

Cantonese opera performance tour in Australia and New Zealand showcases Hong Kong's cultural heritage (with photo)

The beauty of Cantonese opera and Hong Kong's cultural heritage were showcased to audiences in Australia and New Zealand in July through performances of "Monkey King and Skeleton Devil", a well-known episode from the famous Chinese novel "Journey to the West", by Hong Kong's Azure Seas Cantonese Traditional Theatre.

Organised by Australasian Art and Stageworks and sponsored by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Sydney (HKETO Sydney), the tour commenced in Auckland in New Zealand on July 23 before performances in Sydney and Melbourne in Australia on July 26 and 28 respectively. There was also a public lecture promoting the art of Chinese opera in Melbourne on July 27.

Speaking before the performance by the Azure Seas Cantonese Traditional Theatre in Sydney on July 26, the Deputy Director of the HKETO Sydney, Ms Winnie Chan, said that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has spared no effort in creating an environment conducive to arts and cultural development as well as promoting Hong Kong's strengths in arts and culture.

"Opened in January this year, the Xiqu Centre, a striking world-class performing arts venue in the West Kowloon Cultural District, is dedicated to the conservation, promotion and development of Chinese opera. The building houses a Grand Theatre, accommodating 1 073 seats, a Tea House Theatre, with a capacity of up to 200 seats, eight professional studios and a seminar hall, all specially designed for different types of Chinese opera-related functions and activities," she said.

The Xiqu Centre will foster discovery and appreciation of this unique traditional art form among Hong Kong people and international guests alike, and will advance cultural exchange.

"Hong Kong is an arts and cultural metropolis where East meets West. We hope that through this performance tour, audiences in Australia and New Zealand will have a better understanding of Hong Kong's cultural heritage as well as its vibrant arts and cultural scenes," Ms Chan added.

