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HK Phil and HKU School of Future Media Partner on Pioneering Hybrid AI Documentary

Two-year strategic partnership pairs a film celebrating 80 years of history with student internships, digital innovation and arts management training



HONG KONG, 19 November 2026 – The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) and the School of Future Media (SFM) at The University of Hong Kong (HKU) today signed a Memorandum of Understanding launching a two-year strategic partnership. Its flagship project is a hybrid AI documentary marking the orchestra's history, which began with the Sino-British Orchestra in 1947. Beyond the film, the collaboration brings together AI-assisted creative production, digital marketing and industry-oriented education to nurture Hong Kong's next generation of cultural leaders.

The documentary is a co-creation between academia and the performing arts. SFM faculty, working with students from the School's new Master of Arts in Creative Artificial Intelligence Film and Media programme, will create AI-assisted recreations of key moments in the HK Phil's history. The HK Phil will produce chapters following the orchestra's eight-city European tour under Music Director Tarmo Peltokoski, from 23 November to 6 December 2026, along with intimate portraits of its musicians, bringing the story into the present day. The film's working title is *"Eighty Years in Harmony: The Story of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra"*.

Beyond the film, the partnership opens new doors for SFM students:

- **AI meets the concert hall:** Students will have opportunities for internships and project-based learning with the HK Phil, creating AI-assisted campaigns, short videos and social media content to reach new audiences.
- **Mentorship from industry leaders:** Students in SFM's Bachelor of Arts in Global Creative Industries programme will take part in guest lectures, workshops, case studies and visits with the HK Phil team, covering arts management, audience development and digital transformation.
- **Cross-disciplinary innovation:** Faculty and students from SFM's journalism, creative industries and AI filmmaking divisions will work with the HK Phil's artistic and administrative teams to develop new formats for digital concert experiences and cultural heritage preservation.

Professor Ruby Yang, Academy Award winner and Director of HKU School of Future Media, said, "We are grateful to the HK Phil for their trust and vision in embarking on this pioneering journey with us. Documentary filmmaking is fundamentally about preserving human memory and capturing the soul of a place. This partnership gives our students an extraordinary opportunity to bring eight decades of Hong Kong's cultural heritage to life."

Mr David Cogman, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the HK Phil, said, "For eight decades, the HK Phil has grown alongside Hong Kong, and in many ways its story is the city's story. We are delighted to partner with HKU's School of Future Media to tell it in a bold new way, while opening doors for the next generation of creative talent."

Mr Bernhard Fleischer, Primetime Emmy Award nominee and Chief Executive of the HK Phil, said, "Film has always been one of the most powerful ways to bring orchestral music to new audiences. By combining our musicians' own stories with the creativity of SFM's students and the possibilities of AI, we hope to show the world the orchestra behind the music – on stage, on tour and at home in Hong Kong."

Professor Ulrich Gaulke, German Film Award (Lola) winner and Programme Director of the Master of Arts in Creative Artificial Intelligence Film and Media at HKU School of Future Media, said, "By blending authentic archival footage with AI-created re-enactments and visualisations, we are pushing the boundaries of visual storytelling to recreate historical moments that were never caught on camera. For our students, working alongside the HK Phil provides a real-world laboratory to explore how technology and the cinematic arts can serve artistic expression – honouring the orchestra's rich legacy since 1947 while boldly reimagining the future of cinema."

About Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is regarded as one of the leading orchestras in Asia. Collaborating with internationally renowned conductors and soloists, the orchestra presents more than 150 concerts over a 44-week season and attracts more than 200,000 music lovers annually. The HK Phil promotes the work of Hong Kong and Chinese composers, commissions new works, nurtures local talent and runs extensive education and community programmes. Tarmo Peltokoski starts his tenure as Music Director in the 2026/27 season. Long Yu has served as Principal Guest Conductor since the 2015/16 season. Lio Kuokman has served as Resident Conductor since 2020. Jānis Stafeckis has served as Assistant Conductor and Artistic Associate since October 2026.

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). In 2019, the HK Phil won the prestigious *Gramophone*'s Orchestra of the Year Award – the first orchestra in Asia to receive this accolade from the UK classical music magazine. Notable recent recordings include Wagner's complete *Ring* Cycle, Mahler's Symphony no. 10, Shostakovich's Symphony no. 10, and Tchaikovsky's Symphony no. 6 and Piano Concerto no. 1. The HK Phil collaborated with Deutsche Grammophon and released Wagner's *The Ring*: An Orchestral Adventure, arranged by Henk de Vlieger and conducted by Tarmo Peltokoski.

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 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.

About HKU School of Future Media

The University of Hong Kong's School of Future Media (SFM) trains journalists, filmmakers and creative industry leaders. It combines rigorous, fact-based storytelling with hands-on training in AI and other emerging technologies. Its programmes include the Bachelor of Journalism, Media and AI; the Bachelor of Arts in Global Creative Industries; the Master of Journalism; the Master of Journalism – Documentary Filmmaking Specialisation; and the Master of Arts in Creative Artificial Intelligence Film and Media. Students learn from internationally acclaimed practitioners and scholars, led by Academy Award-winning documentary filmmaker Professor Ruby Yang. They also work on real-world projects with arts, culture and media partners in Hong Kong and abroad.

Established in October 2025, SFM brings together HKU's Journalism and Media Studies Centre, the Documentary and AI Filmmaking division, and the Global Creative Industries division.



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(From left) Mrs Cherry Tse Ling Kit Ching, Executive Vice-President (Administration & Finance) of HKU; Professor Ruby Yang, Director of HKU School of Future Media; Mr Bernhard Fleischer, Chief Executive of the HK Phil; Mr David Cogman, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the HK Phil

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