

## Opera Hong Kong returns to the stage with a quirky romantic comedy

### Donizetti's *Don Pasquale* a Semi-staged Opera in Three Acts



[Hong Kong-5 July 2022] Opera Hong Kong will delight the audience with one of the most remarkable work of Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti: *Don Pasquale* from 13 to 14 August at Hong Kong City Hall's Concert Hall. This romantic comedy will be presented in a Semi-staged format.

*Don Pasquale* is a comic opera in three acts. The music is Donizetti at his best, with *bel canto* melodies in turn lyrical, bubbly, wry, melting, ironic and rhythmic; the opera contains showstopping arias for soprano and tenor, and one of the funniest and most challenging patter duets ever written. Don Pasquale, a wealthy old man decides to get married. Why? Most likely to spite his nephew Ernesto whose current girlfriend Norina Pasquale feels is entirely unsuitable for his family stature. He asks his friend Dr Malatesta for help. The girl the Malatesta delivers is none other than Norina -- a trick of course. Norina transforms from the apparently docile convent-schooled maiden into a bossy dragon lady who sets about spending all of Pasquale's money. Pasquale now has the opposite problem: how to get rid of her.....

Riding on the acclaimed performance of Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* last year, Opera Hong Kong returns to the stage with the *Don Pasquale*, a masterpiece the golden age of *Bel Canto* period. The eclectic mix of performers include the graduates of "Jockey Club Opera Hong Kong Young Artist Development and Education Programme" and talented young artists from the mainland.

Our director of *Don Pasquale*, Nancy Yuen, is one of the most outstanding sopranos in Asia. She performed the title role of *Madama Butterfly* to great critical acclaim with the Welsh National Opera after she graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, London. It was followed by subsequent performances of the same role in Europe, Australia and Asia. Currently the Head of Vocal Studies at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, Nancy will reveal to the audience the interesting relationship of the characters, such as the love between the young lovers, the old man's and his young wife and the friendship between the Doctor and his patient. The audience will have as much fun as the performers in this production jam-packed with action and practical jokes.

Our Maestro and pianist, **Olsi Qinami**, is currently the Principal Conductor and Music Director of London City Philharmonic, and the Conductor of Hounslow Symphony Orchestra. He mastered his technique with Riccardo Muti at Riccardo Muti Opera Academy and Paavo Järvi at Jarvi Conducting Academy, who praised him having 'an accomplished technique, a natural rapport with the orchestra and knowing how to express his ideas and communicate effectively.' He has collaborated with many orchestras including Orchestra of National Opera of Albania, Orchestra of National Opera of North Macedonia, Orchestre Opera de Massy, Athens Philharmonic and many others.

Being a loyal supporter of Opera Hong Kong's opera production, **Apollo Wong** will take up the leading role as **Don Pasquale** this time. Prior to that, Apollo has collaborated with Opera Hong Kong in over 20 productions since 2004, including Frère Laurent in *Roméo et Juliette*, Don Alfonso in *Così fan tutte*, Zuniga in *Carman*, among others. Apollo is a bass-baritone, Conductor and Music Director of The Learners Chorus and Orchestra. He is also the winner of Palm Springs Opera Guild Vocal competition and Pasadena Opera Guild Vocal Scholarship.

Singing **Norina** will be soprano **Candice Chung**. Her stage appearances include Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro* in Italy, and Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus* in the United States. Most recently, she sang the original role of the Swallow in the musical *The Happy Prince & The Other Wiseman* in December 2018 and its re-run in March 2019. Chung earned her Bachelor of Music degree at Manhattan where she studied with Metropolitan Opera's Mark Oswald and renowned American soprano Ashley Putnam.

**Anna Jingdan Zhang** will share the role of **Norina**. She is currently pursuing her master's degree at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts under the tutelage of Professor Nancy Yuen. She was Nedda in *Pagliacci*, Ilia in *Idomeneo* and soprano soloist in Bach's *Mass in B minor* with the HK Bach Choir and Orchestra.

Baritones **Albert Lim** sings the role of **Dr Malatesta**. He has appeared frequently in opera and concert performances presented by Opera Hong Kong, Musica Viva, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Ballet, The Chinese University of Hong Kong Chorus, the Learners' Chorus, the Hong Kong Bach Choir, and the Hong Kong Oratorio Society. A highly versatile singer, Lim has also been engaged to record Cantonese vocal covers of Disney animation movies, including *Lady and the Tramp*, *Enchanted* and *Lava*.

