

---

# Jason Lai



Jason Lai is the Principal Conductor at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, and former Associate Conductor of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and Hong Kong Sinfonietta. He's been a prominent figure in Singapore's musical life since his arrival in 2010, but also active internationally giving masterclasses in Europe and China. He has also been a guest conductor with orchestra that include: Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Macau Orchestra, New Japan Philharmonic, Orchestra of the Swan, Osaka Symphony, and Podlasie Opera Philharmonic.

Intent on broadening the appeal of classical music to audiences who would not normally think of going into a concert hall, Jason is also building a unique reputation as a communicator with mass appeal through his television appearances in both the UK and Asia. He has frequently appeared on BBC television as a judge in both the BBC Young Musician of the Year competition and the classical talent show "Classical Star". He reached his widest audience when, as a conducting mentor in the series "Maestro", his celebrity student, the popular comedienne Sue Perkins, won with a nail-biting final in front of the BBC Concert Orchestra and a live studio audience. Other BBC television appearances have include "How a Choir Works" and "The Culture Show". Jason also starred in "Clash" for the children's television channel, CBBC.

Since settling in Singapore he has continued with his television work. He was presenter and conductor for "Project Symphony" Mediacorp, following a community orchestra in Singapore; "Heart of Asia" a BBC series which explores the contemporary arts and culture scene in Thailand, Indonesia, Korea and the Philippines; "Tales from Modern China" for BBC/Jiangsu Broadcasting showcasing the diversity of life, culture, and technology in China; "Sing to Remember" Mediacorp, which follows a choir that is made of up of those living with dementia and their caregivers; and "Nudge" a five-part series for Mediacorp that helps nudge us into better habits.

Jason's roots lie in Hong Kong but he was born in the UK and was a pupil at the prestigious specialist music school in Manchester, Chetham's, where he studied cello. At Oxford University he studied both cello and composition, and went on to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London where he was awarded a Fellowship in Conducting.

Despite having toured as a cellist with the Allegri String Quartet and having been a finalist in the BBC Young Composers Award, Jason gravitated towards conducting and was the first prize winner of the BBC Young Conductors Workshop in 2002. This led to his appointment as Assistant Conductor to the BBC Philharmonic with whom he made his BBC Proms debut in 2003. Following his work with various British orchestras, he was appointed Artist Associate to the Hong Kong Sinfonietta and became their Associate Conductor in 2009.

Education is an important part of Jason's work in Singapore. At the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory he trains the next

generation of conductors, many of whom have had many successes both at home and abroad, and with the SSO he spearheaded the education and outreach programme, helping the orchestra reach new audiences notably through his Discovering Music and Children's concerts. He has also conducted, hosted and written concerts and shows for schools in Singapore in conjunction with the National Arts Council and Ministry of Education.