

“Cyrano de Bergerac” – A Cantonese Opera Interpretation to be staged at inaugural Chinese Culture Festival in June (with photos)

The inaugural Chinese Culture Festival (CCF), organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), will stage three performances of "Cyrano de Bergerac" – A Cantonese Opera Interpretation in mid-June. This play is an adaptation of a French classic piece of the same title. Cantonese opera virtuoso Law Ka-ying – playwright, director and actor all rolled into one – will partner with famous veterans Liza Wang and Sun Kim Long to present this romantic story of a love triangle. This production is a contemporary work developed with traditional Cantonese opera form, showcasing Hong Kong's strength to serve an East-meets-West centre for international cultural exchange. This new opera is also the opening programme of the 12th Chinese Opera Festival and one of the highlights of the 35th anniversary of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre.

"Cyrano de Bergerac" – A Cantonese Opera Interpretation is a play developed by Law over a decade. The story has been transposed from the French battlefield in the original play to Tumu Crisis in the Ming dynasty. The strong cast will delicately interpret the political disputes within the story as well as the complex emotions of love and friendship, through close-knit scenes. This adaptation exhibits an exquisite combination of the plot and musical elements of Western drama while preserving the performing techniques, traditional forms and artistic charm of Cantonese opera. It serves as a demonstration of the eclecticism of the art form, contributing to the promotion of the creative transformation and development of fine traditional Chinese culture.

The play tells the story of Zhu Bufan, a captain of the noble guard, and his best friend Zhu Yihao, both falling in love with Princess Xu Qishan. Bufan, embarrassed by his large nose, hesitates to confess his love to Qishan, while Yihao, though handsome, is naturally shy and lacks the courage to approach the princess. Bufan then offers to write love letters in Yihao's name, conveying his own heartfelt feelings to Qishan through these letters. Later, Yihao dies in a battle. Qishan goes to a convent for retreat and Bufan regularly visits her. During one visit, Qishan asks the wounded Bufan to read out Yihao's love letters and discovers that he can recite those letters. She finally recognises the true heart behind the writings by Bufan.

The "Cyrano de Bergerac" – A Cantonese Opera Interpretation will be held at 7.30pm on June 14 and 15, 2024 (Friday and Saturday), and at 2.30pm on June 16 (Sunday) at the Grand Theatre of Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Tickets priced at \$220, \$320, \$420 and \$520 is now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk) and the Xiqu Centre Ticket Office. For telephone bookings,

please call 3166 1288. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.ccf.gov.hk/en/programme/chinese-opera-festival-2024-cyrano-de-bergerac-a-cantonese-opera-interpretation.

The programme offers a pre-performance talk and a post-performance talk in Cantonese. The pre-performance talk will be held at 7.30pm on June 3 (Monday) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. The speakers include Law and Wang. Admission is free with limited seats available on a first-come, first-served basis. Online registration is required (www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_1716.html#tab_13_0). The post-performance talk will be held after the performance on June 16 (Sunday). The speakers are Law, Wang and Sun. Members of the audience are welcome to stay behind to join.

The CCF, presented by the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and organised by the LCSD's Chinese Culture Promotion Office, aims to enhance the public's appreciation of Chinese culture and cultivate citizens' national identity and cultural confidence. The inaugural CCF will be held from June to September. Through different performing arts programmes in various forms and related extension activities, including selected programmes of the Chinese Opera Festival, exemplary local arts projects recognised by the China National Arts Fund, performing arts programmes from arts and cultural organisations, film screenings, exhibitions, talks and more, the festival allows members of the public and visitors to experience the broad and profound Chinese culture with a view to promoting Chinese culture and patriotic education as well as enhancing national identity among the people of Hong Kong, making contributions to the steadfast and successful implementation of "one country, two systems". For details, please visit the CCF website www.ccf.gov.hk.

The LCSD has long been promoting Chinese history and culture through organising an array of programmes and activities to enable the public to learn more about the broad and profound Chinese culture. For more information, please visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/ccpo/index.html.

