

New role for Barbara Fei

BARBARA FEI is not only attractive and vivacious but also highly talented.

This energetic young woman has two roles to play in next year's Arts Festival and her "behind-the-scenes" role should prove the most taxing.

She has been elected chairman of a committee to organise two gala nights of vocal concerts. She has, she pointed out, the very able assistance of four male committee members - all of whom are experienced in music.

The concerts will feature 16 local singers.

"We have planned what we feel is a gay and interesting programme - with something for everyone and to suit all tastes. Chinese art songs and excerpts from Western operas will be presented on the first night, and Western classics and Chinese folk songs on the second night. Excerpts from *Carmen* and works by Mozart, Verdi and Menotti will be included in the Western section; the Chinese classical section includes Huang Yau-tai and Doming Lam.

The concerts will be presented in the City Hall Theatre on February 2 and 3.

Barbara said there was no shortage of local talent.



Barbara Fei

compared to the hard work and dedication it takes to be successful. Most youngsters chose other careers and singing for them takes second place."

The Allegro Singers give many public, television and radio performances and each year their Christmas concert is a sell-out. They are presently busy recording radio programmes for Christmas.

However, it takes more than a good voice to become a successful singer, said Barbara.

by Colleen Cooke

"Personality and interpretation are very important." This apparently shines through in her own performances. She has been acclaimed by local and overseas critics not only for her voice but also for her poise on stage and the charm and personality in her singing.

Barbara's interest in music started at an early age. Born in Shanghai she was encouraged by her late father (one of China's most famous film producers) to pursue her music studies. She first studied the piano - but after a number of years' study her professor informed her that although she was an excellent student and worked very hard she did not have the necessary talent to become a good concert pianist. Barbara came to Hongkong with her parents in the 50s and with her hopes of a career as a classical pianist dashed she started singing lessons.

At 15 she gave her first public recital and her father who was then very ill was allowed out of hospital for two hours to watch her performance. He was, she said, very happy and proud. She sang with the Sino-British Orchestra which was later to become the Hongkong Philharmonic. "I will always remember that night. I had pigtailed and wore a cheongsam." After studying here under Professor Chao Mei-pa, Barbara went to Paris for further training. She studied under the famous soprano, Madame Lotte Schoene and was her only Chinese student.

Her first comment to her new pupil was "Can you sing in that thing?" - referring to Barbara's cheongsam with its high, tight collar and figure-hugging lines.

Barbara studied with her for three years and lived at her teacher's home on the outskirts of Paris. She appeared on Paris TV and radio and was told if she stayed in Europe she would go a long way. But the call of home proved too strong and Barbara returned to Hongkong.

She has been back to France a number of times for "refresher" courses, on holidays and to visit her teacher who is now a very active 80-year-old.

Barbara performed at the International Music Festival in Salzburg and also in the United States, New Zealand, Singapore and Taiwan. She had her own Hongkong television programme, *Concert Miniature* for four years. Visiting overseas artists, local performers and young talent appeared on her show.

She not only sings in many different languages but also speaks them.

Her husband, she said, while fond of music prefers to remain just a listener as he felt one musician in the family was enough. However, one of her sons is studying the violin.

Barbara has a fairly full schedule up to the middle of next year but all her thoughts, energies and efforts are concentrated on these two nights in February and she is determined to make them something Hongkong people will enjoy and remember.

all have one thing in common - they are to start a new life in new land. Australia: 5.30 Afternoon Feature: Li A young French orphan regains his zest for living when she joins a carnival puppet show. Starring Leslie Caro Mel Ferrer and Zsa Zsa Gabor. 6.55 Newsroom: 7.10 Tuesday Briefing: 7.15 Sounds Unlimited: The presentation of contemporary music a brand new format, with Tony Orcho as the host; 7.45 Chicago, Meanwhile Back at the Ranch: A programme of contemporary music featuring the sensational jazz and rock group Chicago and their guests; 8.45 News Today: 9.05 Weather Report; 9.10 The Shanghai Philharmonic Society Orchestra's Special Performance Hongkong; 11.10 Late News; 11.15 Roving Report; 11.40 Dial M for Murder: Suspense stories set in Britain and Italy. Each episode features "real" characters, who are caught up in a web of mystery, involving murder in different forms. Always, the telephone plays a key part; 12.35 am Close.

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