

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: 22 December 2023

Hong Kong Philharmonic Gala Dinner at the Asia Society: An Enchanting Rhapsody with Lang Lang

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[22 December 2023, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) successfully hosted a Gala Dinner at the Asia Society Hong Kong Centre on 16 December 2023 (Sat), graced by Mrs Vicki Kwok Wong Wing-ki, JP, Deputy Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, as the Guest of Honour.

The Fundraising Dinner Organising Committee was led by the Honorable Advisors Mrs Janice Choi and Ms Angela Yau, the Chair Ms Sarah Wong, and the Committee members including Mrs Christine Ip, Ms Lilian Kiang, Ms Karen Ng, Ms Melody Xu, Ms Ling Yang and Ms Nikki Zhan

The Dinner received tremendous support from all sectors and was attended by many distinguished guests in the city. The guests include renowned pianist Mr Lang Lang, HK Phil Music Director Maestro Jaap van Zweden, HK Phil Resident Conductor Maestro Lio Kuokman, Dr John van Praag and Ms Pat Fok, Dr and Mrs Ronald Lu, Mrs Helen Fong, Mrs Regina Leung, Mrs Cecilia Sze, Ms Winnie Tam, Mr Michael Tien, and Director of Christie's Education Asia Pacific Ms Sara Mao who also served as the auctioneer of the night.

Mr David Cogman, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the HK Phil, said that, "As you know, this is our 50th anniversary – our golden jubilee. We started off in 1947 as a small amateur social club. The journey from a social club to one of the leading orchestras in the world is a very long one, and that is made possible by the orchestra's friends, supporters and patrons. First of all, the HKSAR Government recognised very early on the need to have world-class art institutions, and the need to give them stability. The partnership with the government over the years has allowed us to become the orchestra you see today, and you could not hope for a better partner. The second of all, this is the last season that Mr Jaap van Zweden will be with us as our Music Director. Over the last decade, it's Jaap who built the orchestra into the institution that you see today. On behalf of the orchestra, thank you all again for your support."

"The Hong Kong government takes great pride in the accomplishments of the HK Phil's extraordinary 50-year journey. Under the guidance of the Board of Governors and the leadership of Music Director Maestro Jaap van Zweden, the HK Phil has achieved global recognition and toured in different cities across the Mainland and around the world. Its reputation on the international stage is important in promoting Hong Kong in the east-meets-west cultural exchange, and showcasing our unique culture," said Mrs Vicki Kwok Wong Wing-ki, JP, Deputy Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism.

"I would like to thank Mr Lang Lang for being with us. Thank you for the opportunity to make music with you. I would like to thank Mr David Cogman for his support, courage and strength as such a fantastic partner for me and the orchestra. I thank Swire, the power behind us. I thank the government for being very supportive and thinking highly of us. There are many orchestras in the world which have to work without support from their governments. Finally, I thank the former Chairman Mr Y. S. Liu for everything he did for the organisation, for the musicians, and not to forget – for the city of Hong Kong," said HK Phil Music Director Jaap van Zweden.

The eventful evening commenced with the guided viewing of the artworks of Pang Jiun at the Asia Society's gallery. During the Dinner, HK Phil Associate Principal Bass Clarinet Lorenzo Iosco, Second Associate Concertmaster Wang Liang, First Violin Gui Li, Assistant Principal Viola Kaori Wilson and Principal Cello Richard Bamping performed *Traditional/ Goran Frost arr, Klezmer Dance No. 3*. After that, HK Phil Chief Executive Mr Benedikt Fohr led an inspiring conversation with pianist Lang Lang, diving into Lang Lang's music journey and his wealth of experience as a music educator. Furthermore, Lang Lang captivated the guests with his performances of 4 Mazurkas by Frédéric Chopin and "Can You Feel The Love Tonight" from the iconic Disney movie *The Lion King*.

Chair of the Organising Committee Ms Sarah Wong said: "Our Gala Dinner can only succeed with the tremendous support of many friends, patrons, corporate and individual sponsors, media partners *Jessica* and *Vogue*, Ms Sarah Mao from Christies being our Auctioneer, Ms Vincy Wong being our MC, and many more. My heartfelt

thanks to all of you, along with the staff from the HK Phil.”

