

PRESS RELEASE (FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

(12 September 2023)

Opera Hong Kong proudly presents

Puccini's *Tosca*

A brand-new production with a talented international creative team
from France and Belgium



Opera Hong Kong is delighted to present the grand production *Tosca* featuring the most sought-after overseas artists, including Oksana Dyka, Anna Nechaeva, Roberto Aronica, Rame Lahaj, Claudio Sgura, Sun Li, Gabriele Ribis and many others. The opera will be staged from 11 to 15 Oct, 2023, at the Grand Theatre of Hong Kong Cultural Centre.

Tosca is Giacomo Puccini's one full-length foray into melodrama. Mario Caravadossi, a painter with revolutionary leanings, is in love with Rome's most celebrated diva. Tosca is beautiful, loving but fatally jealous. She is also being pursued by Rome's chief of police, Baron Scarpia. The opera opens with Caravadossi helping an escaped political prisoner elude arrest, at least for the moment. Scarpia uses this transgression as an excuse to finally lock Caravadossi up and make his move on Tosca whom he manipulates her by playing on first her jealousy and then her love.

A paean to art, love and freedom, the opera features music that is, for Puccini, particularly stirring: Italy's reunification as a single country was still in living memory when the opera debuted in 1900, exactly a century after the events it depicts. The opera contains tenderness and yearning, the emotions we most commonly associate with the composer, but in *Tosca* there is also courage, bravado, sex, politics and menace. It includes Puccini's best-known lyrical arias such as "Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore" (Lived for Love, Lived for Arts) and "E lucevan le stelle" (And the stars shone).

Recently appointed as Principal Conductor of the San Diego Opera, **Yves Abel** has been the Chief Conductor of the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie since 2015. He was also the Principal Guest Conductor of the Deutsche Oper Berlin from 2005-2011. He made his debut at the Chorégies d'Orange conducting *Samson et Dalila* with Roberto Alagna this past summer. He was awarded Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government.

Vincent Boussard established his directing career at the Comédie-Française theatre. Since 2001 he has focused mainly on opera and produced successful operas at Staatsoper Unter den Linden Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper, Semperoper in Dresden, Opera national du Rhin, Gran Teatre del Liceu in Barcelona, Théâtre du Capitole, Hamburg Staatsoper, Théâtre Royal de la Monnaie, New National Theater in Tokyo, and he has been invited by notable festivals including Osterfestspiele in Salzburg and Festival dei due Mondi in Spoleto of Italy, and many others. Recently he directed new productions of *The Tales of Hoffmann* at Korea National Opera in Seoul, *Adriana Lecouvreur* at Latvian National Opera, *Giulio Cesare in Egitto* at Oper Köln and *I Capuleti e i Montecchi* at Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre.

Born in Ukraine, **Oksana Dyka** will play the role of Floria Tosca, she won the third prize of the Marseilles International Opera competition in 2003. She appeared on the main stages worldwide including Teatro La Scala, Teatro di San Carlo, Oper Frankfurt, Semperoper Dresden, Opéra Bastille in Paris, Opéra de Montecarlo, Opernhaus Zürich, Metropolitan Opera and Royal Opera House Covent Garden. Her repertoires include Puccini's masterpieces (*Tosca*, *Turandot*, *Il Tabarro*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Il Trittico*), Verdi's (*Aïda*, *Simon Boccanegra*, *Il Corsaro*), Tchaikovsky's *Pique Dame*, Borodin's *Prince Igor* and Janáček *Jenůfa*. She had great reviews from public and critics!

Soprano **Anna Nechaeva** will share the same role. She has the signature roles of *Manon Lescaut*, Mimi in *La bohème*, Yaroslavna in *Prince Igor*, Micaëla in *Carmen*, Liza in *Pique Dame* among others. Her recent engagements include *Eugene Onegin's* Tatiana at Teatr Wielki in Warsaw, Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival, Festival d'Aix en Provence and Savonlinna Opera Festival, *Manon Lescaut* at Staatsoper Berlin and Mikhailovsky Theatre St Petersburg, the title role in *Iolanta* for Savonlinna Opera Festival and Polina in *The Gambler* for Opera Vlaanderen..

