

HK Phil in Bloom: 2025 Fundraising Gala Dinner With Jonas Kaufmann and Distinguished Guests

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[10 March 2025, Hong Kong] The Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra (HK Phil) hosted its 51st season fundraising gala dinner on 20 February 2025 at The Peninsula Hong Kong, with Ms Vivian Sum Fong Kwang, Permanent Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, as the Guest of Honour.

This fundraising gala dinner was held successfully with the remarkable efforts from the Organising Committee Chair, Ms Cynthia Leung and Honourary Advisors Ms Bonny Wong and Ms Angela Yau.

The orchestra was thrilled to have Mr Jonas Kaufmann and distinguished guests across disciplines from the city grace the event. Distinguished guests include (in alphabetical order of surname): Mr Peter Brien, Mrs Christine Cerletti, Ms Estelle Chan, Mr Ivan Chan, Mr Francis Cheng, Ms Linda Choy, Prof Alex Fan, Mr Glenn Fok, Ms Pat Fok and Dr John van Praag, Mr William Fong, Mr Edmond Huang, Mr Richard Hui and Mrs Rachel Hui, Mr Kevin Kwong, Mr George Lacey, Ms Anita Lai, Mr K. Y. Lau, Mr Gabriel Lee, Mr and Mrs Y. S. Liu, Dr John Luk and Mrs Andy Luk, Mr Michael Moriarty, Mrs Amie Moriarty, Mr Jochen Rieder, Mr and Mrs Yat Siu, Mr James Tung, Mr Sonny Yau, Ms Judith Yu, and many more.

Mr David Cogman, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the HK Phil, mentioned in his welcome speech, “The orchestra’s growth and development would not have been possible without the generous help from you. This season has seen many significant achievements in both community engagement initiatives and presentation of star-studded programmes. The HK Phil will continue its efforts on establishing innovative partnerships, as well as celebrating the rich legacy of orchestral music.”

Ms Cynthia Leung, Chair of the Gala Dinner Organising Committee also thanked all supporters in her Vote of Thanks, “Whether you are a longstanding supporter of the HK Phil or just getting to know it, I am glad that our shared love for the orchestra and music has brought us together. Thank you for supporting the HK Phil and the fund raised from the dinner will bring endless possibilities and sustain the orchestra’s long-term development.”

The programme of the evening was spectacular – the night began with the HK Phil’s brass quintet, featuring Co-Principal Trumpet Christopher Moyse, Trumpet Robert Smith, Principal Horn Lin Jiang, Principal Trombone Jarod Vermette and Principal Tuba Paul Luxenberg. The quintet performed the aria *Quando m’en vo* from Puccini’s *La bohème* and Maria from Bernstein’s *West Side Story*. This was followed by the presentation and performance of the “Empress Caterina”, a remarkable 1708 Stradivarius violin generously loan by Mr Yat Siu to HK Phil Concertmaster Jing Wang for the night. Accompanied by pianist Warren Lee, the duo performed Franck’s Sonata in A Major for Violin and Piano: II Allegro, along with two encore pieces, Ravel’s *Tzigane*, and “Méditation”, a symphonic intermezzo from Massenet’s opera, *Thaïs*.

Mr Yat Siu shared more about his meaningful collaboration with the HK Phil, discussing his journey in enabling a communal ownership of cultural heritage and artifacts through tokenisation. He described tokenisation as empowerment - “it democratises assets through the value of things that you don’t normally have access to” and offering it to someone who can utilise it and give it meaning.

Boasting an impressive list of auction items, the fundraising gala dinner ended on a high note featuring winning bids to an exclusive VIP tour package with the orchestra in Europe, opportunities to perform with the HK Phil on stage, and other extraordinary items. The night was a remarkable success of fundraising to support the orchestra's work in bringing orchestral music to the wider community.

