly commissioned work, *swallow harbour*, is his portrayal of Hong Kong as seen through the eyes of an outsider. Beyond depicting the city's jagged skyline, Tao also imagines a mysterious conflict between hidden powers as the sea and the islands struggle for life.

After the interval, there is another titanic struggle as Mahler unleashes great anguish and emotional intensity in his "Tragic" Symphony. Beyond the compelling power of the Symphony are passages of extraordinary beauty and calm – like the soaring "Alma theme", a portrait of the composer's wife – and sounds of cowbells from distant alpine pastures. In the last movement, listen for the hammer blows of fate, "the last of which fells the hero like the stroke of an axe", Mahler revealed.

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

Masterworks: Mahler "Tragic" Symphony will be held on **22 April (Sat) at 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

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.

Conrad Tao, composer [\[full biography\]](#)

Conrad Tao has appeared worldwide as a pianist and composer, and has been dubbed a musician of "probing intellect and open-hearted vision" by the *New York Times*, a "thoughtful and mature composer" by *NPR* and "ferociously talented by *Time Out New York*. In June 2011 the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars and the Department of Education named Tao a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts awarded him a YoungArts gold medal in music. In May 2012 he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant.

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 encourage creation of new works by Chinese composers 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 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.

MASTERWORKS: MAHLER "TRAGIC" SYMPHONY

22 | 4 | 2017

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

[Jaap van Zweden](#)

conductor

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Jaap van Zweden

Photo Credit: Cheung Chi Wai/HK Phil



Conrad Tao

Photo Credit: Brantley Gutierrez



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo Credit: Cheung Wai Lok/HK Phil

Programme

TAO

swallow harbour

World premiere! HK Phil commissioned work

MAHLER

Symphony no. 6, *Tragic*

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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, 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 being recorded live for the Naxos label are winning rave reviews internationally; 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 toured to Taiwan, Europe and Mainland China. The orchestra will undertake an ambitious five-city tour to Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and Sydney in April and May 2017 in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Yo-Yo Ma, 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.