

## Wei Shen Keane Ong Biography

Lauded for his impeccable musicality, expression, and lyricism, Singaporean lyric baritone Keane Ong is one of today's most promising soloists, choral directors, composers and pedagogues from Asia.

Greatly in demand in the symphonic and recital world, Keane sang the bass solo in the Orchestra of the Music Maker's and The Vocal Associate's production of Mahler's 8<sup>th</sup> Symphony for the celebration of Singapore's 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday, and has also sung the Bass Solo for Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*. Keane acted as John Styx in New Opera Singapore's production of *Orpheus in the Underworld*. He has also performed as a chorister and soloist for the non-profit choir EVOKX's annual evocation outreach series concerts to raise funds for needy causes. Internationally, he was invited to present a Schubertiade in Cambodia in 2016 which was well-received by the public and local music enthusiasts.

Keane's 2017/18 season includes being Le Baron in Massenet's *Cherubin* with Peabody Opera conducted by Maestro Laurent Pillot, and a graduate recital presenting music from his home country of Singapore and also include contemporary works by Kathy Berberian, Francis Poulenc, and Chew Jun An. He will be playing the role of the second commissioner and the jailer in New Opera Singapore's (NOS) August 2019 production of Francis Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. Unafraid of the new and unfamiliar, Keane is a frequent collaborator in premieres of new music. He has been featured in new music productions of *Ode to the Nightingale*(2017) by Chew Jun An, *Travelogue*(2014) by Robert Casteels, and in new chamber operas like *Dark Sisters*(2011) by Nico Muhly and *Naomi in the Dark*(2005) by Jonathan Holland.

As a pedagogue, Keane believes in helping his students bring out their natural voices healthfully and tap into their inner potential. He helps his students quell the insecurities that the increasingly competitive world has instilled in them and encourages them to engage in continuous life-long learning. Keane has taught many students privately and on internships with the Peabody Institute in Maryland, USA, and as a voice student in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory in Singapore. Some of his students have also gone to pursue undergraduate studies in vocal performance.

Keane is also a choral conductor who emphasizes healthy vocal production and an attitude to active learning to his choristers. In Singapore, Keane is the music director of The Pioneer Voices, and is the assistant conductor of EVOKX. He took minor lessons in conducting with Dr. Harlan Parker at the Peabody Institute and has trained in conducting workshops with Professor Julian Su and Dr László Norbert Nemes, director of the Kodály Institute of the Liszt Academy of Music. Keane and The Pioneer Voices will also be presenting their latest choral concert featuring the beauty of sacred texts and secular poetry in early August 2019. Previous choral conductors he has worked with also include Jennifer Tham, Albert Tay, Zechariah Goh, Ong Chiak Yin and Chong Wailun. Keane will also be continuing his conducting studies with Singaporean conductor Terrence Toh.

A budding composer and arranger, Keane has composed and arranged pieces that have been premiered by The Pioneer Voices. His style can be described as one that accentuates the atmosphere and natural sounds in it. His newest work, *Dayung*

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*Sampan* was premiered in a sold out concert by EVOKX at the School of the Arts concert hall in Singapore on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

Keane has been coached in master classes taught by world-class artists and groups including Sumi Jo, Roger Vignoles, Frederica von Stade, and The King's Singers. Keane is a graduate student majoring in Vocal Performance and Pedagogy. He recently obtained his Masters in Voice Performance and Pedagogy from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, studying with American baritone William Sharp, and was awarded the George Castelle Memorial Award for Voice. He graduated from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music with a Bachelors of Voice Performance where he studied under Lyric Tenor, Alan Bennett.

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#### Short Bio

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