

# Chinese Opera Festival 2023: “Bless This Land – Cantonese Opera Showcase under the Bamboo Theatre at Victoria Park” kicks off today (with photos)

The grand finale of this year's Chinese Opera Festival (COF), "Bless This Land – Cantonese Opera Showcase under the Bamboo Theatre at Victoria Park", opens today (September 23). From now until October 8 (Sunday), four local Cantonese opera troupes will stage a series of highly dramatic and breathtaking performances by renowned artists in a large-scale bamboo theatre at Victoria Park, recreating the local culture of bamboo theatre in urban areas of the past and bringing a vibrant festival experience to members of the public.

In the first performance of the Cantonese opera bamboo-theatre showcase, a traditional set piece, "The Imperial Emperor of Heaven Holding Court", was performed as the standard stage-opener for today's matinee show. The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong gathered nearly 100 local veteran Chinese opera artists and talented young stars to perform in the spectacular scenes of the immortals gathering at the heavenly court. The immortals showcased their unique stances, in which a variety of exciting routines played out in traditional styles, such as the "Peach Blossom routine" and the "Sun Moon routine". The next three performances of traditional set pieces, "Eight Immortals Bestowing Longevity", "Blessing by the God of Fortune" and "A Fairy Returns Her Son to the Mortal Father", were considered celebratory and auspicious, while the other two formulaic plays, "Breaking the Arrow to Become Sworn Brothers" and "Fan Lihua Executing Her Son", featured multiple martial arts stances. The performances opened the Cantonese opera bamboo-theatre showcase with a full house and thunderous applause.

The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong, the Dragon and Phoenix Cantonese Opera Troupe, the Spring Glory Cantonese Opera Workshop and the Golden Dragon Troupe will stage a total of 12 evening performances of timeless classics to celebrate the National Day and Mid-Autumn Festival with well wishes for the prosperity and peace of Hong Kong. Lyrics and dialogue with Chinese and English surtitles are available at the performances. Tickets priced at \$140 and \$180 are now available at URB TIX ([www.urbtix.hk](http://www.urbtix.hk)). For details of the plays, dates and times of the programme, please see the Annex or visit [www.cof.gov.hk/2023/en/blessthisland.html](http://www.cof.gov.hk/2023/en/blessthisland.html).

As one of the arts and cultural programmes of the third Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Culture and Arts Festival presented in Hong Kong, the Cantonese opera bamboo-theatre showcase has introduced an eye-catching and festive themed tram, which is decorated with a traditional bamboo theatre plaque that tours Hong Kong Island during the programme period. A number of educational programmes on bamboo theatres and Cantonese opera will also be

arranged for teachers and students for the promotion of the unique Lingnan culture and festive characteristics.

In support of the Cantonese opera bamboo-theatre showcase, the Hong Kong Central Library is now presenting a documentary exhibition of Cantonese opera. The Hong Kong Heritage Museum and Ko Shan Theatre will also organise Cantonese opera performances and talks respectively. For details, please visit related websites.

Organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the COF, since its inception in 2010, has curated quality operatic programmes with the aim of promoting the artistry and culture of Chinese traditional opera. The Chinese title for the Cantonese opera bamboo-theatre showcase, as the grand finale of the COF 2023, is a famous line by Lu You, a renowned poet during the Song dynasty. He wrote about a prosperous era when people lived well, cultural activities thrived, and performance venues could be found everywhere. The vision fits well with the format of this Cantonese opera bamboo-theatre showcase. For details of the COF 2023, please visit [www.cof.gov.hk](http://www.cof.gov.hk).

The LCSD has all along promoted Chinese history and culture. Apart from the bamboo theatre performance, the Mid-Autumn Lantern Carnivals 2023 with fascinating programmes is being held in Victoria Park, Sha Tin Park and Tuen Mun Park from now until October 2. Meanwhile, the Chinese Film Panorama 2023 will be launched on September 27. Members of the public can make use of these occasions to learn more about the characteristics of Chinese culture.



