

Cross-generation performances to revisit Cantonese opera "The Cosmic Mirror"

"Revisiting a Fine Selection of Cantonese Opera 'The Cosmic Mirror' (Five Generations on Stage)" will be performed in March and April. The cross-generation performances, to be presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, will feature Cantonese opera virtuosi, young artists and students of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

The performers will include Yau Sing-po, Lee Lung (March 10 and April 24 only), Wan Fai-yin, Leung Siu-ming (March 11 and April 23 only), Yue Ling-lung, Lui Hung-kwong, Wan Yuk-yu, Zong Yunsin, Pui Chun-hin, Hong Hai, Lam Tin-yau, Hong Wah, Yam Dan-fung, Tsz Ling-chau, Chan Chak-lui, Chin Shan, Yat Dim-hung (March 10 and 11 only), Kim Lun, Mo Huamin, Vong Seng-pen, Ng Lap-hei (April 23 and 24 only), Liang Xiaofei, Lin Xinling, Leung Sum-yee, Leung Fei-tung, Jackie Leung, Xie Xiaoyu (April 23 and 24 only), Ng Kwok-wa, Kwong Tsz-wong, Chu Siu-yat, Ng Sin-hang and Kwong Shing-kwan.

Premiered in 2005 by Elmond's Workshop, "The Cosmic Mirror" features a mythical theme about human goodness and has had two reruns thanks to popular demand among Cantonese opera fans. In this restaged production, additional celestials are included among the dramatis personae, such as the Eight Immortals; the Sun God; the Moon Goddess; the Literary and Martial Gods; the God of Fortune; the Goddess of Mercy; the Golden Boy; the Jade Girl; the four sagacious hermits of the Fisherman, the Woodcutter, the Farmer and the Scholar; the creatures in the underwater Dragon Palace; the four Demons; and the Gods of Wind, Thunder, Rain and Lightning, thus creating a visually magnificent tableau of Buddhist and Taoist deities.

The Cosmic Mirror is a treasure with deep allegorical significance. The Celestial King of Beiming (the Northernmost Seas), who has achieved a thousand years of magic cultivation, has the material gratification of the mortal world at his fingertips. When he questions the beneficent Buddhist spirit of universal salvation, the Goddess of Mercy decrees that he would be demoted to the mortal world. The Celestial King of Beiming undergoes extreme poverty and suffering before he can finally succeed as an immortal. On the day he, as a mortal called Du Shuancheng, is named Top Scholar in the civil service examination, news arrives that the region north of the Yangtze River is flooded. The emperor orders him to find the Cosmic Mirror for disaster relief. In his search for the magical mirror, his dear ones and good friends all lay down their lives for his cause.

With the many trials and tribulations, one may wonder if all the joys and sorrows of human experience finally sublimate into the noble spirit of altruism. This is the theme that this play aims to explore.

Performance details are as follows:

March 10 and 11 (Wednesday and Thursday), 7.30pm
Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

April 23 and 24 (Friday and Saturday), 7.30pm
Auditorium, Tuen Mun Town Hall

Tickets priced from \$140 to \$350 are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_1045.html.

There will be two talks with free admission upon telephone registration, which will be available from 10am tomorrow (February 24) on a first-come, first-served basis. Those interested may call 2268 7267 (10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5.30pm from Monday to Friday, except public holidays). Each person can reserve one seat for each talk. Names and contact numbers are required for registration.

Details of the talks are as follows:

Pre-performance Talk (in Cantonese)

March 1 (Monday), 7.30pm

AC1, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Speakers: Liu Xun, Yeung Chi-sum, Lee Lung and Wan Fai-yin

Post-performance Talk (in Cantonese)

April 28 (Wednesday), 7.30pm

AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Speakers: Liu Xun, Yeung Chi-sum, Leung Siu-ming, Yue Ling-lung and Share Ka-lok