

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## Celebrate the HK Phil's 2020/21 Season Finale with Popular Music by Joe Hisaishi, Bizet, Verdi, Berlioz, and Saint-Saëns!

### Swire Maestro Series: Lio Kuokman | Season Finale (2 & 3 July)

[30 June 2021, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) and its Resident Conductor [Lio Kuokman](#) conclude the orchestra's 2020/21 season on **2 & 3 July 2021 (Fri & Sat)** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**, performing audience favourites by Joe Hisaishi, Bizet, Verdi, Saint-Saëns and Berlioz. **Very limited tickets for two performances!**

Opening the concert will be **Bizet's *Carmen Suite no. 1*** – music drawn from one of the most famous operas of all time, *Carmen*. The story is set in Spain and Bizet's music is full of foot-tapping dances and unforgettable melodies. The music was such a hit that it inspired many other concert works, including the spectacular ***Carmen Fantasie*** played on these concerts by young Hong Kong violinist [Paloma So](#), who also performs the wonderful **Introduction and Rondo capriccio** by **Saint-Saëns**.

Also from *Carmen*, Micaëla's famous aria, ***Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante*** ("I say, nothing frightens me"), will be sung by distinguished Hong Kong soprano [Louise Kwong](#). Kwong additionally will perform ***Pace, pace mio dio*** ("Please, please my Lord") from **Verdi's opera *La forza del destino***.

A highlight of the concert will be three selections by **Joe Hisaishi**, including music from two of his most popular anime scores, ***Spirited Away*** and ***Kiki's Delivery Service***, along with the theme from the film ***Departures***, played by Hong Kong cellist [Thomas Hung](#).

As a rousing climax, Lio and the HK Phil will perform **Berlioz's *Roman Carnival***, the perfect festive work to conclude the orchestra's 2020/21 season and send us away with anticipation for the upcoming 2021/22 season—details to be announced in late July. Stay tuned!

**Swire Maestro Series: Lio Kuokman | Season Finale** will be presented on **2 & 3 July 2021 (Fri & Sat)** at **8PM** in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets are HK\$480, \$380 and \$280 and are available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](http://hkphil.org).

## Artists

### **Lio Kuokman, conductor** [\[full description\]](#)

Praised by the Philadelphia Inquirer as “a startling conducting talent”, Lio Kuokman was the laureate at the 2014 Svetlanov International Conducting Competition. Lio Kuokman is Resident Conductor with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and has previously served as assistant conductor to music director Yannick Nézet-Seguin with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the first Chinese conductor to be appointed in this position in the history of the orchestra. He is currently Programme Director of the Macao International Music Festival.

### **Paloma So, violin** [\[full description\]](#)

Paloma So started learning piano at the age of four and violin at five, making her debut with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in February 2014 playing Mozart’s Violin Concerto no. 5. Later that year she was invited to perform as a soloist at the G20 Gala Dinner in Australia. Since then, she has also performed with the Fujian, Guangzhou and Berlin Symphony orchestras, the London Philharmonic, and in 2016 was invited to perform at the Interlaken Music Festival in Switzerland. She currently participates in the Interlaken masterclass with Prof. Zakhar Bron.

### **Louise Kwong, soprano** [\[full description\]](#)

Louise Kwong was a soprano in the Young Artist Programme of Rome Opera House in Italy from 2018-19. She is a graduate of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Dutch National Opera Academy, the Conservatory of Amsterdam, and the Royal College of Music of London. Her operatic roles include Cio-cio-san in *Madama Butterfly*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Liù in *Turandot*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, La Contessa in *Le Nozze di Figaro*, and Fiordiligi in *Così fan Tutte*.

### **Thomas Hung, cello** [\[full description\]](#)

Born in 1999 cellist Thomas Hung was awarded in the Secretary for Home Affairs' Commendation Scheme in recognition of his musical achievements in 2012. He first started learning the cello with his parents, and received lessons from Artem Konstantinov and Stefan Popov. He is currently studying cello with Ray Wang at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and serves as a member of the cello faculty at the Academy. In addition, he has taken part in masterclasses with Yo-Yo Ma, Wang Jian, David Finckel, David Strange, Csaba Onczay and Colin Carr.

## SWIRE MAESTRO SERIES: LIO KUOKMAN | SEASON FINALE

2 & 3 | 7 | 2021

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$480 \$380 \$280

Tickets now available at URBIX, **very limited tickets**

For ages 6 and above

### Artists

[Lio Kuokman](#)

conductor

[Paloma So](#)

violin

[Louise Kwong](#)

soprano

[Thomas Hung](#)

cello

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



Lio Kuokman



Paloma So



Louise Kwong

Photo Credit: Giulia  
Hrvatini



Thomas Hung



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo Credit: Flora Fung/HK Phil

### Programme

BIZET

*Carmen* Suite no. 1

BIZET

*Carmen*: Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante

BIZET/WAXMAN

*Carmen* Fantasie for violin & orchestra

SAINT-SAËNS

Introduction and Rondo capriccioso

VERDI

*La forza del destino*: Pace mio dio

Joe HISAISHI

*Departures*

Joe HISAISHI

*Spirited Away*: One Summer's Day

Joe HISAISHI

*Kiki's Delivery Service*

BERLIOZ

*Roman Carnival*

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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 through to the end of the 2023/24 season. Following his tenure as Music Director, he will hold the title of Conductor Laureate. Maestro van Zweden has also been Music Director of the New York Philharmonic since the 2018/19 season.

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

Lio Kuokman has been appointed as Resident Conductor, effective 1 December 2020 and covering the 2020/21 and 2021/22 seasons.

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 annually 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.

Thanks to a significant subsidy from the HKSAR Government, as well as 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, Hong Kong Arts Festival, and Hong Kong Ballet.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Joshua Bell, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Renée Fleming, Matthias Goerne, Stephen Hough, Evgeny Kissin, Katia and Marielle Labèque (the Labèque sisters), 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 recently founded "The Orchestra Academy Hong Kong", funded by "TrustTomorrow" of The Swire Group Charitable Trust and co-directed with The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, aims at enhancing professional training for graduates from HKAPA's School of Music and facilitating their career development in the orchestral field.

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.