

## PRESS RELEASE

Opera Hong Kong proudly presents

**Verdi's *Rigoletto***

A tragic story of jealousy, vengeance and sacrifice



(21 Aug 2019, Hong Kong) **Opera Hong Kong** presents the production of the Fondazione Teatro Lirico di Cagliari, ***Rigoletto***, composed by **Giuseppe Verdi**, in the last quarter of 2019, with the support of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Hong Kong Arts Development Council, the Art Development Matching Grants Scheme of the Government of the HKSAR and Italian Cultural Institute. The opera in three acts will be performed on 9-13 October, 2019, at the Grand Theatre of Hong Kong Cultural Centre. **K. Wah International Holdings Ltd. (KWIH)** is the title sponsor of the 11 October performance.

**Verdi's opera** is based on the play "*Le roi s'amuse*" by Victor Hugo. The work brought Verdi his first international triumph and it is one of the most frequently performed operas in the world. The tragic story follows the hunchbacked court jester, Rigoletto, who encourages his master, the Duke of Mantua, to indulge in a licentious and lustful life, until his own daughter, Gilda, has fallen victim to the Duke's seduction. Rigoletto's plot to have his master murdered eventually backfires and results in Gilda's demise. Verdi expresses this tragedy with enchanting melodies; strong drama and plots; powerful characterization and intense emotions.

***Rigoletto*** is recognised as a timeless Italian treasure due to its compelling, blood-curdling revenge and beautiful story of honor. ***Rigoletto*** features some of opera's most recognisable music, including "Woman is fickle" ("*La donna è mobile*"). Opera Hong Kong is bringing a team of world-renowned talents to Hong Kong: Conductor **Paolo Olmi** is highly respected in the international arena. His achievements include the French music critics prize for the Best Opera of the Year for his outstanding production of *William Tell* at the Theatre de champs Elysess. **Paolo Olmi** is collaborating with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra and the Opera Hong Kong Chorus to bring the audience an unprecedented acoustic enjoyment.

The Director of this production, **Pier Francesco Maestrini**, has staged over a hundred opera productions around the world, seven of which were ***Rigoletto***, delighting audiences worldwide. Unlike most modern production which set the opera in modern days, **Maestrini** decided to honor the original context and the time period that ***Rigoletto*** was set instead. Such decision keeps the narrative interesting without much alteration. Working together with **Guillermo Nova**, the set designer and video maker, **Maestrini** will tell the story with a never before seen perspective by blending visual projection with the physical sets.

**Roberto Frontali** and **Anton Keremiditchiev** will take on the role as the hunchbacked court jester, Rigoletto. Well acclaimed as one of the most important baritones of his generation, **Roberto's** recent performance in ***Rigoletto*** at Teatro dell'Opera di Roma had received an overwhelming amount of praises and positive

reviews. While the other famous baritone, **Anton Keremidtchiev**, who has also received frequent invitations for the title role in **Rigoletto**, has given multiple superb performances on the stages in Braunschweig, Vienna, Bratislava and Herrenchiemsee. He made his debut in Hong Kong as Kurwenal in *Tristan and Isolde* with Leipzig Opera in 2011.

**Audrey Luna**, **Joyce Wong** and **Nicole Haslett** will be taking the role of Rigoletto's daughter, Gilda. In 2017, Grammy winner **Audrey Luna** has made the record for singing the highest written note of an A above high C on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera, as Leticia in Thomas *Ade s' The Exterminating Angel*. She will be performing three nights among the five. **Joyce Wah-Sheung Wong**, who was hailed by the *South Florida Classical Review* for her "sweetly sung portrayal of Suor Genevieffa". She who played Zerlina in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Hong Kong in May and won a round of applause with her breath taking performance. **Nicole Haslett**, a post-graduate from the Manhattan School of Music in vocal music, is no stranger to the role, Gilda in *Rigoletto*. She has been a frequent presence at Deutsche Opera Berlin and she was hailed by the *New York Times* for her "technically accomplished coloratura".

### Programme Details

Date & Time: 9-12 Oct 2019 (Wed-Sat), 7:30pm | 13 Oct 2019 (Sun), 2:45pm

Venue: Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Ticket: \$1280, \$1080, \$880, \$620, \$420, \$150

- Early bird discount: 20% discount on or before 5 Sep 2019.
- 10% discount for each purchase of standard tickets for Opera Hong Kong Verdi's *Rigoletto* and World Cultures Festival 2019 *Autumn Sonata* from 6 Sep 2019.

\*Tickets now available at all *URBTIX* outlets, on internet, by mobile ticketing app and credit card telephone booking.

Language: Performed in Italian with Chinese and English surtitles.

For more details, please visit <http://operahongkong.org/rigoletto-1/>

### Production Team

Producer	Warren Mok
Conductor	Paolo Olmi
Director	Pier Francesco Maestrini
Libretto	Francesco Maria Piave
Set and Visual Designer	Guillermo Nova
Costume Designer	Marco Nateri
Lighting Designer	Pascal Merat

### Performers

#### **Cast List**

Rigoletto	Roberto Frontali (9,11,13 Oct) / Anton Keremidtchiev (10,12 Oct)
Gilda	Audrey Luna (9,11,13 Oct) / Joyce Wong (10 Oct) / Nicole Haslett (12 Oct)
Duke of Mantua	Pavel Petrov (9,11,13 Oct) / Raimonds Bramanis (10,12 Oct)
Sparafucile	Paul Gay
Maddalena	Carol Lin (9,11,13 Oct) / Bobbie Zhang (10,12 Oct)
Giovanna	Dominique Chan
Count Ceprano	Frankie Fung
Countess Ceprano	Samantha Chong
Matteo Borsa	Chen Yong
Count Monterone	Apollo Wong (9-12 Oct) / Anton Keremidtchiev (13 Oct)

Marullo                                  Sammy Chien  
**Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra**  
**Opera Hong Kong Chorus**  
**Music Director**                          Alex Tam

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### **Press information**

Full version of press release and high-res photos can be downloaded from the link: <https://bit.ly/2KDdAqv>

### **Media Enquiry**

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### **About Opera Hong Kong**

Established in 2003, Opera Hong Kong (OHK) is a non-profit making organization committed to the mission of enhancing the appreciation of the art of opera and promoting local musical talents under the direction of Warren Mok, a world-renowned Chinese tenor from Hong Kong. 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 (OHKCC) were established in 2004 and 2008 respectively and are becoming recognized forces in the local choral scene.

In 2019, OHK has been 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 the company's steady financial support for its development in future.

Riding on the success of the Jockey Club Opera Hong Kong Young Artist Development Programme (the Programme) which kicked off in 2015, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust has renewed the Programme with OHK for another 3 years. The Programme, accompanied by a series of outreach activities, provides intensive vocal training to 12 local young artists.

The establishment of new music centre in Wanchai has marked a milestone for the development of our Education and Outreach endeavour. A wide range of courses are being organized for early age children to adult apart from OHKCC classes. The recent national policy of developing the Greater Bay Area, with its anticipated economic and population boom, will create an even better environment for OHK to initiate more collaborations and bring opera to an even bigger audience.

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

Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/OperaHongKongLimited](https://www.facebook.com/OperaHongKongLimited)

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