



Jason Lai Conductor

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Jason Lai is the Principal Conductor at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, and former Associate Conductor of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (SSO) and Hong Kong Sinfonietta. He's been a prominent figure in Singapore's musical life, but also a active internationally giving masterclasses in Europe and China. He has also guest conducted the New Japan Philharmonic, Orchestra of the Swan, and Podlasie Opera Philharmonic in Poland. There have been recent appearances with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Macao Orchestra, and up coming engagements include concerts with Osaka Symphony, and return visits to the Macao Orchestra and tours with Orchestra of the Swan to Turkey.

Intent on broadening the appeal of classical music to audiences who would not normally think of going into a concert hall, Jason is also building a unique reputation as a communicator with mass appeal through his television appearances in both the UK and Asia. He has frequently appeared on BBC television as a judge in both the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition and the classical talent show "Classical Star". He reached his widest audience when, as a conducting mentor in the series "Maestro", his celebrity student, the popular comedienne Sue Perkins, won with a nail-biting final in front of the BBC Concert Orchestra and a live studio audience. Other BBC television appearances have include "How a Choir Works" and "The Culture Show". Jason also starred in "Clash" for the children's television channel, CBBC.

Since settling in Singapore he has continued with his television work. He was presenter and conductor for "Project Symphony", an eight part series for Okto where he was filmed setting up a community orchestra. He has recently been involved in filming for a BBC series "Heart of Asia" which explores the contemporary arts and culture scene in Thailand, Indonesia, Korea and the Philippines, and a further series for BBC World called "Tales from Modern China".

Jason's roots lie in Hong Kong but he was born in the UK and was a pupil at the prestigious specialist music school in Manchester, Chetham's, where he studied cello. At Oxford University he studied both cello and composition, and went on to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London where he was awarded a Fellowship in Conducting.

Despite having toured as a cellist with the Allegri String Quartet and having been a finalist in the BBC Young Composers Award, Jason gravitated increasingly towards conducting after he won the BBC Young Conductors Workshop in 2002. This led to his appointment as Assistant Conductor to the BBC Philharmonic with whom he made his BBC Proms debut in 2003. Following his work with various British orchestras, he was appointed Artist Associate to the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and became their Associate Conductor in 2009, and Associate Conductor with Singapore Symphony Orchestra in 2013.

Education is an important part of Jason's life. At the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory he trains the next generation of conductors, many of whom have had many successes both at home and abroad; and with the SSO he spearheaded the education and outreach programme, working with the orchestra reach new audiences notably through his Discovering Music and Children's concerts. With the Hong Kong Sinfonietta Jason conducted the first ever series of concerts for babies; helped the orchestra expand its community reach through concerts for students on campus; wrote and presented shows for families; and helped the orchestra maintain its lead in delivering inspiring learning experiences for audiences of all ages and backgrounds in Hong Kong.

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