

Tea House Theatre Experience

Xiqu Centre, West Kowloon Cultural District

About Tea House Theatre Experience

The Tea House Theatre is a performance space designed to echo the environment of early 20th- tea houses. With table and chair seating, it offers audiences an authentic way to experience Chinese opera (xiqu), and to learn about this heritage art while enjoying tea and dim sum.

Presented by the talented young artists of the Xiqu Centre's Tea House Rising Stars Troupe under the guidance of renowned Cantonese opera artist and Artistic Curator and Director Law Ka-ying, the programme presents a selection of excerpts illustrating a range of vocal, musical and performance styles.

Prior knowledge of Chinese culture or Cantonese opera is by no means a necessity to enjoy the show, so come on down and explore the world of xiqu through this fun and immersive experience.

Producer's Message

In July 2026, the Tea House Theatre Experience launches a new season, marking the eighth year of this regular programme. Over the years, we have explored diverse directions – from introducing robots into performances to designing various audience interaction segments – to immerse viewers more deeply in the world of Cantonese opera and offer increasingly memorable experiences.

To date, our repertoire includes over 30 classic and newly adapted Cantonese opera excerpts, alongside other performance formats. Every time you visit the Tea House Theatre, we aim to provide a feast of audio and visual enjoyment.

Our original intention in creating this programme was to give first-time viewers or travellers an accessible introduction to Cantonese opera. Within just 90 minutes, they can sample different facets of the art form, from excerpt performances and Cantonese opera songs to Cantonese music and operatic singing. Meanwhile, seasoned fans can rediscover classic gems through our carefully curated line-up and the exemplary performances of the Tea House Rising Stars Troupe.

This season, as always, the music ensemble of the Tea House Rising Stars Troupe will open the show with a string of beloved instrumental performances to create a lively atmosphere. The Rising Stars will then demonstrate Cantonese operatic singing in an easy-to-follow manner. Plus, interactive segments offer audiences fun, bite-sized insights into Cantonese opera, allowing them to experience its unique charm first-hand.

For excerpts, in addition to a selection of Mr Law Ka-ying's signature works, we have added several new ones with different characteristics. These include the crowd-pleasing "Pingsheng Comforts his Wife" from *Time to go Home*; "Theft in the Mountains" from *The Legend of The White Snake*, a great showcase of the performers' martial skills; "Reconciliation" from *Muk Kwai-ying Routing Hongzhou*, a tense scene depicting a warrior couple mending their rift; and the delicate "Chasing after the Husband" from *Di Qing and Princess Shuangyang*, about two lovers torn between love and duty.

New *paiziqu*, instrumental pieces, and Cantonese opera songs have also been incorporated into the new programme. Each performance is distinct and will be updated regularly, offering the audience new surprises with every visit. Mr Law Ka-ying has served as the Artistic Curator and Director of the Tea House Theatre Experience since its inception. Throughout the years, he mentored the Tea House Rising Stars, empowering the younger generation to pay homage while breathing new life to this ancient art form.

Beyond allowing visitors to appreciate the beauty of Cantonese opera, the programme also bears the vital mission of training young performers and preserving this important regional opera genre. This season, the Tea House Rising Stars Troupe continues to cultivate local talent by welcoming new young members. More emerging actors will have the opportunity

to demonstrate their skills and dedication, while gaining invaluable stage experience. We hope to see them carry forward this unique tradition, keeping it vibrant and alive.

It has been over six years since the Xiqu Centre opened. Thank you to all our audiences for witnessing the growth of the Tea House Rising Stars Troupe. Every ticket you buy, every applause you give, is the driving force behind our progress.

Looking ahead, our Rising Stars will continue to uphold their original mission, delivering ever more captivating performances while exploring the rich possibilities of Cantonese opera. By making full use of this platform, the Troupe will create fresh opportunities for young actors and musicians. We not only strive for excellence but also embrace change and innovation, consistently propelling Cantonese opera into a new era.

Naomi Chung

Head of Xiqu, Performing Arts,

West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

Programme

(I)

Paiziqu (instrumental)*

1. *Ruby Lips, A Military Medal, Narcissus and A Celestial Shepherdess*

2. *Dai Kaimen, A Military Medal and Drinking at the Pavilion*

*Performance includes one pair of pieces

(II)

Cantonese Operatic Singing Experience

Fun Facts about Cantonese Opera

(III)

Cantonese Opera Excerpt Performance*

"Rain-soaked Clothes" from *A Mirror Seal*

"Saving Pui from the Trap" from *The Reincarnation of Red Plum*

"Meeting in a Dream" from *Goddess of the Luo River*

"Reunion in the Nunnery" from *Princess Cheung Ping*

"A Perfect Union" from *The Strange Encounters of Liu Yi*

"Reunion of Sword and Hairpin" from *The Story of the Purple Hairpin*

"Matching of the Embroidered Shoes" from *The Case of the Headless Body*

"Pingsheng Comforts his Wife" from *Time to Go Home*

"Reconciliation" from *Muk Kwai-ying Routing Hongzhou*

*Performance includes one excerpt

(IV)

Music Ensemble Performance*

1. *Village Dawn, Tears of the Red Candle and Billowing Waves*
2. *Orioles Singing in the Willows, The Song of the Fishermen and The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl*
3. *A Stroll in the Garden, Immortal Dance Aria and Beautiful Water Lilies on a Silvery Pond*

*Performance includes one pair of pieces

(V)

Cantonese Opera Song Selection*

1. *The Pear Blossom*
2. *Radiant Phoenix*
3. *Strengthening Resolve*
4. *Butterfly on the Lonely Grave (Excerpt)*

*Performance includes one pair of pieces

(VI)

Cantonese Opera Excerpt Performance *

- "Love and Struggle" from *The Warrior's Marriage*
- "First Encounter" from *A Romance of Martial Heroes*
- "A Duel of Immortal Snakes" inspired by *The Legend of the White Snake*
- Muk Kwai-ying Proposes Marriage*
- Fan Lihua Battles Wang Yinglong*
- "Theft in the Mountains" from *The Legend of The White Snake*
- "Chasing after the Husband" from *Di Qing and Princess Shuangyang*

*Performance includes one excerpt

***Paiziqu* (instrumental)**

Paiziqu is a fixed melody that can be sung with different lyrics or performed on wind and percussion instruments such as *suona* (doublereeded horn) and drums. Popular *paiziqu* can appear across various productions or be strung together to create whole sequences.