The HK Phil gives special thanks to the Gala Dinner Organising Committee:

Chair: Ms Cynthia Leung

Honourary Advisors: Ms Bonny Wong, Ms Angela Yau

Venue Partner: The Peninsula Hong Kong

Auction Partner: Sotheby's

Media Partner: Vogue Hong Kong

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01
Mr David Cogman, Chairman, Board of Governors, The Hong Kong Philharmonic Society Limited, delivered a welcome speech at the start of the Gala



02
Ms Cynthia Leung, Chair of the Gala Dinner Organising Committee, delivered a heartfelt vote of thanks



03
Toasting; from the left:
Mr Benedikt Fohr (Chief Executive, HK Phil), Mr David Cogman (Chairman, Board of Governors, HK Phil), Ms Sum Fong Kwang, Vivian, JP (Permanent Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism), Mr Jonas Kaufmann (world-class tenor, distinguished guest of the gala) and Ms Cynthia Leung (Chair of the Gala)



04
Brass performance by HK Phil musicians:
Robert Smith (Trumpet), Lin Jiang (Principal Horn), Paul Luxenberg (Principal Tuba), Jarod Vermette (Principal Trombone) and Christopher Moyse (Co-Principal Trumpet)



05
The duo performance of the “Empress Caterina” conducted by HK Phil Concertmaster Jing Wang and accompanied by pianist Warren Lee



06
Mr Jing Wang, Mr Yat Siu with the “Empress Caterina”, a remarkable 1708 Stradivarius violin, and Mr Warren Lee



07
Mr George Lacey, Director, Head of Wine, Asia, Sotheby's was holding the silent auction



08
HK Phil Principal Tuba Paul Luxenberg and honorary guest of the Gala, Mr Jonas Kaufmann



09
Photo with the Head Table Guests. From the left: Dr John van Praag, Ms Pat Fok, Mr Glenn Fok, Mr Benedikt Fohr, Mr David Cogman, Ms Sum Fong Kwang, Vivian, Mr Jonas Kaufmann, Ms Cynthia Leung, Mr Ivan Chan, Mrs Christine Cerletti and Mr Jochen Rieder



10
Photo with the Platinum Table Hosts. From the left: Mr Gabriel Lee, Mr Benedikt Fohr, Mr & Mrs Y. S. Liu, Mr David Cogman, Ms Sum Fong Kwang, Vivian, Mr Jonas Kaufmann, Ms Cynthia Leung, Mrs Rachel Hui and Ms Judith Yu



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Photo with the members of the HK Phil Board of Governors and the Gala Dinner Organising Committee members. From the left: Ms Bonny Wong, Mr Benedikt Fohr, Mr Sonny Yau, Prof Alex Fan, Mr David Cogman, Ms Sum Fong Kwang, Vivian, Mr Jonas Kaufmann, Ms Cynthia Leung, Mr Glenn Fok, Mr Peter Brien, Mr Edmond Huang and Ms Angela Yau



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The Gala Dinner Organising Committee members. From the left: Ms Bonny Wong, Ms Cynthia Leung and Ms Angela Yau



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From the left: Mr Michael Moriarty, Mrs Amie Moriarty, Ms Cynthia Leung and Mr James Tung



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From the left: Ms Joyce Yue, Mr Francis Cheng, Ms Anita Lai, Mr K. Y. Lau, Ms Cynthia Leung, Ms Linda Choy, Mr Kevin Kwong, Ms Estelle Chan, Ms Vivian Hui and Mr William Fong



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Thank you remarks by HK Phil Chief Executive,
Benedikt Fohr

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Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra

Music Director Designate: Tarmo Peltokoski

Principal Guest Conductor: Long Yu

Resident Conductor: Lio Kuokman, JP

Artistic Partner: Daniele Gatti

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 will become the HK Phil's Music Director beginning in the 2026/27 season, after serving as Music Director Designate in 2025/26. Currently, Long Yu serves as Principal Guest Conductor, Lio Kuokman is Resident Conductor, and Daniele Gatti is Artistic Partner.

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 has toured extensively across Mainland China. 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 celebrated its 50th anniversary in the 2023/24 season, touring Europe, Asia, and Mainland China, performing in 22 cities across ten countries.

Conductors and soloists who have recently performed with the orchestra include Anja Bihlmaier, Stéphane Denève, Christoph Eschenbach, Paavo Järvi, Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Vasily Petrenko, Krzysztof Urbanski, Joshua Bell, Ning Feng, Boris Giltburg, Lang Lang, Leonidas Kavakos, Olivier Latry, Yo-Yo Ma 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.