大館
TAI KWUN
古蹟及藝術館
CENTRE FOR HERITAGE & ARTS

HOUSE PROGRAMME

一鋪清唱
YAT PO SINGERS

THIS VICTORIA
HAS NO SECRETS

維多利雅講

何手信
再　問
寫揮春
下　留
獅子山
隧　道
大老山
立　搶
榮　華
袋住先
捐　獻
入　心
由　錢
後懷舊
變　賣
大酒店
荷李活
嬸與茶
何手信
香港有

保育活化 Conserved and revitalised by

Synopsis

"Victoria Speaks"? "Nay, this is 'Victori-nga Speaks'. Pidgin English ah, don't you speak? 'Nga', alias elegance, orderliness, appropriateness, is commonly used to describe beauty." "So this is Victori 'elegantly' speaks?" "Yea."

Hong Kong, which was also called the city of Victoria, was merely a small island which Lord Palmerston denounced as a "barren rock" in 1841. Over the years it has developed into a global city which millions see as their home, and for many more who come to visit or work, a brief or long sojourn. Richard Hughes in his Borrowed Place, Borrowed Time held a high opinion of the city, that it "has achieved within its own narrow territories a co-existence which is baffling, infuriating, incomprehensible, and works splendidly — on borrowed time in a borrowed place."

The uniqueness of Hong Kong culture lies in that it is not confined to / may not appear in a classical or contemporary form or in a literary form of writing or art, yet the more we become receptive to our history, the more we appreciate the fun in Cantonese our “dialect”, and the more we assimilate to the style and patterns of Hong Kong life which alluded to the interaction of the cultures of the east and the west, the more we embrace our peculiarities.

The musical draws the audience together to reminisce their laughter and melancholy shaped by events, experiences, perceptions and insights. Each of these memories, rooted in locality, embroiders an album of our memories.

(English text by Dr. Froggie P)

Song List

Prelude	First Movement	Second Movement

ORATIONIS
ELEGANS

HONG KONG'S
GOT
HO HO HO

AUNT
TEA
TIME

Third Movement

HOTEL
HOLLYWOOD

Fourth Movement

GOLDEN
OLDIES

Fifth Movement

WING WAH
SAW SAGE

Sixth Movement

I
HEART
MONEY

Seventh Movement

SUITE
CHARITY

Eighth Movement

UNDER
THE
LION ROCK

Ninth Movement

IVAN HO
REPRISE

Tenth Movement

FINALE

House Rules

- The performance will last for approximately 50 minutes without intermission
- No latecomers will be admitted until a suitable break
- To avoid undue disturbance to the performers and other members of the audience, please switch off your mobile phones and any other sound and light emitting devices before the performance. Eating, drinking, audio or video recording and unauthorised photography are strictly prohibited in the auditorium. Thank you for your co-operation.

Production Team

Music Director/Composer/ Song Arranger	Yin Ng
Director/ Choreographer/ Stage and Costume Director	Yuri Ng
Music Director/ Choral Director	Patrick Chiu
Playwright/ Lyricist	Chris Shum
Song Arranger	Anna Lo

Song Arranger (Resident Artist)	Keith Wong
Assistant Choral Director	Ernest Hui
Benesh Choreologist/ Assistant Stage Director	Iris Tang
Production Manager	Gloria Ngai
Deputy Stage Manager	Olivia Tse
Assistant Stage Manager	Cherry Fung
Stage Crew	Ho Tsz Kiu
Sound Designer & Engineer	Jonathan Lam
Sound Engineer	Bob Wu
Wardrobe Supervisor	Gauze Lam
Wardrobe Assistant	Lau Chi Ho
Make-up & Hair Stylist/ Coordinator	Jadeson Fu
Make-up & Hair Stylist	Amy Wong, Myaki Wong
Photographer	Yvonne Chan
Videographer	Ziv Chun, Chiu Chih Hua
Translator	Br. William Ng, Dr. Froggie P

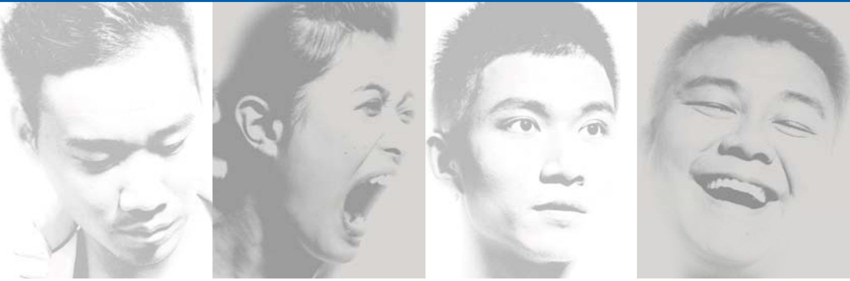
Performers

Performer (Resident Artist)	Raoul Chan
Performer (Resident Artist) *29 – 31/5, 2/6	Sam Lau
Performer (Resident Artist)	Ronald Tsang
Performer	Anna Lo
Performer *1, 3/6	Joseph Ho

Artistic and Administration Team

Artistic Director	Yin Ng
Artistic Advisor	Patrick Chiu
Artistic Advisor	Yuri Ng
Artistic Advisor	Chris Shum
Executive Director (Honorary)	Kathleen Ng
Company Manager	Cindy Wong
Programme & Marketing Assistant	Morrison Leu#

[#] The Arts Administration Internship Scheme is supported by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.



