



HONG KONGISH

港人 • 港語

INSIDE THE POWERHOUSE 音樂殿堂

As the Hong Kong Philharmonic tours Asia,
classical pianist SOPHIA YAN looks at Hong Kong's
bid to become a global musical force

香港管弦樂團展開亞洲巡迴演奏之際，古典鋼琴家嚴倩君與我們回望香港如何致力為成為環球樂壇一分子

SYDNEY HAS THE Opera House. London has the Royal Albert Hall. New York has Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

Hong Kong's version – the Cultural Centre, the windowless brick building shaped like a skateboard ramp on the edge of Tsim Sha Tsui – isn't quite as impressive. But it's what's on the inside that counts: the Hong Kong Philharmonic, the city's main orchestra.

This month the orchestra is touring Melbourne and Sydney, following performances in Osaka, Seoul and Singapore. The programme includes Gustav Mahler's *Symphony No. 1*, Johannes Brahms' *Symphony No. 1*, Bartok's *Violin Concerto No. 2* and Mozart's *Violin Concerto No. 4*, which features Chinese violinist Ning Feng.

Its origins, like the appearance of the Cultural Centre, are much more humble.

'During the Second World War the Japanese army melted down organ pipes for military use, and many musical enthusiasts found themselves in prison, where they conceived plans for a post-war symphony orchestra of Western and Chinese members,' reads the entry filed under Hong Kong in the Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.

The orchestra did succeed in launching as an amateur group after the war, calling itself the Sino-British Orchestra, with a doctor at the conductor's podium.

But classical music was still struggling for airtime in Hong Kong, and the orchestra was limited by the lack of proper performance venues, according to Raff Wilson, who served the HK Phil for six years as its director of artistic planning before recently joining the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

That changed when Hong Kong City Hall opened in 1962 to establish a community cultural centre. By 1974, the orchestra had changed its name to the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, and debuted as a professional group. The Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra followed a few years later, and the Cultural Centre arrived in 1989.

As Hong Kong grew into an international financial hub at the end of the 20th century, arts and culture blossomed in this increasingly affluent city. 'It was no accident that a well-resourced and professional orchestra was a priority,' says Wilson. Degree-granting music programmes launched at the universities, and a fully fledged conservatory launched in the mid-1980s at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

My arrival in Hong Kong in 2012 coincided with that of powerhouse conductor Jaap van Zweden, who was starting his stint as the HK Phil's music director. He's been such a welcome addition that the HK Phil has renewed his position as orchestra leader until 2022.

悉尼有歌劇院，倫敦有皇家阿爾拔堂，紐約有卡內基音樂廳和林肯中心。

至於香港則有文化中心，一座位於尖沙咀海傍的建築，外形有如供人玩滑板的坡道，而且沒有窗戶。不過外表並不重要，最重要的是內涵：這個城市的主要交響樂團——香港管弦樂團就在裡面。

樂團本月遠征墨爾本和悉尼，然後前往大阪、首爾及新加坡；演奏曲目包括馬勒的《第1號交響曲》、布拉姆斯的《第1號交響曲》、巴托克的《第2號小提琴協奏曲》及莫札特的《第4號小提琴協奏曲》，特別介紹小提琴家寧峰。

不過，回首當年，香港管弦樂團成立之初，就像文化中心的建築輪廓，歷經起伏。

在音樂界地位有如《牛津字典》的《格羅夫音樂與音樂家辭典》內，香港條目有這樣的記載：「第二次大戰期間，日軍將風琴管熔掉作軍用用途，很多熱愛音樂的人被關進集中營；他們在營內籌劃，希望戰後能組織一個有西方及華人成員的交響樂團。」

戰後終於出現了一個業餘的交響樂團，名為中英管弦樂團，擔任指揮的是一位醫生。根據曾於香港管弦樂團擔任藝術策劃總監六年、最近轉職悉尼交響樂團的韋雲暉所說，當年電台很少播放古典音樂，而樂團亦缺乏演出的場地。