The HK Phil would like to give its heartfelt thanks to the following Gala Dinner Organising Committee Members: Honorable Advisors: Mrs Janice Choi, BBS, MH, JP, Chevalier del’ordre des Arts et des Lettres, Ms Angela Yau; Chair: Ms Sarah Wong; and Members: Mrs Christine Ip, Ms Lilian Kiang, Ms Karen Ng, Ms Melody Xu, Ms Ling Yang and Ms Nikki Zhan.



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HK Phil Associate Principal Bass Clarinet Lorenzo Losco, Second Associate Concertmaster Wang Liang, First Violin Gui Li, Assistant Principal Viola Kaori Wilson, and Principal Cello Richard Bamping performing Klezmer Dance no. 3



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Welcome Address by Mr David Cogman, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the HK Phil



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Vote of Thanks by Chair of the Gala Dinner Organising Committee, Ms Sarah Wong



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(From left) Honourable Advisor of the Gala Dinner Organising Committee Ms Angela Yau; HK Phil Chief Executive Mr Benedikt Fohr; HK Phil Chairman Mr David Cogman; Mrs Vicki Kwok, Deputy Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism; Mr Lang Lang; HK Phil Music Director Maestro Jaap van Zweden; Honourable Advisor of the Gala Dinner Organising Committee Mrs Janice Choi; Chair of the Gala Dinner Organising Committee Ms Sarah Wong; HK Phil Executive Director Mrs Vennie Ho; and HK Phil Resident Conductor Maestro Lio Kuokman



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Mrs Vicki Kwok Wong Wing-ki, JP, Deputy Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism as the Guest of Honour



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HK Phil Music Director Maestro Jaap van Zweden



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Director of Christie's Education Asia Pacific Ms Sara Mao hosting the auction session



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Pianist Lang Lang performing 4 Mazurkas by Frédéric Chopin and "Can You Feel The Love Tonight"



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(From left) HK Phil Resident Conductor Maestro Lio Kuokman, Honourable Advisor of the Gala Dinner Organising Committee Ms Angela Yau, and Dr Iñaki Sandoval



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(From left) HK Phil Chairman Mr David Cogman, former HK Phil Chairman Mr Y. S. Liu, and Dr Iñaki Sandoval



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(From left) Ms Camille Sze, Honourable Advisor of Gala Dinner Organising Committee Mrs Janice Choi, Mr Lang Lang, Mrs Regina Leung, Chair of the Gala Dinner Organising Committee Ms Sarah Wong, and the Gala Dinner Organising Committee members Ms Melody Xu and Mrs Cecilia Sze



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(From left) Dr Ronald Lu, Founder and Chairman of award-winning architecture firm Ronald Lu and Partners, and HK Phil Board Member Mr Sonny Yau



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Mr Michael Tien, Hong Kong Legislative Council Member



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(From left) HK Phil Board Member Mr Sonny Yau, Mrs Cecillia Yau, Mrs Y. S. Liu, and Former HK Phil Chairman Mr Y. S. Liu



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(From left) Dr Paul N. M. Cheng, and Dr Christopher K. M. Hui



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(From left) Former HK Phil Chairman Mr Y. S. Liu, Mrs Helen Fong, and HK Phil Director of Development, Ms Kary Hon



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(From upper left) Mr Peter Brien, Mr Edward Ng, Mr Simon Loong, Mr Bendikt Fohr, Dr Iñaki Sandoval, and Mr Brian Brown;
(from lower left) Ms Pui Pui To, Mrs Christine Ip, Ms Bonny Wong, and Ms Angela Yau



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(From left) Mrs Janice Choi, BBS, MH, JP, Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, Ms Julianne Doe, and Ms Winnie Tam



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(From left) Dr John van Praag, and Miss Pat Fok



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Live Auction winners and the Auctioneer: (from left) Mr David Chong, Mrs Erica Chong, Mr Ronald Chan, Director of Christie's Education Asia Pacific Ms Sara Mao, Mrs Veronica Lam, Mr Dennis Lam, Ms Melody Xu and her sons



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HK Phil Chief Executive Mr Benedikt Fohr closing the Dinner with a thank you note

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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 20th 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.