

Anna Vienna Ho's

part of
Tête-à-tête

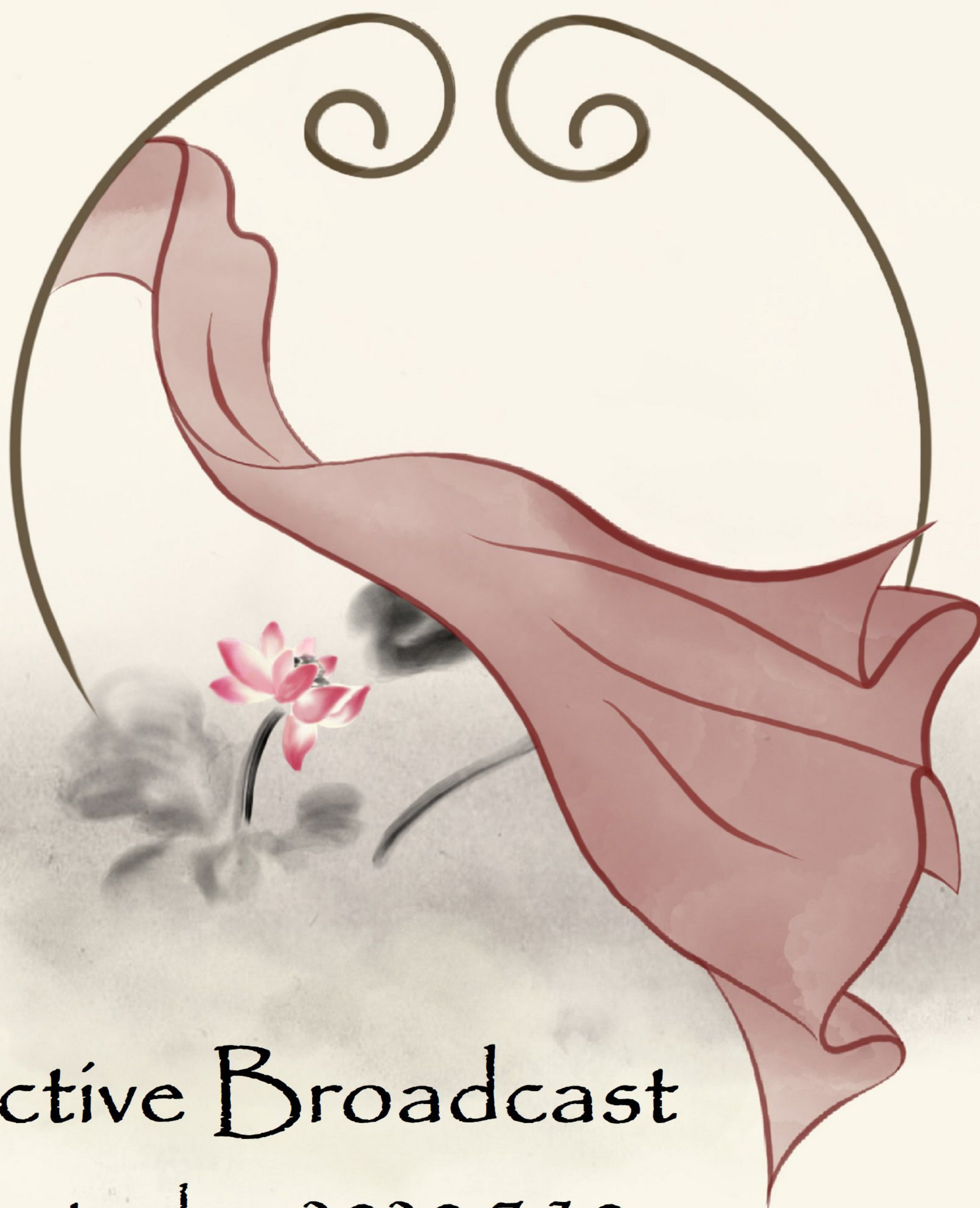
The Opera
Festival 2020



Buddha &

The M onkey King

A Chinese-Western opera



Interactive Broadcast

23rd September 2020 7:30pm

Recording available for 28 days after broadcast

Buddha & The Monkey King

an opera in three acts by Anna Vienna Ho

set to an English libretto by Michael CT Lam

based on the Chinese novel "Journey to the West" by Wu Cheng'en

Synopsis

Place: Outside the Celestial Palace

Time: 500 years ago before "Journey to the West(Tang dynasty)"

