

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: 6 August 2026

HK Phil 2026/27 Tickets on Sale Now
Lio Kuokman Conducts From Gladiators to Valkyries and
Vanessa Scammell Leads BBC Planet Earth III Live in Concert

[6 August 2026, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) will kick start its 2026/27 season soon, and tickets are available at URBTIX from today. In late August and early September, the HK Phil will present two family friendly programmes – HK Phil Resident Conductor Lio Kuokman leads the “Swire Denim Series: From Gladiators to Valkyries”, spotlighting the HK Phil’s own Principal Clarinet and the trombone section; while Australian conductor Vanessa Scammell takes the podium for the “BBC Planet Earth III Live in Concert”, bringing the nature documentary to life with a live orchestral performance of its score.

Swire Denim Series: From Gladiators to Valkyries (27 & 28 August)



Led by Lio Kuokman, the concert opens with Fučík’s *Entrance of the Gladiators*, followed by selections from Hans Zimmer’s score for *Gladiator*. The concert showcases the HK Phil’s own players, featuring Principal Clarinet Andrew Simon in Artie Shaw’s jazzy Concerto for Clarinet, and the Trombone section, Jarod Vermette, Christian Goldsmith, Kevin Thompson, and Aaron Albert, in Koetsier’s Concertino for 4 Trombones and Strings: movement I. The lineup also includes “Sabre Dance” from Khachaturian’s ballet *Gayane*, “Danse Bacchanale” from Saint-Saëns opera *Samson et Dalila*, and concludes with Wagner’s iconic “Ride of the Valkyries” from *Die Walküre*.

“Swire Denim Series: From Gladiators to Valkyries” will be held on 27 August 2026 (Thu) at 7:30PM and 28 August 2026 (Fri) at 7:30PM at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets priced at \$520, \$420, \$320 and \$220 are available at URBTIX. For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit hkphil.org.

BBC Planet Earth III Live in Concert (4 & 5 September)



Planet Earth III brings the wonders of our planet to the stage with breathtaking footage from the acclaimed BBC Studios series, accompanied by the score from Oscar winner Hans Zimmer, Jacob Shea, and Sara Barone, performed by the HK Phil under Vanessa Scammell with vocalist Michelle John and presenter George Lacey. The concert takes audiences across deserts, forests, coastlines, and oceans to witness extraordinary animal dramas, revealing how wildlife adapts to new challenges in a world where humans play a pivotal role, in a series filmed over 1,904 days across 43 countries and six continents.

“BBC Planet Earth III Live in Concert” will be held on 4 September 2026 (Fri) at 7:30PM and 5 September 2026 (Sat) at 3:00PM and 7:30PM at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets priced at \$520, \$420, \$320 and \$220 are available at [URBTIX](https://urbtix.com). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit hkphil.org.

Concert Sponsor: Sun Hung Kai & Co. Limited

Ballot Arrangements for Selected Programmes

In the 2026/27 season, the HK Phil will present a total of 35 orchestral programmes, showcasing an international roster of distinguished artists and ensembles. Tickets for “Tarmo Peltokoski Conducts Mahler 8”, “Standard Chartered Global Private Bank Proudly Sponsors: Yo-Yo Ma Plays Elgar” and “Jockey Club TUTTI Programme: Jockey Club Masters Series: Gustavo Dudamel: Beethoven 9 with HK Phil” will be sold via real-name registration ballot ticketing arrangement at [URBTIX](https://urbtix.com). For “Tarmo Peltokoski Conducts Mahler 8”, online registration for the ballot will be accepted from 16 to 17 September 2026 at [URBTIX](https://urbtix.com). For the other two programmes, the ballot registration details will be announced in due course. Please stay tuned.

Artists

Swire Denim Series: From Gladiators to Valkyries

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

Currently Resident Conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, 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.

Andrew Simon, clarinet [\[full description\]](#)

Boasting a distinguished career spanning over three decades, New York-born clarinetist Andrew Simon has appeared as soloist and guest lecturer on four continents. As Principal Clarinet of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (since 1988), Simon has recorded solo works by Baermann and Stravinsky and has performed concerti over 70 times, including John Corigliano's Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra which he studied with the Academy Award-winning composer.

Jarod Vermette, trombone [\[full description\]](#)

Jarod Vermette joined the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra as Principal Trombone in 1996 at the age of 20. He has performed Frank Martin's Ballade during the 1997 subscription series and Derek Bourgeois's Concerto in 2002. In 2012 Vermette performed John Mackey's Harvest Concerto with the Hong Kong Wind Philharmonia and Roland Szentpáli's Trombone Scenes with The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts Brass and Percussion Ensemble.

