

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Lio Kuokman Leads HK Phil's Japan-Korea Tour in October
Featuring World-Class Pianists Kyohei Sorita and Yekwon Sunwoo

[29 September 2025, Hong Kong] Following its successful Europe tour, the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is set to embark on an Asia tour in October 2025, with performances in Hyogo and Kawasaki in Japan, followed by Gwangju and Seoul in Korea. The tour will be led by HK Phil Resident Conductor Lio Kuokman, featuring star pianists Kyohei Sorita and Yekwon Sunwoo. A new work by Hong Kong composer Charles Kwong will be showcased. Prior to the tour, the orchestra will offer a sneak preview of the programme in Hong Kong.

Hyogo and Kawasaki Concerts (13 & 14 October)

The HK Phil is excited to take part in Asia Orchestra Week with two concerts in Hyogo Performing Arts Center and MUZA Kawasaki Symphony Hall on 13 and 14 October 2025 respectively. The concerts will begin with Charles Kwong's new work *Festina lente*, commissioned by the HK Phil. Kwong approaches music as collective experiential situations both within and beyond listening. His creative output spans orchestral music, collaborations with performers across diverse musical cultures, site-specific and transdisciplinary projects that depart from the conventional concert paradigm, and the exploration of performativity in electronic sound synthesis. The new piece presents a seemingly straightforward concept that grew out of two interconnected fascinations: an orchestral miniature that is fast and slow at the same time, at all times.

Japanese pianist Kyohei Sorita, second prize winner at the 18th Chopin Competition in 2021, will showcase his brilliance in Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto. He won the first prize at the 81st Japan Music Competition in 2012, receiving additional accolades such as the Nomura Prize, Iguchi Prize, Kawai Prize, and Iwatani Prize. The concert will conclude with Tchaikovsky's life-affirming Fifth Symphony, which vividly depicts the composer's struggle against fate.

These performances are supported by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Tokyo) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Gwangju and Seoul Concerts (18 & 19 October)

The concerts in Korea will open with *Subito con Forza*, a Beethoven-inspired piece by renowned Korean composer Unsuk Chin. Described by a critic as "aggressive, disorienting and hugely entertaining", this work was specially composed to commemorate Beethoven's 250th anniversary.

In both Gwangju Arts Center and Seoul Arts Center, the HK Phil will share the stage with Korean pianist Yekwon Sunwoo, gold medal winner at the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, performing Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto. Sunwoo also made history as the first Korean to win first prizes at the 2015 International German Piano Award and the 2014 Vendome Prize held at the Verbier Festival. The programme will again conclude with Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony, with Charles Kwong's *Festina lente* featured in Seoul.

The Gwangju performance is supported by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Tokyo) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Co-presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Seoul Arts Center, the Seoul performance is part of the "Hong Kong Week 2025@Seoul".

Hong Kong Concert: Kyohei Sorita Plays Tchaikovsky (9 October)

Local audiences can enjoy the full repertoire of the upcoming Japan-Korea tour in advance, and witness Kyohei Sorita's debut with the HK Phil.

"Kyohei Sorita Plays Tchaikovsky" will be held on 9 October 2025 (Thu) at 7:30PM at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets have been sold out. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit hkphil.org.

It is one of the programmes of the Asia+ Festival 2025.

Artists

Lio Kuokman, JP, conductor [\[full description\]](#)

Currently Resident Conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil), Music Director and Principal Conductor of the Macao Orchestra, Programme Director of the Macao International Music Festival, Chief Conductor of the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra and Artistic Partner of the Kansai Philharmonic Orchestra, Lio Kuokman was praised by the *Philadelphia Inquirer* as "a startling conducting talent". He was the second prize winner of the third Svetlanov International Conducting Competition in Paris with Audience Prize and Orchestra Prize, and he has served as the first Chinese Assistant Conductor with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Kyohei Sorita, piano [\[full description\]](#)

Kyohei Sorita is a celebrated Japanese pianist recognized for his extraordinary talent and vibrant performances. Born in Tokyo, Kyohei has achieved significant acclaim on both national and international stages. In 2021, he won the second prize at the 18th International Chopin Piano Competition, marking the first time in half a century that a Japanese pianist received this prestigious honour. This accomplishment placed him firmly in the global spotlight, with piano fans around the world recognizing his skill and passion.

Yekwon Sunwoo, piano [\[full description\]](#)

Yekwon Sunwoo, the gold medalist of the 15th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, was the first Korean to achieve this honour in 2017. He also stunned the music world by becoming the first Korean to win first prizes at the 2015 International German Piano Award and the 2014 Vendome Prize held at the Verbier Festival. He now holds the record for the most number of first-place wins by a Korean pianist, in a total of eight international competitions, including the 2013 Sendai International Music Competition and the 2012 William Kapell International Piano Competition.

