

Acclaimed British solo play "JARMAN" to be staged in Hong Kong in January (with photos)

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present the acclaimed British solo play "JARMAN" in January next year. The play is written and performed by renowned stage performer Mark Farrelly. It depicts the extraordinary life of the late British avant-garde artist Derek Jarman (1942 – 1994). The production has toured extensively in the United Kingdom (UK) in recent years, and is one of the nominees of the Best Solo Performance in the 2023 Off-West End Awards. The performance in Hong Kong will be the first time that Farrelly brings his work "JARMAN" to be staged outside the UK.

The solo feature of the play, Jarman, was an iconic British filmmaker, painter, gardener and writer. His film "Blue", which premiered at the Venice Biennale in 1993, not long before he died, was highly acclaimed. Farrelly wrote the "JARMAN" one-man play after reading Jarman's journals chronicling the last few years of his life. The production recounts the artistic spirit of Jarman with minimal set and props – a chair, a torch, some wrapping paper and a bedsheet. Farrelly captures the very soul of Jarman with florid script and physical movement, and employs light, darkness, silence and soundtracks to conjure up the rich visuals of Jarman's world. He also brings improvisation elements, and sometimes even interacts with attendees during the performance to spark the audience's imagination.

Farrelly is an actor and writer. He graduated from Jesus College of the University of Cambridge, and has acted in the West End of the UK and other overseas places over the years. He is the author of two hit solo plays, "The Silence of Snow: The Life of Patrick Hamilton" and "Quentin Crisp: Naked Hope". His recent productions include the two-handed play "Howard's End" and solo play "JARMAN".

Solo Play: "JARMAN" by Mark Farrelly (UK) will be held at 8pm on January 26 and 27 (Friday and Saturday) and 3pm on January 27 and 28 (Saturday and Sunday) next year at the Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre. It will be performed in English with Chinese surtitles. Tickets priced at \$240 and \$320 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For programme enquiries, please call 2268 7325 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/theatre/programs_1650.html. The programme contains adult content, and is recommended for people aged 14 and above.



[Public urged to receive vaccination early prior to winter influenza season and heighten vigilance against respiratory tract infection](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (December 1) again urged members of the public to heighten their vigilance against respiratory tract infection in winter including seasonal influenza. With the approach of Christmas and New Year holidays, it is important for individuals planning to travel outside Hong Kong, especially high-risk groups, to take proactive measures to ensure their personal protection. Given that it typically takes about two weeks for antibodies to develop, members of the public should prepare ahead and receive seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) at appropriate times prior to the winter influenza peak. The Government has been keeping close contact with vaccines suppliers and will continue to endeavour to ensure an adequate supply of

vaccine for the vaccination programmes.

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the DH has been closely monitoring the local activity of respiratory pathogens in the community. For influenza, the latest surveillance data showed local seasonal influenza activity continued to remain at a low level. The percentage of respiratory specimens testing positive for seasonal influenza viruses received by the CHP's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch and the Hospital Authority was 3.92 per cent which was below the baseline threshold of 9.21 per cent, and the admission rate with the principal diagnosis of influenza in public hospitals was 0.16 per 10 000 population in the week ending November 25. For the other respiratory pathogens, the percentages of respiratory specimens testing positive for them in the week ending November 25 were comparable with the preceding week. More active respiratory pathogens included Rhinovirus/enterovirus, parainfluenza viruses and adenovirus.

To strengthen the immunity of the public against vaccine-preventable respiratory diseases (such as influenza, COVID-19 and pneumococcal infection), the DH has been administering various vaccination programmes to provide free or subsidised vaccines to eligible persons. Channels for vaccinations include public and private clinics, residential care homes and school outreach vaccination service.

The 2023/24 SIV programmes have been launched since September this year. A total of 929 000 doses of SIV have been procured under the Government Vaccination Programme, the Seasonal Influenza Vaccination School Outreach (Free of Charge) Programme and the Residential Care Home Vaccination Programme for eligible high-risk groups to receive SIV free-of-charge. In view of the vaccine usage and public needs, the Government has increased the procurement amount to over 1 million doses for the free vaccination programmes. Relevant vaccine suppliers have also undertaken to ensure a steady supply of vaccines procured by the Government.

In addition, the DH has been monitoring the vaccine supplies in the private healthcare sector and keeping close communications with vaccine suppliers. Private doctors participating in the Vaccination Subsidy Scheme will purchase influenza vaccines themselves according to the usual practice. It is noted that over 1.2 million doses of vaccines have been reserved for supplying the private healthcare sector in phases starting from September to private doctors who have placed pre-orders and additional orders over the past months. Additional doses of SIV will also arrive Hong Kong in December for supplying to the private healthcare sector. The DH has reminded private doctors to contact relevant vaccine suppliers for more details.

As of November 26, a total of over 1.44 million doses of SIV have been given so far under various vaccination programmes in the 2023/24 season, representing an increase of 23 per cent comparing with the same period of the 2022/23 season. This was attributable to concerted efforts of citizens, the DH, the Hospital Authority and private doctors engaged through the private-public partnership programme.

Meanwhile, the DH observed an obvious increase in SIV uptake this season

for high-risk groups, especially elderly and children, when comparing with previous years. Vaccination at residential care home for the elderly is ongoing and has covered 48 per cent of the residents by arranging visiting doctor's outreach vaccination service, while the coverage rate of community elders increased by 15 per cent to the current 40 per cent; For children, the DH has worked together with the Education Bureau, Parent-Teacher Associations and district-based school associations to implement enhanced measures in raising the number of schools participating in the outreach programme. According to data of the DH, both participation from schools and consent rates from students showed improvement this season. The vaccination rate among children is now 43 per cent, which has increased by 44 per cent compared to same period last year.

