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| opera



The Bangkok Opera Foundation and Opera Siam International in cooperation with The Department of Cultural Promotion, Ministry of Culture PRESENT **THE SILENT PRINCE** an opera about the Lord Buddha by Somtow Sucharitkul. Thai audiences have had to wait some time to see this masterwork by Thailand's most renowned living composer.

There will be two public performances of Somtow's The Silent Prince at the Thailand Cultural Center on June 8 & 9 2013, featuring an international cast from four continents.

THE SILENT PRINCE tells the story of Prince Temiya, a former incarnation of the Lord Buddha, who must choose between obedience to his father and taking a human life. Unable to make a decision, he

must choose between obedience to his father and taking a human life. Unable to make a decision, he retreats into silence broken only at the very end of the story, when he is compelled to reveal his identity as the Boddhisatva.

Set in Benares in legendary times, THE SILENT PRINCE weaves a rich, sensuous visual and aural tapestry of color and sound. There are scenes set in Heaven and Hell as well as on earth. Gods and goddess appear by magic, and angels bring the baby Boddhisatva down from the sky, spirits from hell haunt Temiya as he remembers his past lives.


One of the greatest challenges of THE SILENT PRINCE was creating an opera in which the main character does not sing until the last five minutes. "I had to make sure this was a major surprise and that the audience would jump out of their skins when the Lord Buddha finally speaks," said Maestro Somtow, Thailand's first Silpathorn Kittikhun Artist. "So I wrote the part for the rarest possible male voice - that of a male soprano." Fortunately, Thailand has a male soprano - Jak Cholvijarn - who is also a scholar of Buddhism. There are only a few such voices in the world.

An international cast from four continents plus some of Thailand's most famous opera singers star in this production which also features a large chorus and an orchestra of top soloists, conducted by Thailand's most well-known young conductor, Trisdee na Patalung. The maestro himself will direct the production with designs by award-winning international artist Dean Shibuya, who recently designed "Reya - The Musical". About one hundred performers will be involved, including dancers, singers, and musicians

Somtow was the first composer to combine western and Thai instruments while living in Europe in the 1970s, earning a reputation as a revolutionary composer. He returned to Thailand and founded Bangkok's first international opera company in 2001. The Norwegian government commissioned his song cycle Songs Before Dawn for the 100th Anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize, and he composed at the request of the government of Thailand his Requiem: In Memoriam 9/11. OPERA Magazine said, "In just five years, Somtow has made Bangkok into the operatic hub of Southeast Asia." His opera Mae Naak was taken to London in 2011 where it was performed to a sold out audience at The Bloomsbury Theatre. The Silent Prince was premiered in 2010 in Houston, and his fifth opera, Dan no Ura will premiere in Thailand next year, while his sixth, Midsummer, will premiere in The UK in 2014. He is currently in Germany where he just received the International Wagner Society's "Golden W" Award for bringing Wagner to Thailand.

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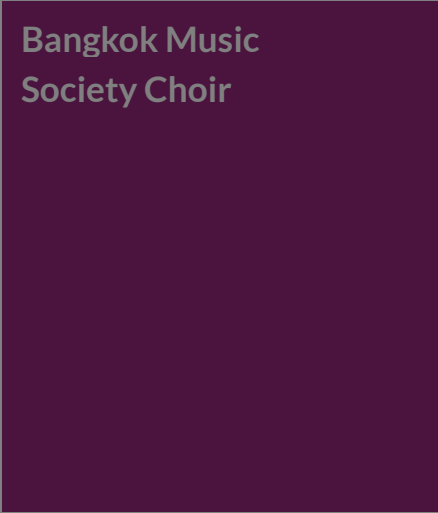
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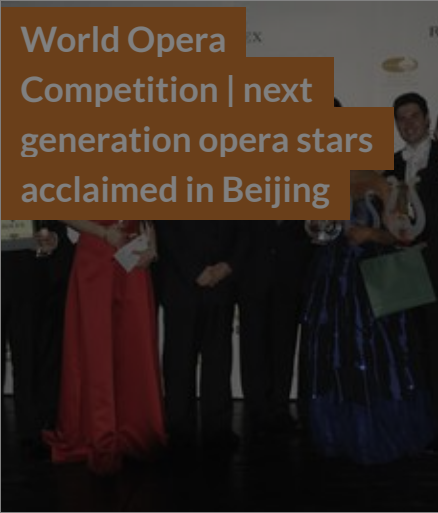
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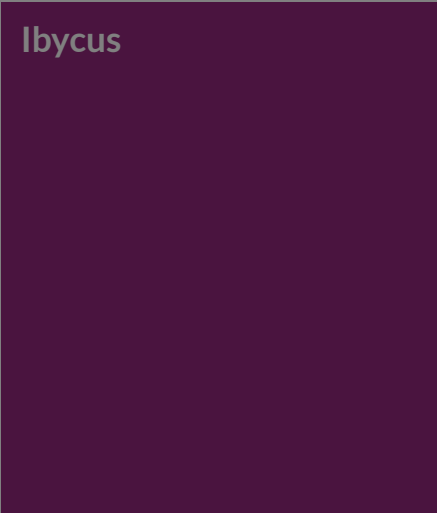
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