Sun Wukong, a monkey born from a magical stone on the Mountain of Flower and Fruit, is a powerful creature who mastered the skill to become immortal. In order to progress beyond the horizons and become the king of Heaven, he single-handedly defeated the Army of Heaven's 100,000 celestial warriors, all 28 constellations, four heavenly kings, and many other Gods. After his rebellion against Heaven, the Buddha comes and talks with him. After conversation and bargain, the Buddha traps the Monkey King under a mountain by his power.

Cast

Sun Wukong, *the Monkey King* – Lixin Liu

Sakyamunī, *the Buddha* – Michael CT Lam

Piano – Lingling Yu

Ruan – Michael CT Lam

Musical director/Wooden fish – Anna Vienna Ho

Programme

Introduction to Chinese music and instruments

Anna Vienna Ho, Michael CT Lam, Eugene Too, David Chan, Bright East Chinese Orchestra

Live performance: "Buddha and the Monkey King"(World Premiere)

Composer: Anna Vienna Ho

Librettist: Michael CT Lam

Preview: "The Monk of the River"

Composer: Anna Vienna Ho

Librettist: Roxanne Korda



Performers (The Monk of the River)

Xuanzang: Jack Whiting

Yin Wenqiao: Valerie Wong

Chen Guangrui: James Gribble

Yin Kaishan: Franco Kong

Liu Hong: Aaron Kendall

Li Biao: Tricia Yates

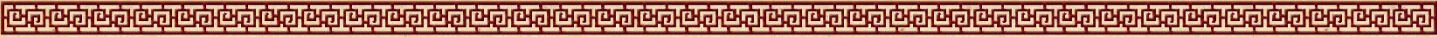
Monk Faming: Edwin Dizer

Fisherman: Wan Tat Cheah

Dizi: Anna Vienna Ho

Erhu: Eugene Too

Ruan: Michael CT Lam



Biography

Anna Vienna Ho – Composer/Music Director

The Hong Kong pianist, Anna Vienna Ho, received an Advanced Postgraduate Diploma and her Master of Music in Piano Performance with distinction from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where she was a recipient of numerous awards and scholarships, including Malcolm John Bullock Memorial Trust Award, Birmingham Conservatoire Association Award and Royal Birmingham Conservatoire International Students Scholarship.

Anna was the prize winner of the International Robert Schumann Klavier Wettbert, Internationaler Deutscher Irmler-Klavierwettbewerb, Rome International Music Competition, Schumann International Youth Piano Competition, Mid-Somerset Festival, North London Music Festival, London Grand Prize Virtuoso International Music Competition, Abergavenny Eisteddfod Y Fenni and Leamington Spa Competitive Festival among others. As a pianist, Anna has given solo recitals and performed in many concert venue in Asia and Europe, including Royal Albert Hall, Birmingham Town Hall, Parco della Musica and Hong Kong City Hall. Besides performing as a soloist, Anna is also an experienced collaborative pianist who has performed in varies chamber recitals and collaborated with many choirs and orchestras. She has also worked as a repetiteur for opera companies.



Besides developing a career as a concert pianist, Anna has also performed actively as a vocalist. Passionate about opera, Anna has sung the role of **The Third Apparition** in Verdi's *Macbeth* for Opera In A Box and **Gherardino** in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* for the London Gay Symphony Orchestra. Other productions she has sung within including Verdi's *La traviata* (Midland Opera), Bellini's *Norma* (Midland Opera), Puccini's *La Bohème* (Midland Opera), Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Musica Viva), Bizet's *Carmen* (Midland Opera and Musica Viva), Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Midland Opera), Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci* (Midland Opera), and Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Musica Viva).