As many respiratory pathogens including influenza virus may have increasing activity and community transmission during winter, while vaccination is safe and effective in preventing seasonal influenza and COVID-19, the DH strongly urged members of the public especially high-risk groups, to receive SIV as soon as possible. High-risk groups such as elderly persons, children and those with chronic illnesses, should receive a booster dose to be given at least six months after the last dose or COVID-19 infection (whichever is later), regardless of the number of doses received previously. COVID-19 vaccine can be co-administered with, or separated from, SIV. Details of receiving both COVID-19 vaccination and SIV are available online (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/106096.html).

"To prevent respiratory infections, members of the public should observe strict personal, hand and environmental hygiene at all times. Persons with respiratory symptoms, even if the symptoms are mild, should wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly. They should perform hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask," a spokesman for the DH stressed.

For the latest information, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#). As for vaccination, the public may visit the CHP's [Vaccination Schemes page](#).

Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill 2023 gazetted

The Government published in the Gazette today (December 1) the Telecommunications (Amendment) Bill 2023 (the Bill) to amend the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) (TO) to provide legal basis for the Communications Authority (CA) to grant authorised access for mobile network operators to install and maintain mobile communications facilities (MCFs) in

reserved space in specified new buildings.

"The amendment is to implement the initiative in the 2022 Policy Address to enhance the fifth generation (5G) mobile services infrastructure. The mobile communications network has become a basic necessity and is fundamental to further innovation and technological development. Given the nature of 5G, mobile network operators need to install more MCFs to achieve the construction of a comprehensive mobile network. The Bill would be crucial to the expansion of 5G network coverage in Hong Kong and the facilitation of Hong Kong's development into a smart city," a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said.

The Government proposes that specified new buildings (including new commercial, industrial, residential and hotel buildings, as well as redeveloped buildings) under the Bill should reserve designated space where mobile network operators under authorisation can access, install and maintain MCFs at those areas. As far as the access to the specified new buildings for installation and maintenance of telecommunications facilities is concerned, the Bill will standardise the relevant arrangements which are applicable to mobile network operators and fixed network operators. Such designated space in specified new buildings will be exempted from the calculation of gross floor area.

To implement the proposal, apart from amending the TO, the CA will issue a code of practice to provide detailed information and guidance for mobile network operators, building developers, construction professionals, etc on the minimum standards and requirements of the infrastructure for the installation of MCFs in specified new buildings. Relevant government departments including the Buildings Department and the Lands Department will also revise administrative guidelines/codes of practice/practice notes under their respective purview to dovetail with the CA's promulgation of the code of practice.

In the course of implementing the related work, the Government conducted consultations from February to April this year and consulted the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting on the proposal on March 20, and received general support from the industry and LegCo members.

The Bill will be introduced into the LegCo for first reading on December 6.

[Inland Revenue \(Amendment\) \(Tax](#)

Deductions for Spectrum Utilization Fees) Bill 2023 gazetted

The Government published in the Gazette today (December 1) the Inland Revenue (Amendment) (Tax Deductions for Spectrum Utilization Fees) Bill 2023 (the Bill) to provide for tax deductions for spectrum utilization fees (SUF) payable by mobile network operators (MNOs) on radio spectrum acquired in future auctions, with a view to encouraging MNOs to invest more proactively in telecommunications infrastructure for providing better communications services to business sectors and the general public.

"The amendments aim to implement the proposals in the 2023-24 Budget. Communications infrastructure provides essential foundation for all sorts of advanced telecommunications, innovation and technology developments that are key to Hong Kong's digital transformation and long-term economic development. The Bill evidently demonstrates the current-term Government's commitment to, and support for, the enhancement of Hong Kong's communications infrastructure. It will benefit not only the telecommunications and innovation sectors but also the general public," a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said.

The Government proposes that the SUF payable by MNOs for the radio spectrum to be acquired in future auctions is to be fully deductible, and the tax deduction will be spread over the spectrum assignment term (which is generally 15 years). The proposal has no retrospective effect and will only be applicable to the SUF derived in auctions conducted on or after the commencement of the Bill. In other words, the SUF derived in all past auctions, whether they are already paid or to be paid, will not be affected and will remain not tax deductible.

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council for first reading on December 6.

Public consultation on proposed updates to safety standards for toys and children's products launched

The Government launched a public consultation today (December 1) on the proposed updates to Schedules 1 and 2 to the Toys and Children's Products Safety Ordinance (Cap. 424) to implement up-to-date safety standards promulgated by the relevant standards institutions for toys and children's

products listed in Schedule 2 (Schedule 2 products).

The Ordinance stipulates that a person must not manufacture, import or supply a toy or a Schedule 2 product unless it complies with all the applicable requirements contained in any one of the safety standards (international standards or standards adopted by major economies) specified in Schedule 1 (applicable to toys) or Schedule 2 (applicable to Schedule 2 products) to the Ordinance. The Government keeps in view any updates or amendments to the safety standards so as to apply up-to-date and operative versions of the standards to toys and Schedule 2 products supplied in Hong Kong.

As the safety standards specified for toys and for six classes of Schedule 2 products, namely (i) baby walking frames; (ii) bunk beds for domestic use; (iii) child safety barriers for domestic use; (iv) children's paints; (v) playpens for domestic use; and (vi) wheeled child conveyances, have been updated, the Government proposes to adopt the up-to-date versions of those safety standards under the Ordinance. Details of the proposals are available on the website of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau at www.cedb.gov.hk.

Members of the public are welcome to send their views on the proposals in writing to the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau at 23/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong, or by fax to 2869 4420, or by email to tcpso_standards_updates@cedb.gov.hk, on or before December 31, 2023.