

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
8 May 2018

**Saint-Saëns' Symphony no. 3, *Organ* with Jaap van Zweden (8 & 9 June)
And Bernstein's Serenade in Celebration of Leonard Bernstein at 100**

[8 May 2018, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)'s Music Director [Jaap van Zweden](#) will be conducting the HK Phil for a series of stunning programmes over three weeks in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Featuring world-renowned violinist [James Ehnes](#) and organist [Leo van Doeselaar](#), the first programme on **8 & 9 June** will take the audience from America to France through music by American composers Charles Ives and Leonard Bernstein, and the beautiful Organ Symphony by Camille Saint-Saëns.

The Philharmonic Society of London commissioned a new symphony from Saint-Saëns for their regular concert series held in London's St. James's Hall during 1886. Saint-Saëns knew and admired the hall's organ, and decided to feature it in his new symphony, treating it not as a solo instrument, but as an integral part of the orchestra. This makes the single C major chord he put into this Symphony no. 3 not only has become one of the most famous C major chords ever written, but also earned the symphony its nickname, *Organ*. Sitting in front of the largest pipe organ in southeast Asia, Leo van Doeselaar, official organist of the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, will show the power and depth of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre organ and also the symphony.

World-renowned violinist James Ehnes, named Instrumentalist of the Year by the Royal Philharmonic Society in 2017, returns to Hong Kong to perform Leonard Bernstein's Plato-inspired Serenade for solo violin, strings, harp and percussion, a piece for which Ehnes is praised for his "lustrous tone, rock-solid intonation and impeccable phrasing". This is part of the HK Phil's celebration of the 100th birthday of the late, great Leonard Bernstein.

Opening the programme is *Central Park in the Dark* by Charles Ives. Ives is one of the most adventurous and important American composer of his time, who had a tremendous influence on other American composers including Leonard Bernstein. In this work, we find the composer sitting on a bench by one of the ponds and observing the goings-on of New York's Central Park after dark.

Tickets priced: HK\$480, \$380, \$280, \$180 are now available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org.



Artists

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

Over the last decade, conductor Jaap van Zweden has become an international presence on three continents. The 17/18 season marks a major milestone as he completes his ten-year tenure as Music Director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and simultaneously is Music Director Designate in New York, anticipating his inaugural season (2018/19) as the 26th Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. He continues as Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, a post he has held since 2012. Born in Amsterdam, Jaap van Zweden was the youngest ever Concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. He began his conducting career in 1995 and in 2012 was named Musical America's Conductor of the Year.

James Ehnes, violin [\[full biography\]](#)

James Ehnes has established himself as one of the foremost violinists of his generation. Gifted with a rare combination of stunning virtuosity, serene lyricism and an unfaltering musicality, Ehnes is a favourite guest of many of the world's most respected conductors including Ashkenazy, Alsop, Sir Andrew Davis, Ivan Fischer, Paavo Järvi, Nosedá, Robertson and Runnicles. Ehnes's long list of orchestras includes, amongst others, the Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, New York, London Symphony, Philharmonia, BBC Philharmonic, Czech Philharmonic and the NHK Symphony orchestras.

Leo van Doeselaar, organ [\[full biography\]](#)

Leo van Doeselaar studied the organ with Albert de Klerk and piano with Jan Wijn at the Amsterdam Sweelinck Conservatory. After obtaining his solo degrees, he was awarded the Prix d'Excellence in organ. Leo van Doeselaar appears frequently in concert throughout Europe and the United States; he has also appeared as a soloist and teacher at numerous important Early Music festivals. He has performed as a soloist with various orchestras and conductors including Ernest Bour, Riccardo Chailly, Jean Fournet, Ingo Metzmacher, Mariss Jansons, Frans Brüggen and David Zinman.

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Artists

[Jaap van Zweden](#) conductor
[James Ehnes](#) violin
[Leo van Doeselaar](#) organ

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Jaap van Zweden and the HK Phil

Photo Credit: Keith Hiro/HK Phil



James Ehnes

Photo Credit: Benjamin Ealovega



Leo van Doeselaar

Programme

CHARLES IVES *Central Park in the Dark*

BERNSTEIN *Serenade*

SAINT-SAËNS *Symphony no. 3, Organ*

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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. Presenting more than 150 concerts over a 44-week season, the HK Phil 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 2022. Maestro van Zweden will be the next Music Director of the New York Philharmonic from 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 the dynamic leadership of Music Director Jaap van Zweden, the HK Phil has attained new heights of artistic excellence, garnering international critical acclaim.

Following on from the success of the European tour which included a filmed concert from Vienna's Musikverein, the HK Phil has toured extensively within the mainland China. In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, and with support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, the orchestra recently performed in Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and at the Sydney Opera House.

Jaap, the HK Phil, a superb cast of soloists and a chorus successfully completed the four-year epic "Ring Cycle" journey in January 2018. The concert performances and live Naxos recordings have been enthusiastically received by audiences and praised by critics at home and abroad. The recording of *Götterdämmerung* will be released towards the end of 2018.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Matthias Goerne, Stephen Hough, Lang Lang, Yo-Yo Ma, Ning Feng and Yuja Wang.

The HK Phil promotes the work of Hong Kong and Chinese composers through an active commissioning programme, and has released recordings on the Naxos label featuring Tan Dun and Bright Sheng, each conducting their own compositions. Its acclaimed education and community engagement programmes in schools, hospital and outdoor space, bring music into the hearts of tens of thousands of children and families every year.

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 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 Charities Trust and other supporters, the HK Phil now boasts a full-time annual schedule of core classical repertoire and innovative popular programming, extensive education and community programmes, and collaborations with, among others, Opera Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Originally called the Sino-British Orchestra, it was renamed the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in 1957 and became fully professional in 1974. The HK Phil is a charitable organisation.

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and is Venue Partner of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre.

SWIRE is the Principal Patron of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.