About *This Victoria Has No Secrets* – Chris Shum

Shortly after the enjoyable experience of working together on *Our Immortal Cantata* last year, Yat Po Singers proposed another collaboration: a show for the launch of the Tai Kwun Centre for Heritage and Arts. Both the collaborative partners and the project itself were too interesting for me to say ‘no’. However, after a few meetings with Yuri Ng, I started to feel as though I had walked into a blind alley. Yuri had set ‘Cantonese’, ‘homonym’ and ‘My Hong Kong’ as the main themes of the show. These keywords might have been enough for a dozen flippant trifles in the style of Chip Tsao, but they were not enough to form the basis for a coherent theatre piece. I tried using ‘grass root’s nightclub’ to package this content, but I soon got bored. The approach would be too similar to *Our Immortal Cantata*, and Yuri was set against us repeating ourselves from the very beginning. I was in anguish… Finally, in early February 2018, I happened to pick up a copy of Chin Wan’s *Cantonese as Elegant Language* (陳雲，《廣東雅言》), and got inspired. I sat in front of the computer and completed a first draft in two days.

When I sent the draft to the Yat Po Singers, I included the following email:

I have given up the concept of ‘theatre’ and instead chose an approach I am least comfortable with: lyrics-before-music. But actually I wasn’t thinking of specific melodies in mind when I wrote these song texts.

There are eight texts that I conceived of as ‘movements’. Together with a ‘prelude’ and a ‘coda’, there are ten texts in total.

All these texts can be treated seriously or comically; I leave that for Yin Ng to decide. I am sure that after you finish the music, I will rewrite the lyrics. So you may wish to ignore the specifics of the text at this stage. Yin and Yuri should also feel free to switch the order of the movements and alter the lengths of the texts.

I have taken reference of the following books …
《廣東雅言》，作者：陳雲，次文化堂，2015年7月
《藏在古蹟裏的香港》，作者：黃家樑，三聯書店（香港）有限公司，

2014 年7月
《洋葱頭三及第》，作者：林振強，博益出版集團有限公司，1984年11月

Yin Ng ended up using all eight ‘movements’ and reordered them according to the emotional trajectory suggested by the music. Together with a reprise of one of the movements and the prelude and coda, there are now eleven musical numbers. The show’s basic structure gradually emerged.

When it came time to name the show, I thought why not call it《維多利雅講》(Victoria Speaks Elegantly), which puns on Victoria Harbour (the last two characters of ‘Victoria harbour’ are homonyms of those for ‘speaks elegantly’ in Cantonese). After all, Tai Kwun is located in Central, a district formerly known as ‘Victoria City’, and ‘elegant language’ is the premise of the show. Moreover, when I wrote the lyrics without the music, I became very aware of the seamless integration of refined and popular speech registers in the Cantonese language. Because Cantonese still retains the characteristics of ancient classical Chinese, one can talk about lowbrow subjects in high style. So, Victoria Speaks Elegantly is a fitting Chinese title. [Note: the English show title, *This Victoria Has No Secrets*, takes the idea of punning in a different but related direction.]

I cannot pin down what Victoria’s secrets are about. My writing process began with flipping through books, and once I started, I could not stop. If Hong Kong is a book, then it is one that I have read for decades from a certain perspective. Writing a ‘book report’, at this time and place, has prompted in me flights of fancy and feelings.

Three movements in this ‘book report’ were written as ‘lyrics before music’. Yin has taken my quasi-poetic lines and set them in ways that really captured the melodic and rhythmic nuances of the Cantonese language. You should know that the tonal subtleties of Cantonese are hard to reproduce in music, especially when my lines are not in regular verse forms. Yin has demonstrated that it is possible to do so, and in a completely new way, without having to resort to the formulaic patterns of traditional Cantonese opera. I was really blown away!

There are two Ng’s in Yat Po Singers: Aside from Yin Ng, there is also the aforementioned Yuri Ng, with whom I have a love-hate relationship. His vivid imagination can drive one to exhaustion. But if you ignore what he says literally and focus on your own path, then eventually his imagination will bring the work to another level. But these are afterthoughts. Some of the song demos of *This Victoria Has No Secrets* have already driven me to tears, for no apparent reason. I am already gratified for having participated in the creative process.

Thank you, Yat Po Singers, and thank you, Tai Kwun, for offering me this opportunity.

I hope you will all enjoy the show.

(Translated by Dr. Su-yin Mak)