

Chinese Opera Festival to present Guangdong Quadrangle folk concerts

The Chinese Opera Festival will present "Guangdong Quadrangle – Four Folk Music Types in Concert" in June and July. The programme will showcase four indigenous art forms of Guangdong folk music which are worthy of preservation because of their historical and retention values.

To encourage a comprehensive revival of these musical folk art forms, the renowned percussion ensemble leader Ko Yun-kuen will lead a five-piece ensemble in a revival of sounds of the "bayin" troupes in their heyday. Yuen Siu-fai, a renowned Cantonese opera actor, and Leung Hoi-li, a young singer of "nanyin", will perform the narrative singing items of "banyan", "moyuge" and "nanyin". A Cantonese music ensemble led by Yu Siu-wah and Chan Chi-chun will perform classics such as "Autumn Moon over a Placid Lake" and "The Peacock in Its Full Glory". Yuen Siu-fai, Ng Chin-fung and Sun Kim-long will sing the classic repertoire, including "Jia Baoyu's Lament for the Wrong Match in the Arranged Marriage" and "Waiting in the West Chamber under the Moon" in the classic singing style.

The titular "Guangdong Quadrangle" is a figurative description of the combined showcase of four indigenous Guangdong musical art forms. They are "dabayin", narrative singing, Cantonese music and the Cantonese operatic song in classic singing style. Among the local community "Dabayin" is also called "luogugui" or "percussion in a cabinet". In 1854, when Cantonese opera was banned, the "bayin" troupes used "suona" in two different sizes (and hence two different pitches) to mimic the vocal ranges of "sheng" (male) and "dan" (female) roles in Cantonese opera. Narrative singing is one of the essential elements of the ballad-singing system in Guangdong, and can be subdivided into "nanyin", "moyuge" (singing with woodblock beat), "banyan" and "longzhou". Among them, "nanyin" and "moyuge" have been inscribed onto the listing of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Cantonese music is distinguished by the south China temperament. The Cantonese operatic song in classic singing style involves the ancient provenance of the central plains, where Chinese traditional theatre originated. Today almost all Cantonese opera productions are performed in the Cantonese dialect, and few actors can sing with the correct enunciation and vernacular traits in the classic singing style. Traditional theatre is an art that needs to be passed on from mentor to mentee with one-on-one attention. As old veteran artists bow out, there are no followers to carry on their legacy. It is necessary for the present generation to safeguard these art forms that are on the verge of extinction.

The programme includes the "dabayin" pieces "Jin-Fan-Kai", "An Ingot of Gold", "The Advent of Spring", "Wuzhao Pass"; Cantonese music "A Monk Misses His Wife", "The Toll of the Temple Bell", "Autumn Moon over a Placid Lake"; narrative singing performances featuring "moyuge", "The Fable of the

Ungrateful Wolf" and the "nanyin" excerpt from "Nocturnal Lament"; and the Cantonese operatic songs in classic singing style "Jia Baoyu's Lament for the Wrong Match in the Arranged Marriage", "Waiting in the West Chamber under the Moon", "Rendezvous at the Monastery of Sweet Dew".

Jointly presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Xiqu Centre, West Kowloon Cultural District, "Guangdong Quadrangle – Four Folk Music Types in Concert" (with Chinese and English surtitles) will be staged at 7.30pm on June 25 and 26 (Tuesday and Wednesday) at the Theatre, Hong Kong City Hall; and at 7.30pm from July 4 to 7 (Thursday to Sunday) at the Tea House Theatre, Xiqu Centre, West Kowloon Cultural District. Ticket price ranging from \$230 to \$430 are now available at URBTIX (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/guangdong.html.

There will also be talks and exhibitions. All talks will be held at AC2, Level 4, Administration Building of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Free admission for the talks and exhibitions with details as follows:

Talk – The Dying Art of Narrative Singing in Cantonese Music
May 3 (Friday) 7.30pm
Speaker: Yuen Siu-fai
Moderator: Chan Chi-chun

Talk – "Of Guangdong" and "In Music" – The Two Essential Elements of Cantonese Music
May 22 (Wednesday) 7.30pm
Speaker: Yu Siu-wah
Moderator: Chan Chi-chun

Talk – "Dabayin" and Cantonese Operatic Song in Classic Singing Style
May 29 (Wednesday) 7.30pm
Speakers: Yuen Siu-fai, Ko Yun-kuen, Ko Yun-hung
Moderator: Musette Tsang

Talk – The Way Forward for the Four Indigenous Musical Arts of Guangdong
July 16 (Tuesday) 7.30pm
Speakers: Yuen Siu-fai, Yu Siu-wah, Ko Yun-kuen, Ko Yun-hung
Moderator: Chan Chi-chun

Exhibition – The Four Indigenous Musical Arts of Guangdong: Where Have All These Genres Gone?

June 7 – 23 / Foyer Exhibition Area, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

June 20 – July 8 / Foyer, Hong Kong City Hall

June 25 – July 7 / Exhibition Gallery, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing

July 1 – October 1 / Arts Resource Centre, 10/F, Hong Kong Central Library

July 3 – 8 / Foyer, Tuen Mun Town Hall

July 23 – August 4 / Exhibition Corner, Yuen Long Theatre