

# Ling Lung Cantonese Opera Troupe to perform "Du Shiniang" in January

The Ling Lung Cantonese Opera Troupe will stage two performances of "Du Shiniang" in January next year. The production is an adaptation of "Du Shiniang Sinks Her Jewel Box in Anger", Volume 32 of the vernacular story collection of "Jingshi Tongyan" (Stories to Caution the World) by Feng Menglong from the Ming dynasty.

Written by Chow Kit-ping and directed by Geng Tianyuan, the play is a winner of the Cantonese Opera Development Fund's New Cantonese Opera Play Scriptwriting Competition Outstanding Script Award, and features a cast that includes Loong Koon-tin, Tang Mi-ling, Chan Hung-chun, Lui Hung-kwong, Chan Ka-ming and Yuen Siu-fai.

The story takes place during the Wanli reign of the Ming dynasty. Du Shiniang is an unrivalled beauty among the courtesans in the capital. One day, Li Ganxian and Liu Yuchun visit a brothel. Li, smitten by Du's beauty, is bent on winning her heart. Liu, aware of his humble circumstances, admires Du but lacks the courage to show his love. Lacking literary talent, Li asks Liu to compose a poem for him. It succeeds in getting Du to meet Li and they fall in love.

Sun Fu, a rich salt dealer, is enamoured of Du but she rejects him. The bawd of the brothel, for want of money and wary of Sun Fu's power, forces Du to become Sun's concubine. Du resists by threatening to kill herself. Fearing she may lose both Du and the money, the bawd asks Du to raise 300 taels of gold to be released from the bond. Li asks Liu to help him raise the money. Liu wants to free Du from the bond, so he borrows 150 taels of gold from Sun and gives them to Du. Ironically, Du shows appreciation for Li but mocks Liu. Du has eventually raised enough to free her. She sets off for Jiangsu-Zhejiang with Li.

However, when the boat sails near Guazhou, Li begins to feel regret – he is now broke and his parents may not forgive him for marrying a courtesan. In the meantime, Sun Fu's boat catches up with them. He offers to pay Li 1,000 taels of gold to buy Du from Li, who agrees and tells Du his feelings. Ruing her choice of husband, the disillusioned Du sinks her treasure chest of jewels into the river and jumps in to drown. Later, the dispirited Liu finds the treasure chest in the river and collects it when he leaves the capital. He dreams of Du appearing on the waves, tearfully telling him her sad story. They are, however, now separated by death, with only Du's memory remaining.

"Du Shiniang" is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. It will be held at 7.30pm on January 14 and 15 (Tuesday and Wednesday) at the Auditorium of Kwai Tsing Theatre. Tickets priced at \$140, \$220, \$300 and \$380 are now available at URBTIX ([www.urbtix.hk](http://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\\_926.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_926.html).

Two performance-related talks will be held at 7.30pm on November 29 (Friday) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre (HKCC) and at 7.30pm on January 16 (Thursday) at AC1, 4/F, Administration Building, HKCC respectively. Speakers include Loong Koon-tin, Tang Mi-ling and Chow Kit-ping. The talks will be held in Cantonese. Admission is free. Limited seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis.