

Press Release

**Proudly presented by Opera Hong Kong**  
**Mozart's Opera — Don Giovanni**

*A fascinating classic opera of lust, tragedy and comedy*



(Hong Kong, 8 April 2019) Highlighting its 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, Opera Hong Kong (OHK) proudly presents one of the most performed operas around the world — **Don Giovanni** to Hong Kong audience on **17 to 19 May, 2019**, in the **Grand Theatre of Hong Kong Cultural Centre at 7:30pm**.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the story of the legendary, fictional libertine, Don Juan (also Don Giovanni), had swept through Spain. His story was extremely intriguing that it was made into numerous versions such as the play *Dom Juan ou le Festin de pierre* by **Molière**, one of the greatest French playwright, the epic poem version by **Lord Byron**, the most influential and significant British poet, and arguably the most well-known version — **Mozart's** opera *Don Giovanni*, which we will be able to appreciate in May.

With music by **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** and Italian libretto by **Lorenzo Da Ponte**, *Don Giovanni* was first performed in 1787. Back then, **Mozart** conducted the world premiere of *Don Giovanni* himself in the National Theatre in Prague, which was rapturously received by the audience and was reputed to be an extremely hard-to-perform opera that people have never heard the like. The two-act opera portrays **Don Giovanni's** life of seducing and sweet talking his way into the beds of countless women, **Leporello**, **Giovanni's** servant making record of his master's encounters, and how **Giovanni** ends up in a dead end with hatred, revenges and death after killing the Commendatore when he fails to seduce the Commendatore's daughter, **Donna Anna**.

Director Jean-Louis Grinda expressed that "Don Giovanni is in my view the most difficult of all operas to stage. This immense masterpiece offers inexhaustible possibilities; once a particular

dramatic approach has been chosen, the greatest difficulty is, as a result, to maintain overall coherence without distractions.” World-renowned director Jean-Louis Grinda directed *Aida* for Opera Hong Kong in 2017, he has been the General Director of Opera de Monte-Carlo since 2007 and he is currently the Director of Les Chorégies d'Orange.

**Richard Ollarsaba** and **Marcelo Guzzo** will be starred as the leading role of the infamous Spanish womanizer, Don Giovanni. Praised by The Washington Post for his “meltingly smooth bass-baritone” and “expressive, resonant voice” by Sun-Times, Richard was a grand finalist in the 2013 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, as well as a well-recognised bass-baritone who has been playing major roles with phenomenal operas including the title role in Don Giovanni with Lyric Opera of Chicago and Escamillo in Carmen with Piedmont Opera. Earning critical praises “strong and charm” and “idealistic” by the New York Times, Marcelo is considered one of the most prominent singers of his generation with notable performances such as Valentin in Faust at the Festival Amazonas de Ópera in Manaus, Brazil, Alfio in Cavalleria Rusticana at Teatro del Silenzio in Taormina and Opera San Antonio, and the title role in Don Giovanni at the Solis Theater in Uruguay.

Taking the role of Giovanni’s servant, Leporello, will be the multi-award-winning bass-baritone – **Joseph Barron**. Apart from being the winner of the 2011 Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the 2013 Sullivan Foundation Awards, he had as well played diversified characters with international operas, including the role of Leporello with New Orleans Opera. Also taking the role of Leporello, will be **Alex Soare**, a bass-baritone with exciting international career who recently received the third place in the Jensen Foundation Vocal Competition and the Glenn & Ginger Flournoy Award at Mary Jacobs Smith Singer of the Year competition. His recent performances include soloist in Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 with Glacier Symphony Orchestra and Chorale, Zuniga in Carmen with Florida Grand Opera, Prince Gremin in *Eugene Onegin* and Tom in *Un ballo in maschera*. More excitingly, he is making his debut with Opera Hong Kong as Leporello in this May.

World-class conductor, **Mārtiņš Ozoliņš** will be conducting the amusing performance. Ozoliņš is currently the Chief Conductor of the Latvian National Opera and Ballet. As a winner of the prestigious IV International Jorma Panula Conducting Competition, he has collaborated with many established international orchestras including Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Tampere Philharmonic Orchestra. He was also he was the guest director at two of China’s largest theatres in Tianjin and Harbin with *La Traviata* in 2017/2018.

During the performance, audience will be brought back to the classy, noble life of the Spanish high society in the 17<sup>th</sup> century through the exquisite set design by the sophisticated France set designer **Eric Chevalier**, striking lighting design by award-winning French light designer **Patrick Méeüs** and costumes by **Opéra Monte-Carlo** which are specifically customized for the production.

Bringing along the world-class conductor, the star-studded cast, together with **Hong Kong Simonetta** and **Opera Hong Kong Chorus**, Opera Hong Kong is serving a spectacular feast for both eyes and ears for the audience.

Tickets are now available. Please visit [http://operahongkong.org/don\\_giovanni/](http://operahongkong.org/don_giovanni/) for more details.

### **Programme details**

Date:	17-19 May, 2019
Time:	7:30 pm
Venue:	Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre
Ticket Price:	\$1280, \$1080, \$880, \$620, \$420, \$150

### **Production team**

Producer	Warren Mok
Conductor	Mārtiņš Ozoliņš
Director	Jean-Louis Grinda
Set Designer	Eric Chevalier
Costumes	Opéra Monte-Carlo
Lighting Designer	Patrick Méeüs

### **Performers**

#### **Cast list**

Don Giovanni	Richard Ollarsaba / Marcelo Guzzo
Leporello	Joseph Barron / Alex Soare
Donna Anna	Victoria Cannizzo / Katherine Whyte
Donna Elvira	Michelle Lange
Commendatore	Tian Hao Jiang
Don Ottavio	David Blalock / Chen Yong
Masetto	Apollo Wong / Sammy Chien
Zerlina	Alison Lau / Joyce Wong

### **Hong Kong Sinfonietta**

### **Opera Hong Kong Chorus**

### **About Opera Hong Kong**

Opera Hong Kong is the first opera company to have been established in Hong Kong. The company was formed in July 2003 as a non-profit organisation. Since its inception, Opera Hong Kong has become a firmly established part of Hong Kong's cultural scene. Since our establishment, Opera Hong Kong has gone from strength to strength under the artistic direction of Warren Mok, the internationally acclaimed Hong Kong tenor, with many grand-scale productions of operas including *The Barber of Seville*, *Otello*, *Tosca*, *La Traviata*, *Turandot*, *Carmen*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Roméo et Juliette*, *Aïda*, *Werther*, *Don Carlo*, *The Magic Flute*,



*Poet Li Bai, Manon, La Bohème* and many others. Apart from operas, Opera Hong Kong has also presented a significant number of musicals and concerts.

Opera Hong Kong (OHK) is committed to the mission of enhancing the appreciation of the art of opera in Hong Kong and promoting local musical talents. In 2015, OHK has launched The Jockey Club Opera Hong Kong Young Artist Development Programme (the Programme), a 3-year opera training programme funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, to nurture ten professional young local artists. The Programme is the first-ever intensive professional opera training project in Hong Kong accompanied by a series of outreach activities. Mr. Gong Dongjian, a famous bass and an experienced vocal coach, is the Programme Director of the Programme.

In addition to staging operas and concerts, opera school tours, summer camps and master classes are held regularly to reach the young population. Opera Hong Kong Chorus and Opera Hong Kong Children Chorus were established in 2004 and 2008 respectively and are becoming recognised forces in the local choral scene.

High resolution images can be downloaded at: XXXXXX

#### **Media enquiries**

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