Anna has started her interest in composition since she studied in secondary school. Her Hymn "A New Creation" was included in a CD album published by International Christian Quality Music Secondary and Primary School in 2010. In 2014, she was chosen as one of the finalists in the New Generation 2014 and premiered her String Quartet "The Forester" in the New Generation Concert at RTHK Studio One and was broadcast on RTHK Radio 4. Her art song "Geforne Tränen" was premiered in the HKBU Student Composition Showcase. In 2016, her song cycle "Impression of life" and two Italian songs, "Non posso disperar" and "Aprile", were premiered at Weoley Hill United Reformed Church, Birmingham, UK. She won the NADFAS Trophy in Newcastle-U-Lyme Festival of Music 2017. Her Cantonese song "Parting on a Moonlit Night" was premiered at St. Andrew's Church Rugby. In 2018, her solo piano piece "Images" is included in the RMN Classical album "Modern Music for Piano" and distributed in stores and digital platforms. In 2019, her choral work "The Infinite Shining Heavens" was premiered by London Oriana Choir in their annual concert.

Michael CT Lam as The Buddha/Ruanist/Librettist

Praised for a voice of "deliciously deep and rich," (Birmingham Post), Hong Kong baritone Michael Chun Ting Lam was a winner of multiple international singing competitions. He trained the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Hungary, as a recipient of the Joseph Weingarten Scholarship. He received his Master of Music in Vocal Performance from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, where he was awarded the St Clare Barfield Memorial Bowl for Operatic Distinction and was supported by Opera Hong Kong K Wah International Vocal Scholarship, Foundation for the Arts and Music in Asia Limited (FAMA) Vocal Scholarships and Birmingham Conservatoire Scholarship Fund. Prior to that, he gained his Bachelor of Music from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, where he received a number of scholarships, including Welsh Male Choir Scholarship, the Bernard van Zuiden Music Fund, Mr Ng Fung Chow Memorial Scholarships, The Hong Kong Children's Choir Chan Ho Choi Memorial Scholarship and Michael Rippon Memorial Scholarship.



Passionate about opera, Michael has sung more than 30 operatic roles and performed for opera companies in Asia and Europe in many major theatres and festivals, including Opera Hong Kong, Musica Viva, Winslow Hall Opera, OperaUpClose, Passaggio Oper, Opéra de Bauge and more. His operatic roles include **Macbeth**(*Macbeth*), **Tonio**(*Pagliacci*), **Renato & Silvano**(*Un Ballo in Maschera*), **Rigoletto & Count Ceprano**(*Rigoletto*), **Escamillo**(*Carmen*), **The Four Villains, Hermann & Peter Schlemil**(*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), **Colline**(*La Bohème*), **Count Almaviva**(*Le Nozze di Figaro*), **Giorgio Germont & Baron Douphol**(*La Traviata*), **Forester**(*The Cunning Little Vixen*), **Bottom**(*A Midsummer Night's Dream*), **Sharpless & Bonze**(*Madama Butterfly*), **Don Alfonso**(*Così fan Tutte*), **Don Magnifico**(*La Cenerentola*), **Ferrando**(*Il Trovatore*), **Death**(*Sāvitri*), **Le Fauteuil**(*L'enfant et les sortilèges*), **Don Basilio**(*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*), **Marco**(*Gianni Schicchi*), **Dr Blind**(*Die Fledermaus*), and **David**(*The Hand of Bridge*), among many others. He has been given the Gil Rodriguez Scholarship Award from Opéra de Bauge for his outstanding contribution to the 2019 Operatic Season.

