

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Date: 21 June 2019

**An Enchanting Family Matinée with music inspired by Shakespeare**  
**Actors enliven music by Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn and more**  
**Swire Sunday Family Series: Ode to Shakespeare (23 Jun – ONE performance only)**

[21 June 2019, Hong Kong] The **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** with Principal Guest Conductor [Yu Long](#) invites you and your family to explore classical music favourites inspired by Shakespeare. Actors from the **Hong Kong Shax Theatre Group** will present excerpts from the plays that inspired the music – from Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* to Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The concert takes place at the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall** on **23 June 2019 (Sunday, 3PM, ONE performance only)**.

One of the most well-known stories of all time, *Romeo and Juliet* has inspired countless composers with its tale of star-crossed lovers. It took 10 years for Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet* Fantasy Overture to reach its final form, including the addition of the calm exposition representing the lovers' ally Friar Laurence, contrasting with the chaotic theme depicting the feud between the Montague and Capulet families. These signatures turned this work into a classic.

We then turn to another Shakespearean tragedy, *Othello*, this time set to the music of Dvořák. Conceived as the final piece in a trilogy entitled *Nature, Life and Love*, the *Othello* Overture captures through music some of the most intense human experiences. The hymn-like opening introduces Othello's sombre theme, which is later transformed into a musical metaphor for love, jealousy and deceit.

The programme will finish on a bright note with music by Mendelssohn based on his favourite Shakespeare play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Woodwinds set the scene for the Overture with four simple yet distinctive chords that transport the audience to the enchanted world of the play. The piece offers a glimpse into the magical world of Shakespeare, using short motifs to portray fairies, hunters, and of course the braying of Bottom the donkey. The music is embellished with vivid orchestral colour and artistic polish. The suite's majestic "Wedding March", one of Mendelssohn's most famous melodies, will conclude the concert.

You and your family are sure to enjoy this Sunday afternoon of music combined with the Bard's imaginative stories!

**Swire Sunday Family Series: Ode to Shakespeare** will be held on **23 June (Sun), 3PM** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**. Tickets priced: HK\$380, \$280, \$220, \$180 are available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit [hkphil.org](http://hkphil.org).

### Artists

#### Yu Long, conductor [[full biography](#)]

Hailed as the "most powerful figure in China's classical music scene" by The New York Times, Chinese conductor Long Yu holds positions as Chairman of the Artistic Committee of the Beijing Music Festival (BMF), Artist Director of the China Philharmonic Orchestra, Music Director of the Shanghai and Guangzhou Symphony orchestras, Co-director of MISA Shanghai Summer Festival, and Principal Guest Conductor of the HK Phil. Frequently conducts the leading orchestras and opera companies around the world, Yu Long found the BMF in 1998, and was its Artistic Director for two decades. He made history with the China Philharmonic Orchestra which became the first Chinese orchestra to perform at the Vatican in the Paul VI Auditorium in 2008. Recently Yu has signed a recording deal with Deutsche Grammophone and started global release and distribution partnership.

## SWIRE SUNDAY FAMILY SERIES: ODE TO SHAKESPEARE

23 | 6 | 2019

SUN 3PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

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

Tickets are now available at URBTIX.

For ages 3 and above

### Artists

[Yu Long](#)

conductor

Click the thumbnails to download press images [Or hold Ctrl then click to open the file]



Yu Long

Photo Credit: Keith Sin/HK Phil



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo Credit: Cheung Chi-wai/HK Phil

### Programme

**TCHAIKOVSKY**

*Romeo & Juliet Fantasy Overture*

**DVOŘÁK**

*Othello Overture*

**MENDELSSOHN**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream: Overture*

**MENDELSSOHN**

*A Midsummer Night's Dream: Wedding March*

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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, Leonard Slatkin 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.