



Opera Viva Ltd

22 Gemmill Lane, #04-00,
Singapore 069257

NEW OPERA COMPANY OPERAVIVA LAUNCHED

Baroque and new opera works to add to Singapore's opera scene; three Singaporean arts veterans proceed with artistic vision despite uncertain economy

19 March 2009 – The economy may be slow, but three Singaporean arts veterans have set out to brighten the “stage” by launching a new opera company, *OperaViva*, today.

The trio comprise of impresario-vocalist Leow Siak Fah, composer-pianist John Sharpley and poet-playwright Robert Yeo.

Mr Leow said: “Largely due to the efforts of the Singapore Lyric Opera, Western opera has become an indispensable part of Singapore’s arts palette. We feel that Singaporeans are now ready for another opera company that focuses on Baroque and contemporary opera as well as new works by Singaporean and other Asian composers / librettists.”

OperaViva’s offerings of Baroque and new opera productions will happily complement the Classical and Romantic opera repertory of Singapore Lyric Opera, a company Leow also pioneered in the 1980s, under the auspices of the National University of Singapore Society (NUSS) and founded in 1990. OperaViva’s new offerings mean that audiences in Singapore can in future look forward to a more complete historical repertory of opera works.

Encapsulating the aims of the new non-profit company, its mission statement reads as follows:

To produce innovative and meaningful productions of early and contemporary opera, operettas and musicals;

To foster vibrant and integrated communities of artists, arts professionals and audiences in Singapore and beyond, embracing new and diverse audience segments.

To create and stimulate new forms of music drama, drawing upon all global cultures, techniques and technologies.

OperaViva Limited registration no. 200809663K

is an approved charity organization under the Charities Act since 12/03/09.

Pending IPC approval for tax exemption purposes.

OperaViva Limited c/o CAEMPL

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The new company has already lined up its new shows. In the coming year, from March 2009 to March 2010, OperaViva will stage two concerts and a new opera. Its inaugural concert on 8 and 9 April, entitled *Songs of Love, Despair & Hope*, will feature songs and excerpts from operas and musicals in three sets – Early Music, Contemporary Musicals and Contemporary Opera. A double bill on 7 to 9 Sep will feature a new work *Kannaki – the Ankle Bracelet*, based on an ancient verse romance, with music written by John Sharpley.

The highlight of OperaViva's first year will be the premiere in Feb 2010 of *Fences*, an original opera written by Sharpley and Yeo. Conceived by Leow two years ago, *Fences*, is about the fences in our hearts told through a version of the Romeo and Juliet story set in the tumultuous 1960s just before Singapore joined Malaysia, through the period when Singapore was in Malaysia and into separation from Malaysia. The question is whether love will triumph despite parental objections and racial and religious divisions.

In the longer term, OperaViva will commission more operas and musicals, collaborating with SLO and Opera Studio. There are also plans to start an outreach and educational programme to promote opera to younger audiences.

OperaViva's other directors are Dr Chua Soo Pong, the Director of the Chinese Opera Institute; Mr Koh Buck Song, poet and Head, Public Affairs, Southeast Asia, Hill & Knowlton; Mr Liew Chin Choy, Vice-President (Admin), Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts; and arts enthusiast Juliana Lim.

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