

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Date: 31 August 2026

HK Phil Welcomes New Music Director Tarmo Peltokoski
Mahler's Colossal Symphony No. 8 Marks the Beginning of a New Era



貝托祺的馬勒八
Tarmo Peltokoski
Conducts Mahler 8

[31 August 2026, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) embarks on an exciting new chapter with its new Music Director, Tarmo Peltokoski. To inaugurate his tenure, Peltokoski will lead the HK Phil in the orchestra's long-awaited premiere of Gustav Mahler's Symphony no. 8 at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, bringing together an extraordinary roster of world-class soloists and choirs for a monumental musical event.

Tarmo Peltokoski said: "I am honoured and thrilled to embark on my first season as Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. My inaugural concert will feature Mahler's Eighth Symphony, a piece reserved for the most special and rare occasions. Known as the 'Symphony of a Thousand', it stands as one of the greatest human statements of the 20th century. This landmark performance for Hong Kong not only marks the HK Phil's premiere of the work but also completes our long-awaited exploration of all of Mahler's symphonies. It will be an unforgettable musical feast."

Symphony of a Thousand: A Milestone for the HK Phil

Few works rival the scale and ambition of Mahler's Eighth Symphony. Nicknamed the "Symphony of a Thousand" for its enormous performing forces, it brings together a massive orchestra, multiple choirs, and eight vocal soloists. Composed in two parts, it combines the medieval Latin hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus* with the final scene of Goethe's *Faust*. Peltokoski describes the work as "cosmic, universal, heavenly, uniting," and filled with "some of the deepest, most primitive aspects of our existence." This landmark performance marks the HK Phil's long-awaited first encounter with one of the greatest achievements in the orchestral repertoire.

Joining the performances are distinguished international and Hong Kong soloists Jacquelyn Wagner, Chen Reiss, Louise Kwong, Catriona Morison, Sasha Cooke, Tuomas Katajala, Rinalds Kandalincevs, and Shenyang, alongside a combined choir comprising the HK Phil Chorus, London Philharmonic Choir, The Hong Kong Children's Choir and The Learners Chorus.

Finnish conductor Tarmo Peltokoski has been hailed as “a talent of a century” and “the Finnish wonder-conductor” by *Tagesspiegel*. In the 2026/27 season, he begins his tenure as Music Director of the HK Phil, having served as Music Director Designate in the preceding season. He also serves as Music Director of the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse as well as Principal Guest Conductor of the Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest. He is continuing his three-year residency as “Exklusivkünstler” at Konzerthaus Dortmund, which began in the 2025/26 season. He has been Principal Guest Conductor of The Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen since 2022.

In his inaugural season as the HK Phil's Music Director, Peltokoski will conduct six major programmes, featuring monumental symphonic works, acclaimed guest artists, and the orchestra's signature annual outdoor mega-concert. He will also lead the orchestra on a four-country, eight-city European tour, in addition to performances in Guangzhou and Beijing.

Ballot Arrangements

“Tarmo Peltokoski Conducts Mahler 8” will be held on 7 November 2026 (Sat) at 5PM and 8 November 2026 (Sun) at 3PM in the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Tickets priced at \$2,080, \$1,480, \$880 and \$680 will be sold via real-name registration ballot ticketing arrangement. Online registration for the ballot will be accepted from 16 September 2026 (Wed) to 17 September 2026 (Thu) at [URBTIX](#). Further details will be announced on the [URBTIX](#) website.

Concert Sponsor: Chow Sang Sang

Artists

Tarmo Peltokoski, conductor [\[full description\]](#)

In the 2026/27 season, Finnish conductor Tarmo Peltokoski begins his tenure as Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, having served as Music Director Designate in the preceding season. He also serves as Music Director of the Orchestre National du Capitole de Toulouse as well as Principal Guest Conductor of the Rotterdams Philharmonisch Orkest. He is continuing his three-year residency as “Exklusivkünstler” at Konzerthaus Dortmund, which began in the 2025/26 season. He has been Principal Guest Conductor of The Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen since 2022. Highlights of the 2026/27 season include his highly anticipated debut at the Bayreuther Festspiele with a new production of *Lohengrin* (July/August 2027) as well as a new production of Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, which will open the 26/27 season at Zurich Opera.