Ruby Lips

Ruby Lips is a melody commonly played when a military leader is being appointed or giving command as a way to highlight the character's high status and strong presence. It is also known to be used in the popular traditional formulaic play *Grand Birthday Celebration at Mount Heung Fa*, in a scene where the goddess Guanyin takes the stage.

A Military Medal

This joyous and lively melody is a popular choice for banquet scenes. In the formulaic play *Grand Birthday Celebration at Mount Heung Fa*, the audience hears this music when all the Dragon Kings arrive to celebrate Guanyin's birthday.

Narcissus, A Celestial Shepherdess

These two melodies share in their brisk rhythm and vibrant energy. They are played in fantastical scenes such as when the goddess Guanyin uses her magic.

Dai Kaimen

Dai Kaimen is a percussion and wind overture commonly used to open Cantonese opera performances. It typically accompanies scenes such as a general taking command, or the entrance of emperors and nobles, accentuating their majestic authority.

This music has also moved from the opera stage into everyday life, where it is now played at wedding ceremonies and birthday banquets to heighten the festive atmosphere.

Drinking at the Pavilion

This brisk and joyful melody is regularly used in scenes where a royal or lavish banquet is taking place. Often, the tune begins to play when the host orders the staff to start preparing the feast.

Cantonese Operatic Singing Experience

Chasing After Han Xin

Chasing After Han Xin is an excerpt from *Han Xin Defects to Han from Chu*, one of the eight songs that form the core repertoire of traditional Cantonese operatic singing. These songs, once almost lost to history, are representative works of Lingnan art. They feature unique singing styles and strict requirements for playing, making them demanding for both the vocalists and instrumentalists.

In the late Qin dynasty (3rd century BC), the powerful Chu and Han kingdoms are at war. When the talented strategist Han Xin attempts to defect from Chu to Han, his offer of service is rejected, and he turns homeward in humiliation. In this piece, Han Xin laments as he sets off alone, questioning his purpose. As the song ends, a glimmer of hope appears in the form of the Han chief minister, who has ridden after him to urge him to stay.

Fun Facts about Cantonese Opera

A live demonstration of some Cantonese opera body movement offers a personal experience in gaining the sense of the expressive techniques in traditional Xiqu storytelling.

Music Ensemble Performance

Village Dawn

Composed by Lam Ho-yin, this piece vividly depicts the sunrise in the countryside. The melody is light and cheerful. Listeners feel like they have been transported into a country village, freed from all troubles.

Tears of the Red Candle

A soulful, romantic tune written by Wong Yuet-sang in 1954 for the Cantonese opera production *Wedding Candle Turns Into Temple Light* by acclaimed Hong Kong librettist Tong Tik-sang.

Billowing Waves

This lively, familiar melody was composed by eminent Cantonese musician Chan Man-tat in the late 1930s to raise spirits during a time of war.

Orioles Singing in the Willows

Written by the renowned Cantonese music composer Tan Pei-jun in the 1940s, this lighthearted melody transports the listeners to a green paradise with flowing willows and birdsong.

The Song of the Fishermen

This composition by the celebrated composer He Shaoxia is inspired by a famous Tang dynasty poem that depicts an idyllic and playful autumn scene where fishermen and a group of young women make their way home in laughter after a day of work.

The Cowherd and the Weaver Girl

Inspired by a beloved Chinese folklore, this ancient composition is characterised by its delicate and melancholic melody, but picks up the tempo towards the end for a dramatic climax.

A Stroll in the Garden

A Stroll in the Garden is an interlude from *The Peony Pavilion*, written by the legendary Cantonese opera playwright Tong Tik-sang and composed by Cantonese music master Wong Yuet-sang. It was first performed in 1956 by Yam Kim-fai and Pak Suet-sin.

This instrumental piece features a gentle, light-hearted and romantic melody. Typically played by a string ensemble including *gaohu*, *yangqin* and *pipa*, it evokes the tender emotions of lovers under the moonlight, creating a sweet and enchanting atmosphere.

Immortal Dance Aria

This is a melody from playwright Tong Tik-sang's 1956 Cantonese opera *The Goddess of the Luo River*, composed by Cantonese music master Wong Yuet-sang and originally sung by Fong Yim-fun.

It is performed in the opera's final scene and portrays the titular goddess treading lightly on water with ethereal grace, as well as the otherworldly beauty of the immortal realm.

Beautiful Water Lilies on a Silvery Pond

A classic by renowned Cantonese music composer Wong Yuet-sang, the piece is an interlude from the iconic 1950s Cantonese-language film *Mysterious Murder*.

The melody is lively and joyful, with a blend of Chinese and Western musical elements. Depicting the scenery of a pond with blossoming water lilies, it is often used as an accompaniment or instrumental piece in Cantonese opera and song performances.

Cantonese Opera Song

The Pear Blossom

Based on an eponymous novel, the song was one of the most iconic works by the renowned Cantonese opera artist Sit Kok-sin, as well as his protégé Lam Kar-sing.

In the story, scholar He Mengxia meets and falls in love with the widow Bai Liniang at the residence where he works as a private tutor, but their love is deemed unacceptable by the parochial society. Instead, Bai betroths her sister-in-law to He, leaving the lovers with lifelong regrets.