On the concert platform, Michael has appeared as a soloist in Haydn's Nelson Mass (The Really Big Chorus and Hong Kong Police Choir); J.S. Bach's Magnificat in D Major (Hong Kong Oratorio Society, HKOS Cantata Singers and HKFYG Hong Kong Melody Makers); Felix Mendelssohn's Die erste Walpurgisnacht (Hong Kong Oratorio Society); Handel's Messiah (Hong Kong SingFest); J.S. Bach's Magnificat in D Major (Village Voices UK); Faure's Requiem (Chesterfield Co-operative Choral Society); Brahms's Ein deutsches Requiem (The Guild Consort Choir); "Another Night at the Opera" (Red Earth Opera); "A Night of Celebration" and "French Connections" (Midland Opera). He has given recitals in many places, including one at St Andrew's Church Rugby as part of the Rugby Festival Of Culture 2019.

Besides performing as a singer, Michael frequently appears as a Zhongruanist. He started learning Zhongruan at the age of twelve and obtained the Shanghai Conservatory of Music Grade 8 Certificate in Zhongruan performance within a short space of time. He has studied Ruan, Liuqin and Sanxian with Chu Man Kuen, Kwan Chun Chiu, David Chan and Kitty Lee. He was the leader and the principal Zhongruanist of Ng Wah Chinese Orchestra and, a Ruanist of Hong Kong City Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Bright East Chinese Orchestra and Sze Nga "Sonata Elite" Chamber Orchestra. In addition to participating in large-scale concerts held in concert halls, such as "A Concert of Popular Chinese Music" and "A Concert of Guided History", Michael has also actively participated in Chamber performances in various community events, dinners and cocktail parties.

Lixin Liu as The Monkey King

"Lixin Liu's Queen of the Night was simply stellar, coloratura bubbling, her soarings into the stratosphere fearless and imperious, matching her stage persona."
(Christopher Morley Midlands music reviews, March 2019)

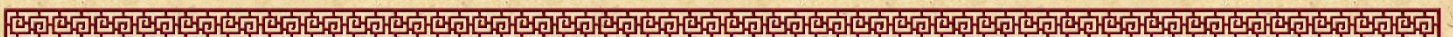
Lixin Started her studies at the Royal Northern College of Music where she was generously supported by James and Mary Glass Scholarship. She has recently finished Advanced Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Performance (post-Master Level 8) at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, supported by RBC Tuition Scholarship. During her studies, Lixin has been awarded The St Claire Barfield Memorial Bowl for Operatic Distinction, she won 1st Prizes in both The Edwards Brooks Lieder Prize and Cecil Drew Oratorio Prize respectively in 2019, Feb and 2018, Oct. She also received The Claire Croiza Prize for French song and she was one of the finalists for the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Strauss in 2017.



Lixin has performed the full role of **Queen of the Night** (*The Magic Flute*) at Crescent Theatre in Birmingham 2019. She has also played the role of **Controller** (*Flight*), **Sprite** (*Cendrillon*), **Nanetta** (*Falstaff*), **Frasquita** (*Carmen*), **Sophie** (*Werther*), **Constance** (*Dialogues de Carmelites*), **Clara** (*La Vie Parisienne*), **Laurette** (*Le Docteur Miracle*), **Ilia** (*Idomeneo*), **Gretel** (*Hansel und Gretel*), **Clorinda** (*La Cenerentola*) and **Fox Cubs** (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) as part of Opera Scenes. Her solo experiences include singing at Cadogan Hall, the O2 Arena, the Bridgewater Hall, Newcastle and Leeds Town Halls. In addition, she has been invited to perform at the Chinese Consulate General in Manchester a number of times and she sang in the Chinese New Year Gala for HuNan TV Worlds Channel in February 2017.

Lingling Yu – Pianist

Lingling was born in China, she began her music education on the piano at the age of four. She started learning music professionally during her high school. Since 2013, she has taken part in masterclasses with world-renowned pianists such as Lang Lang, Oxana Yablonskaya and Peter Donohoe. She has been studying in the UK since 2014 and under the tutelage of Dr Vivian Choi in London. Later she was awarded a scholarship to further her studies in Birmingham. During her studies in Birmingham, she participated in several music festivals such as Max Reger Centenary Festival and Arnold Bax Piano Festival. She finished her Bachelors of Music with honours at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire in 2019 under the tutelage of Mark Bebbington.