Jacquelyn Wagner, Soprano as Magna Peccatrix [\[full description\]](#)

Jacquelyn Wagner is in high demand by such prestigious opera houses and festivals as the Paris Opera, the Teatro alla Scala, the Zurich Opera House, the Gran Teatre del Liceu of Barcelona, the Deutsche Oper Berlin and the Salzburg Festival. With her “lovely clean and focused sound” (*The New York Times*), “silvery tone”, “a natural dignity and vocal command that” make her performances “highly impressive” (*Opera News*), the American soprano is

enjoying resounding success in such different repertoire as Mozart, Handel, Verdi and Puccini, with a special focus on the German Fach and the iconic jugendlich-dramatische roles by Wagner, Strauss and Weber.

Chen Reiss, Soprano as Una poenitentium [\[full description\]](#)

Soprano Chen Reiss has established a strongly acclaimed and distinctive career, enchanting audiences with “one of the most perfect Strauss voices one could wish for” (*Classical Source*), “a voice of silver brightness and clarity” (*Bachtrack*) with “immaculately produced and enticing tone matched by superb musicianship” (*Opera News, USA*). She came to prominence as a member of the ensemble of the Bavarian State Opera under the music directorship of Zubin Mehta and subsequently resident artist at the Vienna State Opera.

Louise Kwong, Soprano as Mater Gloriosa [\[full description\]](#)

Louise Kwong’s musical achievements were recognised by the HKSAR government when she was awarded one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons Award in 2019 and the Award for Young Artist (Music) in 2014 by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Internationally, Kwong made her debut at the Rome Opera House as Mimì in *La bohème* and as Micaëla in *Carmen* at Caracalla Rome in 2018. She has sung in various renowned performance venues, including the Concertgebouw of Amsterdam and Graz Opera House of Austria. In 2017, she debuted at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing in the role of Rita in opera *The Dawns Here Are Quiet*.

Catriona Morison, Alto as Mulier Samaritana [\[full description\]](#)

Scottish mezzo-soprano Catriona Morison, now at home in Berlin, gained international recognition in 2017 when she won both the Main Prize and the Song Prize at the prestigious BBC Cardiff Singer of the World competition. Since then, she has established herself as a versatile artist with a broad repertoire spanning the Baroque era to the late Romantic period – performing on the opera stage as well as in concert and recital settings.

Sasha Cooke, Alto as Maria Aegyptiaca [\[full description\]](#)

Two-time Grammy Award-winning mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke has been praised for her “agile, glamorous presence” by *Opéra Magazine* and as a “luminous standout” by *The New York Times*. Cooke has sung at the Metropolitan Opera, San Francisco Opera, English National Opera, Seattle Opera, Opéra National de Bordeaux, and Gran Teatre del Liceu, among others, and with over 90 symphony orchestras worldwide frequently in the works of Mahler. In 2022 Cooke was appointed at the Music Academy of the West as Co-Director of the Lehrer Vocal Institute.

Tuomas Katajala, Tenor as Doctor Marianus [\[full description\]](#)

Finnish tenor Tuomas Katajala is one of the most versatile and sought-after Scandinavian tenors and has achieved noticeable success not just as an opera singer, but as a concert singer as well. He studied at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki as well as in Rome and Amsterdam and has a longstanding and close relationship with the Finnish National Opera in Helsinki and the Savonlinna Opera Festival, where he made his stage debut as Tamino (*Die Zauberflöte*).

Rinalds Kandalincevs, Baritone as Pater Ecstaticus [\[full description\]](#)

Born in a small town called Ventspils on the west coast of Latvia. After first finishing studies at the Latvian Academy of Music, he obtained a master’s degree in performing arts at the Norwegian Academy of Music in 2010. His stage career started back in 2004, with a small part in Latvian composer Janis Kalnins’ opera *Hamlet*. And soon after that many diverse musical

projects followed, especially in the field of early music in cooperation with the baroque orchestra Collegium Musicum Riga. Roles of Orpheus were interpreted both in Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* and in Giulio Caccini's *L'Euridice*, Aeneas in Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, vocal parts in Monteverdi's *Vespro*, Johann Sebastian Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* and *Coffee Cantata* and many, many others.