Christian Goldsmith, trombone [\[full description\]](#)

American trombonist Christian Goldsmith is a player of versatility and range. His diverse background includes orchestral playing, chamber music, big band, marching band, concert band, jazz and pop music. A native of Southern California, Christian attended the prestigious Los Angeles County High School of the Arts. He went on to complete undergraduate and post-graduate degrees in classical trombone performance at the University of Southern California (USC) with Prof Terry Cravens.

Kevin Thompson, trombone [\[full description\]](#)

Kevin Thompson was appointed to the trombone section of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in 2016 as Utility Trombone. His duties in the orchestra include playing Second and Principal Trombone, as well as bass trumpet and euphonium. He was trained at the University of Victoria and University of Toronto, and did post-graduate work in England, with Denis Wick (former Principal Trombone of the London Symphony).

Aaron Albert, trombone [\[full description\]](#)

Aaron Albert was appointed as Bass Trombonist for the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in 2020. He also held the bass trombone position in the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, and has played with orchestras such as the Cleveland Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

BBC Planet Earth III Live in Concert

Vanessa Scammell, conductor [\[full description\]](#)

Vanessa has an extremely diverse portfolio of work as a conductor of ballet, musical theatre, concert repertoire and opera. Post graduate study includes a Master's degree in Conducting and she has been the recipient of the Brian Stacey Award and the Robert and Elizabeth Albert Conducting Fellowship for The Australian Ballet.

Michelle John, vocal [\[full description\]](#)

Whether it was singing as a child in her local gospel choir or recording and touring with stars including Eric Clapton, Annie Lennox, Carole King, George Michael, Celine Dion, Mariah Carey, Madonna, Mary J. Blige, Tom Jones, and Andrea Bocelli, the diversity of her musical background and the wide range of artists she has worked with have given Michelle a great vision for her musical destiny.

Swire Denim Series: From Gladiators to Valkyries

27 & 28 | 8 | 2026

THU & FRI 7:30PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$520 \$420 \$320 \$220

Tickets now available at URBIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Lio Kuokman](#)

[Andrew Simon](#)

[Jarod Vermette](#)

[Christian Goldsmith](#)

[Kevin Thompson](#)

[Aaron Albert](#)

conductor

clarinet

trombone

trombone

trombone

trombone

Programme

FUČÍK

Hans ZIMMER

ARTIE SHAW

KHACHATURIAN

KOETSIER

SAINT-SAËNS

WAGNER

Entrance of the Gladiators, op. 68

Gladiator selections

Concerto for Clarinet

Gayane: Sabre Dance

Concertino for 4 Trombones and Strings, op. 115: movement I

Samson et Dalila: Danse Bacchanale

Die Walküre: Ride of the Valkyries

[Download](#) press images



Lio Kuokman

Photo: Tat Keng Tey



Andrew Simon

Photo: Eric Hong/HK Phil



Jarod Vermette

Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil



Christian Goldsmith

Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil



Kevin Thompson

Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil



Aaron Albert

Photo: Ka Lam/HK Phil



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil

BBC Planet Earth III Live in Concert

4 & 5 | 9 | 2026

FRI 7:30 & SAT 3PM & 7:30PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$520 \$420 \$320 \$220

Tickets now available at URBTIX

Film screening with live orchestra performance

For ages 3 and above

Artists

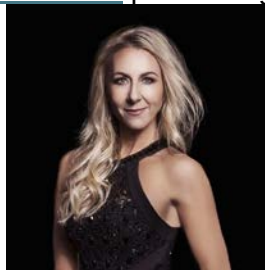
[Vanessa Scammell](#)

conductor

[Michelle John](#)

vocal

[Download](#) press images



Vanessa Scammell



Michelle John



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Tarmo Peltokoski
Principal Guest Conductor: Long Yu
Resident Conductor: Lio Kuokman, JP

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 starts his tenure as Music Director in the 2026/27 season. Currently, Long Yu serves as Principal Guest Conductor and Lio Kuokman is Resident Conductor.

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 releases its debut album on Deutsche Grammophon in March 2026, featuring Richard Wagner's *The Ring – An Orchestral Adventure* (arranged by Henk de Vlieter), conducted by Tarmo Peltokoski. This landmark collaboration with the world's most historic classical label marks a new chapter in the HK Phil's international recording profile.

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 2026/27 season, the orchestra will perform in Europe and the Chinese Mainland again.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Stéphane Denève, Christoph Eschenbach, Daniel Gatti, Daniel Harding, Pietari Inkinen, Paavo Järvi, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Vasily Petrenko, Emanuel Ax, Joshua Bell, Ning Feng, Mao Fujita, Jonas Kaufmann, Lang Lang, Leonidas Kavakos, Olivier Latry, Yo-Yo Ma, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Aristo Sham, 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.