直到1962年香港大會堂開幕後，情況才有所改變。由於大會堂具有社區文化中心的機能，樂團於是有了新的演出場地。到了1974年，樂團改名香港管弦樂團，並且成為職業樂團。數年後香港中樂團亦隨之成立，而文化中心則在1989年落成。





Heavy hitters

Clockwise from top: Maestro Jaap van Zweden leading the HK Phil; the interior and exterior of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre

雄才偉略

上圖起順時針：指揮梵志登領導香港管弦樂團演奏；香港文化中心內部及外貌



He'll be doubling up with his newest gig next year as music director of the New York Philharmonic, one of the most high-profile conducting posts in the world.

The HK Phil isn't the only act in town. The Hong Kong Sinfonietta was founded in 1990 to bolster the classical music scene for Hong Kongers – and is now notable for having a female conductor, Yip Wing-sie, at its helm. The City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong followed in 1999.

Hong Kong has continued to court both homegrown and international artists in recent years, from conductor Elim Chan to the Moscow Philharmonic. Other acts, including Pink Martini – from Portland, Oregon – have also performed in Hong Kong, thanks to annual events such as the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the International Chamber Music Festival.

A bubbling classical music revolution has also spread to the streets as the audience is driven to explore the unconventional. You can find chamber music performances popping up in art galleries like Artyze in Sheung Wan or bars like the one at Central's Fringe Club, including shows by my own performing arts group, Western District. And plenty of Hong Kong composers such as Joyce Wai-chung Tang and Wendy Wan-ki Lee are churning out new music, from the neoclassical to the avant-garde. These are the seeds of the city's next generation of music-making.

Hong Kong might not be Vienna. The Cultural Centre might not be the Royal Albert Hall. But like the city itself, Hong Kong's classical music scene continues to evolve. ■

到了20世紀末，香港成為國際金融中心，整個城市變得富裕，而藝術和文化事業亦同時蓬勃發展。韋雲暉說：「香港擁有一個資源充足的專業交響樂團是意料中事。」多間大學推出了學位音樂課程，而1980年代中期香港演藝學院更設立了全面而完善的音樂學院。

我於2012年來香港時，剛好也是活力十足的指揮梵志登走馬上任，擔任香港管弦樂團音樂總監的時候。過去五年，港樂對他的表現深感滿意，因此與他續約，讓他繼續領導樂團至2022年。明年他更會同時兼任紐約愛樂樂團的音樂總監，這是全球其中一個最備受注目的樂團指揮職位。

但香港管弦樂團並非城中獨一無二的交響樂團。香港小交響樂團於1990年成立，現由女指揮家葉詠詩掌舵，旨在為香港人帶來更豐富的古典音樂節目。其後還有成立於1999年的香港城市室樂團。

香港近年與不少本地或外地的音樂家合作，例子有港產女指揮陳以琳和莫斯科愛樂樂團等。此外，每年一度的香港藝術節及國際室內樂音樂節等活動邀來一些別具特色的樂團，例如來自俄勒岡州波特蘭市的樂團粉紅馬天尼，亦曾來香港演出，令本地音樂節目更見豐富多元。

由於聽眾開始喜歡發掘非傳統的音樂體驗，街頭巷尾亦靜靜地發起了一場古典音樂的革命。現在你可以在上環一些藝廊如Artyze內，或者中環的藝穗會中聽到室樂演奏，表演的樂團中包括我自己所屬的Western District樂團。香港還有不少作曲家如鄧慧中和李允琪等，不斷有新作品面世，類型從新古典到前衛都有。這都是香港新一代的音樂菁英。

香港也許不是維也納，文化中心亦並非皇家阿爾拔堂。不過香港的古典樂壇，就如這個城市一樣，將會不斷演變，為樂迷帶來精采的音樂。■

For more information on the Hong Kong Philharmonic, visit hkphil.org

有關香港管弦樂團的詳情，請瀏覽 hkphil.org