Shenyang, Bass as Pater Profundus [\[full description\]](#)

From the moment Shenyang won the prestigious BBC Cardiff Singer of the World Competition in 2007, his ascent to international prominence was assured. His career, defined by the elegance and precision of his singing, was launched to early acclaim for interpretations of Mozart, Rossini, and Handel but in recent years, Shenyang has ventured into more dramatic and psychologically complex repertoire, embracing the works of Beethoven, Strauss, and Wagner.

Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus [\[full description\]](#)

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus (HK Phil Chorus) has been delighting audiences since its inception in 1980. Over the years, it has showcased a diverse range of choral masterpieces in exclusive collaboration with the HK Phil. In 2013, the chorus launched an extensive recruitment campaign that attracted over 450 singers to audition. The newly formed ensemble made its debut with a performance of Handel's *Messiah* and has gone on to sing major works by Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Britten, Haydn and Mahler.

London Philharmonic Choir [\[full description\]](#)

Founded in 1947 as the chorus for the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Choir is widely regarded as one of Britain's finest choirs. For the last seven decades the Choir has performed under leading conductors, consistently meeting with critical acclaim and recording regularly for television and radio.

The Hong Kong Children's Choir [\[full description\]](#)

The Hong Kong Children's Choir (HKCC) was founded in 1969 as the first children's choir in Hong Kong. HKCC is a registered non-profit-making charitable organisation and has made tremendous contributions for children's arts training in Hong Kong. It is now the biggest choir in the world with over 5,000 members and has grown into a diversified arts organisation for children.

The Learners Chorus [\[full description\]](#)

The Learners Chorus was founded in 1979 by former members of the Hong Kong University Students' Union Choir, and is today one of Hong Kong's leading independent choirs, presenting large-scale choral repertoire with its orchestral partner, The Learners Orchestra, under Music Director Apollo Wong. Throughout its history the Chorus has commissioned new works from Hong Kong composers, helping to expand the local choral repertoire.

Tarmo Peltokoski Conducts Mahler 8

7 & 8 | 11 | 2026

SAT 5PM & SUN 3PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$2,080 \$1,480 \$880 \$680

Online ballot registration accepted from 16 Sep 2026 (Wed) to 17 Sep 2026 (Thu) at URB TIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Tarmo Peltokoski](#)

[Jacquelyn Wagner](#)

[Chen Reiss](#)

[Louise Kwong](#)

[Catriona Morison](#)

[Sasha Cooke](#)

[Tuomas Katajala](#)

[Rinalds Kandalincevs](#)

[Shenyang](#)

[Hong Kong Philharmonic Chorus](#)

[London Philharmonic Choir](#)

[The Hong Kong Children's Choir](#)

[The Learners Chorus](#)

Conductor

Soprano as Magna Peccatrix

Soprano as Una poenitentium

Soprano as Mater Gloriosa

Alto as Mulier Samaritana

Alto as Maria Aegyptiaca

Tenor as Doctor Marianus

Baritone as Pater Ecstasticus

Bass as Pater Profundus

Programme

MAHLER

Symphony no. 8 in E flat major

[Download press images](#)



Tarmo Peltokoski

Photo: Peter Rigaud



Jacquelyn Wagner

Photo: Chris Gonz



Chen Reiss

Photo: Paul Marc Mitchell



Louise Kwong



Catriona Morison

Photo: Jeremy Knowles



Sasha Cooke



Tuomas Katajala

Photo: Heikki Tuuli



Rinalds Kandalincevs

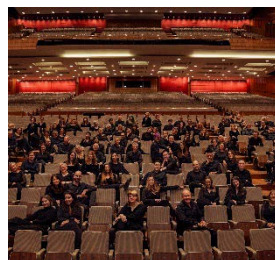
Photo: Ginata Garuta



Shenyang
Photo: Shiyi Pan



**Hong Kong
Philharmonic Chorus**
Photo: Desmond
Chan/HK Phil



**London
Philharmonic
Choir**



**The Hong Kong
Children's Choir**



The Learners Chorus



Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra
Photo: Desmond Chan/HK Phil

--- END ---

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: 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.