

PRESS RELEASE
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Opera Holland Park announces the retirement of General Director, Michael Volpe

After 31 years at Opera Holland Park, Michael Volpe, General Director, has decided to take early retirement from his role with the company. This will take effect from 30 September 2020, after the 2020 Season and at the end of the 2019/2020 financial year.

Michael began work with the then owners of the Holland Park Theatre, The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, in 1989. He founded Opera Holland Park under their management in 1996 and in 2015 played a key role in transitioning the company to become an independent charity. In between, James Clutton joined the company as Producer (now Director of Opera) and the pair formed a formidable partnership that has endured for 20 years.

On 1 October 2020, following Michael's retirement, James Clutton will be appointed Chief Executive and Director of Opera of Opera Holland Park with overall responsibility for the company. A Deputy Chief Executive will be recruited in the coming months.

Michael Volpe said:

"It has been a life's work at Opera Holland Park, but there comes a moment when one feels it is time for a change – both in one's personal life, but perhaps also for the company, which is now mature enough to thrive and evolve on the strength of its own achievements and family of supporters.

"Opera Holland Park has framed so much of my life. There have been so many ups and downs, challenges and extraordinary highs. I have much to be proud of but it is time for new challenges.

"I have so many people to thank and have made so many friends among the talented OHP family as well as within our supporters whose faith and commitment have been so critical to OHP's success. I would like to thank my 'partner-in-crime' James Clutton for all the fun and for his unique brilliance over these past 20 years. I would also like to thank our Chairman Charles Mackay and the board of trustees, for allowing me to take this early retirement so that I can pursue other interests. I am sure I won't stray too far from the enriching world of the arts."

James Clutton, Director of Opera, said:

"For over 20 years Mike and I have not only been colleagues but brothers. A kaleidoscope of memories; a lifetime encompassed into 20 years. The work that Mike has put in to making Opera Holland Park what it is today will never be surpassed. Now in this next chapter we have to make sure his

legacy is protected and nourished; that OHP continues to grow whilst never losing sight of the values Mike originally instilled in the company and that for over two decades we have stood firmly by and proudly believed in."

Charles Mackay, Chairman, said:

"When Mike retires in September, Opera Holland Park will have completed five years as an independent charity. He has indeed played an absolutely key role in that transition, as he did in the preceding 20 years under the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea after he established the company for them in 1996. And his partnership of 20 years with James Clutton, probably unique in the opera world, lies at the heart of the extraordinary evolution of Opera Holland Park to become the acclaimed company it is today.

"We wish Mike every possible success in his new endeavours. We know that we will see him often at the theatre, when he will be able to enjoy our productions and see so many old friends and supporters - but free of any concerns about how everything is going!

The Board are very pleased that James will be taking over full responsibility for Opera Holland Park from 1 October, building on the remarkable success he has had as Director of Opera over 20 years."

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