Mario Cavaradossi will be sung by the renowned tenors **Roberto Aronica** and **Rame Lahaj**. Roberto Aronica is today one of the best dramatic tenors of the moment. His Otello, Samson and Radamès are roles in which the artist highlights his ringing tone and the dramatic accent that distinguish him. He sang *Fanciulla del West* and *Manon Lescaut* at the Teatro alla Scala, *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly* at the Metropolitan in New York and *Don Carlo* at Royal Opera House Covent Garden. His career has taken him all over the world including Sydney where he played the role of Don Josè recently. Born in Istog, Kosovo, Rame Lahaj is well known for his notable role portrayal of Alfredo, Duke of Mantua, Rodolfo, Edgardo and Pinkerton. Winner of the Plácido Domingo Competition in 2016, he has appeared on the most prestigious stages of opera houses. He was awarded the 10th Independence Anniversary Medal by the President of the Republic of Kosovo, for "drawing Kosovo closer to the international arena through the art of opera." He was also honored as a Global Ambassador of Kosovo.

Claudio Sgura and **Sun Li** will take on the role as Scarpia. The Italian baritone Claudio Sgura is acclaimed as one of best performers of Verdi, Puccini and Verismo repertoires. In 2006 he was an awardee at the prestigious Voci Verdiane competition, and one year later he made his debut at Teatro alla Scala Milan as Sharpless in *Madama Butterfly* conducted by Myung Whun Chung. He was invited back at La Scala in 2011 as Alfio in *Cavalleria rusticana* with Daniel Harding and in 2016 as Jack Rance in *La fanciulla del West* with Riccardo Chailly. A renowned baritone in the mainland, Sun Li is the President of Fujian Opera Dance and Drama Theatre, Director of Fujian Folk Music and Symphony Exchange Centre, Deputy Secretary-General of the China Opera Research Society and member of the Chinese Musicians Association. He performed Ping in *Turandot* for cultural exchange in Egypt. In 2008,

the opera *Farewell My Concubine* starring Sun toured six cities in USA. He also won the Wenhua Performance Award in 2010. In 2010, Nucci acclaimed his skill being 'so perfect that amazes him!' at Leo Nucci masterclass.

Special thanks to the continuous support from the Art Development Matching Grants Scheme of the Government of the HKSAR, Hong Kong Arts Development Council and Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Italian Cultural Institute of Hong Kong, ITALIA on STAGE Autumn Festival Hong Kong, as well as our hotel sponsor, New World Millennium Hong Kong Hotel.

Programme Details

Date and time: 11-14 October (Wed to Sun) 7:45pm, 15 October (Sun) 3:00pm

Venue: Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Ticket price: \$1,080, \$920, \$720, \$620, \$420, \$220

Tickets NOW available at Urbtix

Performed in Italian with Chinese and English Surtitles.

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

Production Team

Producer	Warren Mok, BBS, MH
Conductor	Yves Abel
Director and Costume Designer	Vincent Boussard
Chorus Director	Alex Tam

Performers

Floria Tosca	Oksana Dyka (11, 13 Oct 7:45pm & 15 Oct 3pm) / Anna Nechaeva (12 & 14 Oct 7:45pm)
Mario Cavaradossi	Roberto Aronica (11, 13 Oct 7:45pm & 15 Oct 3pm) / Rame Lahaj (12 & 14 Oct 7:45pm)
Scarpia	Claudio Sgura (11, 13 Oct 7:45pm & 15 Oct 3pm) / Sun Li (12 & 14 Oct 7:45pm)
Cesare Angelotti	Gabriele Ribis (11, 13 Oct 7:45pm & 15 Oct 3pm) / Apollo Wong (12 & 14 Oct 7:45pm)
Spoletto	Henry Ngan (11, 13 Oct 7:45pm & 15 Oct 3pm) / Chen Yong (12 & 14 Oct 7:45pm)
Sacristan	Albert Lim (11, 13 Oct 7:45pm & 15 Oct 3pm) / Lam Kwok Ho (12 & 14 Oct 7:45pm)
Sciarrone	Patrick Chan
Un Carceriere	Patrick Chan

Opera Hong Kong Orchestra
Opera Hong Kong Chorus
Opera Hong Kong Children Chorus

High resolution photos can be downloaded at:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/cxscmgdlcyvgavluavx50/h?rlkey=8n46wpi1pjxn4j83ikq3h29i&dl=0>

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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 direction of 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. The Programme has been completed successfully in March 2022.

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.

Opera
Hong Kong
香港歌劇院



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