Radiant Phoenix

The song comes from the eponymous Cantonese opera written by the theatre titan Tong Tik-sang in 1951, and was famously sung by the artist Fong Yim-fen.

It tells the story Zhao Yanyang, a young civilian woman who catches the eye of the emperor and is made a royal concubine. However, after giving birth to a son, a murder plot against her forces Zhao to flee the palace. Hiding in the mountains, she desperately awaits the day that she reunites with her child.

In the song, Zhao tells of her tragic story and how she longs for her son. With her signature vocal style, Fong portrayed the protagonist's sorrow and longing with remarkable emotional nuance.

Strengthening Resolve

Defeated, captured, and forced to serve the Wu King, Goujian the King of Yue withstands the humiliation by plotting a perfect revenge. This short song showcases an array of different Cantonese opera music styles.

Butterfly on the Lonely Grave (Excerpt)

Butterfly on the Lonely Grave is the theme song of the Cantonese opera *The Butterfly Lovers*, which was written by playwright Poon Yi-fan and premiered in 1955 starring renowned performers Yam Kim-fai and Fong Yim-fen.

The story of the opera is based on the Chinese folklore of the Butterfly Lovers. In this tragic romance, young woman Zhu Yingtai disguises as a man in order to attend school. There, she becomes best friends with fellow classmate Liang Shanbo and develops a crush on him. Unable to profess her love directly due to her guise, she tells Liang that she has a sister - very similar in appearance and personality, except a woman, and urges him to come to her home and propose. However, when Liang finally pays the visit, three days later than promised, Zhu has already been betrothed against her will to another man.

Cantonese Opera Excerpt Performances

Cantonese opera is marked by a minimalist aesthetic that relies on stagecraft and symbolism rather than props. Performances take place on a pared-down stage, and performers, whose faces are painted with exaggerated expressions to convey heightened emotions and character type, tell the story through their gestures and mastery of the four skills fundamental to Chinese opera – singing, acting, recitation and martial arts.

“Rain-soaked Clothes” from A Mirror Seal

Set in the Southern Song dynasty, *A Mirror Seal* follows the journey of Feng Yumei, who gets separated from her minister father during the Jurchen invasion, but is luckily saved from harassers by young man Fan Xizhou.

In the scene “Rain-soaked Clothes”, Feng and Fan find shelter from the pouring rain in a dilapidated temple, and make a fire to dry their clothes. They confide in each other by the fire and find a romantic spark.

The Cantonese opera premiered in 1977 starring legendary artists Law Ka-ying and Lee Bo-ying. The scene “Rain-soaked Clothes”, written by the eminent Cantonese music composer Wong Yuet-sang, is widely beloved for its mellifluous melodies that exude tenderness and romanticism.

“Saving Pui from the Trap” from *The Reincarnation of Red Plum*

The Reincarnation of Red Plum was written by renowned librettist Tong Tik-sang and performed publicly by the Sin Fung Ming Opera Troupe in 1959. Tong adapted his script from the Ming dynasty play *The Story of Red Plum* by Zhou Chaojun.

Prime minister Kar Tsi-dou's (Jia Sidao) concubine Lee Wai-neung has a chance encounter with Pui Yu. Because she is already married, she rejects Pui's affections. However, in a fit of jealousy Kar has her executed, and buried in Red Plum Pavilion. Later Kar invites Pui to his residence under false pretenses, where he plans to have Pui killed. One night the ghost of Wai-neung appears and saves Pui from the trap.

The scene *Saving Pui from the Trap* is accompanied by the score *Eighteen Beats of the Rainbow Robe* by renown composer Chu Ngai-kong. The melding of Tong's elegant lyrics and Chu's beautiful score brings to life this haunting tale of romance between man and ghost.

"Meeting in a Dream" from *Goddess of the Luo River*

Before his death, the powerful warlord Cao Cao arranges for his scholarly son Zhi to become his successor and marry the daughter of a government official. Zhi, however, is deeply in love with Zhen Fu, a woman his brother Pi also covets. When Cao arranges a marriage between Zhen Fu and Pi, a complicated power struggle begins to play out and Zhen Fu drowns herself in despair. One night, Zhi encounters Zhen Fu in a dream, transformed into the *Goddess of the Luo River*.

"Reunion in the Nunnery" from *Princess Cheung Ping*

Princess Cheung Ping was adapted by the renowned librettist Tong Tik-sang from the eponymous Qing-dynasty kunqu opera. The Sin Fung Ming Troupe premiered the opera in 1957, starring legendary Cantonese opera performers Yam Kim-fai and Pak Suet-sin, and it has since become a crowd-pleasing classic.

In the story, set at the dawn of the collapse of Ming dynasty, the royal princess Cheung Ping has just gotten engaged with Chow Sai-hin, the son of a powerful Chamberlain. But before they could tie the knot, rebels storm the imperial city as the Ming emperor, knowing the dynasty has fallen, takes his own life.

Having narrowly escaped death, Cheung Ping buries her identity and finds shelter in a nunnery, where Chow runs into her by chance a year later. In the excerpt "Reunion in the Nunnery", he begs the princess to acknowledge her past and her estranged fiancé.

"A Perfect Union" from *The Strange Encounters of Liu Yi*

The Cantonese opera *The Strange Encounters of Liu Yi* was adapted from a Tang-dynasty novella by playwright Tan Qingshuang and composer Chen Guanqing. Since its 1950 premiere, it has been an enduring classic beloved for its moving plot and the characters' unique singing styles.

"Reunion of Sword and Hairpin" from *The Story of the Purple Hairpin*

Adapted from a celebrated Ming dynasty play, *The Story of the Purple Hairpin* is a Cantonese opera written by the renowned playwright Tong Tik-sang, which premiered in 1957. The story follows the romance between scholar Li Yik and his wife Fok Siu-yuk. Featuring a roller-coaster plot, vivid characters and emotionally-charged songs, it has been a long-standing fan favourite and remains a frequently performed classic.

