



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Multi Voice One Heart 2023
Post-pandemic Cantonese Operatic Benefit Shows
For Fans on the West Coast
3 shows on Aug. 18 & 19
at Michael J Fox Theatre, Burnaby, B.C.

Multi Voices One Heart (MVOH) – the annual trans-Pacific Cantonese Opera Project first launched in 2017 – is coming back to the West Coast this summer with three benefit shows at the Michael J. Fox Theatre in Burnaby, BC.

When COVID first broke out, the organizers were forced to cancel their booking at the Michael J. Fox Theatre, where the MVOH 2020 annual show was to be staged in the Fall. As the Artistic Director and some of the Canadian performers were stranded in Hong Kong that Spring, a brain-storming session took place across the Pacific, resulting in a historic break-through in the world of Cantonese opera. For the first time ever in the world, a marathon Cantonese opera benefit concert in four parts was live-streamed over 2 days from a studio in Hong Kong. It was promoted to fans in the Chinese Diaspora throughout the world by the Pacific Canada Heritage Centre - Museum of Migration (PCHC-MoM) Society during Asian Heritage Month, and as part of the Festival Accès Asie in Montreal.

The resounding success of the first virtual MVOH concert series then morphed into a hybrid event in 2021, which took place in a theatre in front of a scaled-down audience (due to COVID restrictions in Hong Kong), while simultaneously being

live-streamed to fans around the world. In both 2020 and 2021, over 200,000 viewers were able to enjoy some of the finest live Cantonese opera singing, while interacting in real time from around the world. This kind of real-time connection, even if it was just virtual, meant a lot to people who had been living in enforced isolation during the pandemic. Many appreciative viewers reported how grateful their elderly parents/grandparents were for the unexpected MVOH treat of over 16 hours of fine singing: they felt they had not been forgotten, especially when the young people in their families or nursing homes tried to set up computers or iPads for the seniors to enjoy the concert into the wee hours. “It was like an antidote or a balm” wrote one woman on social media, “for easing the mental and emotional anguish endured by my 90-year old mother living in social isolation in New York.”

As the theatres slowly re-opened in Hong Kong in 2022, MVOH came up with a series of 3 new shows to be staged over 2 days in the historic Sunbeam Theatre, with an innovative attempt to mark the 65th anniversary of the debut of the famous opera “The Flower Princess” written by Tang Di-Sheng & Wong Yue-Sheng. By restoring and presenting in concert form the original full script, MVOH simply put the spotlight on the beauty of the original lyrics and music that have turned this opera into the most celebrated Cantonese opera in Hong Kong and beyond.

To make up to the fans in North America for their physical absence in the last 3 years, the organizers anticipated the lifting of most COVID restrictions in 2023, and so proactively booked both theatre and performers in advance to stage three live shows at Michael J. Fox Theatre on August 18 and 19. Under the artistic direction of Master Lau Wing-Chuen, a sterling cast has been assembled, including three top-tiered professional performing artists Ng Chin-Fung, Wong Chiu-Kwan and Pui Jun-Hin, along with six of Master Lau’s students selected from both sides of the Pacific. Each evening concert will conclude with a different one-act show - extracts from well-known operas - to be performed in full costumes by Ng Chin-Fung and Wong Chiu-Kwan, two of the best performing artists in this field.

As in the past, all proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to support local heritage organizations promoting the art of Cantonese opera. Of the three shows, **the matinee on Aug. 19 will be free for all over 60 years old.** To facilitate the participation of seniors, we encourage young people to help organize and transport their older family members and friends to the matinee. Younger people accompanying their elders can also obtain complimentary tickets for themselves.

Caregivers & volunteers in nursing homes and senior residences are encouraged to enable their residents to have a fun afternoon at this special show dedicated to paying tributes to seniors in our society.

Tickets for the evening shows are at \$100, \$60 and \$30. Fans living outside of BC and Metro Vancouver may enjoy a special offer of “buy-one-get-one-free” discount on a first-come-first-served basis. To order tickets in advance before they are sold out, and to obtain free tickets for the matinee, please **text or WhatsApp** MVOH volunteers at:

778-636-2368 (in English) or 778-788- 8809 (in Chinese)

An MVOH pop-up counter will be set up on **Saturday, June 3 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.** at the lobby of the **Chinatown Plaza** (106 Keefer St., Vancouver, BC) for tickets to be picked up.

For the full cast and programs of the MVOH 2023 shows, please see the attached poster, or visit: <http://movh.online>

Media Contact: Winnie L. Cheung

email: winnie.cmusic@gmail.com

call: (604) 836-8838
