

## Film Archive to present screening programme "Hairpin, Butterfly and Tong Tik-sang Revisited" in July (with photos)

The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will present a programme entitled "Hairpin, Butterfly and Tong Tik-sang Revisited" to screen "The Legend of Purple Hairpin" (1959) and "Butterfly and Red Pear Blossom" (1959) (Restored Version), both adapted by master playwright of Cantonese opera Tong Tik-sang from his own works, on July 1 and 7 respectively at the HKFA Cinema. Through the programme, audiences will be able to revisit the pieces of Chinese cultural treasure created by Tong. This screening programme is one of the programmes of the Chinese Culture Festival (CCF).

Tong penned a series of four Cantonese operas, "The Legend of Purple Hairpin", "Butterfly and Red Pear Blossom", "The Reincarnation of Lady Plum Blossom", and "Princess Chang Ping", known as the "Dynastic Tetralogy", for the Sin Fung Ming Opera Troupe in the 1950s. They provided materials for the general public to reinforce their sense of identification with traditional Chinese culture while criticising the ills of autocratic monarchy. Both films, "The Legend of Purple Hairpin" and "Butterfly and Red Pear Blossom", tell a story of free love in which a couple, despite obstacles and tribulations, eventually triumph in their devotion to each other. They are not only two of Tong's most timeless and touching love stories, but also enduring classics under the directorship of Lee Tit.

The popular Cantonese opera "The Legend of Purple Hairpin" was adapted from the play of the same name created by Tang Xianzu of the Ming dynasty, with references to the novel "The Tale of Huo Xiaoyu" by Jiang Fang of the Tang dynasty. Huo, a courtesan played by Pak Suet-sin, falls in love with scholar Li Yi played by Yam Kim-fai on the night of the Lantern Festival but they are threatened by a powerful official, Marshal Lu, because of their sprouting romance. With the help of a royalty, the Fourth Lord played by Leung Sing-por, the lovers eventually find a happy life together. With the deft and smooth mise-en-scene of Lee, the film retains the essence of Cantonese opera that articulates the romance and sorrow between lovers, alongside the satisfying mockery of the rich and powerful, all under the precision of Tong as a playwright and librettist.

"Butterfly and Red Pear Blossom", adapted from the classical drama "The Tale of Red Pear Flower" from the Ming dynasty, is also with Yam and Pak portraying the protagonists, who share mutual admiration for each other but they are always kept apart by twists of fate and the interference by a corrupt official played by Lan Chi Pak. By bringing together Tong's subtle and elegant libretto and a touching storyline based on a classical story, the

stellar performance of the Sin Fung Ming Opera Troupe and Lee's directing that is in harmony with the rhythm of the original Cantonese opera, this film is a masterpiece blending the art forms of Cantonese opera and cinema.

Both films are in Cantonese. "The Legend of Purple Hairpin" is with Chinese subtitles for lyrics while "Butterfly and Red Pear Blossom" is with Chinese and English subtitles. The screenings will be accompanied by post-screening talks, hosted by Cantonese opera expert Professor Chan Sau-yan. For programme details, please visit the website of the HKFA ([www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en/web/hkfa/2024/tts/pe-event-2024-tts.html](http://www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en/web/hkfa/2024/tts/pe-event-2024-tts.html)) or call 2739 2139.

Tickets priced at \$45 will be available at URBTIX ([www.urbtix.hk](http://www.urbtix.hk)) from June 2. For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288.

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](http://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](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/ccpo/index.html).