In this excerpt, high-ranking court official Lo has been abusing his power to keep Li Yik and Fok Siu-yuk apart for years, in order to sow misunderstanding and resentment between them so that Li would marry Lo's own daughter.

Just when Fok is about to give up on Li, thinking that he has remarried, a mysterious Yellow-Clad Knight arranges a secret meeting for the lovers. Li finally gets to explain to Fok that he has been threatened and held captive at Lu's residence. As the truth comes to light, the couple makes up and vows that nothing will come between them again.

"Matching of the Embroidered Shoes" from *The Case of the Headless Body*

Written by legendary playwright Tong Tik-sang, *The Case of the Headless Body* is a thrilling crime story in which Qin Sanfeng and his mistress Yang Liujiao hatch a heinous plan to kill his wife in order to elope together, and frame the murder on Yang's sister-in-law.

In the scene "Matching of the Embroidered Shoes", detective Zuo Weiming finds a key piece of evidence in solving the case: an embroidered shoe left at the crime scene. Suspecting that it belongs to Yang, Zuo pretends to flirt with her in order to lure out the truth. The two characters, with wildly different personalities and hidden agendas, engage in a battle of wits that sizzles with suspense and humour.

The show premiered in 1957 with a production by Aroma Cantonese Opera Troupe, featuring a star-studded cast led by Chan Kam-tong, Law Yim-hing and Fong Wong-nui.

“Pingsheng Comforts his Wife” from *Time to Go Home*

Written by Fung Chi-fan and first performed in 1939 by Sit Kok-sin and Sheung Hoi-mui,

Time to go Home follows the romance between Pingsheng and his wife Pin'niang. After their marriage, the couple is forced apart due to pressure from Pingsheng's mother.

In the scene “Pingsheng Comforts His Wife”, he secretly visits the ailing Pin'niang, tenderly consoles her, and the two confess their love for each other.

Wife and mother-in-law conflicts have long been a relatable theme across cultures. With its masterful blend of dialogue, arias and duets, the opera’s deep emotional resonance has made it a beloved classic for over half a century.

“Reconciliation” from *Muk Kwai-ying Routing Hongzhou*

In this story set in the Song dynasty, the Song city of Hongzhou is besieged by the Khitan-ruled Liao Empire, and the legendary commander Muk Kwai-ying is tasked with fending off the invaders.

When Muk's hot-tempered husband Yeung Chung-bo disobeys her orders and leads a failed attack with his platoon, he is sentenced by Muk to receive 40 lashes and be paraded through the barracks.

Although Yeung's public humiliation initially causes a rift between the couple, faced with a national crisis, the two eventually reconcile. Fighting side by side on the battlefield, they successfully save Hongzhou by defeating the Liao troops.

This Cantonese opera was written by Yip Shiu-Tak and premiered in 1988 with Law Ka-ying and Liza Wang in the starring roles. In the scene "Reconciliation", after being court-martialed by his wife, a humiliated and resentful Yeung gets ready for an ugly confrontation. However, when Muk shows up, he is taken aback by her tender demeanour and reminded of their love. The actor playing Yeung will showcase the "water hair" technique—an essential xiqu skill—as he swings his hair dramatically to illustrate the character's burning indignation.

“Love and Struggle” from *The Warrior’s Marriage*

The Warrior’s Marriage is a Cantonese opera written in the 1970s by the playwright So Yung based on historic events. In the story, Ming dynasty warrior Hua Yunlong helps the Ming

emperor in his efforts to expand the territory by assuming a false identity and gaining the affection of Yinping, the princess of a rival nation. After successfully marrying the unsuspecting princess and winning her family's trust, Hua leads her father to his death.

In the scene "Love and Struggle", Princess Yinping, upon discovering the truth, vows to avenge her father.

"First Encounter" from *A Romance of Martial Heroes*

When Zhan Zhao is appointed the chief imperial bodyguard by the Emperor, it attracts much vitriol from other martial artists who believe they are more deserving of the honour.

Among them is Bak Yuk-tong, who taunts Zhan by stealing royal treasures from the court and requesting a duel. Fearful of an ambush, Zhan asks his friend Ouyang to be his backup.

On his way to the duel, Bak runs into Zhan's sister Chau-sheung, who has been his longtime admirer. Without any suspicion, the naive young woman reveals the secret of Ouyang's signature moves.

"First Encounter" depicts the initial meeting of Bak and Chau-sheung, where a quarrel turns into a full-on fight, which then unexpectedly leads to mutual affection. It is a scene filled with high drama and fun twists.

From the performers' movements to the choreography of the fighting sequences and the lively percussion, every element in the scene is designed to highlight the characters' youthful energy and their finesse as highly skilled martial artists.

"A Duel of Immortal Snakes" from *The Legend of the White Snake*

Written by young playwright Lee Ting-fung, this excerpt is a new adaptation of a popular segment from *The Legend of the White Snake*.

Leaving the celestial realm in search of her banished lover, Lady White Snake, Bai Suzhen, encounters a green snake spirit. After she rejects his advances a battle ensues and the green snake is defeated. Taking on female form, he pledges to accompany Bai on her travels.

Choreographed by Peking opera performer Han Yanming, this martial arts excerpt incorporates stylised gestures and elements from Peking opera, such as the double sword fight.

Muk Kwai-ying Proposes Marriage

Song general Yeung Chung-bo is on his way to Muk Fort to obtain the Taming Dragon wood necessary for breaking the Liao force's Heavenly Gate battle formation. He encounters Muk Kwai-ying and both feel a mutual attraction. After some brief sparring,

Yeung is subdued by Kwai-ying, who pours out her feelings for him and proposes marriage. If Yeung accepts her proposal she will aid the Song dynasty and offer them the precious wood they need. Yeung is moved by Kwai-ying and agrees to marry her.

