



Talented tenor takes on Top End

Aged just 21, talented **KANG WANG** has career choices that most students only dream about. Despite being an exceptionally talented opera singer already in demand throughout the Territory, he's also well on his way to securing a back-up profession.

Most parents are over the moon when their offspring expresses an interest in entering the family business, but not so Kang Wang's.

When the young man announced to his family of professional singers that he had set his sights on a career as an opera singer, Kang did not receive the reception he had hoped for. His father immediately advised caution: "Singing is all very well and good, but you need to have a back-up plan." This fatherly advice had grown out of decades dedicated to earning a living as a professional opera singer in China.

Both of Kang's parents are predominantly European-style opera singers with careers that have taken them across the globe. But while both continue to remain highly successful, they told their son that it had not been easy keeping themselves in work, particularly as Chinese opera is by far the favoured form of entertainment in China.

Kang knew his father's words were wise and were aimed at ensuring his son was financially secure in his future. So he accepted them without relinquishing his plan to forge a career in opera. Having already set his sights on higher education, Kang set about finding a university where he could broaden his skills in web development and also continue with his vocal training.

His father, who had existing connections with Music at CDU, having performed an Anglo-Chinese concert at the university, suggested Kang enquire about the opportunity to combine IT and music studies in the Top End. He was soon accepted into the university.

Currently in his third year of study in a Bachelor of Information Technology, Kang is making the best of both interests. He is gaining credits towards his degree through his outstanding vocal talents.

Under the guidance of voice lecturer Kathy Banks, from CDU's Centre for Youth Music, Kang is working to maximise the control of his voice so he does not simply sing the top notes, but is able to soar with them.

"I only really took an interest in singing from the age of 18. Before that I really didn't even like opera. Like all teenagers, I was far more interested in pop music," Kang said.

"Once I got into opera, though, my parents set about teaching me technique and, as my father's style is European and we're both tenors, that's the style they taught me. As soon as I began to sing those beautiful opera arias, I just knew it was what I wanted to do for my career."

Although it's early days, the young tenor is already developing a performance profile in the Territory. Among other engagements, Kang sang a medley of arias at CDU's mid-year graduation ceremony at the Casuarina campus and is also scheduled to perform with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra later this year

"I'm so grateful to everyone who's been so supportive of my dream, from Professor Martin Jarvis and Kathy Banks in the Music department, who sponsored my family's

Although it's early days, the young tenor is already developing a performance profile in the Territory.

application for permanent residency and continue to nurture me through my studies, through to my parents who made it possible for me to come to Australia and have provided me with constant encouragement - and critiques on my vocal development over skype," he said.

But certainly for Music Theme Leader Professor Martin Jarvis, the department felt Kang was well worth their efforts.

"I first met Kang at a celebration dinner at a restaurant in Darwin. Kang and his famous tenor father performed an unaccompanied duet to thank me for my support and it was during that performance that I realised what a great talent Kang was.

"I think Kang has a great future ahead of him. In my role as Artistic Director of the Darwin Symphony Orchestra, I have scheduled him for a number of performances this year including the Viennese Masked Ball, where I know his performance of Mozart arias will be particularly well received," Professor Jarvis said.

Kang is set to graduate in May next year and hopes to be able to remain in Australia to pursue his opera career. But to fund his dream, he intends to keep working in the IT industry as a web developer.

"After graduating, I hope to land some auditions that will lead on to professional work. I may also go on to study at a conservatorium of music. I'm not sure yet. I just know I want to sing," he said.

Anyone who heard Kang's spine-tingling top notes at the Casuarina graduation ceremony won't be surprised to hear much more from him in the future.

LEFT

Kang Wang performs at CDU's mid-year graduation ceremony on the Casuarina campus, accompanied by piano lecturer Chen Hui.

TEXT

Row Booker

IMAGE

Courtesy Len Menzies