**Alexander Chen** will play the same role. He has performed with numerous opera companies in Hong Kong and the United States. Apart from operatic performances, Chen appeared in Vaughan William's *A Sea Symphony* with Ponte Singers as the baritone soloist. Chen completed his Bachelor of Music in Voice at Manhattan School of Music in New York City, under the tutelage of baritone Mr. Maitland Peters. He also obtained a Master of Music degree in Voice at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, under the tutelage of soprano Nancy Yuen.

Also singing **Ernesto** will be **Herny Ngan**. He is the recipient of Muses Foundation for Culture & Education, RNCM Scholarship, Sir Robert Black Trust Fund, Hong Kong Welsh Male Voice Choir Scholarship and Michael Rippon Memorial Scholarship. A Dunraven Welsh Young Singer of the Year, Overall Champion in Hong Kong Youth Singing Festival, Ngan frequently won in Hong Kong Schools Music Festival. His operatic roles included Don José and Remendado in *Carmen*, Tamino and Monostatos in *Die Zauberflöte*, Rinuccio in *Gianni Schicchi* and many more.

Chinese lyric tenor **Jiang Kuncheng** will be taking the same role, he is a graduate in Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and received his Master of Music from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) under the tutelage of renowned soprano Professor Nancy Yuen and award-winning répétiteur Hsu Wei-En. Recently he appeared as Canio in *Pagliacci* at HKAPA, and today's performance marks his debut with Opera Hong Kong.

Opera Hong Kong wishes to express its deepest gratitude for the generous and continued support of Hong Kong Arts Development Council, which has made **Don Pasquale** possible.

**Programme Details**

Date and time 13-14 August (Sat-Sun) 7:30 pm  
Venue Concert Hall, Hong Kong City Hall  
\$480, \$380, \$280, \$150 - Tickets available at all URBTIX outlets and [www.klook.hk](http://www.klook.hk) on 4 July 2022.  
Performed in Italian with Chinese and English surtitles.

Please visit <http://operahongkong.org> for more details.

**Production team**

Producer Warren Mok, BBS, MH  
Conductor Olsi Qinami  
Director Nancy Yuen  
Chorus Director Alex Tam  
Orchestra Executive Anders Hui

**Performers**

Don Pasquale Apollo Wong  
Norina Candice Chung (13 Aug)  
Anna Zhang (14 Aug)  
Dr Malatesta Albert Lim (13 Aug)  
Alexander Chen (14 Aug)  
Ernesto Henry Ngan (13 Aug)  
Jiang Kuncheng (14 Aug)  
A Notary Patrick Chan

Opera Hong Kong Orchestra  
Opera Hong Kong Chorus

High resolution photos can be downloaded at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/yi48zxr52oi2cii125zth/h?dl=0&rlkey=h8w1x5i0qnm7tpzd6ht4odq3>

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## **Media Enquiry**

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## **About Opera Hong Kong**

Founded in 2003 Opera Hong Kong (OHK) is Hong Kong's first professional opera company. Over the years, the company has gone from strength to strength under the Artistic Director Warren Mok, the internationally acclaimed Hong Kong tenor. OHK has elevated opera in the Asia's world city, with many world-class productions covering all major works in the operatic canon and has collaborated with opera houses and festivals including Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Taormina Opera Festival, Theater Erfurt, Opéra de Nice, National Centre for the Performing Arts and Shanghai Opera House.

In 2019, OHK was selected by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council as one of the three recipients of the coveted "Eminent Arts Group Scheme". The Scheme's consecutive 5-year funding has become a boost to further the company's development.

OHK is committed to promoting the city's brightest, young opera singers. In 2015, OHK launched the Jockey Club Opera Hong Kong Young Artist Development and Education Programme (the Programme), a three-year opera training programme designed to nurture ten young local artists. The success of the Programme led to its renewal by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for another three years from 2019 to 2022, providing intensive training to 12 local artists.

OHK also places a strong emphasis on its education and community activities. Opera school tours, summer schools and master classes are held regularly to reach young audiences. The music centre in Wanchai provides a wide range of courses for early age children to adult in addition to Children Chorus classes. The OHK Chorus and the OHK Children Chorus were established in 2004 and 2008 respectively and are becoming recognised contributors on the local choral scene.

The recent development of the Greater Bay Area has created an environment for OHK to initiate more collaborations and bring the art of opera to a wider audience.

Official website: [www.operahongkong.org](http://www.operahongkong.org)

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