



“The Phantom of the Opera” was first staged in China at the Shanghai Grand Theater.
— Ti Gong

Raise the curtains as overseas performances receive green light

Ma Yue

Culture and tourism administrative departments around China will once again be accepting and approving commercial performances from overseas, starting from March 20, according to the latest notice from China’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism, aiming to revive the country’s performing art market after the pandemic.

“This is undoubtedly a very positive signal, boosting our confidence in reaching more performance agreements with partners from overseas,” Zhang Xiaoding, general manager of the Shanghai Grand Theater, told Shanghai Daily.

“It will also positively influence the performing arts market,” she said.

Overseas commercial performances have been absent for over three years due to the pandemic. China downgraded

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the COVID-19 management from Class A to Class B in January, and the limitations on international travel abolished gradually.

Some international artists have since arrived in China to get involved in stage creation, including Italian theatrical director Marco Carniti, who worked with his Chinese colleagues on a new version of Puccini’s “La Bohème,” which premiered at the Shanghai Grand Theater in February.

But commercial performances

from overseas are still absent. Earlier this month, the Shanghai Oriental Art Center became one of the first Shanghai theaters to announce the return of international troupes when unveiling its spring-summer performance season.

In its schedule, France’s Renaud Capuçon will give a violin recital on May 19, making him the first international artist to perform at the Art Center since the pandemic.

Other performers and troupes from overseas include

the St Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra, the Chelyabinsk State Academic Opera and Ballet Theater, Russian pianist Andrei Ivanovich, and Polish pianist Katarzyna Borek.

The Shanghai Grand Theater is also working actively to import overseas performances. According to Zhang, a new version of Wagner’s “Lohengrin” will hit the stage in September. It’s the first joint collaboration between the Shanghai Opera House, the Shanghai Grand Theater and the Bavarian State Opera.

Famed Wagnerian dramatic tenor Klaus Florian Vogt, dramatic soprano Johannes van Oostrum, and bass-baritone Andreas Bauer Kanabas will perform along with Shanghai Opera House artists.

Other international programs under planning include original musicals and musical gala concerts by original casts.

The Shanghai International

Arts Festival is expected to make a return after years of absence. Zhang said the Shanghai Grand Theater is working together with organizers of the festival for negotiations with world-class opera houses, ballet companies and symphony orchestras.

“The talks are underway. Big troupes from overseas and performance agent companies all showed great interest in visiting Shanghai,” she said.

Theater Young in Yangpu District will also open its stage to international drama troupes this year. The theater began operation last year and has been introducing quality domestic stage work to audiences.

The Cadillac Shanghai Concert Hall also announced that it will have famous pianists David Fray and Ivo Pogorelich, as well as violinist Gidon Kremer performing in Shanghai between May and June respectively.