

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
26 March 2018

Retirement of Chief Executive Michael MacLeod

[26 March 2018, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Society Limited today announces that Michael MacLeod, since April 2011, will retire at the end of March 2019 after eight years in the position.

Mr MacLeod said: "By the spring of 2019, I shall be approaching my 67th birthday and will have completed almost 45 non-stop years in the music profession. I have decided to not just retire from the HK Phil but also from the profession and to enjoy retirement as much as possible."

Mr MacLeod thanked Mr YS Liu, the entire Board, the staff and the orchestra for their support throughout his tenure, saying that "working for the HK Phil has been one of the most fulfilling chapters in my life, particularly with the performances and recordings with Music Director Maestro Jaap van Zweden of the four operas that make up Wagner's *Ring* cycle."

"Jaap is a truly world-class conductor" said Mr MacLeod, when referring to Jaap's impact on the now extraordinarily high level of playing by the orchestra.

A search committee for Mr MacLeod's successor will be convened shortly.

Mr YS Liu, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Society and Music Director Maestro Jaap van Zweden both thanked Michael for his tremendous contribution to the development of the HK Phil and to the Hong Kong arts scene. "His vision, dedication and experience in the field helped the management team as well as the orchestra to achieve extraordinary success, and to turn the HK Phil into what it is today. On behalf of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society, I would like to express the most sincere gratitude to Michael and wish him all the best in the new chapter of his life", said Y.S. Liu.

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Michael MacLeod
Photo credit: Cheung Wai-lok/HK Phil

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director: Jaap van Zweden

Principal Guest Conductor: Yu Long

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) is recognised as Asia's foremost classical orchestra. Presenting more than 150 concerts over a 44-week season, the HK Phil attracts more than 200,000 music lovers annually.

Jaap van Zweden, one of today's most sought-after conductors, has been the orchestra's Music Director since the 2012/13 concert season, a position he will continue to hold until 2022. Maestro van Zweden will be the next Music Director of the New York Philharmonic from the 2018/19 season.

Yu Long was appointed Principal Guest Conductor with the HK Phil for a three-year period commencing with the 2015/16 season.

Under the dynamic leadership of Music Director Jaap van Zweden, the HK Phil has attained new heights of artistic excellence, garnering international critical acclaim.

Following on from the success of the European tour which included a filmed concert from Vienna's Musikverein, the HK Phil has toured extensively within the mainland China. In celebration of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, and with support of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices, the orchestra recently performed in Seoul, Osaka, Singapore, Melbourne and at the Sydney Opera House.

Jaap, the HK Phil, and a superb casts of soloists, have presented concert performances and recordings of the four operas from Richard Wagner's epic *Ring* cycle. These have been enthusiastically endorsed by both audiences and critics at home and abroad, and in recognition of their quality, the orchestra and Jaap have been invited to perform Wagner's *Die Walküre* in staged performances at the Beijing Music Festival last October in a co-production with the Salzburg Easter Festival.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Vladimir Ashkenazy, Charles Dutoit, Christoph Eschenbach, Matthias Goerne, Stephen Hough, Lang Lang, Yo-Yo Ma, Ning Feng and Yuja Wang.

The HK Phil promotes the work of Hong Kong and Chinese composers through an active commissioning programme, and has released recordings on the Naxos label featuring Tan Dun and Bright Sheng, each conducting their own compositions. Its acclaimed education and community engagement programmes in schools, hospitals and outdoor space, bring 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 sponsorship, which is the largest in the orchestra's history, Swire endeavours to promote artistic excellence, foster access to classical music and stimulate cultural participation in Hong Kong, and to enhance Hong Kong's reputation as one of the great cities of the world.

Thanks to a significant subsidy from the Hong Kong Government 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, among others, Opera Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Originally called the Sino-British Orchestra, it was renamed the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in 1957 and became fully professional in 1974. The HK Phil is a charitable organisation.

The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and is Venue Partner of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. SWIRE is the Principal Patron of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.