

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**Date: 14 December 2018**

## **Benedikt Fohr Appointed Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra**

**[14 December 2018, Hong Kong]** The **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** today announced the appointment of Mr Benedikt Fohr as its new Chief Executive following an international search. Mr Fohr will take up the position on 1 April 2019 to succeed the retiring Michael MacLeod, who has served the HK Phil for eight years.

Mr Y S Liu, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the HK Phil and Chair of the Search Committee, said of the appointment: "The HK Phil is well-recognised on the international stage because of the success the orchestra has achieved in recent years under the leadership of Music Director Jaap van Zweden. This has attracted candidates of a high calibre during our global search. Benedikt has held executive positions with orchestras in Germany, Austria and Luxembourg, and with his vision, management skills, talents and experience in the arts scene, we are confident that he will lead and drive our orchestra to the next level of excellence."

Mr Fohr has been the Orchestra Manager (CEO) of Deutsche Radio Philharmonie Saarbrücken Kaiserslautern (DRP) for 12 years and was highly-regarded for his long-term commitment to the orchestra. Previously, he was the General Director of the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra (The orchestra of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg), Secretary General of the Camerata Salzburg and Managing Director of the Ensemble Research Freiburg. Mr Fohr, 55, was educated in Germany and has served on the board of various arts entities and foundations, including the Board of the Förderverein Saarphilharmonie for the building of a new concert hall in Saarbrücken. He has been the Artistic Director (Classical) of the Festival International Echternach in Luxembourg since 2015.

Mr Fohr said: "I am incredibly looking forward to working with Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and Jaap van Zweden. The orchestra is in excellent artistic shape and the huge success of the 'Ring Cycle' project has once again confirmed the orchestra's high international standing. Together with Jaap, the many renowned soloists and guest conductors and above all with our first-class musicians, we will continue to delight our audiences over all generations in Hong Kong and around the world. Working for this means for me is a wonderful new challenge. I would like to thank our board, the Government and the sponsors for their support and close cooperation, so that we can continue to shape and represent Hong Kong musically as one of the most exciting cultural metropolises in the world."

Maestro Jaap van Zweden, Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra since 2012, congratulated Mr Fohr on his appointment: "I am very pleased with the appointment of Mr Benedikt Fohr as the orchestra's next CEO. His longstanding dedication and resourceful experience with big orchestras will make him an outstanding leader. I look forward very much to our partnership. We will create an imaginative future for the HK Phil moving forward, locally, nationally and internationally."

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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. Presenting more than 150 concerts over a 44-week season, the HK Phil attracts more than 200,000 music lovers annually.

Jaap van Zweden, one of today's most sought-after conductors, has been the orchestra's Music Director since the 2012/13 concert season, a position he will continue to hold until at least 2022. Maestro van Zweden is the 26<sup>th</sup> Music Director of the New York Philharmonic from the 2018/19 season.

Yu Long has been Principal Guest Conductor since the 2015/16 season.

Under the dynamic leadership of Music Director Jaap van Zweden, the HK Phil has attained new heights of artistic excellence, garnering international critical acclaim.

Following on from the success of the European tour which included a filmed concert from Vienna's Musikverein, the HK Phil has toured extensively within the mainland China. In 2017, in celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, and with support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, the orchestra performed in Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and at the Sydney Opera House.

Jaap, the HK Phil, a superb cast of soloists and a chorus successfully completed an epic four-year journey through Wagner's "Ring Cycle" in January 2018. The concert performances and live Naxos recordings have been enthusiastically received by audiences and praised by critics at home and abroad. The recording of *Götterdämmerung* was released in November 2018.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Joshua Bell, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Matthias Goerne, Stephen Hough, Evgeny Kissin, Lang Lang, Yo-Yo Ma, Ning Feng and Yuja Wang.

The HK Phil promotes the work of Hong Kong and Chinese composers through an active commissioning programme, and has released recordings on the Naxos label featuring Tan Dun and Bright Sheng, each conducting their own compositions. Its acclaimed education and community engagement programmes in schools, hospital and outdoor space, bring 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 sponsorship, which is the largest in the orchestra's history, Swire 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 in 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 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, among others, Opera Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Hong Kong Ballet.

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 charitable organisation.

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