

LCSD launches free online programme “Hong Kong Young Talent Cantonese Opera Troupe – Performance of Cantonese Opera Excerpts”

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department has launched the free online programme "Hong Kong Young Talent Cantonese Opera Troupe – Performance of Cantonese Opera Excerpts".

The programme will include excerpts from four operas, namely "The Secret Pledge" from "Empress Xiaozhuang", "Chastising the Princess" and "The Reconciliation" from "The Warrior's Marriage" and "Kneeling by the Pond" from "The Lioness Roars". The performers of the shows will include young Cantonese opera talents To Wing-sum, Wang Kit-ching, Doris Kwan, Lam Tsz-ching, Ng Lap-hei, Fei Fenger, Yuen Sin-ting, Chan Kei-ting and Ng Kwok-wa.

The story of "The Secret Pledge" from "Empress Xiaozhuang" follows Da Yu'er, dubbed the "number one beauty" among the Mongolians and Jurchens. She meets Dorgon, the 14th son of Khan Nurhaci, on a mound. It is love at first sight for both, but it is a love that is not to be. Dorgon's half-brother, Hong Taiji, aims to take the throne of the khanate on the death of their father. He forces the Royal Concubine – Dorgon's mother – to be buried with Nurhaci's remains. Then Yu'er is told that Dorgon has died on an expedition, so she marries Hong Taiji to become one of his many wives. On their wedding day, Dorgon returns, obviously injured. Now Yu'er sees through Hong Taiji as a cold and heartless man who has no love for his family. She visits Dorgon at night, and gives him a cut strand of her hair as a pledge of her love.

The story of "Chastising the Princess" takes place in the Tang dynasty. General Guo Ziyi was made Lord of Fenyang for putting down the An Lushan Rebellion. His son, Guo Ai, marries Princess Junrui. Though they are a loving couple, the Princess's over-pampered behaviour leads to a family dispute: on the double celebration of the birthdays of Guo Ziyi and his wife, she refuses to attend the banquet at the Guo Residence. Guo Ai sits through the banquet amidst the prickly teasing of his family members and gets drunk. He returns to the palace and has a heated quarrel with his wife. In the heat of the moment, he slaps her. The Princess goes to the emperor and tearfully relates the whole incident, which leads to dire consequences.

The story of "The Reconciliation" from "The Warrior's Marriage" follows Hua Yunlong, who is on a mission to go to Wuchang to win the hand of Princess Yinping, the daughter of Chen Youliang. He adopts a false name and succeeds in marrying her. At his persuasion, Yinping agrees to merge two armies and put them under his command. This leads to the death of her father in the battle of Lishan. Upon hearing the terrible news, she leads her army to besiege the fortress where Yunlong is stationed. Not without guilt and

remorse, he comes out of the fortress gate to surrender to her. The Princess struggles with her mixed emotions for her husband, then vows to kill him to avenge her father.

The story of "Kneeling by the Pond" from "The Lioness Roars" takes place during the Song dynasty. Chen Jichang is a Prefect. He lives in fear of his wife, Liu Yu'e, who is so prone to jealousy that she always goes on a rampage. Jichang feels the shame of being unable to stand up to her as a man. One day, his friend Su Dongpo sends him an invitation to go together to enjoy the plum blossoms in the snow. However, Dongpo has arranged to be in the company of the courtesan Qincao. Jichang is immediately enamoured of Qincao because of her beauty. She tells him that she is willing to be his concubine. When Jichang returns home, Yu'e calls him a liar, cudgels his calf, and makes him kneel by the pond for the whole night as punishment.

Performed in Cantonese with Chinese subtitles, the programme was today (July 7) uploaded to the department's one-stop Online Resources Centre at www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/onlineresources.html. For programme enquiries, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_983.html.