

PRESS RELEASE
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Superstar Pianist Lang Lang Returns to the HK Phil Stage to Launch the “Beethoven 250th” Series with Music Director Jaap van Zweden

Beethoven 250th: Jaap’s Beethoven 1 | Lang Lang (16 & 18 January)

[13 January 2020, Hong Kong] To celebrate the 250th anniversary of Beethoven’s birth, the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** launches a special “Beethoven 250th” series. Superstar pianist [Lang Lang](#), returns to the stage of the HK Phil after four years, to present the first programme with the HK Phil’s Music Director [Jaap van Zweden](#). He will play Beethoven’s Piano Concerto no. 2, which the composer himself played as his public debut in Vienna. This programme also features Beethoven’s *Egmont* Overture and Symphony no. 1, Beethoven’s tribute to his teacher Haydn. HK Phil’s celebration of Beethoven’s 250th Anniversary starts on **16 & 18 January 2020 (Thursday & Saturday)** at the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**.

“His [Lang Lang] playing was so raptly beautiful that one was afraid to breathe for fear of missing anything.”

--- *Chicago Tribune*

Beethoven’s Piano Concerto no. 2 was actually the first one he composed, inheriting the traditions of Mozart and Haydn, and achieving beauty of harmony and balance. Lang Lang, hailed as the “Innate Beethoven Performer” by world-leading conductor Christoph Eschenbach, joins forces with Maestro van Zweden and the HK Phil to showcase this concerto.

The concert opens with Beethoven’s *Egmont* Overture, which was his introduction to musical theatre. In 1810, on Goethe’s own recommendation, the theatre director commissioned Beethoven to write an overture for *Egmont*, and the Overture has become very popular as a stand-alone concert work ever since its launch.

To close the concert, Beethoven’s Symphony no. 1 shows his indebtedness to his teacher Haydn. Although lots of irregularities exist, it is still a ground-breaking masterpiece, showing the potential of this young composer.

Title Sponsor of Opening Night Concert: Bank of China (Hong Kong)

Official Sponsor of Jan 18 Closing Night Concert: Maggie & Rose The Family Members’ Club

Beethoven 250th: Jaap’s Beethoven 1 | Lang Lang will be held on **16 & 18 January (Thu & Sat) at 8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Tickets are HK\$1,880 \$1,480 \$980 \$580 and are available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](#).

Artists

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

Over the past decade, conductor Jaap van Zweden has become an international presence on three continents. Currently Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, he is also Music Director of the New York Philharmonic – a post he has held since the 2018/19 season. Guest engagements this season include the Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Shanghai Symphony and Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra.

Lang Lang, piano [\[full biography\]](#)

Lang Lang is a leading figure in classical music today – as a pianist, educator and philanthropist he has become one of the world’s most influential and committed ambassadors for the arts in the 21st century. Equally happy playing for billions of viewers at the 2008 Olympic Opening Ceremony in Beijing or just for a few hundred children in the public schools, he is a master of communicating through music.



BEETHOVEN 250TH SERIES: JAAP'S BEETHOVEN 1 | LANG LANG

16 & 18 | 1 | 2020
THU & SAT 8PM
Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall
HK\$1,880 \$1,480 \$980 \$580
Tickets are now available at URBTIX.
For ages 6 and above

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Artists

[Jaap van Zweden](#) conductor
[Lang Lang](#) Piano

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Jaap van Zweden
Photo Credit: Cheung Chi-wai/HK Phil



Lang Lang
Photo Credit: Philip Chau



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo Credit: Cheung Wai-lok/HK Phil

Programme
BEETHOVEN
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Egmont Overture
Piano Concerto no. 2
Symphony no. 1

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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. In 2019, the HK Phil received the prestigious *Gramophone* Orchestra of the Year Award – the first orchestra in Asia to receive this distinction.

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 also Music Director of the New York Philharmonic since the 2018/19 season.

Yu Long has been Principal Guest Conductor since the 2015/16 season.

Under the dynamic leadership of Jaap van Zweden, the HK Phil has attained new heights of artistic excellence, garnering international critical acclaim. The orchestra successfully completed a four-year journey through Wagner's Ring Cycle, performing and recording one opera from the cycle each year from 2015 to 2018. The concert performances and live Naxos recordings were enthusiastically received by audiences, praised by critics at home and abroad and garnered Gramophone Orchestra of the Year Award 2019.

The HK Phil tours extensively across Mainland China and, with the support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, undertook a major tour in 2017 to Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and Sydney in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The orchestra will perform in Japan and Korea in 2020.

Thanks to a significant subsidy from the Hong Kong SAR Government and long-term funding from Principal Patron Swire, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and other supporters, the HK Phil presents an 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.

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 conducting their own compositions. Its acclaimed education and community engagement programmes in schools, hospitals and outdoor spaces 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, stimulate cultural participation in Hong Kong, and enhance Hong Kong's reputation as one of the great cities in the world.

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 a Venue Partner of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. SWIRE is the Principal Patron of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.