



Opera Hong Kong announces details of Puccini's *Turandot*

Lavish production rounds off the 15th anniversary programme of Hong Kong's most established champions of Western opera



(Hong Kong, 10 September 2018) - Opera Hong Kong (OHK) is delighted to announce *Turandot* as the final production of its 15th anniversary year. A co-production of Opera Hong Kong and New York City Opera, Puccini's classic opera features an all-star cast and will run from 10 – 14 October 2018 in the Grand Theatre at Hong Kong Cultural Centre.

Puccini's *Turandot*, first premiered in 1926 and set in Imperial Peking, opens with notoriously bloody scene as the Prince of Persia befalls the same destiny as many previous suitors of the Princess Turandot, and is executed, having failed to answer correctly the Princess's three riddles. It is as Princess Turandot appears to order the execution to take place that Calàf, Prince of Tartary, standing amidst the mob outside the palace, sees her and instantly falls in love. The opera traces his unlikely success in answering the Princess's three riddles, challenging her to find his name by midnight when she still, despite his victory, refuses his hand. Finally, as her feelings towards her suitor begin to soften, she proclaims she has uncovered his name: love.

Rather than modernise the audience's expectations of *Turandot*, Director Michael Capasso seeks to contextualise our expectations of the opera. The direction and set design by John Farrell are opulent and luxuriant, unpacking what Puccini and his 19th century peers considered Imperial China to represent. The completely red set is sumptuous with imperial finishings and furniture, representing at once the bloodshed and terror of Turandot's challenges to her suitors, as well as the passion of the Prince Calàf and Princess Turandot's love towards the end of the opera.

This production has also been designed to indirectly reflect a notable scandal in Puccini's own life, which saw his wife Elvira wrongly accuse the maestro of an affair with his servant Doria Manfredi, who poisoned herself at the age of 23, unable to cope with the humiliation. She had been acting merely as messenger for Puccini and his actual mistress, Giulia Manfredi, who served as the inspiration for another of his operas, *La Fanciulla del West*.



Taking the role of Turandot will be sopranos Oksana Dyka and Mlada Khudoley. Dyka was catapulted into fame upon winning the Marseilles International Opera Competition in 2003, going on to perform as Tosca at the Opera national de Montpellier and perform as Scarpia at the Teatro dell'Opera di Roma in a production directed by Franco Zeffirelli. She debuted at New York's Metropolitan Opera in 2014 as Yaroslavna from Borodin's *Prince Igor* and Aida the following season before taking the lead role as Turandot. Praised by the New York Times for her 'lush, sizeable and luminous voice', Russian soprano Mlada Khudoley has performed leading roles at the Royal Opera House, Los Angeles Opera, Oper Leipzig and Tokyo Opera Nomori. A critically-acclaimed Turandot, Khudoley most recently reprised her Princess Turandot at Oper Köln in May 2017.

Starring as the Prince of Tartary, Calàf, will be Korean Tenor Alfred Kim, who has played leading roles internationally and who previously performed in the role of Calàf for The Royal Opera's 2014 production. Alternating with him in the role will be Gustavo Porta. Born in Argentina, Porta has established an extraordinary international career, performing regularly at the world's most prestigious concert halls and opera houses including Deutsche Oper Berlin, Teatro Real de Madrid, Oper Frankfurt and Maddio Musicale Fiorentino, last performing the role of Calàf at Deutsche Oper am Rhein.

Taking the role of Liù, a kind-hearted servant besotted with Calàf while serving his father Timur, will be young Italian soprano Valeria Sepe, and recipient of the Oscar della Lirica 2015/2016 as Soprano of a New Generation. Audiences may recognise her from her previous role with Opera Hong Kong as Desdemona in Verdi's *Otello*. Also taking the role of Liù will be rising star Natalya Pavlova, who first debuted in the role earlier this year at the Teatro Regio in Turin, under the baton of Gianandrea Noseda.

Calàf's long lost father, Timur, will be played by Georgian bass George Andguladze, who first debuted at the Teatro Comunale in Ferrara in 2009 and who most recently was critically-acclaimed as Timur as part of the 63^o Puccini Opera Festival. Also taking the role is American talent Jeremy Galyon, whose established career has seen him perform at leading opera houses across the US, making his Metropolitan Opera debut in 2009.

Warren Mok, Producer and Artistic Director of Opera Hong Kong, commented, "Collaborating with New York City Opera enables us to stage a reimagined production with a high calibre of international talent and a group of emerging young local singers. One of Puccini's most famous operas, Turandot is a great way to be introduced to the world of opera, and is a must-see show."

In a fitting celebration of Opera Hong Kong's 15th anniversary, the production will also feature the Opera Hong Kong Chorus and the Opera Hong Kong Children's Chorus, with orchestral collaboration from the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Paolo Olmi.

Tickets are now available. Please visit operahongkong.org/Turandot for more details.

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Event Details:

Puccini's Turandot

Performed in Italian with Chinese and English Surtitles.

Date: 10-14 October 2018

Venue: Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Ticket Price: \$1080, \$880, \$680, \$420, \$300, \$150

High-resolution images can be downloaded here:

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Images:



Caption: Opera Hong Kong's production of *Turandot* in 2005



Caption: Warren Mok as Calaf performing *Nessun Dorma* in Opera Hong Kong's production of *Turandot* in 2005



Caption: Portrait of Michael Capasso, Director



Caption: Portrait of Oksana Dyka, participating singer as Turandot



Caption: Portrait of Mlada Khudoley, participating singer as Turandot (Credit: N. Razina)



Caption: Portrait of Alfred Kim, participating singer as Calaf



Caption: Portrait of Gustavo Porta, participating singer as Calaf



Caption: Portrait of Valeria Sepe, participating singer as Liù (Credit: Gianluca D'Angerio)



Caption: Portrait of Natalya Pavlova, participating singer as Liù



Caption: Portrait of George Andguladze,
participating singer as Timur



Caption: Portrait of Jeremy Galyon,
participating singer as Timur

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About Opera Hong Kong

Established in 2003, Opera Hong Kong is committed to the mission of enhancing the appreciation of the art of opera in Hong Kong and promoting local musical talents. In addition to staging operas and concerts, education and outreach programme are also 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.

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.

OHK will celebrate its 15th anniversary in 2018. In addition to presenting a series of celebratory programmes including full scale productions of *Carmen* in May and *Turandot* in October, the company will also be expanding its Education & Outreach efforts with a brand-new music centre Opera Hong Kong Atelier Lyrique and scaling up the Jockey Club Opera Hong Kong Young Artist Development Programme. Alongside, a re-energised social media platform will enhance readers' knowledge of opera and nurture a new generation of opera lovers in Hong Kong.