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Passion, Betrayal and Deadly Obsession:

Opera Hong Kong Presents Classic Double Billing

Cavalleria Rusticana & Pagliacci

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Hong Kong, 12 August 2026 – This autumn, Opera Hong Kong proudly presents one of the most celebrated and intense double-bills in operatic history: **Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*** and **Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci***. Running for four performances only from 8 to 11 October 2026 at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre Grand Theatre, offering audiences an immersive journey into the raw heart of Italian Verismo (realism).

Widely regarded as the "twin gems" of Italian opera, *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *Pagliacci* revolutionized the art form in the late 19th century by abandoning grand historical mythology in favour of gritty, emotionally charged human drama. From the soaring, bittersweet *Intermezzo* to Canio's heartbreaking, world-famous aria *"Vesti la giubba"*, these two stunning short operas explore the volatile boundary between love, honour, jealousy and revenge.

An Authentic Italian Visionary Team

To bring the uncompromising spirit of Italian culture to Hong Kong, Producer Warren Mok has assembled a creative team of international renown in partnership with Rome's distinguished Associazione Festival di Pasqua.

Producer
Warren Mok

"*It is a great honour to present this production in collaboration with Associazione Festival di Pasqua", says Warren Mok. "Through opera, Hong Kong audiences can experience Italian history, language, music and aesthetics firsthand. We hope to use this platform to promote authentic Italian cultural heritage within our local community.*" Producer Warren Mok shares.

The production is helmed by celebrated Italian director Enrico Castiglione, renowned for his spectacular staging at world-class open-air venues including the ancient Teatro Romano and the Verona Arena. In a rare artistic tour de force, Castiglione will personally oversee the production as Director, Set Designer, and Costume Designer, creating a unified visual narrative tailored to the Grand Theatre.

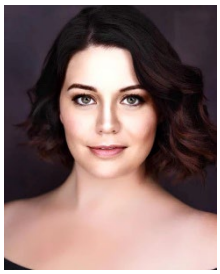
Director, Set & Costume Designer
Enrico Castiglione

World-Class International Cast & Cultural Bridge

The production features a double cast of distinguished international and regional artists: Italian-American Tenor Leonardo Capalbo and Georgian Tenor Konstantine Kipiani share the intensely demanding lead tenor roles of Turiddu (*Cavalleria Rusticana*) and Canio (*Pagliacci*). Acclaimed Soprano Bing Bing Wang, who has built a distinguished career across European and Italian opera houses, performs as Nedda (*Pagliacci*). Renowned for her artistic versatility, she also serves as a vital cultural ambassador bridging Eastern and Western classical traditions. She shares the role with rising international star Monica Conesa. The stellar cast is further elevated by powerhouse singers including Gosha Kowalinska and Kate Jackman as Santuzza (*Cavalleria Rusticana)*, alongside seasoned baritones Franco Pomponi and Sun Li performing in both operas.

Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana*

Santuzza
Gosha Kowalinska



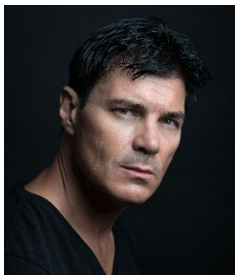
Santuzza
Kate Jackman

Turiddu
Konstantine Kipiani

Turiddu
Leonardo Capalbo

Lucia
Carol Lin

Lucia
Dominique Chan



Alfio
Franco Pomponi

Alfio
Alberto Gazale

Lola
Ashley Chui

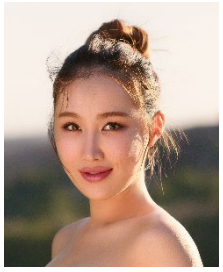
Lola
Christy Li

Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*

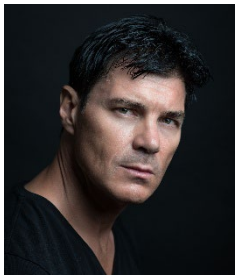
Canio
Konstantine Kipiani

Canio
Leonardo Capalbo

Nedda
Monica Conesa



Nedda
Bing Bing Wang



Tonio
Franco Pomponi

Tonio
Alberto Gazale

Peppe
Henry Ngan

Peppe
Chen Yong

Silvio
Richard Rittelmann

"*These two works have captivated global audiences for generations because they speak directly to the raw truth of human nature,*" explains Warren Mok. "*With our distinguished team of Italian creatives and stellar vocalists, this double-bill stands as a vital cultural bridge deepening the artistic connection between Hong Kong and the world stage.*"

Dynamic Italian conductor Roberto Gianola will take the baton to lead the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Opera Hong Kong Chorus and Opera Hong Kong Children Chorus, ensuring an authoritative and passionate execution of these iconic Italian scores.

Conductor
Roberto Gianola

A Must-See Production This Autumn!

Two Iconic Operas, One Ticket: True Crime Meets Theatre

By pairing Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, this double-bill offers theatregoers two full-scale Italian masterpieces with just one ticket. Fast-paced, intense, and emotionally concise, each one-act opera delivers a complete cinematic story arc. The dramatic appeal of *Pagliacci* resonates strongly with modern audiences fascinated by true-crime thrillers: based on a real late-19th-century murder trial presided over by Leoncavallo's own father, the opera breaks the "fourth wall" as a heartbroken clown's real-life grief bleeds into his comedic performance, leading to a shocking collapse between theatre and reality.

