

PRESS RELEASE
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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Successfully Concludes Japan and Korea Tours
With Conductor Lio Kuokman, Pianists Kyohei Sorita and Yekwon Sunwoo

[24 October 2025, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) has successfully concluded its Japan and Korea tours in mid-October 2025 to resounding acclaim. Under the baton of HK Phil Resident Conductor Lio Kuokman, the tour featured celebrated pianists Kyohei Sorita and Yekwon Sunwoo, and included the Japan and Korea premieres of *Festina lente*, a newly commissioned work by Hong Kong composer Charles Kwong.

Hyogo and Kawasaki Concerts (13 & 14 October)

The HK Phil was honoured to participate in Asia Orchestra Week 2025 with debut performances at the Hyogo Performing Arts Center and MUZA Kawasaki Symphony Hall on 13 and 14 October respectively, receiving enthusiastic applause from the audiences. Each concert opened with *Festina lente* by Charles Kwong commissioned by the HK Phil, with its Japan premiere taking place in Hyogo. Japanese pianist Kyohei Sorita, second prize winner at the 18th Chopin Competition in 2021, showcased his brilliance in Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto, and the programme concluded with Tchaikovsky's uplifting Fifth Symphony. These performances were supported by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Tokyo) of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

The HK Phil also participated in the Asia Orchestra Week Symposium on 12 October, engaging ideas with regional counterparts on the theme "The Expanding Asian Orchestra Market." A string quartet – featuring HK Phil members Second Associate Concertmaster Wang Liang and Assistant Principal Viola Kaori Wilson, alongside two musicians from the Osaka Symphony and the Japan Century Symphony Orchestra – performed at the opening of the symposium. The quartet gave a second performance later that afternoon at Expo 2025 Osaka, fostering vibrant artistic exchange.

Gwangju and Seoul Concerts (18 & 19 October)

At both Gwangju Arts Center and Seoul Arts Center, the HK Phil shared the stage with Korean pianist Yekwon Sunwoo, gold medallist of the 15th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, performing Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto. The Korean concerts opened with *Subito con Forza* by renowned Korean composer Unsuk Chin, and concluded once again with Tchaikovsky's majestic Fifth Symphony. The Seoul programme also featured the Korea premiere of Charles Kwong's *Festina lente*.

The HK Phil was delighted to be part of Hong Kong Week 2025@Seoul, a major cultural exchange extravaganza organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) of the Government of the HKSAR. The Seoul performance was co-presented by the LCSD and the Seoul Arts Center, while the Gwangju concert received support from the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Tokyo) of the Government of the HKSAR.

To nurture young musical talent, the HK Phil organised two outreach activities in Seoul on 20 October. The first, a masterclass held at the Korean National Symphony Orchestra International Orchestra Academy, offered students invaluable guidance from HK Phil Concertmaster Jing Wang, Principal Viola Andrew Ling, Principal Clarinet Andrew Simon, Principal Trumpet Nitiphum Bamrungbanthum, and Principal Trombone Jarod Vermette. Later that day, Lio Kuokman and Jing Wang coached students at the College of Music at Yonsei University.

As a cultural ambassador for Hong Kong, the HK Phil remains committed to fostering cultural exchange and showcasing the city's artistic excellence on both local and international stages. The orchestra looks forward to

continuing its mission of sharing the beauty of music and building meaningful connections with audiences around the world.

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Hyogo

(Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil)



Charles Kwong (centre in the auditorium)'s new work receives its Japan premiere at Hyogo concert



Kyohei Sorita



Lio Kuokman



Lio Kuokman, Kyohei Sorita and HK Phil



A string quartet featuring HK Phil Second Associate Concertmaster Wang Liang (first from left) and Assistant Principal Viola Kaori Wilson (third from left), alongside two musicians from the Osaka Symphony and the Japan Century Symphony Orchestra perform at the Asia Orchestra Week Symposium

Kawasaki

(Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil)



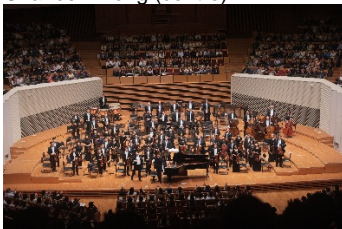
Charles Kwong (centre)



Kyohei Sorita



Kyohei Sorita



Lio Kuokman, Kyohei Sorita and HK Phil

Gwangju

(Photo: Gwangju Arts Center)



Lio Kuokman, Yekwon Sunwoo and HK Phil



Lio Kuokman, Yekwon Sunwoo and HK Phil



Lio Kuokman and HK Phil

Seoul

(Photo: Eric Hong/HK Phil)



Yekwon Sunwoo
(Photo: Eric Hong/HK Phil)



Lio Kuokman (left) and Yekwon Sunwoo
(right)
(Photo: Eric Hong/HK Phil)



Lio Kuokman
(Photo: Seoul Arts Center)



Lio Kuokman and HK Phil
(Photo: Seoul Arts Center)



Charles Kwong (centre)'s new work receives
its Korea premiere at Seoul concert
(Photo: Eric Hong/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 the Chinese Mainland. 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 the Chinese Mainland, 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 the Chinese Mainland 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.