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Press Release

Hong Kong Sinfonietta appoints German conductor Christoph Poppen as Music Director from April 2023

Hong Kong Sinfonietta is pleased to announce the appointment of German conductor Christoph Poppen as their new Music Director starting from the 2023/2024 season. The announcement was made on 1 Feb 2023 by Music Director Emeritus Yip Wing-sie and Chief Executive Officer Margaret Yang at a press conference held at Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong, where Chairman of the Board of Governors Dr Patrick S C Poon hosted the signing ceremony.

“I am deeply honoured to become the new Music Director of Hong Kong Sinfonietta”, said Music Director Designate Christoph Poppen. “Having worked with the orchestra for several years as its Principal Guest Conductor, our connection has been growing in a very healthy and fruitful way. Our collaboration, not only with the members of the orchestra but also with Music Director Emeritus Yip Wing-sie, CEO Margaret Yang and the wonderful management team, is built on mutual trust and friendship. I am looking forward to many unforgettable concerts here and hopefully in many other countries with Hong Kong Sinfonietta, which will continue to play its role as cultural ambassador of Hong Kong all over the world.”

Margaret Yang, Chief Executive Officer of Hong Kong Sinfonietta said, “Hong Kong Sinfonietta must be one of the luckiest orchestras in the world – where we have not only a Music Director but also a Music Director Emeritus who will always be there for us. Being the CEO of this unique organisation, I am blessed with the best of both worlds, with Christoph and his wonderful insights and experience – and Wing-sie, as a totally supportive figure, both of whom I know I can totally entrust the artistic future of the orchestra. I am sure that Hong Kong Sinfonietta will not only be moving forward as a ‘tour-de-force’ under the leadership of our new Music Director, but will break even more barriers and new grounds, bringing the best in classical music in all shapes and forms, for the people of Hong Kong, and beyond.”

Conductor, soloist, chamber musician and pedagogue, Christoph Poppen has made a name for himself in diverse roles in the international musical world, and is currently Principal Conductor of the Cologne Chamber Orchestra, Principal Guest Conductor of the Israel Chamber Orchestra, and Artistic Director of the Marvão International Music Festival. He was

Music Director of the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie from 2007-2011 and Artistic Director of the Munich Chamber Orchestra from 1995-2006, establishing the ensembles' profiles in a short period of time. As a prize-winning violinist who co-founded the Cherubini Quartet, he has performed at prestigious venues around the world and won great critical acclaim with his CD recordings in the 1980s and 1990s.

As Hong Kong Sinfonietta's Principal Guest Conductor since 2015, he has presented to the Hong Kong audience a rich repertoire ranging from Austro-German masterpieces to contemporary works, and brought the orchestra on tour to Germany and Portugal. During the COVID pandemic, he frequently travelled to Hong Kong despite the strict quarantine requirements to perform for the local audience, as well as take part in the filming of Hong Kong Sinfonietta's concert films *Back On Stage II (Quarantined!)* and *Back On Stage III: DESTINY*, winning wide acclaim in the city and beyond. Tirelessly passionate about nurturing the next generation of great artists, he has taken up the position of Co-chair of the 1st and 2nd Hong Kong International Conducting Competition, taught at the Hong Kong International Conducting Workshop and held violin masterclasses during his past visits.

At the press conference, Hong Kong conductor Vivian Ip was also appointed Associate Conductor of Hong Kong Sinfonietta from the 2023/2024 season, and it was announced that local visual artist Vivian Ho would extend her tenure as HKS Artist Associate into the 2023/2024 season, continuing her brilliant work in retelling the beauty of classical music through her unique and vibrant artwork.

Press release and photos can be downloaded at



Christoph Poppen

Music Director Designate

Conductor, soloist, chamber musician and pedagogue, Christoph Poppen has made a name for himself in diverse roles in the international musical world, and was recently appointed Music Director of Hong Kong Sinfonietta from the 2023/2024 season. As Hong Kong Sinfonietta's Principal Guest Conductor since 2015, he has presented to the Hong Kong audience a rich repertoire ranging from Austro-German masterpieces to contemporary works, brought the orchestra on tour to Germany and Portugal, and taken up the position of Co-chair of the Hong Kong International Conducting

Competition. As the orchestra's new Music Director, he will oversee the artistic development of the orchestra and work closely with Music Director Emeritus Yip Wing-sie to create inspiring and innovative programmes, bringing music closer to all.

During the current season, Poppen continues his close and highly successful collaboration with the Cologne Chamber Orchestra in his role as Principal Conductor, and with the Israel Chamber Orchestra as Principal Guest Conductor, while being the Artistic Director of the Marvão International Music Festival. Other highlights in the season include appearing with the Orquestra Sinfónica do Porto Casa da Música and return visits to the Deutsche Radio Philharmonie, Munich Chamber Orchestra and Athens State Orchestra, as well as the continuation of his recorded cycle of the complete Mozart Masses with the Cologne Chamber Orchestra for the Naxos label.

From 1995 to 2006, Poppen was Artistic Director of Munich Chamber Orchestra, establishing the ensemble's new profile in a short period of time. His distinctive programmes, often contrasting classical and contemporary styles with numerous commissioned works, were highly successful. In 2006, Poppen was appointed Music Director of Radio Symphony Orchestra Saarbrücken and from 2007 until 2011, he was Music Director of the newly formed Deutsche Radio Philharmonie. He has appeared with orchestras such as Vienna Symphony, Staatskapelle Dresden, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Detroit Symphony, Orchestra Philharmonique de Radio France, Bamberg Symphony, Camerata Salzburg, Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra, Residentie Orkest, Orquestra Sinfônica do Estado de São Paulo, Indianapolis Symphony, Seoul Philharmonic, New Japan Philharmonic and Singapore Symphony Orchestra. He also has a strong presence in Italy, performing regularly with the country's leading orchestras and at festivals such as the Venice Biennale, as well as giving masterclasses.

