

Veteran Cantonese opera stars to perform award-winning work “Lu Buwei – A Kingly Potential Asset”

The acclaimed Cantonese opera stars of the Sun Moon Star Cantonese Opera will perform a newly written work entitled "Lu Buwei – A Kingly Potential Asset" in December. The play, written by Norman Cheung, won the Cantonese Opera Development Fund's Outstanding Script Award of the New Cantonese Opera Play Scriptwriting Competition in 2016.

The play is inspired by the story of Lu Buwei, a merchant who succeeded in usurping the Ying regime of Qin, as chronicled in "Annals of the Dukedoms of Eastern Zhou Period". Playwright Norman Cheung formally became a disciple of renowned composer of Cantonese operatic songs Yeung Sek-kui to learn the art. Cheung ventured to write full-length plays for Cantonese opera and, when he heard of the New Cantonese Opera Play Scriptwriting Competition organised by the Cantonese Opera Development Fund, he was thrilled to have the opportunity to try. Cheung picked the Lu Buwei story for adaptation into a Cantonese Opera script, and was encouraged when opera performer Ng Chin-fung consented to be his supervisor and guided him on the libretto and script.

The story of "Lu Buwei – A Kingly Potential Asset" takes place towards the end of the Warring States period. Yiren, a minor prince of Qin, is held hostage in the Zhao state. Lu Buwei, a merchant, sees him as a rare commodity. He seeks Yiren out, befriends him and offers him his own concubine, Zhao Ji, who is already pregnant at the time. The baby will later be the First Emperor of Qin, Ying Zheng. Lu sells all his assets and moves the whole family to the state of Qin. With his ingenious schemes, he succeeds in paving the way for Yiren's return to his native country. After a few years, Yiren is declared heir to the throne, to which he ascends later. But he is poisoned to death by Lu, who wants to put Ying Zheng in his place.

The performers in "Lu Buwei – A Kingly Potential Asset" include Ng Chin-fung, Yuen Siu-fai, Wan Fai-yin, Song Hongbo, Leung Sum-ye, Lui Hung-kwong, Yat Dim-hung (December 12 only) and Wan Yuk-yu (December 13 only).

"Lu Buwei – A Kingly Potential Asset" is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. It will be staged at 7.30pm on December 12 and 13 (Wednesday and Thursday) at the Auditorium of the Kwai Tsing Theatre (lyrics and dialogue with Chinese and English surtitles). Tickets priced at \$120, \$220, \$300 and \$380 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 7325 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/chinese_opera/programs_671.html.

A pre-performance talk (in Cantonese) will be held at 7.30pm on November

30 (Friday) at AC2, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre. Speakers will include Ng Chin-fung and Norman Cheung. A post-performance talk (in Cantonese) will be held at 7.30pm on December 15 (Saturday) at AC1, 4/F, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, with speakers including Ng Chin-fung, Wan Fai-yin and Norman Cheung. Admission is free with limited seats available on a first-come, first-served basis.