

PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
15 May 2018

Swire Maestro Series: Jaap and Jian Wang (15 & 16 June) **Jaap's *Leningrad* Symphony and Jian Wang's *Variations on a Rococo Theme***

[15 May 2018, Hong Kong] In the upcoming concert with the **Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil)** on **15 & 16 June** in the **Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall**, internationally renowned cellist [Jian Wang](#) revisits a golden age of elegance with Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations*, conducted by the orchestra's Music Director [Jaap van Zweden](#). Completing the programme is Shostakovich's *Leningrad* Symphony, a musical tour de force written in the war-ravaged city, honouring the indomitable spirit of the city's people.

“Cellist Jian Wang, who was brilliant, extremely musical, and sensitive in the *Variations on a Rococo Theme*”

--- *New York Concert Review*

“Rococo” is a term applied to the decorative arts of the 18th century characterised by light and ornate decoration and emphasis on frivolous elegance and luxury. Having completed the *Variations on a Rococo Theme* in November 1876 and having attended its premiere in Moscow in December the following year, Tchaikovsky rather ignored the work. It was not until ten years later, when Tchaikovsky first saw the published version of his *Rococo Variations*, that he realised the sequence of variations had been altered and that there were numerous revisions to the cello solo part. The consensus is that these changes made the work one of Tchaikovsky's most delightful creations. A sense of grace, charm and lingering nostalgia permeates all seven variations, which are interspersed with short hymn-like figures from the woodwind but otherwise run without a break.

Bachtrack described Jaap's interpretation of Shostakovich's *Leningrad* Symphony as “...a vivid realisation of this foreboding motto”. After the intermission, Maestro Jaap van Zweden will contrast the elegance of Tchaikovsky with the high drama of Shostakovich's *Leningrad* Symphony. Begun almost immediately after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, and written largely during the terrible Siege of Leningrad, the Symphony's huge first movement was completed in just six weeks. With three movements of the *Leningrad* Symphony already completed, Shostakovich was eventually evacuated in October 1941 to Kuibyshev, east of Moscow, safely. The Symphony was premiered there in December 1941 and in Moscow the following March.

Tickets priced: HK\$580, \$480, \$380, \$280 are now available at [URBTIX](#). For enquiries, please call +852 2721 2332 or visit www.hkphil.org.

Artists

Jaap van Zweden, conductor [\[full biography\]](#)

Over the last decade, conductor Jaap van Zweden has become an international presence on three continents. The 17/18 season marks a major milestone as he completes his ten-year tenure as Music Director of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra and simultaneously is Music Director Designate in New York, anticipating his inaugural season (2018/19) as the 26th Music Director of the New York Philharmonic. He continues as Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, a post he has held since 2012. Born in Amsterdam, Jaap van Zweden was the youngest ever Concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra. He began his conducting career in 1995 and in 2012 was named Musical America's Conductor of the Year.

Jian Wang, cello [\[full biography\]](#)

While a student at the Shanghai Conservatoire Jian Wang was featured in the celebrated documentary film *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*. Mr Stern's encouragement and support paved the way for him to go to the US and in 1985 he entered the Yale School of Music. Wang's recent and future highlights include concerts with the New York and Hong Kong Philharmonic, Toronto and Singapore Symphony Orchestras, the Konzerthausorchester Berlin and Orchestre de Chambre de Paris. He has a regular relationship with the Hallé Orchestra with whom he has performed in the UK and China. This season Jian will also perform recitals with pianist Sunwook Kim.

SWIRE MAESTRO SERIES: JAAP & JIAN WANG

15 & 16 | 6 | 2018

FRI & SAT 8PM

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall

HK\$580 \$480 \$380 \$280

Tickets are now available at URBTIX

For ages 6 and above

Artists

[Jaap van Zweden](#) conductor
[Jian Wang](#) cello

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Jaap van Zweden
Photo Credit: Cheung Chi Wai/HK Phil



Jian Wang
Photo Credit: Xu Bin

Programme

TCHAIKOVSKY *Variations on a Rococo Theme*

SHOSTAKOVICH *Symphony no. 7, Leningrad*

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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, a superb cast of soloists and a chorus successfully completed the four-year epic "Ring Cycle" journey in January 2018. The concert performances and live Naxos recordings have been enthusiastically received by audiences and praised by critics at home and abroad. The recording of *Götterdämmerung* will be released towards the end of 2018.

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, hospital 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.