During the 1980s, famous Cantonese opera stars Law Ka-ying and Lee Bo-ying released a recording of this excerpt, which has remained popular until today. This performance was arranged by the Artistic Curator and Director, and conceived to allow a lively portrayal of the two young heroes.

Fan Lihua Battles Wang Yinglong

Written by playwright Lee Yuen-man, *Fan Lihua Battles Wang Yinglong* is an adaptation of a segment from the Chinese opera classic *The Chilly River Pass*. The story unfolds during a turbulent war between the Tang and Western Liao kingdoms.

Despite being the daughter of a prominent Western Liao military leader, Fan Lihua falls in love with the Tang general Xue Dingshan.

On their wedding night, conflict arises when Fan tries to persuade her father and brothers to surrender to the Tang forces. Amid the chaos, she mistakenly kills her own family. Xue, shocked and outraged, banishes his new bride.

Later, Xue is captured by the enemies, and his colleague asks Fan to help rescue him. On her way to free Xue, Fan is harassed by a gang of bandits and challenged with a fight by the bandit king Wang Yinglong. After winning the duel, Fan disbands the gang and takes Wang with her on the rescue mission.

“Theft in the Mountains” from The Legend of The White Snake

Based on the eponymous Chinese folklore, *The Legend of The White Snake* tells of the thousand-year-old white snake spirit, Bai Suzhen, who transforms into human form and marries a mortal man, Xu Xian. But when she accidentally reverts to her true snake form, it frightens her husband to death.

In the scene “Theft in the Mountains”, Bai braves the perilous journey to Mount Kunlun to steal the magical herb that can revive Xu Xian. There, she engages in a fierce battle with the mountain’s guardian.

The scene features an extended and complex sequence of martial combat, incorporating advanced techniques involving swords, spears and horsetail whisks, all interwoven with vocal passages. The intense atmosphere provides a full showcase for the performers' outstanding physical and vocal skills.

"Chasing after the Husband" from *Di Qing and Princess Shuangyang*

General Di Qing, on a campaign against the enemy army, strays into the western kingdom of Shanshan. There, he is made prince consort to Princess Shuangyang. Later, to rescue his imprisoned mother, he flees back to his homeland, taking with him a prized horse and a golden sabre.

In the scene "Chasing after the Husband", the princess learns of his departure, gives swift chase, and confronts him. Di Qing explains that filial duty compelled him to set aside their love, and the two reconcile. This scene blends action with emotional depth, capturing both marital conflict and the sorrow of lovers forced to part.

Artistic Team

Artistic Curator and Director

Law Ka-ying

Producer

Naomi Chung*

Rehearsal Curator

Cheng Wing-mui

Music Arranger

Janet Wong

Ensemble Leader

Lee Tik-lun

Percussion Ensemble Leader

Mai Jiawei

Actors

Christie To Wing-sum, Chan Kei-ting, Chan Hei-yu, Mo Huamin, Wong Ho-yau, Alan Tam Wing-lun, Wong Hai-wing, Man Shuet-kau, Xiaoyu, King Fa-lui, Wong On-ching, Phoebe Ng Man-ting, Chen Jingru, Ng Lap-hei, Lung Yuk-sing, Yam Dan-fung, Cheung Chun-chung, Kwong Tsz-wong, Li Man-chit

Musicians

Szeto Wai-suet, John Ho Chun-hei, Yue Kin-long, Yuen Ka-yi, Liu Chun-hei

* Staff of West Kowloon Cultural District Authority

Introduction of the Artistic Team

Law Ka-ying

Artistic Curator and Director

Law Ka-ying is a famous leading actor in Cantonese opera and dedicated to the preservation, promotion and development of Cantonese opera. In 2012, he received the Medal of Honour from the Hong Kong SAR Government.

Naomi Chung

Producer

Naomi Chung is a member of the China Theatre Association. She graduated from California Institute of the Arts with MFA in Lighting Design. Joining West Kowloon in 2011, she has produced a number of events, including the West Kowloon Bamboo Theatre (2012, 2013, 2014), Freespace Fest (2012), the Xiqu Centre Seminar Series, Rising Stars of Cantonese Opera, *The Ghost Seller & His Butterflies*, Experimental Cantonese opera *Farewell My Concubine* (New Adaptation), *Wenguang Explores the Valley* and *The Imperial Decree* and cultural exchange programmes in mainland China. In 2019, she produced *The Reincarnation of Red Plum* for the grand opening of the Xiqu Centre. Before joining West Kowloon, Naomi Chung was Technical Director of Hong Kong productions at the Expo 2010 Shanghai China, and Head of Programmes & Education with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra (2001–2009).

Cheng Wing-mui

Rehearsal Curator

Cheng Wing-mui received her training under Law Ka-ying, Lee Po-ying and the Chinese percussion master Keung Chi-leung. She has also received stylised movement training from Beijing opera teachers and vocal practice from Lau Kin-wing. In 1988, Cheng Wing-mui established the Good Harvest Cantonese Opera Troupe and has performed in Singapore and Malaysia, as well as Hong Kong and Macau. In 2001, she performed in Berlin for The Chinese Festival.

Janet Wong

Music Arranger

Wong graduated in 2005 from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts Advanced Certificate Programme (Cantonese Opera), where she specialised in dan (female) roles and studied under musician Ng Lut-kwong. Since then she has performed with various Cantonese opera troupes, including the Cantonese Opera Theatre, and also formed her own troupe. In 2011, Wong became a resident Actor in the Hong Kong Young Talent Cantonese Opera Troupe. In 2014, she won the Outstanding Performance Award at the *Rising Stars in Cantonese Opera Showcase* organised by the West Kowloon Cultural District, as well as the Award for Young Artist (Xiqu) presented by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

Christie To Wing-sum

Actor

Christie To is a professional Cantonese opera actor specialising in male roles. Performing since the age of four, she learned her art from her master Lee Lung. She has also studied under Cai Zhengren and Guan Shizhen. Besides performing, To has worked as composer, lighting designer and stage manager for a number of professional productions.

