

# Chinese Opera Festival to premiere new Cantonese opera "A Love Poem Stained with Blood"

Local Cantonese opera veterans will join together in performing a new Cantonese opera entitled "A Love Poem Stained with Blood" to mark 10th anniversary of the inscription of Cantonese Opera on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The new opera is also one of the highlights of the 10th Chinese Opera Festival and the 30th anniversary of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre.

"A Love Poem Stained with Blood" is written by Sun Kim-long and endeavours to pass the genre from veterans of the art to a younger generation of actors. Consequently the cast features both renowned veterans and rising stars of Cantonese opera, including Sun Kim-long, Nam Fung, Yuen Siu-fai, Tang Mi-ling, Lui Hung-kwong, Johnson Yuen and Chan Kei-ting.

The story takes place during the last years of the Ming dynasty. A scholar, Hou Chaozong, has fallen in love with a courtesan, Li Xiangjun, after they meet in a brothel in Nanjing. The two are engaged to be married. Ruan Dacheng, who has sided with remnant eunuch forces holding sway over state affairs, wants to lure Hou to join his faction, and offers the dowry secretly to Li. But seeing through his evil intent, Li rejects the offer. Ruan then frames Hou as colluding with ministers like Zuo Liangyu to overthrow the regime, thus forcing Hou to flee. Hou, a man of letters and a member of the literary and political party Fu She, and Li, an intelligent and artistically accomplished beauty, are both real figures in Chinese history. At which point do their lives take a downturn? How do their breakup and reunion articulate with the vicissitudes of the country? What is the relationship between Hou and his best friend Yang Longyou?

This adaptation is written by Sun based on "The Peach Blossom Fan" by Kong Shangren of the early Qing period. Through the love story of Hou and Li, the play traces the decline of the Ming period, but offers an unexpected ending.

The new Cantonese opera "A Love Poem Stained with Blood" (with Chinese and English surtitles), presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, will be staged at 7.30pm on June 21 and 22 (Friday and Saturday) at the Grand Theatre of Hong Kong Cultural Centre; and at 2.30pm on June 30 (Sunday) at the Auditorium of Tuen Mun Town Hall. Tickets price ranging from \$180 to \$480 are now available at URBTIX ([www.urbtix.hk](http://www.urbtix.hk)) and the Xiqu Centre Ticket Office. For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit [www.cof.gov.hk/2019/en/cantonese.html](http://www.cof.gov.hk/2019/en/cantonese.html).

A pre-performance talk with free admission will be held at 3.30pm on May

11 (Saturday) at AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The speakers will be Sun Kim-long, Nam Fung and Yuen Siu-fai. Limited seats will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.