

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
DATE: 31 May 2017

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra presents Ping Pong Diplomacy – A Concerto with a real table tennis performance on stage

[31 May 2017, Hong Kong] Get ready for American composer Andy Akiho's jaw-dropping *Ricochet*: Ping Pong Concerto, a high-intensity *tour de force* for violin, percussion and ping pong "virtuosos", with the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra's** Principal Guest Conductor **Maestro Yu Long** keeping everyone in play. The concerts are available on **9 & 10 June (Fri & Sat) at 8pm** thus **11 June (Sun) at 3pm** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**.

"So riveting was the piece as visual theatre that no one seemed to keep score"
--- *Financial Times*

Andy Akiho has developed a reputation for writing music which often makes use of metallic sounds and incorporates elements of theatre. His Ping Pong Concerto not only gives centre-stage to his preferred instrumental medium — percussion — and one with strong Chinese and Western associations — the violin — but it also incorporates a ping pong tournament between a player of Chinese descent (**Ariel Hsing**) and an American one (**Michael Landers**). The work was first performed at the Shanghai Symphony Hall in July 2015 where, as in the performance with the HK Phil, the percussion soloist is **David Cossin** and the violinist is **Kristin Lee**.

Opening the concert is Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings, which is one of the composer's fondest creations. It is a tribute to the musical world of the 18th century and in particular to Tchaikovsky's great musical hero, Mozart.

Swire Denim Series: Ping Pong Diplomacy will be held on **9 & 10 June (Fri & Sat) at 8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Ticket prices: HK\$380, \$280, \$180, \$120 are now available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org

Swire Sunday Family Series: Ping Pong Diplomacy will be held on **11 June (Sun) at 3PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Ticket prices: HK\$380, \$280, \$180, \$120 are now available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org

Artists

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

Yu Long is the Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the China Philharmonic Orchestra which he co-founded in 2000, and the Music Director of the Shanghai and Guangzhou Symphony orchestras. All three ensembles tour internationally and feature alongside the world's top soloists. Maestro Yu is also the Founding Artistic Director of the Beijing Music Festival, as well as Artistic Co-Director of the MISA Festival, bringing classical music to the young people of Shanghai. He was appointed the Principal Guest Conductor of the HK Phil from the 2015/16 concert season.

David Cossin, percussion [[full biography](#)]

David Cossin is a specialist in new and experimental music, who has worked across a broad spectrum of musical and artistic forms to incorporate new media with percussion. Cossin has recorded and performed internationally with composers and ensembles including Philip Glass, Yo-Yo Ma and Tan Dun. He has also performed as a soloist with orchestras throughout the world including the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Orchestra Radio France, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sao Paulo State Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Gothenburg Symphony, New Jersey Symphony and Singapore Symphony.

Kristin Lee, violin [\[full biography\]](#)

A recipient of the 2015 Avery Fisher Career Grant as well as a top prizewinner of the 2012 Walter W. Naumburg Competition and the Astral Artists' 2010 National Auditions, Kristin Lee is a violinist of remarkable versatility and impeccable technique. Born in Seoul, Lee began studying violin at five, and later moved to the US to continue her studies under Sonja Foster. In 1997 she entered The Juilliard School's Pre-College Division, and in 2000 was chosen to study with Itzhak Perlman after he heard her perform Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto.

Michael Landers, ping pong

Michael Landers has been playing table tennis professionally since the age of 13. He has represented the United States national team in three world championships. He is the youngest US men's singles champion in history, and won the US Olympic Trials in 2012. In addition to table tennis, Michael's other passion is playing music.

Ariel Hsing, ping pong

Born in 1995 in California, Ariel Hsing has played table tennis since she was seven years old. Hsing became the youngest U.S. table tennis national champion in history in 2010 at age 15. She repeated as champion in 2011 and 2013. The American table tennis player competed in the London Olympics. Ariel participated in Andy Akiho's Ping Pong Concerto, world premiered in Shanghai in July 2015, at Shanghai Symphony Hall by Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

SWIRE DENIM SERIES: PING PONG DIPLOMACY

9 & 10 | 6 | 2017

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$380 \$280 \$180 \$120

Tickets are now available at URBTIX

For ages 6 and above

SWIRE SUNDAY FAMILY SERIES: PING PONG DIPLOMACY

11 | 6 | 2017

SUN 3PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$380 \$280 \$180 \$120

Tickets are now available at URBTIX

For ages 3 and above

Artists

[Yu Long](#)

conductor

[David Cossin](#)

percussion

[Kristin Lee](#)

violin

[Michael Landers](#)

ping pong

[Ariel Hsing](#)

ping pong

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



Yu Long



David Cossin



Kristin Lee

Photo Credit: Sophie Zhai



Michael Landers



Ariel Hsing



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo Credit: Paul Wong/HK Phil

Programme

TCHAIKOVSKY

Serenade for Strings

Andy AKIHO

Ricochet: Triple Concerto for Ping Pong,
Percussion and Orchestra



梵志登 音樂總監
Jaap van Zweden Music Director

余隆 首席客席指揮
Yu Long Principal Guest Conductor

For further press information please contact:

Meggy Cheng, Director of Marketing

Tel: +852 2721 9035 Email: meggy.cheng@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 Principal Guest Conductor with the HK Phil for a three-year period commencing with the 2015/16 season.

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 just completed an ambitious five-city tour to Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and Sydney in April - 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, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Yuja Wang and the late Lorin Maazel.

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 was originally called the Sino-British Orchestra. It was renamed as the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra 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.



梵志登 音樂總監
Jaap van Zweden Music Director

余隆 首席客席指揮
Yu Long Principal Guest Conductor