Chan Kei-ting

Actor

Chan Kei-ting received an Advanced Diploma in Cantonese opera from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. During her studies, she was awarded a Hongkong Bank Foundation scholarship to study in Beijing. Mentored by her godfather, Lam Kam-tong, she also received coaching from virtuosos such as Poon Sai-lun, Leung Sum-yee, Ng Lut-kwong, Ye Anyi, Xing Jinsha and Hu Zhifeng. Chan performed the role of Lu Daoci in the HKAPA production, *Love in a Time of Bloodshed*, and received one-on-one training from maestro Lam Kar-sing. In recent years, she has performed with several local troupes, including the Golden Blossom Opera Troupe, the Sum Mei Cantonese Opera Songs Association and the Hong Kong Young Talent Cantonese Opera Troupe, broadening her stage experience and knowledge.

Chan Hei-yu

Actor

Chan Hei-yu started her Cantonese opera training aged seven under Kwok King, Man Lai-fung, Chen Ming-ying, and Vanessa Tsang Ho-chi, and obtaining a level 12 in the Beijing Dance Academy Chinese Dance Graded Exams at the age of 18. An active Cantonese opera and Chinese dance actor, Chan was selected as a featured artist in the Cantonese Opera Young Talent Showcase in 2018. Chan graduated from the Journalism and Media Studies Centre of the University of Hong Kong in 2016, and besides performing, also works as a radio presenter hosting xiqu-related programmes at RTHK Radio 5.

Mo Huamin

Actor

Mo Huamin is a professional Cantonese opera actor specialising in male roles. He started his training aged 11 with the Zhanjiang Little Phoenix Cantonese Opera Troupe in China under the tutelage of Kong Queping. He joined the Zhanjiang Cantonese Opera Troupe and the Xiangshan Cantonese Opera Troupe of Guangdong before being admitted to the School of Chinese Opera at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in 2012. In 2016, Mo was invited to take part in a prestigious performance in Sydney, Australia.

Wong Ho-yau

Actor

Wong Ho-yau majored in Chinese Opera Performance at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts where she received a number of awards, including the Lam Kar Sing Foundation Scholarship, the Sunbeam Chinese Opera Cultural Scholarship, the HSBC Hong Kong Scholarship and the Director's Award. In addition to Chinese opera, Wong has also studied piano, *dizi* (Chinese flute), *hulusi* (gourd flute) and other instruments, gaining the Royal School of Music grade eight in piano (2011) and the China Nationalities Orchestra Society grade nine in *hulusi* and *dizi* (2013).

Alan Tam Wing-lun

Actor

First exposed to Cantonese opera as a two-year-old, Tam joined the Hong Kong Children And Juvenile Chinese Opera Troupe at the age of three. Since then he has studied foundation and *paichang* (traditional style) training under several teachers, and studied singing techniques under Lam Kam-tong. In 2013, he won the Hong Kong Arts Development Council Award for Young Artist (Xiqu), and in 2014 he was selected to perform in the *Rising Stars in Cantonese Opera Showcase* organised by the West Kowloon Cultural District.

Wong Hai-wing

Actor

Wong Hai-wing holds an Advanced Diploma in Cantonese Opera from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and has received coaching in Peking opera, Kunqu and Cantonese opera. During her studies, Wong was awarded for various scholarships. In 2006 she participated in a xiqu school exchange programme in Beijing. In 2010, Wong was an awardee of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council's Xiqu New Artists Internship Scheme, and also received a scholarship for further studies. In 2016 she was selected to perform in *West Kowloon's Rising Stars of Cantonese Opera*.

Man Shuet-kau

Actor

Trained in *huadan* (lead female) and *daomadan* (sword-wielding, horse-riding female) roles, Man Shuet-kau's work is distinguished by her attention to detail and insightful character studies. A student of the late Leung Ming-shing, she also trained with Hui Kin-shun, Ho Ka-yiu, Chu Siu-bing and Wu Kam-fai. Man has performed with professional troupes and had practicum training with Chan Kim-fung. She is currently performing in the *Cantonese Opera Young Talent Showcase* organised by The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong, as well as with various professional companies. In 2016, she was selected to perform in *Rising Stars of Cantonese Opera II* organised by the West Kowloon Cultural District.

Xiaoyu

Actor

Xiaoyu is a graduate of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts and The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She is an experienced performer specialising in *dan* (female) roles. Her repertoire includes excerpts *Dream Reunion and Death in the Shrine*, and *Cantonese operas The Monkey King Thrice Beats the Bony Ghost, Wu Yen and Mothers and Sons*.

King Fa-lui

Actor

King Fa-lui first performed with her mother in Singapore when she was five years old. In recent years, she has studied foundation training, body gestures and acrobatics with Wang Huiling and Chan Yuen-sum, and singing techniques with musicians Tsang Kin-man and Chou Chi-kai. In 2012, she was selected to perform at the *Cantonese Opera Young Talent Showcase*, and in 2014 she performed in the *Rising Stars in Cantonese Opera Showcase* organised by the West Kowloon Cultural District.

Wong On-ching

Actor

A specialist in *guimen dan* and *zheng dan* (young and middle-aged female) roles, Wong On-ching began learning Cantonese opera at the age of four. She enrolled in the BFA programme in Chinese opera at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts on a full scholarship and received the academy's Outstanding Student Award in 2023. Wong has performed worldwide, including in Macau, Beijing, Singapore, the US and Canada. Her performances include *Forty Years of Cherished Love*, "Stealing a Poem" from *Legend of the Jade Hairpin*, "Giving up the Son to Save the Orphan" from *The Orphan of Zhao and Pearl Bay*, an original work by the HKAPA's School of Chinese Opera.