Charles Kwong, composer [\[full description\]](#)

Charles Kwong is a composer from Hong Kong whose practice approaches music as collective experiential situations - both within and beyond listening. His creative output spans orchestral music, collaborations with performers across diverse musical cultures, site-specific and transdisciplinary projects that depart from the conventional concert paradigm, and the exploration of performativity in electronic sound synthesis.

Kyohei Sorita Plays Tchaikovsky

9 | 10 | 2025

THU 7:30PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$680 \$540 \$400 \$260

Sold out

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Lio Kuokman](#)

conductor

[Kyohei Sorita](#)

piano

Programme

Charles KWONG

Festina lente (World Premiere, HK Phil Commission)

UnsuK CHIN

Subito con Forza

TCHAIKOVSKY

Piano Concerto no. 1 in B flat minor, op. 23

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony no. 5 in E minor, op. 64

Hyogo Concert

13 | 10 | 2025

MON 3PM

Hyogo Performing Arts Center

JPY5,000 JPY4,000

Sold out

www.orchestra.or.jp/aow2025

Kawasaki Concert

14 | 10 | 2025

TUE 7:00PM

MUZA Kawasaki Symphony Hall

JPY6,000 JPY4,500

www.orchestra.or.jp/aow2025

Artists

[Lio Kuokman](#)

conductor

[Kyohei Sorita](#)

piano

Programme

Charles KWONG

Festina lente (Japan Premiere, HK Phil Commission)

TCHAIKOVSKY

Piano Concerto no. 1 in B flat minor, op. 23

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony no. 5 in E minor, op. 64

Gwangju Concert

18 | 10 | 2025

SAT 4PM

Gwangju Arts Center

KRW130,000 KRW120,000 KRW 100,000 KRW 80,000 KRW 50,000

<https://gjart.gwangju.go.kr/ko/cmd.do?opencode=p0101&boper=view&bnum=9257>

Artists

[Lio Kuokman](#)

conductor

[Yekwon Sunwoo](#)

piano

Programme

UnsuK CHIN

Subito con Forza

TCHAIKOVSKY

Piano Concerto no. 1 in B flat minor, op. 23

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony no. 5 in E minor, op. 64

Seoul Concert

19 | 10 | 2025

SUN 5PM

Seoul Arts Center

KRW200,000 KRW160,000 KRW110,000 KRW80,000 KRW50,000

https://www.sac.or.kr/site/eng/show/show_view?SN=66156

Artists

[Lio Kuokman](#)

conductor

[Yekwon Sunwoo](#)

piano

Programme

UnsuK CHIN

Subito con Forza

Charles KWONG

Festina lente (Korea Premiere, HK Phil Commission)

TCHAIKOVSKY

Piano Concerto no. 1 in B flat minor, op. 23

TCHAIKOVSKY

Symphony no. 5 in E minor, op. 64

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Lio Kuokman
Photo: Jane Chiang



Kyohei Sorita
Photo: Yuji Ueno



Yekwon Sunwoo
Photo: rohsh



Charles Kwong
Photo: Andy Lam



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director Designate: Tarmo Peltokoski
Principal Guest Conductor: Long Yu
Resident Conductor: Lio Kuokman, JP
Composer-in-Residence: Esa-Pekka Salonen

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. 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.

Tarmo Peltokoski is the HK Phil's Music Director Designate in 2025/26 and will become Music Director in the 2026/27 season. Currently, Long Yu serves as Principal Guest Conductor and Lio Kuokman is Resident Conductor. Esa-Pekka Salonen is Composer-in-Residence in the 2025/26 season.

The HK Phil has flourished in the last two decades under Jaap van Zweden (Music Director, 2012–2024) and Edo de Waart (Artistic Director and Chief Conductor, 2004–2012). 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 collaborates with Deutsche Grammophon and is set to release Wagner's *The Ring: An Orchestral Adventure* arranged by Henk de Vlieger and conducted by Tarmo Peltokoski.

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 toured Europe, Asia, and Mainland China, performing in 22 cities across ten countries in its 50th anniversary. In the 2025/26 season, the orchestra will perform in Europe, Japan, Korea and Mainland China again.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Anja Bihlmaier, Stéphane Denève, Christoph Eschenbach, Daniel Gatti, Daniel Harding, Pietari Inkinen, Paavo Järvi, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Vasily Petrenko, Joshua Bell, Ning Feng, Stephen Hough, Jonas Kaufmann, 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, each 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, the largest 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 engaging 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.

The history of the HK Phil dates back to the establishment of the Sino-British Orchestra in 1947. In 1957, the orchestra was officially registered as the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra 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.