

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Date: 9 March 2023

**World-class Conductors Christoph Eschenbach and Paavo Järvi  
Lead the HK Phil in Two Programmes  
Featuring Soloists Ray Chen and Zee Zee**

Swire Maestro Series: Eschenbach & Ray Chen (31 March & 1 April)  
Paavo Järvi Conducts Sibelius (7 & 8 April)

**[9 March 2023, Hong Kong]** The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) welcomes two leading international conductors and two renowned soloists for two remarkable programmes: Christoph Eschenbach conducts the HK Phil with violinist Ray Chen on 31 March and 1 April 2023, while Paavo Järvi leads the orchestra with pianist Zee Zee on 7 and 8 April 2023. All concerts will take place in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets are available at URBTIX and POPTICKET.

**Swire Maestro Series: Eschenbach & Ray Chen (31 March & 1 April)**



Currently Musical Director of the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Christoph Eschenbach is one of the most distinguished conductors. He received the highest accolades and held numerous significant positions previously, including Musical Director of the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Orchestre de Paris. Over the course of five decades, Eschenbach has built an impressive discography, both as conductor and pianist, with a repertoire ranging from J.S. Bach to contemporary music. In this concert, he will conduct Bruckner's titanic Fourth Symphony, also known as the "Romantic Symphony", a story of knights, forests and distant castles.

The concert begins with superstar Ray Chen playing Mendelssohn's gloriously tuneful Violin Concerto in E minor, considered as one of the most loved and popular concertos. As the First Prize winner of the Yehudi Menuhin and Queen Elizabeth competitions, Chen's remarkable musicianship transmits to millions around the world, reflected through his engagements both online and with the foremost orchestras and concert halls around the world. "Chen crashes through any supposed barriers erected around classical music with his playing," described by *The San Diego Union-Tribune*.

"Swire Maestro Series: Eschenbach & Ray Chen" will be held on 31 March 2023 (Fri) and 1 April 2023 (Sat) at 8PM in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Limited tickets priced at HK\$880, \$700, \$520 and \$380 are available at URBTIX and POPTICKET. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](http://hkphil.org).

**Paavo Järvi Conducts Sibelius (7 & 8 April)**



Estonian conductor Paavo Järvi is widely recognised as one of today's most eminent conductors, enjoying close partnerships with the finest orchestras around the world. He has been serving as Chief Conductor of the Tonhalle Orchester-Zürich, as Artistic Director of The Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen since 2004, and as both the founder and Artistic Director of the Estonian Festival Orchestra. From the 2022/23 Season, he is also Honorary Conductor of the NHK Symphony Orchestra. In 2019, Paavo Järvi was named Conductor of the Year by Germany's Opus Klassik and received the 2019 Rheingau Music Prize.

The concert begins with *Josephs Legende: Symphonic Fragment*, a colourful slice of Richard Strauss. Next, Zee Zee will perform Liszt's tempestuous Second Piano Concerto. From a delicately rippling passagework to the stormy climax, it took Liszt no less than 24 years to complete this tempestuous masterpiece, which Zee Zee perfectly demonstrates her extraordinary virtuosity in it. Her mature creativity has been hailed as "a powerful, passionate and compelling representation of pure artistry" by the *Los Angeles Times*.

In the second half of the concert, Paavo Järvi will lead the HK Phil in Sibelius' Fifth Symphony. It begins with a radiant dawn and ends with a majestic hymn to that vision of nature at its most glorious, crowned with an unforgettable tune.

"Paavo Järvi Conducts Sibelius" will be held on 7 & 8 April (Fri & Sat) at 8PM in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets priced at HK\$780, \$620, \$460 and \$300 are available at URBTIX and POPTICKET. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](http://hkphil.org).

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## Artists

### **Swire Maestro Series: Eschenbach & Ray Chen**

#### **Christoph Eschenbach, conductor** [\[full description\]](#)

Renowned for the breadth of his repertoire and the depth of his interpretations, Christoph Eschenbach has held directorships with many leading orchestras and gained the highest musical honours. Currently Musical Director of the Konzerthausorchester Berlin, Eschenbach was Principal Conductor and Artistic Director of the Tonhalle Orchestra (1982-86), Musical Director of Houston Symphony (1988-99), Artistic Director of the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival (1999-2002), as well as Musical Director of the NDR Symphony Orchestra (1998-2004), the Philadelphia Orchestra (2003-08), the Orchestre de Paris (2000-10) and the Washington National Symphony Orchestra (2010-17).