Phoebe Ng Man-ting

Actor

Phoebe Ng has a BFA (Hons) in Chinese opera from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Art. In 2024, she became a government-appointed committee member of the Cantonese Opera Development Fund, and received the top prize (Cantonese opera) representing Hong

Kong at the Shenzhen-Zhuhai-Hong Kong-Macau Cantonese Opera Performance Showcase. Ng has performed internationally and engaged in exchange with artists and students in the UK, US and Thailand, as well as in Beijing, Shandong, Sichuan, Guangzhou and Macau.

Chen Jingru

Actor

Chen Jingru graduated from the Guangdong Yueju School in 2019, and from The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Art's School of Chinese Opera in 2023, finishing her final year at the academy on a full scholarship. A specialist in *wusheng* and *xiaosheng* (male warrior and scholar) roles, Chen has performed in *Lu Bu Tries the Horse*, *Pearl Bay*, *Farewell My Husband*, *The Magpie Bridge*, "The Big Battle" from *The Maiden Commander-in-Chief and the Rash General*, *Mu Guiying Gets a Husband* and "Stealing a Poem" from *The Legend of the Jade Hairpin*. Chen won the 2013 Four Seas Newcomer Award from the Guangdong Provincial Committee of the CPPCC and the Silver Flower Prize at the 2013 Guangdong Small Plum Blossom Extravaganza.

Ng Lap-hei

Actor

A graduate of The Cantonese Opera Academy of Hong Kong, Ng Lap-hei studied under Wong Yee-man, Yeung Ming, Zhou Zhenbang, He Jiayao, Tsai Win-wei and Guan Shizhen. In 2016 he received the Emerging Talent Award from RTHK's Chinese Opera World, and in 2020, the Award for Young Artist (Xiqu) from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Ng currently serves as the director of the Bahe Association.

Lung Yuk-sing

Actor

Cross-disciplinary artist Lung Yuk-sing is a Hong Kong Cantonese opera artist specialising in *sheng* and *wusheng* (male civil and martial) roles and the director of a Cantonese opera education programme. He also works as a television actor, radio host and talent show master of ceremonies. In 2024, in recognition of his contributions to the promotion and education of a new generation of xiqu artists, Lung was named an Inheritance Innovation Cultural Example by the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund and received the China-Europe Cultural Ambassador Certificate of Honour. Lung studied under Cantonese opera

maestro Leo Wong, and acclaimed performers such as Jacky Man Chin-shui and Leung Shiu-sum, refining his technique under Yue opera virtuoso and Class One actor Shi Jihua.

Yam Dan-fung

Actor

Cantonese opera actor, director and prolific librettist, Yam Dan-fung specialises in *sheng* and *wusheng* (male civil and martial) roles and has performed with the Purple Maple Cantonese Opera Troupe, the Dan Fung Cantonese Opera Troupe and the Sunshining Cantonese Opera Troupe. Yam received personal instruction from the late Cantonese opera maestro Lam Kar-sing and has performed in a number of productions with the Lam School. In recent years, Yam has also studied with Cantonese opera virtuoso Ng Chin-fung and renowned vocalist Lo Siu-ping.

Cheung Chun-chung

Actor

Performer and stage actor, Cheung Chun-chung has 20 years' experience in Cantonese opera and has performed with a number of Hong Kong-based xiqu troupes and theatre companies. In 2018, he performed *The Butterfly and the Red Pear Blossoms* in Macau with the Yam Pak Charitable Foundation. In 2024, he toured the Greater Bay Area with the Hong Kong Arts Festival production *Love in the Bamboo Grove*. Cheung is also a docent at the Xiqu Centre.

Kwong Tsz-wong

Actor

Actor Kwong Tsz-wong has over ten years of training in Cantonese Opera and specialises in *sang* (young male) roles. A graduate of the Cantonese Opera Academy of Hong Kong Opera's Youth Artist Training Course, he began his training under the mentorship of Yeung Siu-wah and Au Shuk-yee, and refined his craft under the guidance of esteemed instructors, such as Yu Tung-sing, Yuen Sin-ting, Wong Po-huen, Wong Hon-yam, Wong Ka-ling, Chow Lei-lei and Leung Hon-yung. Kwong currently contributes to a number of professional troupes across a range of roles and capacities.

Li Man-chit

Actor

Li Man-chit began his training at the age of five at the Sing Fai Cantonese Opera Promotion Association, studying under Yeung Kim-wah, Fong Suet-ying, Chung Cheuk-wah, Tsang Kin-man and Yeung Lai-hung. In recent years, Li has studied Southern School (*nanpai*) techniques under the guidance of veteran performer Ho Chi-shing, and received specialised coaching and guidance from industry seniors such as Mok Sing-lun and Choi Yuen-ling. Li has participated in cultural exchange performances in Macau, Zhongshan and Beijing, as well as in the US, Canada, Singapore and Malaysia.

Lee Tik-lun

Ensemble Leader

Lee Tik-lun graduated from the School of Chinese Opera at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts where he received training from several renowned musicians. From 2011 to 2017 he served as the ensemble leader of the Young Academy Cantonese Opera Troupe at the HKAPA. Lee has completed certificate courses in erhu at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

Mai Jiawei

Percussion Ensemble Leader

Mai Jiawei graduated from the Guangdong Yueju School and the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing with a bachelor's degree in music pedagogy and art management. From 2001, Mai worked at the Guangdong Cantonese Opera Theatre (Guangdong Yueju Yuan). Mai has composed for percussion in numerous Cantonese opera productions and received two First Class Awards at the Guangdong Art Festival.

Szeto Wai-suet

Musician

Szeto Wai-suet is a graduate of the School of Chinese Opera at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, where she specialised in pipa and studied under veteran musician Li-ping, as well as Cheung Ying and Wing Yun-kiu. In 2012, Szeto was recognised with a First-Class Award in the International Pipa Contest at the First Liaoyuan International Pipa Art Festival.

