

Local Cantonese opera artists to perform classic repertories

"Four Decades of Artistry Brought Together on One Stage" featuring two classic repertories – "The Sword of the Valiant" and "Death of a Loyal Warrior" – will be presented in February by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

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The story of "The Sword of the Valiant" takes place during the mid-Ming dynasty. The fatuous Emperor causes suffering to his people. The minister who holds sway over state affairs, Meng Kui, colludes with Japanese pirates, while a righteous man called Xun Ru happens to know that Meng will be passing through Huainan and plots to assassinate him. Xun knows that the patriotic Long family have an heirloom, a sword with a hidden blade, which could help him succeed. Dowager Long sends her grandson Jialie to bring the sword and be the assassin. She also urges him to be ready to die if he fails.

Jialie's sister, Jiajie, is worried about her younger brother going on this deadly mission alone. She dresses as a man and trails him in order to protect him. Jialie manages to get close to Meng but despite wielding the special sword, he fails to kill Meng. Jialie is driven off a cliff. At the news of the death, Jiajie hurries to the camp, where an ambush is waiting. During the fight, Jiajie's pendant is lost, while Meng recognises the Long family's treasure. Later, on Dowager Long's birthday, Meng presents her with a box containing the head of her son. Meng claims that Jialie tried to assassinate him on the evidence of the jade pendant. The Dowager replies that he has stolen it to incriminate them. Meng gives the Long family five days to surrender, otherwise the whole family will be punished by death.

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Performing will be Wai Chun-fai, Chong Yuen-sin, Liu Kwok-sum, Wan Yuk-yu, Chor Ling-yan, Pui Chun-hin, Lung Ting-sang, Sze Yuen-ying and Ho Yuen-sze. "The Sword of the Valiant" will be staged at 7.30pm on February 4 (Tuesday) at the Auditorium, Sha Tin Town Hall; and at 7.30pm on February 17 (Monday) at the Auditorium, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing. Tickets are priced from \$140 to \$380.

The story of "Death of a Loyal Warrior" takes place during the Ming dynasty. The Emperor is facing serious troubles within his empire and abroad. The frontier is guarded by the patriotic family of Marshal Zhong Yujun, whose elder son Xiaoquan is talented in both literary and martial arts, and has been ordered to embark on an expedition. In the meantime, the father of the Emperor's consort slanders Xiaoquan before the Emperor. Xiaoquan is thus summoned by the Emperor, and is subject to military discipline if he defies the order. While everyone is in disarray, the consort's father arrives with a golden token from the Emperor, threatening to execute the entire Zhong family if Xiaoquan does not return to the court immediately. Xiaoquan has no choice but to follow the order.

Deceived by rumours, the Emperor dismisses Xiaoquan from his position. Xiaoquan's father also falls into the villainous trap, believing that the ruthlessness of his son has triggered an enemy invasion. He strikes Xiaoquan in anger with his sabre, wanting to execute him. At the same time, the consort's father arrives with a royal decree and announces that Xiaoquan is to be executed. Despite coming back with the proof of the consort's father's treason, it is already too late for Xiaoyi to rescue his twin brother Xiaoquan, who has been executed by the consort's father. To avenge his brother, Xiaoyi wields his sabre and kills the villain on the spot.

Performing will be Wai Chun-fai, Pui Chun-hin, Chong Yuen-sin, Chor Ling-yan, Lung Ting-sang, Kwong Tsz-wong, Liu Kwok-sum, Wan Yuk-yu, Sze Yuen-ying, Ho Yuen-sze, Ng Lap-hei and Kwok Chun-hang. "Death of a Loyal Warrior" will be staged at 7.30pm on February 18 (Tuesday) at the Auditorium, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing. Tickets are priced from \$140 to \$320.

Tickets are now available at URBIX (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_940.html.

There will be talks (to be conducted in Cantonese) with free admission on a first-come, first-served basis.

Pre-Performance Talk

January 13 (Monday) 7.30pm

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

Speakers: Mak Wai-man, Liu Kwok-sum, Wai Chun-fai, Chong Yuen-sin, Chor Ling-yan, Sze Yuen-ying, Ho Yuen-sze and Lung Ting-sang

Post-Performance Talk

March 10 (Tuesday) 7.30pm

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

Speakers: Mak Wai-man, Liu Kwok-sum, Wai Chun-fai, Chong Yuen-sin, Pui Chun-hin, Chor Ling-yan, Sze Yuen-ying, Ho Yuen-sze and Lung Ting-sang