

Press Release  
27 August 2015  
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Hong Kong Dance Company x Yat Po Singers

## *Voices and Dances of the Distant Land*

A Folkish Crossover:  
Folk Songs and Dances, with A Cappella Singing



Dance to the romance of folklore

Sing along to jazzy makeovers of ethnic songs

Ever wonder what a modern makeover of Chinese traditional folk art would be like? In *Voices and Dances of the Distant Land*, Hong Kong Dance Company collaborates with Yat Po Singers, a local a cappella group well-loved by the young audience for their witty, theatrical performances, in a creative remaking of the most vibrant, ecstatic Chinese folk songs and dances. Through their exuberant performance, Yat Po Singers will interpret a collection of widely loved folk songs as choral music, expressing their melodic beauty and idyllic spirit through the magic of voice. And woven into their performance you will hear rich nuances of latter-day music genres like pop, rock and jazz. Join us on a magical journey: let our voices and our dance lead you into the realms of romance, folklore and *joie de vivre*, and take you to an idyllic distant land.

A cappella – group or solo singing of rhythm and melody or vocal percussion without instrumental accompaniment – has become a popular style in Hong Kong in recent years. This programme ingeniously brings together this European form with traditional



Chinese folk songs, and takes you away from the hustle and bustle of the city to the earthly paradise we seek.

For this folklore crossover programme, the Hong Kong Dance Company has invited Mr Patrick Chiu to act as Music Director. The Company has also invited Guest Musician Master of Chinese Lute Sanxian, Mr Zhao Taisheng, to perform on the sanxian, the Chinese ocarina and vocals, and Guest Musician Ms Huang Xiyin for vocals.

### Programme Summary (around 120 words)

In *Voices and Dances of the Distant Land*, Hong Kong Dance Company collaborates with Yat Po Singers, a local a cappella group well-loved by the young audience for their witty, theatrical performances, in a creative remaking of Chinese folk songs and dances. Yat Po Singers will interpret a collection of widely loved folk songs as choral music, expressing their melodic beauty and idyllic spirit through the magic of voice. In this distinctive contemporary interpretation of traditional song and dance, you will hear rich nuances of latter-day music genres like pop, rock and jazz. Join us on a magical journey: let our voices and our dance lead you into the realms of romance, folklore and *joie de vivre*, and take you to an idyllic distant land.

25-26.9.2015 (Fri - Sat) Tsuen Wan Town Hall Auditorium

\$260、\$200、\$150、\$100 Ticket available now at URBTIX

Internet Ticketing [www.urbtix.hk](http://www.urbtix.hk) | Ticketing Enquiries 3761 6661

Programme Enquiries 3103 1806 | [www.hkdance.com](http://www.hkdance.com)

Dances x Folk Songs x A Cappella Singing <i>Voices and Dances of the Distant Land</i>	
Date & Time	25 - 26 Sept 2015 (Fri - Sat) 7:45pm 26 Sept 2015 (Sat) 3:00pm
Venue	Tsuen Wan Town Hall Auditorium
Tickets	\$260、\$200、\$150、\$100 Ticket available now at URBTIX 50% off - Full-time students*, people with disabilities and the minder, senior citizens aged 60 or above and CSSA recipients * Not applicable for \$100 tickets
Internet Ticketing	<a href="http://www.urbtix.hk">www.urbtix.hk</a>
Mobile Ticketing App	My URBTIX
Telephone Credit Card Booking	2111 5999
Ticketing Enquiries	3761 6661
Programme Enquiries	3103 1809   <a href="mailto:hkdance@hkdance.com">hkdance@hkdance.com</a>
website	<a href="http://www.hkdance.com">www.hkdance.com</a>
Suitable for aged 6 or above.	
Hong Kong Dance Company reserves the right to change programme details and substitute artists.	



## **Hong Kong Dance Company**

### **“Dancing across East and West, Moving to the Tempo of Hong Kong”**

#### **Mission Statement**

We are nurtured in the cultural tradition of China, combining with the creativity of contemporary art, to impress the world with Chinese dance of Hong Kong character.