Preview: The Monk of the River

Roxanne Korda – Librettist

Roxanne is an opera singer, librettist and science disseminator, currently enrolled on the M4C PhD DTP, researching the use of science in opera libretti and performance. She co-founded Infinite Opera in order to be able to combine her love of science, philosophy and music. She has BSc Hons (First) in Physics and Philosophy from King's College London and MMus Vocal Performance (Distinction) from Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

After her BSc she worked as a physics teacher enabling her to both keep up to date on research and devote time to music and performance. She has performed several roles including **Rosalinda** (*Die Fledermaus*, J. Strauss), **Lucy Lockitt** (*The Beggar's Opera*, Gay arr. Britten), **Nora** (*Riders to the Sea*, V. Williams), **Fiordiligi** (*Così fan tutte*, Mozart), **Besse** (*Besse: Water, Rye and Hops*) and **Baron Entropy** (*Entanglement! An Entropic Tale*, Daniel Blanco). She regularly performs recitals and enjoys programming music around themes including the visual arts and feminism.

Roxanne has written a biography of Rosalind Franklin for King's College London as well as the libretti for: *Entanglement! An Entropic Tale*, *Besse: Water, Rye and Hops*, *The Monk of the River* (composer: Anna Ho) and the *Flowering Desert*. On top of this she has a strong interest in film and wrote and co-produced an operatic short (*Love In Chains*), based on *Die Lorelei* by Liszt for 48 hr Film Project where it won 2 prizes.

Jack Whiting as Xuanzang

Jack Whiting, tenor, is studying for his BMus (Hons) in Vocal and Operatic Studies at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire with a scholarship. His current singing teacher is Christopher Turner. Previous teachers include Tom Marandola, Nicholas Warden and Julian Pike. Before moving to Birmingham, Jack studied at The Purcell School, RAMJD under an Elton John scholarship and RCMJD.

During his time at the Conservatoire Jack has been involved in many productions and projects. Operatic roles include **Filch** (*The Beggars Opera*, Britten, 2017), **Monostatos** (*The Magic Flute*, Mozart, 2019), **Mr Rushworth** (*Mansfield Park*, Dove, 2019) and **Neptune** (*The Enchanted Island*, Jeremy Sams, 2020).

As part of the Conservatoire's annual Opera Scenes Jack has played the roles **Herr Biedermann** (*Biedermann und die Brandstifter*, Šimon Voseček, 2018), **Oronte** (*Alcina*, Handel, 2018) and **Albert** (*Albert Herring*, Britten, 2019).

Jack is a self-employed singing teacher and also enjoys a busy freelance performance career.

Valerie Wong as Wenqiao

Valerie Wong, Hong Kong-born Soprano took part in multiple opera productions including *L'elisir d'amore* by Donizetti as **Gianetta**, *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* by Offenbach as **La Voix**, *Suor Angelica & Gianni Schicchi* by Giacomo Puccini as **La Badessa** and **La Ciesca**, *Semele* by Handel as **Ino**, *Così fan tutte* and *Le Nozze Di Figaro* by Mozart, *Die Fledermaus* by Johann Strauss II, *La Cenerentola* by Rossini, *Don Giovanni* by Mozart, *Tosca* by Giacomo Puccini, *Otello* by Giuseppe Verdi.

Wong graduated from Master of Performance at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama under John Evans. Wong obtained the Bachelor of Music (Honours) under renowned soprano Nancy Yuen and Diploma of Music of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. Wong was a recipient of the Hong Kong Welsh Male Voice Choir Scholarship and Michael Rippon Memorial Scholarship.

James Gribble as Chen Guangrui

James is a baritone from Berkshire and is a graduate of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. He has extensive and varied performance experience in opera, oratorio, musical theatre, song and film.

