

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**An Evening of Finnish Music with conductor Osmo Vänskä, clarinettist Kari Kriikku and the HK Phil**  
**Swire Maestro Series: OSMO VÄNSKÄ | Finnish Adventure (28 & 29 June)**

[27 June 2019, Hong Kong] The **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)**, together with Finnish conductor [Osmo Vänskä](#) and renowned Finnish clarinettist [Kari Kriikku](#), will take the Hong Kong audience on a journey to relish the music from picturesque Finland, at the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall** on **28 & 29 June**. This fully Finnish programme includes *Finlandia* and Symphony no. 2 by Sibelius, and the China premiere of Magnus Lindberg's thrilling Clarinet Concerto.

Magnus Lindberg's incredibly exciting and hugely entertaining Clarinet Concerto was written especially for the renowned Finnish clarinettist Kari Kriikku. The work perfectly combines traditional and modern skills and is highly praised by music critics. *BBC Music Magazine* wrote, "This is a shiny, sophisticated, nostalgic cultural artefact". Kari Kriikku is the ideal performer to present this stunning work for the first time in China.

The concert opens and closes with music from "the musical voice of Finnish nationalism", Sibelius. In 1899, when the Russian Empire invaded Finland, the Finnish people launched a patriotic movement to defend their freedom. Sibelius wrote the symphonic poem Ode to *Finlandia* for this historical moment, with the deliberate intention of arousing the patriotic feelings amongst the Finns.

On this summer evening, Sibelius' famous Symphony no. 2 brings you to the end of this Finnish Adventure. With the support of Baron Axel Carpelan, who gave Sibelius' well-known tone poem *Finlandia* its name, Sibelius embarked on a trip to Italy in 1901 where he began work on his second symphony. This symphony quickly became very popular following the premiere, which was conducted by the composer himself, and remains his most popular symphony.

**Swire Maestro Series: OSMO VÄNSKÄ | Finnish Adventure** will be held on **28 & 29 June (Fri & Sat), 8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Tickets priced: HK\$ 580, \$480, \$380, \$280 are available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](#).

## Artists

### **Osmo Vänskä, conductor** [\[full biography\]](#)

Music Director of the Minnesota Orchestra for 15 years, Osmo Vänskä has led the orchestra on five major European tours, as well as historic trips to Cuba in May 2015 and South Africa in August 2018 as part of the world-wide celebration of Nelson Mandela's Centenary. Other key highlights include the complete recordings of Sibelius and Beethoven symphony cycles - winning a Grammy Award in 2014 for "Best Orchestral Performance" (Sibelius symphonies 1 and 4), and the forthcoming cycle of Mahler symphonies, of which one disc already garnered a Grammy nomination in 2018. Vänskä has been appointed as the new Music Director at Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, starting in January 2020 and extending for three seasons.

### **Kari Kriikku, clarinet** [\[full biography\]](#)

A champion of contemporary music, Kari Kriikku is renowned for his interpretation of virtuosic new clarinet works written for him. The 2018/19 season saw him perform Kaija Saariaho's D'om Le Vrai Sens with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra in Dublin, Magnus Lindberg's Clarinet Concerto with the Real Filharmonía de Galicia, and the concerto by Kimmo Hakola with the Turku Philharmonic and the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie. He also brings Michel van der Aa's Hysteresis and his ingenious Bizarre Bazaar programme to the Trondheim Chamber Music Festival.

## SWIRE MAESTRO SERIES: OSMO VÄNSKÄ | FINNISH ADVENTURE

28 & 29 | 6 | 2019

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$580 \$480 \$380 \$280

Tickets are now available at URBTIX.

For ages 6 and above

### Artists

[Osmo Vänskä](#)

conductor

[Kari Kriikku](#)

clarinet

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**Osmo Vänskä**

Photo Credit: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco



**Kari Kriikku**

Photo Credit: Marco Borggreve



**Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra**

Photo Credit: Cheung Chi-wai/HK Phil

### Programme

**SIBELIUS**

**Magnus LINDBERG**

**SIBELIUS**

*Finlandia*

Clarinet Concerto (China premiere)

Symphony no. 2

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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 at least 2022. Maestro van Zweden is the 26<sup>th</sup> Music Director of the New York Philharmonic from the 2018/19 season.

Yu Long has been Principal Guest Conductor since 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 2017, in celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, and with support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, the orchestra 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 an epic four-year journey through Wagner's "Ring Cycle" 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* was released in November 2018.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Joshua Bell, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Matthias Goerne, Stephen Hough, Evgeny Kissin, Lang Lang, Yo-Yo Ma, Ning Feng, Leonard Slatkin 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 in 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, the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Hong Kong Ballet.

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.