In 2017, she received a certificate from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Szeto Wai-suet has performed as a musician with the Xiqu Centre's experimental Cantonese opera production *Farewell My Concubine* (New Adaptation) since 2017.

John Ho Chun-hei

Musician

John Ho received a Bachelor of Fine Arts (First Class Honours) from the School of Chinese Opera at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, where he studied dizi (Chinese flute) under Chan King-tsun and Cantonese opera accompaniment under Chen Fen. His outstanding performance helped him gain scholarships and the commendation on the Dean's List. Ho participated in the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod in Wales in 2013, where he was the first runner-up in the Open Folk Solo category. In 2017, he received a silver award at the Tongyin Cup National Dizi Competition in China. Ho has participated in several performances, including *Waiting Heart* by the Hong Kong Dance Company, the *All About Love Chinese New Year Concert* by the Hong Kong String Orchestra, and concerts by the Tsun Lok Dizi Ensemble Group.

Yue Kin-long

Musician

Young musician Yue Kin-long is currently head of orchestra with the Gaudeamus Dunhuang ensemble, sheng (Chinese reed pipes) principal with the Hong Kong Youth Chinese Orchestra, a core member of the Academy Chinese Orchestra at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, a part-time musician with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra and a principal member of the JohnChen Ensemble.

From the age of eight, Yue studied sheng under Loo Sze-wang at the Hong Kong Music Office. Since 2013 he has been a student at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, receiving a grant from the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund to complete an Advanced Diploma in Music, and studying Chinese music under renowned sheng master Cheng Tak-wai and Chinese percussion under Yim Hok-man.

Yue has collaborated with several different art groups and cultural organisations, including the Hong Kong String Orchestra, Musicus Society, Four Gig Heads Percussion Group, the Xiqu Centre at West Kowloon, and Utopia Cantonese Opera Workshop, and performed in several major cities in the region and internationally.

Yuen Ka-yi

Musician

Yuen Ka-yi was introduced to xiqu music when she began to study *yangqin* (Chinese hammered dulcimer) and Cantonese music under Pan Weiwen, and continued to teach herself by listening to xiqu music at school. Since 2013, Yuen has been a part-time musician with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. She has participated in several Cantonese music concerts, including the inauguration concert of the Hong Kong Cantonese Music Society, and the joint concert *Yuen Siu Fai x HKAPA: Traditional Cantonese Singing and Music*.

Liu Chun-hei

Musician

Liu Chun-hei started learning erhu under Sam Cheung Kwong-sing at the age of nine. He received guidance from Zhou Yi, principal erhu player with the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. In 2018, Liu received a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) in Chinese opera at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, where he studied under Lei Yeying of the Xinghai Conservatory of Music, as well as Luo Qinger, and received several scholarships. Liu has participated in a number of Cantonese opera performances as *zhonghu*, *erhu*, and electric *ruan* player.

Production Team

Executive Producer

Agnes Fok*

Producer Assistant

Ellie Yeung*

Technical Director

Rae Wu*

Production Managers

Cherry Kwan*

Fanny Lo*

Stage Manager

Martin Lau

Lau Sai Wai

Deputy Stage Managers

Kathryn Lai

Mandy Mak

Veronica Chack

Ng Wing Cheung

Chan Nga Wun

Ng Ka Man

Surtitle

Ho Cheuk Kei

Wong Tsz Ching

Tse Man Chun

Wong Ching Yu

Hui Yu Ting

Lighting Designer

Leo Siu

Video Designer

Dan Fong

House Programme Designer

Timmy Wai

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Kun Ting Study Hall

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About West Kowloon Cultural District (WestK)

WestK is one of the largest and most ambitious cultural hubs in the world and Hong Kong's new cultural tourism landmark, spanning 40 hectares alongside Victoria Harbour. WestK comprises a mix of landmark arts and cultural facilities, including world-class museums M+ and the Hong Kong Palace Museum, intricately designed performing arts venues the Xiqu Centre and Freespace, the 11-hectare Art Park with a waterfront promenade, and the upcoming WestK Performing Arts Centre. Hosting over 1,000 exhibitions, performances, programmes, and events each year, WestK provides a vital platform for both emerging and established artists. WestK welcomes more than 10 million visitors each year, evolving as the international cultural brand of Hong Kong and strengthening the city's strategic role as an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange.

About WestK Performing Arts

WestK Performing Arts strives to establish WestK as a focal point for vibrant arts performances from Asia and beyond. Led by the vision of amplifying Hong Kong's creative potential and transcending boundaries in the performing arts, WestK Performing Arts curates an exciting and innovative annual programme that spans across dance, music, theatre, and Chinese opera in a range of artistic styles and traditions, presented through major arts and music festivals, as well as new, original commissions by local and international artists. West Kowloon Cultural District (WestK) offers a growing portfolio of world-class performing arts venues, including the Xiqu Centre and Freespace, which opened in 2019, and the forthcoming WestK Performing Arts Centre, attracting top artists and arts groups from around the world for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaborations that fuel artistic advancements for the city and the region.

About the Xiqu Centre

The Xiqu Centre at West Kowloon Cultural District (WestK) is a world-class arts venue dedicated to the promotion of Chinese traditional theatre, built with the goal of preserving, promoting, and developing the heritage art of Chinese opera.

Recognised as one of the "100 Greatest Places in the World" by Time magazine in 2019, the Xiqu Centre features state-of-the-art facilities. The Grand Theatre, with a seating capacity of over 1,000, is a venue showcasing performances. The Tea House Theatre recreates the intimate atmosphere of a traditional tea house. It is the venue for the Tea House Theatre Experience, specially designed to introduce new audiences to Cantonese opera.

By staging a diverse range of Chinese opera performances and educational activities, the Xiqu Centre is an important hub that brings together different xiqu genres from China, nurtures artistic talent, attracts new audiences, and preserves and reinvigorates the traditions of xiqu.