Recently James played **Mercutio** in Acadian Opera's *Romeo & Juliet* and was a young artist at Longborough Festival Opera, playing the role of 'Pane' in their acclaimed production of *La Calisto* as well as joining the chorus of Anna Bolena. Unfortunately, the festival was cancelled this year where he was due to perform in *The Elixir of Love*. Other recent performances include: **Amantio** in a number of productions of *Gianni Schicchi*, Singing in a new work for the Royal Albert Hall and performances with The National G&S Opera Company.

Operatic roles whilst studying include: **Bobinet** in *La vie parisienne*, **Captain Macheath** in Britten's *The Beggar's Opera*, **Antonio** & cover **Figaro** in *Le nozze di figaro* and **L'horloge comtoise** in *L'enfant et les sortilèges*.

Franco Kong as Yin Kaishan

Franco Kong was born of a musical family in China. He studied at the Xinghai Conservatoire, where he was conferred a bachelor's Degree. After graduation, he was awarded the Norman Gristwood scholarship to study a postgraduate certificate course at Trinity College of Music London. Franco is an accomplished opera, oratorio and recital artist. While his stage performances, working with Wexford Festival Opera, Dublin Grand Opera, Birmingham Opera Co, Chelsea Opera Group, English Touring Opera, Coro Lirico Sandonatese Italy, Ahmadi Music Group, English Festival Opera, Almeida Opera, Garsington Opera, New Sussex Opera etc. He is the first Chinese opera singer invited to perform in Kuwait where he consecutively performed four seasons already. His many recitals and oratorio performances have taken him to Ireland, Italy, France, Spain, Kuwait & China.

Franco is an "ex-performer turned teacher." He currently teaching singing in The Windsor Music school & The Master Music School(London).

Aaron Kendall as Liu Hong

Aaron is a classical baritone from the coast of Pembrokeshire, Wales and he has recently graduated from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where he was tutored by Welsh baritone, Gwion Thomas. At the conservatoire, he has had the pleasure of being mentored by répétiteurs Paul Wingfield, Robin Bowman, Rosalind Jones and James Platt.

He regularly performs in recitals around Birmingham and Pembrokeshire with a diverse range of repertoire from Vivaldi, to Brahms, to Finzi. He also performs as a soloist for oratorios and mass settings on a regular basis, such as Handel's *Messiah*, Faure's *Requiem* and a collection of Mozart Masses to name a few.

On the opera stage, Aaron's most recent opera credits include **Caliban** in Jeremy Sams' *The Enchanted Island*, **Papageno** in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, **Edmund Bertram** in Jonathan Dove's *Mansfield Park* (RBC), **Figaro** in *Le Nozze di Figaro* (Somerset Opera), **Luka** in Walton's *The Bear* (Dafne Opera) and **Guglielmo** in *Così fan tutte* (Opera Novello).

Tricia Yates as Li Biao

Tricia Yates is an operatic tenor, in the final of four years on the BMus performance programme at the University of Leeds; she has recently completed an Erasmus Exchange year at ArteZ Conservatorium in Zwolle, The Netherlands. She has been a choral singer for many years, starting out with Halifax Young Singers and the Yorkshire Youth Choir as a child. As an older member of the HYS, Tricia has conducted the choir in the Mrs. Sunderland Festival choral competition, and since leaving YYC, she has returned several times in the role of assistant tutor. Her choral experience has led her to singing professionally in the Netherlands in the Dutch Touring Opera chorus and in large-scale choral works such as Britten's *War Requiem* with Consensus Vocalis. In her career as an classical soloist, Tricia has sung in oratorio such as Handel's *Messiah*, Stainer's *The Crucifixion* and Franck's *Messe in A*. She has also starred in operas such as Verdi's *Macbeth* as **Macduff**, Puccini's *La Bohème* as **Marcello** and Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* as **Alfred**. Her 2nd passion is LGBTQ+ and queer culture, fashion and make-up.

Wan Tat Cheah as Fisherman

Wan Tat Cheah- Baritone, just finished his final year Bachelor at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. He started to sing at the age of 18 in a college choir and was soon advised by the conductor to take singing lessons with a professional singing teacher. He is currently under the tutelage of Jonathan Gunthorpe.

