

PRESS RELEASE
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A Decade of Musical Brilliance: Maestro Jaap van Zweden Concludes 12-Season Journey as HK Phil Music Director

[26 June 2024, Hong Kong] After an unforgettable 12-year journey with exceptional achievements and outstanding performances, Maestro Jaap van Zweden bids farewell as the Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil). Under his assiduous and energetic nurture, the HK Phil has attained unprecedented heights of artistic excellence and made history by performing Wagner's complete *Ring Cycle*, garnering the prestigious *Gramophone* Orchestra of the Year. Maestro van Zweden and the orchestra have also brought the finest music-making beyond Hong Kong on international tours across Asia, Australia, Europe and the Mainland.

From mid to late June 2024, Maestro van Zweden has presented us with three exciting programmes, including the Swire Community Concerts, Wagner's *The Flying Dutchman* – the second Wagner opera-in-concert performance following the huge success of the *Ring Cycle*, joined by a stellar cast of vocalists, as well as the farewell concerts performing beloved pieces voted by the audiences. The memorable farewell concerts opened with *Dragon Factors* by OZNO (James Boznos, HK Phil Principal Timpani), celebrating the musical journey with our Music Director. The audience rose to their feet, applauding and cheering thunderously after the final notes, bidding an emotional farewell to van Zweden.

"It's been a source of immense personal satisfaction to collaborate with this magnificent orchestra for the past twelve unforgettable years. The journey has undoubtedly demanded great dedication from everyone involved, but the artistic achievements we've accomplished together stand as a testament to our collective efforts. A huge thank you to all of you in the audience. Throughout it all, you – the audience – have been companions on this remarkable voyage, sharing in the profound joy that great music can bring. I hope you will all continue to support the HK Phil in the future," said Maestro van Zweden.

David Cogman, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the HK Phil, said: "Jaap inherited a strong regional orchestra in 2012. He leaves it in 2024 as a leading international orchestra. We cannot thank Jaap enough for what he has achieved here over the past decade: he will always be a treasured friend of the orchestra and of Hong Kong, and the orchestra is tremendously proud of everything they have accomplished under his leadership. Though we are very sad to see him leave, we look forward to welcoming him back to conduct us in the years to come."

Since his inaugural concert in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall on 28 September 2012, Maestro van Zweden has become the longest serving Music Director of the HK Phil. With van Zweden at the helm, the HK Phil has shared the stage with numerous international artists, including Joshua Bell, Rudolf Buchbinder, Renaud Capuçon, Renée Fleming, Lang Lang, Ning Feng, Yo-Yo Ma, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Yuja Wang, elevating the orchestra's artistic level to unprecedented heights. The Maestro has delighted the HK Phil audiences with many masterpieces, including his "second to none" interpretations of Bruckner symphonies, the monumental Bach *St Matthew Passion*, and the captivating Mahler symphonies.

Maestro van Zweden also led the HK Phil in a groundbreaking performance of Wagner's complete *Ring Cycle* from 2015 to 2018, a considerable accomplishment in the world of classical music. In recognition of the live Naxos recordings of the orchestra's astonishing performances, the HK Phil was honoured with the prestigious *Gramophone* Orchestra of the Year award in 2019, earning international recognition for their artistic achievements and commitment to excellence. In addition, van Zweden made numerous acclaimed recordings with the HK Phil, including Mahler's Symphony no. 10 (concert version ed. Mengelberg/Dopper) and Shostakovich's Symphonies nos. 5, 9 and 10, alongside a new Tchaikovsky album.

A believer in the transformative power of music, Maestro van Zweden sees it as a bridge connecting communities. “Music is important in enriching not only the brain but more importantly the soul,” he once said. Determined to transform the lives of children and young people with autism, van Zweden and his wife Aaltje established the Papageno Foundation in 1997 to support families with autistic children, using music as a means of reaching out to them. Committed to making concerts enjoyable for and accessible to people of all abilities and needs, the Maestro has conducted many community concerts for the HK Phil, including the popular Swire Community Concerts.

