

# Review: captivating Yat Po Singers point the way to a sunnier future

Hong Kong's first professional a cappella theatrical company range from pop, country to jazz, with superb lyrics

PUBLISHED : Sunday, 02 April, 2017, 6:37pm

UPDATED : Monday, 03 April, 2017, 12:56am



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*Save the Next Song For Me*

**Yat Po Singers**

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**Composer Anna Lo Yee-kuan**

**City Hall Theatre**

**Reviewed: April 1, 2017**

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The city's top a cappella group's latest production invoked bygone karaoke days to convey the need to put down the past and move on.

Yat Po Singers, Hong Kong's first professional a cappella theatrical company, showed their versatility in three sell-out concerts featuring a semi-staged musical drama set in a karaoke bar.

Mixing nostalgia and laughter, the play, performed mainly in Cantonese, brought out thought-provoking issues about the concept of time and what individuals were left to confront when the music ended and the lights went back on.

## Yat Po Singers and Chinese Orchestra explore Chinese medicine through music

"This show is about moving from one stage to another, and how it is inevitable to have growing pains," Anna Lo, the composer of all 10 original songs, said.

"There will be fear, uncertainties, reluctance, but that's all part of growing up."

Like pop music which has evolved from karaoke to busking and other forms of music-making, individuals, she said, should "grow up and move on" and not "dwell on and remain in the past".

The moral aside, the 75-minute performance was anything but didactic.

It was unusual for a pop concert audience to be as quiet as a classical music concert, thanks to the nine performers with their signature vocal percussion and super harmony to unfold the story through Lo's ear-pleasing melodies, in styles ranging from pop, country to jazz, and the superb lyrics of Sam Lau, the mastermind behind the show.

*Best in History* and *Happy Palace*, the first two songs, set the scene in an optimistic opening. But the mood changed abruptly with the next title, *See You?*, when counter-tenor Keith Wong delivered the lines, soft and lyrical, “See you; there’s no need to see you again ... don’t talk about the past. Future, I’ll choose my path.” It was the only song that was repeated towards the end, though no longer with a question mark.

The most captivating of all was *Supernova* by Margaret Cheung, who asked a series of questions that would resonate. “Don’t know what I did wrong, don’t know how to unlock myself ... How did I know all along that this radiance is madness, is despair, is panic, is disguise, is destruction.”

The show ended on a conciliatory note, sung in exquisite harmony. “Go on, let go. All those past ups and downs weren’t pointless. The weather will be fine sooner or later.”

*This article appeared in the South China Morning Post print edition as:  
Captivating singers point way to a sunnier future*