As a Baritone, Wan Tat has actively participated in voice department performance including singing chorus in *Marriage of Figaro*, *La Vie Parisienne* and ensemble in Monteverdi's *Madrigals of War and Love*. He performed the role of **Matt of the Mint** in *Bagger's Opera*, **Leporello** in *Don Giovanni* (scene), **Spinelloccio** and **Guccio** in *Gianni Schicchi*, **Dr. Pangloss** in *Candide* (scene), **Speaker** and **Man in Armour** in *The Magic Flute*, **Vodník** in *Rusalka* (scene), **Lysander** in *The Enchanted Island*, **Actor** and **Mr. Rushworth** (acting) in *Mansfield Park*. He will continue his Master's study at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire this September.

Eugene Too – Erhuist

Eugene Too is a Vocal and Piano Teacher who combines a diverse background as a performer and a teacher. Eugene received his Master's Degree from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Bachelor's Degree from the University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom.

Eugene has taught in organisations such as the Birmingham Chinese School, Birmingham Chinese Society and more. Besides Vocal and Piano, Eugene also plays the ErHu and the Saxophone where he also delivers lesson on these instruments as well.

He has also been featured as a professional performer in the West Midlands Community as he performs for the Lord Mayor's Charity Ball in Derbyshire, Lord Mayor of Birmingham and Lord Mayor of Worcestershire, and charity events organised by the Lion's Club Birmingham Chinatown and Solihull and the Chinese Festive Committee Birmingham.

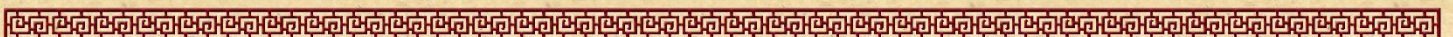
Besides that, he also been invited by Zimbabwe famous Mbira Musician, Chartwell Dutiro to collaborate with him to make different cultural music with Professor Amanda Bayley, Professor of Music in Bath Spa University to perform and Korean Daeguem player Professor Hyelim Kim.

Besides that, Mr. Too did involved in multiple productions of Opera such as Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, *La Vie Parisienne* (operetta) in Birmingham.

Eugene currently serves on the faculty of Aureus Academy in Singapore as a Vocal and Piano Teacher.

David Chan – Pipaist/ Artistic director of Bright East Chinese Orchestra

Graduated with a bachelor honors degree from the Chinese University of Hong Kong, David Chan Yiu Dong is a Chinese music educator and performer. He started to learn Pipa since he was in secondary school, under the tutelage of Pui-yuen Lui, known as "Southern Pipa King". He performed "Floating Petals Decorating the Green Leaves" and won the award in Hong Kong School Music Festival Pipa Competition. He was also winner of HKTVB's Sharp Night, where he performed "Ambush from Ten Sides", in 1971. During the years studying at the university, he has organized a few solo recitals. In 1990, he started studying Yangqin under the guidance of famous Yangqinist Chan Sham Lam. Later, he studied a number of plucked instruments, including Zhongruan, Liuqin and Guzheng with many other great musicians. In recent years, he received the guidance of well-renowned Pipaists, such as Wang Fandi and Yang Jing, which has given him new sight toward interpretation. In addition to performing, he has also studied conducting with Feiyun Xia and studied composition with Guanren Gu.



Acknowledgment

(listed in no particular order)

Mr. Bill Bankes-Jones

Ms. Anna Gregg

Mr. David Salter

Mr. Leo Doulton

Mr. David Chan

Bright East Chinese Orchestra (耀東中樂團)

Mr. Michael CT Lam

Ms. Lixin Liu

Ms. Lingling Yu

Ms. Roxanne Korda

Ms. Valerie Wong

Mr. Eugene Too

Mr. Jack Whiting

Mr. James Gribble

Mr. Franco Kong

Mr. Aaron Kendall

Ms. Tricia Yates

Mr. Edwin Dizer

Mr. Wan Tat Cheah

Ms. Teresa Ng

The Cockpit