#### **Ray Chen, violin** [\[full description\]](#)

Violinist and online personality, Ray Chen redefines what it means to be a classical musician in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With a global reach that enhances and inspires a new classical audience, Chen's remarkable musicianship transmits to millions around the world, reflected through his engagements both online and with the foremost orchestras and concert halls around the world. Beyond the performing arts, his work has also contributed to philanthropy, popular culture and educational technology.

### **Paavo Järvi Conducts Sibelius**

#### **Paavo Järvi, conductor** [\[full description\]](#)

Estonian Grammy Award-winning conductor Paavo Järvi is widely recognised as one of today's most eminent conductors, enjoying close partnerships with the finest orchestras around the world. He serves as Chief Conductor of the Tonhalle Orchester-Zürich, as the long-standing Artistic Director of The Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen (DKAM) since 2004, and as both the founder and Artistic Director of the Estonian Festival Orchestra. He is also Honorary Conductor of the NHK Symphony Orchestra.

#### **Zee Zee, piano** [\[full description\]](#)

Zee Zee (Zuo Zhang) has performed with leading orchestras worldwide such as the BBC Symphony, BBC Philharmonic, London Philharmonic, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Belgian National Orchestra, Sinfonieorchester Basel, Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Tonhalle Zurich, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, Seattle Symphony and Pasadena Symphony orchestras. Her latest solo album *Journey*, which features works from Wagner, Schoenberg, Ravel and Liszt, was released in May 2022.

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## SWIRE MAESTRO SERIES: ESCHENBACH & RAY CHEN

31 | 3 & 1 | 4 | 2023

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$880 \$700 \$520 \$380

Tickets now available at URBTIX and POPTICKET

For ages 6 and above

### Artists

[Christoph Eschenbach](#)

conductor

[Ray Chen](#)

violin

### Programme

**MENDELSSOHN**

Violin Concerto

**BRUCKNER**

Symphony no. 4

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**Christoph Eschenbach**

Photo: Jonas Holthaus



**Ray Chen**

Photo: John Mac



**Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra**

Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil

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## PAAVO JÄRVI CONDUCTS SIBELIUS

7 & 8 | 4 | 2023

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$780 \$620 \$460 \$300

Tickets now available at URBIX and POPTICKET

For ages 6 and above

### Artists

[Paavo Järvi](#)

conductor

[Zee Zee](#)

piano

### Programme

R. STRAUSS

*Josephs Legende*: Symphonic Fragment

LISZT

Piano Concerto no. 2

SIBELIUS

Symphony no. 5

[Download](#) press images



Paavo Järvi

Photo: Kaupo Kikkas



Zee Zee



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil

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## Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden, SBS

Principal Guest Conductor: Yu Long

Resident Conductor: Lio Kuokman, JP

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is recognised as one of Asia's foremost classical orchestras. Presenting more than 150 concerts over a 44-week season, the HK Phil attracts more than 200,000 music lovers annually. Recently the HK Phil won the prestigious UK classical music magazine *Gramophone's* 2019 Orchestra of the Year Award – the first orchestra in Asia to receive this accolade.

Jaap van Zweden, SBS, one of today's most sought-after conductors, has been the orchestra's Music Director since the 2012/13 Season, a position he will hold until the end of the 2023/24 Season. 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, JP was appointed Resident Conductor in December 2020.

Under the dynamic leadership of Jaap van Zweden, the HK Phil has attained new heights of artistic excellence, receiving 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 were enthusiastically received by audiences, and the live Naxos recordings were praised by critics and garnered the *Gramophone* Orchestra of the Year Award 2019.

The HK Phil has toured extensively across Mainland China and, with the support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, it undertook a major tour in 2017 to Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and Sydney in celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Joshua Bell, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Renée Fleming, Ning Feng, Stephen Hough, Evgeny Kissin, Katia and Marielle Labèque, Lang Lang, Yo-Yo Ma, Leonard Slatkin and Yuja Wang.

The HK Phil promotes the work of Hong Kong and Chinese composers through an active commissioning programme, and it 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. Founded in 2021, "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 The HKAPA's School of Music to facilitate 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.

Thanks to a significant subsidy from the Government of the HKSAR 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, amongst others, Hong Kong Ballet, 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 registered 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.