

PRESS RELEASE
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Renowned pianist Niu Niu joins the HK Phil for an enchanting evening of romantic Rachmaninov!

Niu Niu Plays Rachmaninov (17 & 18 December)

[7 December 2021, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) proudly presents **Niu Niu Plays Rachmaninov** in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall on 17 & 18 December, featuring acclaimed pianist [Niu Niu](#) and Spanish-American conductor [François López-Ferrer](#).

Named by *The Boston Music Intelligencer* as one of "the most accomplished and most completely realised young pianist(s)" of his generation, Niu Niu has broken numerous world records, including being the youngest pianist signed to an international classical label in history, at the age of nine. Niu Niu will perform Rachmaninov's romantic Piano Concerto no. 2, triumphantly premiered in Moscow in 1901 and securing Rachmaninov's place as one of the greatest Russian composers of the 20th century.

François López-Ferrer opens the concert with the Asian premiere of Unsuk Chin's *Subito con Forza*, a short orchestral piece inspired by Beethoven and composed to mark Beethoven's 250th anniversary in 2020. Meaning "Suddenly with Force", the title reflects one of the most fascinating aspects of Beethoven's style in Chin's view: the restless, relentless fire and energy that propels his music with seemingly unstoppable force.

The evening will conclude with Shostakovich's Symphony no. 9, a symphony which set out to be as grand as Beethoven's Ninth. The HK Phil will showcase its exceptional power and mastery in performing Shostakovich's brilliant yet subversive neo-Classical symphony.

Niu Niu Plays Rachmaninov will be held on **17 & 18 December 2021 (Fri & Sat)** at **8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Tickets priced at HK\$480, \$380, \$280 and \$220 are available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](#).

Artists

François López-Ferrer, conductor [\[full description\]](#)

Spanish-American conductor François López-Ferrer came to international attention after a critically acclaimed debut at the 2018 Verbier Festival, where he jumped in for Iván Fischer in a shared programme with Sir Simon Rattle and Gébor Takács-Nagy. He was winner of the inaugural 2015 Neeme Järvi Prize awarded at the Menuhin-Gstaad Festival, and received third prize at the 2018 OFUNAM International Conducting Competition. He was previously a member of the prestigious Deutsche Dirigentenforum.

Niu Niu, piano [\[full description\]](#)

Niu Niu is the stage name of Zhang Shengliang. He signed to EMI Classics at the age of nine, making him the youngest pianist ever signed to an international classical label. Since then, he has released eight albums. *Fate & Hope*, his latest album released in 2021, includes his debut composition *Hope*. He dubbed the piano part in NHK's animated version of *Piano no Mori* (Forest of Piano), broadcast by Netflix worldwide. As part of the campaign in support of his new album *Fate & Hope*, Niu Niu embarks on a world tour in the 2021/22 season.

NIU NIU PLAYS RACHMANINOV

17 & 18 | 12 | 2021

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK \$480 \$380 \$280 \$220

Tickets now available at URBTIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[François López-Ferrer](#)

conductor

[Niu Niu](#)

piano

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François López-Ferrer
Photo Credit: Noah Shaye



Niu Niu
Photo Credit: Paul Tsang



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo Credit: Eric Hong/HK Phil

Programme

UnsuK CHIN

Subito con Forza (Asian Premiere)

RACHMANINOV

Piano Concerto no. 2

SHOSTAKOVICH

Symphony no. 9

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden, SBS

Principal Guest Conductor: Yu Long

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

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 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 is also Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. Yu Long has been Principal Guest Conductor since the 2015/16 season, while Lio Kuokman has been Resident Conductor since the 2020/21 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 annually from 2015 to 2018. The concert performances and live Naxos recordings were enthusiastically received, and garnered Gramophone Orchestra of the Year Award 2019.

The HK Phil tours extensively across Mainland China and around the world, to showcase the orchestra's and the city's artistic excellence. In 2019, the HK Phil was the first Hong Kong arts group to perform in the Greater Bay Area since the promulgation of the "Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area". With the support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, the HK Phil undertook a major tour in 2017 to Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and Sydney in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR.

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, Hong Kong Arts Festival, Hong Kong Ballet, HKU MUSE, Opera Hong Kong and Tai Kwun.

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, 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.

香港管弦協會有限公司 The Hong Kong Philharmonic Society Ltd

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