As a cultural ambassador of Hong Kong, the HK Phil is dedicated to fostering cultural exchange and showcasing the artistic excellence of Hong Kong on the global stage. Maestro van Zweden has led the HK Phil on 11 tours across Asia, Australia, Europe and the Mainland, including the longest nine-city tour to Singapore and Europe in February and March 2024. Commemorating the HK Phil's five decades of excellence, this tour took international audiences by storm with the orchestra's finest music-making.

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

Over the past decade, conductor Jaap van Zweden has become an international presence on three continents. He has appeared as guest conductor with leading orchestras such as, in Europe, the Orchestre de Paris, Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw, the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, the Vienna Philharmonic, the Berlin Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra, and, in the US, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, The Cleveland Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

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Jaap's inaugural concert “Welcome, Jaap! A National Day Celebration” (28 September 2012)
 Photo: Cheung Chi-wai/HK Phil



Mainland China Tour: Beijing (6 March 2014)
 Photo: Gan Yuan



Europe Tour: Vienna. Featuring violinist Ning Feng (26 February 2015)



Yuja Wang Triptych 1 – Mozart: A Celebration of the 18th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR (12 June 2015)
 Photo: Cheung Chi-wai/HK Phil



HK Phil Tour 2017: Sydney (5 May 2017)
Photo: Keith Saunders



The Ring Cycle Part 4 – *Götterdämmerung*
(18 January 2018)
Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil



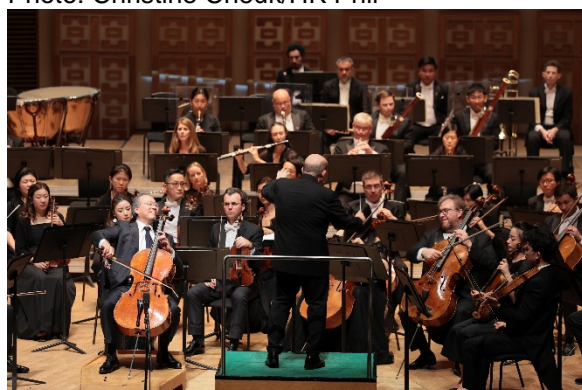
Jaap | Renée Fleming (8 November 2019)
Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil



Sharing the joy of winning the prestigious
Gramophone Orchestra of the Year Award at the
“Jaap | Renée Fleming” concert (9 November
2019)
Photo: Christine Cheuk/HK Phil



Season Opening: Jaap & Joshua Bell (9
September 2023)
Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil



CUHK 60th Anniversary: Yo-Yo Ma & HK Phil
(8 November 2023)
Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil



Singapore and Europe Tour: Zurich
(26 February 2024)
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



Swire Community Concert: Summertime, Party
Time (15 June 2024)
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



Opera in Concert: Jaap | The Flying Dutchman
(21 June 2024)
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil



Farewell to Our Music Director (25 June 2024)
Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil



The audience bids an emotional farewell to Jaap van
Zweden (25 June 2024)
Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden, SBS

Principal Guest Conductor: Long Yu

Resident Conductor: Lio Kuokman, JP

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is regarded as one of the leading orchestras in Asia. 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. Jaap van Zweden has also been Music Director of the New York Philharmonic since the 2018/19 Season. Long Yu 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. Other recent recording projects include Mahler's Symphony no. 10, Shostakovich's Symphony no. 10, and Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 6 and Piano Concerto no. 1.

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 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The HK Phil celebrates its 50th anniversary in the 2023/24 season, touring Europe, Asia, and Mainland China, performing in 22 cities across ten countries.

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, Joshua Bell, Ning Feng, Boris Giltburg, Lang Lang, Leonidas Kavakos, Olivier Latry, Yo-Yo Ma 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 conducting their own compositions.

The HK Phil runs diverse education and community programmes in schools and outdoor spaces, bringing 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 current sponsorship donation, which is the largest amount received in the orchestra's history, Swire endeavours to foster access to classical music and stimulate cultural participation in Hong Kong and the Chinese Mainland – a critical aspect of this is to engage with the community, especially young people. The sponsorship will also help promote local artistic excellence 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.

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