#### **History**

Established in 1981 with the aim of promoting Chinese dance, the Hong Kong Dance Company was incorporated in 2001 as a charitable and non-profit-making institution, and is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Since its inception, the Hong Kong Dance Company has staged over 100 productions, many of which were highly popular with critical acclaim. Recent productions include *Qingming Riverside*; *The Smiling, Proud Wanderer*; *Snow Fox*; *Eagle Companions*; *Two Swallows – Ode to Wu Guanzhong*; *Spring Ritual · Eulogy*; *Feng Shui*; *Pop Classics: Joseph Koo's Dance Melodies 2013*; *The Legend of Mulan*; *The Butterfly Lovers* and *Storm Clouds*.

The Company has toured internationally as well as around Mainland China as a way to encourage cultural exchange. The Company was invited to perform at the “Meet in Beijing 2008” Arts Festival to celebrate the Beijing Olympics, and took part in the opening ceremony of the East Asian Games in 2009. In 2010, the Company participated in “The Ninth China Art Festival” in Guangzhou and the World Expo in Shanghai. In January 2013, the Hong Kong Dance Company presented *Qingming Riverside* at The Sony Centre for the Performing Arts in Toronto and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. *Spring Ritual · Eulogy* was presented at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing in September 2013, and the Novel Hall for Performing Arts in Taipei in December 2013 as part of Hong Kong Week 2013. *The Legend of Mulan* was presented at the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York in March 2015.

## Director & Choreographer | Yang Yuntao



A member of the Bai ethnic minority in Yunnan, Yang Yuntao was a graduate of the Minzu University of China's Faculty of Dance. A former member of the Guangdong Modern Dance Company and the Beijing Modern Dance Company, he won the Bronze Prize at the inaugural Central Modern Dance Competition and the Gold Prize and Outstanding Male Performer at the 2nd National Lotus Awards Competition for his performance as principal dancer in *Ma and Le Visiting the Sky*. Later at the 6th China Arts Festival, he received the Outstanding Performance Award. He also won the Gold Award in Solo Dance in *South of the Cloud* at the 7th National Dance Competition for Ethnic Minorities.

Yang joined the Hong Kong Dance Company in 2002 as Principal Dancer. A year later, he received the Hong Kong Dance Award from the Hong Kong Dance Alliance for his performance in *Water Margin* and *The Song of the Earth*. He joined the City Contemporary Dance Company in 2005, winning the Hong Kong Dance Award the following year for his performance in *The Conqueror*. Yang returned to the Hong Kong Dance Company in 2007 as Assistant Artistic Director and received the Award for Best Artist (Dance) at the 2009 Hong Kong Arts Development Awards, Outstanding Achievement in Production for his choreography *Spring Ritual · Eulogy* at the 2013 Hong Kong Dance Awards, and Outstanding Production and Outstanding Ensemble Performance for *The Legend of Mulan* at the 2014 Hong Kong Dance Awards. Most recently, *Storm Clouds* was awarded Outstanding Achievement in Production at the 2015 Hong Kong Dance Awards.

Yang has choreographed for the Guangdong Modern Dance Company, Beijing Modern Dance Company and City Contemporary Dance Company. His works for the Hong Kong Dance Company include *Border Town*; *The Smiling, Proud Wanderer*; *Everlasting Love*; *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*; *Joseph Koo's Classic Melodies*; *Spring Ritual · Eulogy*; *The Legend of Mulan*; *The Butterfly Lovers* and *Storm Clouds*.

## Music Director | Patrick Chiu



Patrick Chiu is a Hong Kong-born choral artist. During his residence in Vienna, he participated in various local professional performances and received tuition from professors at the Vienna Conservatory. In 2003, he earned a scholarship to study at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where he received his Master's degree in choral conducting. During his stay in Europe and the United States, he worked with and studied under world-renowned maestros including Helmuth Rilling, James Levine and Harry Christophers.