Founded by Poppen in 2014, the Marvão International Music Festival has grown to become a highly successful and award-winning musical event featuring soloists such as Jörg Widmann, Augustin

Hadelich, Javier Perianes and Clara-Jumi Kang. As an opera conductor, he has enjoyed acclaimed collaborations with Staatsoper Stuttgart, Oper Frankfurt, Opera Köln, Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, Aalto-Musiktheater in Essen and the RuhrTriennale.

As a prize-winning violinist, Poppen co-founded the Cherubini Quartet in 1978. He was appointed Professor of Violin and Chamber Music at Hochschule für Musik Detmold, and later at Hanns Eisler Hochschule für Musik in Berlin, where he was President from 1996 to 2000. From 2001 to 2005, he was Artistic Director of the renowned ARD International Music Competition. In 2019, he founded the International Academy for Music, Arts and Science in Marvão, Portugal. Between 2020-2022, he was the Artistic Director of the Classic Revolution Festival in Seoul, South Korea, for which he curated highly inventive programmes and united many of the best international artists for performances exclusively at the Lotte Concert Hall. Since 2003, he has been Professor of Violin and Chamber Music at Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich. He is also the current Chair Professor of Violin at the prestigious Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid, an appointment which began in the 2021/2022 academic year.

Hong Kong Sinfonietta

Music Director Emeritus: YIP Wing-sie

Music Director Designate: Christoph POPPEN

One of Hong Kong's flagship orchestras, Hong Kong Sinfonietta has achieved significant local and international recognition for its passionate performances and innovative programming which have brought music closer to the community.

Since 1999, Hong Kong Sinfonietta has collaborated with an illustrious array of international musicians and groups, including in recent years Nicolas Altstaedt, Vilde Frang, Ilya Gringolts, Martin Helmchen, James MacMillan, Sergei Nakariakov, Krzysztof Penderecki, Jean-Guihen Queyras, Fazıl Say, Dmitry Sitkovetsky, The Royal Ballet, English National Ballet, American Ballet Theatre, New York City Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet and Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch. A regular participant at all the major festivals in Hong Kong including the Hong Kong Arts Festival and French May Arts Festival, the orchestra also partners regularly with Hong Kong Ballet in their staged productions.

As an avid believer of keeping music alive and contemporary, Hong Kong Sinfonietta – the Venue Partner of the Hong Kong City Hall since 2009 – performs year-round with over 100 performances a

season, presenting not only standard orchestral repertoire but also more than 70 newly commissioned works over the past 20 years, as well as launching in 2006 the HKS Artist Associate scheme, which provides a platform for intensive collaboration with local artists from different arts disciplines to expand the horizon of classical music. The orchestra has enjoyed many triumphs with cross-genre productions such as *A Soldier's Story*, *The Passage Beyond in Concert* and *Pica Pica Choose*, which melded dance and theatre with music to wide critical acclaim. It also became the first local orchestra to appear on the cinema screen in 2020 with its groundbreaking *Back On Stage* concert film series, and in 2021 further ventured into the cinematic world by co-curating the "Life is Art" film festival with MOVIE MOVIE.

Always breaking down barriers between music and the general audience, Hong Kong Sinfonietta holds specially-designed concert series for different audiences and age groups, including *Good Music for Babies/Kids*, *Know Your Classical Music*, *Short-cut to Classical Music* and *HKS McDull Music Project*, and recently filmed the *Tiny Galaxy Concerts* online series featuring chamber music performances recorded at a fascinating hostel in Hong Kong. The orchestra's discography includes CDs of works by Chinese composers on HUGO, and three double-CD albums *This is Classical Music* on DECCA which have been awarded Platinum and Gold Records. In 2018, *The Passage Beyond in Concert* by Leon Ko, was released on DECCA.

Thriving on its strong local roots combined with an ambitious international vision, Hong Kong Sinfonietta has been invited to perform on tour in North America in Canada and New York City; in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay in South America; in Europe at prestigious festivals in France including Festival International de Piano La Roque d'Anthéron and Festival de Musique Menton, in Germany at Gezeitenkonzerte Ostfriesland, at Beethoven Easter Festival in Poland, in Switzerland at Tonhalle Zürich, Geneva Victoria Hall and Fribourg, at festivals in Italy including the Festival Pianistico Internazionale di Brescia e Bergamo, in Portugal at the Marvão International Music Festival, and in Lithuania; in China at China Shanghai International Arts Festival (Expo 2010), in Beijing at the National Centre for the Performing Arts; in Japan at La Folle Journée and Asia Orchestra Week; in Korea at the Tongyeong International Music Festival and in Singapore at the Esplanade, and at National Concert Hall Taipei and National Taichung Theater. In 2018, the orchestra organised the 1st Hong Kong International Conducting Competition, which attracted 310 applications from 49 countries/regions. The 2nd Competition will take place in March 2023.

Hong Kong Sinfonietta has gone from strength to strength under the direction of Yip Wing-sie – one of Asia's most respected conductors who was the orchestra's Music Director from 2002-2020 and Music Director Emeritus since 2020. She remains responsible for the artistic development of the

orchestra alongside Principal Guest Conductor and Music Director Designate Christoph Poppen, who will officially begin his term in April 2023.

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