

Huge orchestra and massed choir combine for a powerful *Belshazzar's Feast* (29 & 30 April)

[24 March 2016, Hong Kong] “The writing is on the wall” comes from the biblical story of King Belshazzar. Will he mend his decadent ways, or will the hand of God strike him down and destroy his kingdom? Find out in William Walton’s riveting work for huge orchestra, massed choir and bass-baritone with soloist **Jonathan Lemalu** and the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)**.

British composer William Walton composed the music based on the story of “Belshazzar’s Feast” for performance at the Leeds Festival in 1931. In this HK Phil performance, conductor **Courtney Lewis** will lead bass-baritone Jonathan Lemalu and the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus** in this massive and spectacular work.

Also, on the programme, the HK Phil’s Principal Flute **Megan Sterling** will showcase her virtuosity in the Flute Concerto by German composer Carl Reinecke. A contemporary of both Beethoven and Walton, Reinecke’s music is full of charming melodies and gentle moods. One of his very last works, this enchanting Concerto is one of the most important in the flute repertoire.

The concert will open with Beethoven’s Leonore Overture no. 2, one of four overtures he wrote for the opera *Fidelio*, the only opera written by this great composer. The music is full of power and high drama.

Classics: Belshazzar’s Feast will be held on **29 & 30 April (Fri & Sat), 8PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Ticket prices: HK\$380, \$280, \$220, \$180 are now available at **URBTIX**. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org.

Free Pre-concert talks are available on both concert nights, stay tuned for details at www.hkphil.org

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| Date: | 29 April 2016 (Fri) | 30 April 2016 (Sat) |
| Time: | 7:15 – 7:45pm | 7:15 – 7:45pm |
| Venue: | 4/F Foyer, Auditoria Building Hong Kong Cultural Centre | 4/F Foyer, Auditoria Building Hong Kong Cultural Centre |
| Speaker: | TBC | Mr Li Chi-man, Music Educator |
| Language: | English | Cantonese |

Artists

Courtney Lewis, conductor [\[full biography\]](#)

Courtney Lewis is currently the Music Director of the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and Assistant Conductor of the New York Philharmonic. He appeared with the National Symphony Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Atlanta Symphony, Detroit Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic and many more.

Jonathan Lemalu, bass-baritone [\[full biography\]](#)

Jonathan Lemalu is the joint winner of the 2002 Kathleen Ferrier award and the recipient of the 2002 Royal Philharmonic Society’s Award for Young Artist of the Year. He has performed at the Royal Opera House, English National Opera, Opera de Lyon, San Francisco Opera, The Dallas Opera, The Metropolitan Opera and the Staatsoper of Munich and Hamburg.

Megan Sterling, flute [\[full biography\]](#)

Megan Sterling has been the Principal Flute of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra since 2002. She has enjoyed working with some of the world’s top conductors and soloists, and is a frequent soloist of the HK Phil.

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus [\[full biography\]](#)

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus performed with the HK Phil in major works by composers such as Britten, Mendelssohn, Beethoven and Haydn under renowned conductors including Lorin Maazel, Nicholas McGegan and Brett Weymark amongst others.

Classics: Belshazzar's Feast

29 & 30 | 4 | 2016

FRI & SAT **8PM**

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$380 \$280 \$220 \$180

Tickets are now available at URBTIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Courtney Lewis](#)

conductor

[Jonathan Lemalu](#)

bass-baritone

[Megan Sterling](#)

flute

[Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus](#)

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Courtney Lewis

Photo Credit: Travis Anderson



Jonathan Lemalu

Photo Credit: Sussie Ahlburg



Megan Sterling

Photo Credit: Cheung Chi Wai/HK Phil



The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus

Photo Credit: Cheung Chi Wai/HK Phil

Programme

BEETHOVEN

Leonore Overture no. 2

REINECKE

Flute Concerto

WALTON

Belshazzar's Feast

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden

Principal Guest Conductor: Yu Long

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is recognised as Asia's foremost classical orchestra. The Orchestra presents more than 150 concerts over a 44-week season and attracts more than 200,000 music lovers annually.

Jaap van Zweden, one of today's most sought-after conductors, is the Orchestra's Music Director, a position he has held since the 2012/13 concert season. Maestro van Zweden was recently announced as the next Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. This appointment will not affect his tenure with the HK Phil; his commitment to the HK Phil extends at least to the summer of 2019.

Yu Long was appointed for an initial three-year term in the 2015/16 season as Principal Guest Conductor.

Under Maestro van Zweden, the HK Phil is undertaking a variety of initiatives including a four-year project to perform and record the complete *Ring of the Nibelung* (Richard Wagner). The Orchestra is in the second of this four-year journey, performing one opera annually in concert. The performances are being recorded live for the Naxos label and mark the first performances by a Hong Kong or mainland Chinese orchestra of the entire *Ring* cycle.

Also under van Zweden, the orchestra undertook a highly successful five-country, seven-city tour of Europe in the 2014/15 season, with concerts in London, Vienna, Zurich, Eindhoven, Birmingham, Berlin and Amsterdam. Performances were met with enthusiasm and universally positive reviews. The concert in Vienna's Musikverein was filmed for broadcast on TV.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Ning Feng, Matthias Goerne, Lang Lang, Yu Long, Yundi Li, the late Lorin Maazel, Anne-Sophie Mutter and Yuja Wang.

The HK Phil promotes the work of Hong Kong and Chinese composers through an active commissioning programme, and has released recordings featuring Tan Dun and Bright Sheng, each conducting their own compositions, on the Naxos label. Its acclaimed community engagement programme brings music to tens of thousands of children annually. A recording was issued free to schoolchildren throughout Hong Kong of Britten's *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf* and Leopold Mozart's *Toy Symphony*.

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 also endeavours to promote artistic excellence, foster access to classical music and stimulate cultural participation in Hong Kong, and to enhance Hong Kong's reputation as one of the great cities of the world.

Thanks to a significant subsidy from the Hong Kong Government and long-term funding from Principal Patron Swire, the Hong Kong Jockey Club and other supporters, the HK Phil now boasts a full-time annual schedule of classical music concerts, pops concerts, an extensive education programme, and collaborations for staged opera with Opera Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

The Orchestra's history stretches back to 1895, when it was formed as the Sino-British Orchestra. It was re-named in 1957 and became fully professional in 1974.

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. SWIRE is the Principal Patron of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra is a Venue Partner of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre.