

PRESS RELEASE
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Celebrating Aristo Sham: World-Acclaimed Homegrown Pianist Returns to the HK Phil Stage



[4 March 2026, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is thrilled to welcome the return of acclaimed Hong Kong pianist Aristo Sham on 18 March. Fresh from his triumph as the Gold Medalist and Audience Award winner of the 2025 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Sham returns to perform Rachmaninov's fiery and youthful First Piano Concerto.

"Noble. That's the adjective that kept coming to mind in Sham's performance..."
—*The Dallas Morning News*

Sham began his formal training at The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and quickly gained recognition. At the 2025 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, he found his breakthrough moment, following which critics showered him with praise. He was mentioned in more than 800 news articles, and his Cliburn performance videos were streamed two million times across 125 countries within just two months.

A familiar face to HK Phil audiences, Sham last appeared with the orchestra in 2022 in Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto no. 1 – one of the works he performed on his path to Cliburn victory – and first took the stage with the HK Phil at just 11, performing Beethoven's First Piano Concerto in 2007.

Before Sham's appearance, renowned American conductor David Robertson, acclaimed for bringing clarity to even the most complex scores, leads the evening with two symphonic works from different eras, connected with the masterly developed motives and textures. The concert begins with Sibelius's Symphony no. 7 – a single movement lasting just half the length of the First, yet hailed as a consummate masterpiece.

The other masterpiece is John Adams's *Doctor Atomic* Symphony. *Doctor Atomic* is about the creation of the first atomic bomb, Adams recomposed scenes from his three-hour stage score, and compressed them into a through-worked symphonic whole.

"Chow Sang Sang Proudly Sponsors: Celebrating Aristo Sham" will be held on 18 March 2026 (Wed) at 7:30PM at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets priced at HK\$880, \$700, \$520 and \$380 have been sold out. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit hkphil.org.

Title Sponsor: Chow Sang Sang

Artists

David Robertson, conductor [\[full description\]](#)

David Robertson – conductor, composer, artist, thinker, and American musical visionary – occupies some of the most prominent platforms on the international music scene. A highly sought-after podium figure in the worlds of opera, orchestral music, and new music, Robertson is celebrated worldwide as a champion of contemporary composers, an ingenious and adventurous programmer, and a masterful communicator whose passionate advocacy for the art form is widely recognised. A consummate and deeply collaborative musician, Robertson is hailed for his intensely committed music making.

Aristo Sham, piano [\[full description\]](#)

Pianist Aristo Sham exudes astounding intellect and a deep emotional resonance; a cultivated sophistication and an immediately engaging presence; a penchant to take on the great monuments of the piano repertoire and a natural, infectious spontaneity. This makeup is fuelled by a fascination with the world and its rich cultures: he was an international prodigy, is a voracious student of wide-ranging interests, and currently splits his time between three continents. At the 2025 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Sham found his breakthrough moment, taking home both the gold medal and the audience award.

Chow Sang Sang Proudly Sponsors: Celebrating Aristo Sham

18 | 3 | 2026

WED 7:30PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$880 \$700 \$520 \$380

Sold Out

Artists

[David Robertson](#)

conductor

[Aristo Sham](#)

piano

Programme

SIBELIUS

Symphony no. 7 in C major, op. 105

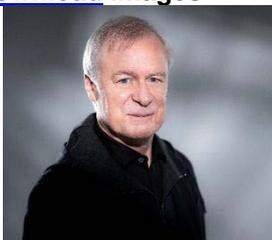
John ADAMS

Doctor Atomic Symphony

RACHMANINOV

Piano Concerto no. 1 in F sharp minor, op. 1

[Download images](#)



David Robertson

Photo: Chris Lee



Aristo Sham

Photo: Lisa-Marie
Mazzucco



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo: Keith Hiro/HK Phil

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For further press information please contact:

Dennis Wu, Director of Marketing

Tel: +852 2721 9035 Email: dennis.wu@hkphil.org

Emily Hui, Media Relations & Communications Manager

Tel: +852 2721 1585 Email: emily.hui@hkphil.org

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 Mainland Chinese, 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.