A Single Designer's Complete Aesthetic Vision

Rarely does a single artist craft every visual element of a grand opera. Director Enrico Castiglione's triple role as Director, Set Designer, and Costume Designer ensures an extraordinarily cohesive aesthetic. Designed by Castiglione and crafted entirely in Italy, every costume, set piece, and movement is realized under one unified artistic vision, offering audiences a visually stunning world created specifically for the Hong Kong Cultural Centre stage.

Part of the HKPAX 2026

This double-bill is also featured as part of the official programme for the Hong Kong Performing Arts Expo (HKPAX). As a global platform designed to foster exchange among performing arts institutions across Hong Kong, Mainland China, Asia, and beyond, HKPAX brings international arts leaders and creators together in Hong Kong, highlighting the production's international standing.

About *Cavalleria Rusticana* & *Pagliacci*

Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* – Love, Honour and Tragedy in Sicily

Mascagni's verismo masterpiece *Cavalleria Rusticana* is a one-act opera set in a Sicilian village on Easter morning. Santuzza anxiously searches for her lover Turiddu, believing he has returned to his former fiancée Lola, who married the wine merchant Alfio after Turiddu was called away to war. Desperate to win him back but cast aside and consumed by jealousy, Santuzza reveals the affair to Alfio. Enraged, Alfio challenges Turiddu to a duel. Before facing his fatal destiny, Turiddu bids a final farewell to his mother. With its soaring Intermezzo and powerful emotional intensity, *Cavalleria Rusticana* remains one of the most moving works in the Italian operatic repertoire.

Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* – When Theatre Turns Deadly

Based on a real late-19th-century Italian murder case, *Pagliacci* follows Canio, the head of a travelling acting troupe. His wife Nedda is secretly involved with Silvio, a young man from the village where they are performing. Although Nedda initially attempts to end the affair, Silvio persuades her to flee with him after the show. Tonio, another member of the troupe who also desires Nedda, is rejected and seeks revenge by revealing the affair to Canio. During the performance, Canio breaks character, confronts Nedda and, knife in hand, collapses the boundary between theatre and reality. The famous aria "Vesti la giubba" is one of the most recognisable tenor arias in opera history. *Pagliacci* remains one of the defining masterpieces of verismo opera.

Tickets Now on Sale!

Tickets for *Carmen* are now available for booking online via URBTIX. Prices range from $1,280, $1,080, $880, $680, $480, to $280. A limited number of concession tickets are also available for full-time students, senior citizens aged 60 or above, persons with physical impairments, and recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA).

Performance Details:

Dates and Times: 8–10 Aug 2026 (Thu–Sat) 7:30 PM | 11 Aug 2026 (Sun) 2:30 PM
Venue: Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre
Language: Sung in Italian with Chinese and English surtitles

#OperaHongKong #OHK #CavalleriaRusticana #Pagliacci #CavPag @operahongkong

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About Opera Hong Kong

Opera Hong Kong (OHK), founded in 2003, is Hong Kong's first professional opera company and a leading presenter of Western grand opera in the city. The company is dedicated to producing fully staged opera productions featuring major works from the international operatic canon, including repertoire by Verdi, Puccini, Mozart and other classical composers.

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Warren Mok, the internationally acclaimed Hong Kong tenor, OHK has presented numerous large-scale productions and has collaborated with renowned opera houses and festivals worldwide, including Teatro dell'Opera di Roma, Taormina Opera Festival, Theater Erfurt, Opéra de Nice, the National Centre for the Performing Arts (Beijing) and Shanghai Opera House.

In 2019, Opera Hong Kong was selected by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council as one of the three recipients of the "Eminent Arts Group Scheme", a five-year major funding initiative recognising artistic excellence and institutional development. Beyond its mainstage productions, Opera Hong Kong plays a significant role in nurturing local opera talent. In 2015, OHK launched the Jockey Club Opera Hong Kong Young Artist Development and Education Programme, a structured three-year professional training initiative designed to nurture emerging Hong Kong opera singers. The programme was supported by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and was successfully renewed for a second cycle from 2019 to 2022. In 2024, OHK further expanded its talent

development efforts by launching the inaugural “LKSF–OHK Young Artist Overseas Fellowships” Programme, generously sponsored by the Li Ka Shing Foundation. The fellowship provides short-term international bursaries for six selected young artists who are Hong Kong residents, offering overseas training opportunities to enhance their vocal artistry and professional development.

Opera Hong Kong also maintains extensive education and outreach programmes, including school tours, summer schools, masterclasses and choral training. The OHK Chorus (established in 2004) and Opera Hong Kong Children Chorus (established in 2008) are active contributors to Hong Kong’s choral and performing arts scene.

As Hong Kong strengthens its position within the Greater Bay Area, Opera Hong Kong continues to expand artistic collaborations and audience development initiatives across the region.

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