

Regional Music of China Series to stage “Set Tunes of the North and the South” in July

As part of its "Regional Music of China Series", the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present "Set Tunes of the North and the South" in July. The programme will provide a concert featuring music from the northern and southern Mainland.

The brothers Ko Yun-kuen and Ko Yun-hung, renowned percussion and ensemble leaders in Cantonese opera, together with their wind and percussion ensemble, will perform a programme featuring selected songs from the northern and southern Mainland. The performance will include a special treat; their double presentation of two tunes from the Kunshan and Guangdong repertoires that share the same titles.

The programme will include a percussion marking the beginning of the performance "The Heralding Drums", a medley of set tunes for wind and percussion "Birthday Celebration", "Blessing by the God of Fortune" and "A Fairy Returns Her Son to the Mortal Father". Also to be featured is a medley of short tunes "Da Ba-Ban-Tou", "Jian-Jian-Hua", "Seeing Her Lover Off", "Jade Beauty", "The Red Embroidered Shoes", "Yingtai Pays Her Respects at the Grave", "Taohua Brings Herbal Medicine", "The Nun Leaving the Nunnery" and "Su Xiaomei Laments by Herself". There will also be a medley of long tunes, including "Thinking of the Sages" and "Liu-Yao-Jin", ensemble music of wind and percussion set tunes of Kunshan and Guangdong "Da-Kai-Men", "Dian-Jiang-Chun", "Shi-Liu-Hua", music from a notation of live singing "The Little Red Peach", and ba yin (eight sound) ensemble "King Chu Bidding Farewell to His Concubine".

The Ko brothers were born into a family with three generations of percussion virtuosi in Cantonese opera. They are the sons of the late Ko Gan, a renowned percussion ensemble leader in Cantonese opera.

Under his father's influence and rigorous tutelage, Ko Yun-kuen developed a keen interest in Cantonese opera gongs and drums from an early age and aspired to follow in his father's footsteps. Ko was already the mentor of many musicians when he was only 30 years old, and today many of them have become professional musicians. He was awarded Artist of the Year (Xiqu) at the Hong Kong Arts Development Awards 2017 by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

Ko Yun-hung became a formal disciple of the xiao virtuoso Li Sum, acquiring a masterful command across instrumental categories including percussion, wind, string, lucked-string, as well as music theory. He is also a prolific composer, which won him fame in the Cantonese opera world as a truly versatile musician. He was awarded Artist of the Year (Xiqu) at the

Hong Kong Arts Development Awards 2014 by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

"Set Tunes of the North and the South" will be staged at 8pm on July 23 (Friday) at the Auditorium, Ko Shan Theatre New Wing. Tickets priced at \$240 are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone credit card bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7321 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/music/programs_1124.html.