In 2009, Patrick led the Hong Kong Melody Makers Vocal Band to win three awards in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Asian Youth a cappella Competition in South Korea: Champion, Best Vocal and Best Arrangement. In 2010, he and the Hong Kong Melody Makers Chorus won two Gold Awards in the World Choir Games (Mixed Chamber Choir and Contemporary Music categories). In 2012, Patrick was a scholarship recipient of Helmuth Rilling's Herbert von Karajan Music Prize to attend and perform in the Oregon Bach Festival. In the same year, Patrick received the Award for Young Artist (Music) from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council in 2012.

Patrick is the Festival artistic director of the Hong Kong International A cappella Festival from 2010-2015. He is currently the Co-Artistic Director of Hong Kong's first professional a cappella theatre company Yat Po Singers and Artistic Director of the award-winning Hong Kong Melody Makers.

## Guest Performers & Music Arrangement | Yat Po Singers



Yat Po Singers is the first professional a cappella choral theatre company in Hong Kong focusing on developing original theatrical works. It was founded by the solid team of three Co-Artistic Directors – Composer Ng Cheuk-yin, Choral Director Patrick Chiu and Stage Director / Designer Yuri Ng – and Executive Director (Honorary), Kathleen Ng.

The Company's artistic mission is to promote a cappella art in Hong Kong, especially among young people, through original work by local artists that demonstrates the innovative interaction of music and theatre. Young singers and school teachers who participate in the company's

productions and activities are nurtured through intensive rehearsals, workshops, and public performances.

In 2012 and again in 2014, Yat Po Singers received the Springboard Grants under the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme. The company aims at enhancing the arts in Hong Kong at large, in particular in audience building and arts education for professional performers and teachers.

Yat Po Singers is financially supported by the Springboard Grant under the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

### Guest Musicians | **Zhao Taisheng** (Chinese Lute Sanxian, Chinese Ocarina & Vocal)



Zhao Taisheng is a member of the Chinese Musicians' Association and a committee member of the Central Conservatory of Music Alumni Association (Hong Kong). He graduated from the Conservatory in 1988, where he trained in *sanxian* under Prof. Xiao Jiansheng, Wang Zhenxian and Tan Longjian at the Traditional Instruments Department. In his second year at the Conservatory, he won the Dunhuang Class One Award at the First International Jiangnan Wind and String Competition, a Class One Performance Award with A Festive Procession and another Class One Award for the new work Eulogy of the South. In 1996, his premiere of Demon from Heaven won an Outstanding Performance Award at the 3rd

All China Folk Music Instrumental Music Showcase, and he was honoured by the Government of the Beijing Municipality for his meritorious achievements in culture. He was named one of the 'Ten Best Performers of Beijing' in 1998.

He was on the Beijing delegation to Scandinavia in 1996, on which occasion he demonstrated the sounds of the Chinese instruments *sanxian*, *xun* and *zheng*. He was invited to perform at the Asian Percussion Festival of the Asian Week, held in Busan, South Korea for three consecutive years. His *sanxian* solo performance of Ceding Xuzhou at the closing ceremony of the 2nd National Peking Opera Festival caused a sensation in 1998. He made a guest appearance on CCTV during the Chinese New Year of 2000 and performed Sending the Tiger Back to Its Mountain Hideout solo in a standing position, which marked him as the first *sanxian* artist to perform like this in China. In 2003, as one of the Outstanding Young Persons of China, Zhao was invited by the President of South Korea to tour ten cities in Korea. While in Beijing, he had a busy schedule performing and recording, and worked closely with the famous actor, Zhao Benshan as the latter's *sanxian* accompanist.

Zhao joined the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra in 2005 as a *sanxian* virtuoso, and became a Hong Kong resident under the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme in 2008. He has toured the United States, Australia, Canada, Russia, South Korea and many countries in Europe. He was a guest performer at Hacken Lee's concert in 2011, where he demonstrated the amazing potential and charm of the *sanxian*. He later went on Hacken's world tour and wherever they went, the segment that featured Zhao in traditional Chinese costume playing the *sanxian* invariably won rave response from the audience.

By kind permission of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra

### Guest Musicians | Huang Xiyin (Vocal)



Set & Costume Designer | Bacchus Lee

Lighting Designer | Bert Wong

Sound Designer | Ha Yan Pui

### Media Inquiries

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