

**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra's Nanjing & Shanghai Tour under Jaap Van Zweden was a Massive Success featuring Tianwa Yang**

**“Under the baton of Jaap van Zweden, all sections of the HK Phil join forces to perform Mendelssohn's Symphony no. 4, presenting a feast of colourful and elegant melodies at the Shanghai Oriental Art Center Concert Hall.” – Mao Yiming, *Xinmin News***

**“Jaap van Zweden conducted [the HK Phil in its performance of Mendelssohn's Symphony no. 4] with refined and concise gestures, proving his technical mastery with effortless finesse. The exquisite orchestration resembles one of chamber music, giving a faithful interpretation to the composer's signature style: graceful, refreshing and glamorous.” – Chen Jie, *Music Weekly***

**[15 September 2023, Hong Kong]** The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) kicked off its 50<sup>th</sup> professional season with an exciting tour held at the Nanjing Jiangsu Centre for the Performing Arts Concert Hall and the Shanghai Oriental Art Center Concert Hall from 1 to 2 September 2023. Featuring a programme highly praised by local music fans, these concerts are made possible with the support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Shanghai (SHETO) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

As the HK Phil's Music Director, Jaap van Zweden led the orchestra and renowned violinist Tianwa Yang in the performances of three famous works by Mendelssohn. The concerts opened with Mendelssohn's *The Hebrides Overture*, which portrays the violent seas off the west coast of Scotland. Following Tianwa Yang's performance of the beloved *Violin Concerto*, the orchestra concluded the evenings with Mendelssohn's *Symphony no. 4*, filling the concert halls with blazing colours and sunbeams of Italy, the travel destination that inspired this piece.

The Director of the SHETO Laura Aron said that it was a pleasure to invite the HK Phil, and support its Nanjing and Shanghai tour. She added that, after years of separation during the pandemic, they were honoured to have the HK Phil, hailed as one of Asia's foremost classical orchestras, making its long-awaited return under the baton of Jaap van Zweden for a reunion with the audiences. This tour also marks the opening of the HK Phil's golden jubilee year. With the support of the National 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan, Hong Kong has been making every effort to develop into an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. In the future, the SHETO will not only cooperate with major arts and cultural organisations and artists from Hong Kong, support their cultural exchanges in the Mainland, but will also encourage the emerging Hong Kong artists to explore cross-sectoral projects while performing in the Mainland. By nurturing talents, it opens infinite artistic possibilities and gives Mainland Chinese more opportunities to enjoy Hong Kong's cultural and artistic diversity.

The Chief Executive of the HK Phil Benedikt Fohr emphasised the significance of touring for the orchestra, as it puts the HK Phil on the global stage and allows international audiences to experience our excellence. These tours also served as great motivation for the players to represent Hong Kong in exceptional venues. Fohr expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the HKSAR Government for its funding and support, which enables the HK Phil to tour other areas of China and the world.

In addition to Nanjing and Shanghai, the HK Phil's Music Director Jaap van Zweden and Resident Conductor Lio Kuokman are set to return to the Greater Bay Area this November, leading the orchestra in its concerts held at the Guangzhou Xinghai Concert Hall and the Shenzhen Concert Hall respectively. Entering its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the HK Phil will also tour other countries in Asia and Europe, sharing the beauty of music and forging connections with audiences from every corner of the world.

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(Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil)



Laura Aron, Director of SHETO (third from left);  
Shen Yanfei, Deputy Director of Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office of Jiangsu Provincial People's Government (second from left);  
Cong Sufeng, Vice President of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Jiangsu Sub-council (second from right);  
Sze Wai-pan, Chairman of the Hong Kong Chamber of Commerce in Jiangsu Province (far left);  
Benedikt Fohr, Chief Executive of the HK Phil (third from right) and Vennie Ho, Executive Director of the HK Phil (far right) take a group photo before the performance at Jiangsu Grand Theatre.



The HK Phil's Music Director Jaap van Zweden leads the orchestra and renowned violinist Tianwa Yang in a performance at the Jiangsu Grand Theatre.



The HK Phil's Music Director Jaap van Zweden leads the orchestra and renowned violinist Tianwa Yang in a performance at the Shanghai Oriental Art Center.

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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. 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. Following his tenure as Music Director, he will hold the title of Conductor Laureate. Jaap 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 well received, 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. The orchestra 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. In the 2023/24 Season, the orchestra will embark on global tours to more than 18 cities.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Anja Bihlmaier, Stéphane Denève, Christoph Eschenbach, Paavo Järvi, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Tarmo Peltokoski, Vasily Petrenko, Krzysztof Urbanski, Ning Feng, Boris Giltburg, Leonidas Kavakos, Olivier Latry and Akiko Suwanai. 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, each conducting their own compositions.

The HK Phil runs diverse education and community programmes in schools, hospitals and outdoor spaces, bringing 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 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.

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.