A New Cantonese Opera
Eternal Lament
at the Palace of Eternal Life

A lifetime of honour and position lost to the lamentable Palace of Eternal Life

16-18.7.2010 (Friday to Sunday)
Auditorium, Kwai Tsing Theatre
7:30pm
$320, 220, 100

Lyrics and dialogue with Chinese and English subtitles
On the Creation of Eternal Lament at the Palace of Eternal Life

In the history of development of Chinese traditional theatre, *The Peach Blossom Fan* and *The Palace of Eternal Life* are the two most outstanding works of Kunqu opera in the Qing period (1644-1911). While the former is indisputably a greater play in terms of literary vision, the latter offers more staging possibilities.

In making *The Palace of Eternal Life* into a Cantonese opera, I was concerned that a simple transplanting process would not do the play justice, as the audience may not grasp the significance of the work at the time of its creation, in the history of Chinese theatre as well as among dramatists. This prompted me to incorporate into the story how Hong Sheng created his *Palace of Eternal Life*, and hope that by doing so, it would restate the work to the position it deserves in the history of Chinese opera.

My purpose of writing *Eternal Lament at the Palace of Eternal Life* is not so much to tell the life story of a frustrated scholar than to trace the growth and development of a dramatist and display the artistic attributes that make him great. But then, of course, I also hope to venture, through the play, my personal views on the culture of Chinese traditional theatre, and affirm the value of Chinese operatic literature which was not recognized until the early 20th Century.

A word about the staging: the music of this production is newly written, with the two-pronged objective that it should be innovative but at the same time it should have the true flavour of Chinese opera. Some of the lyrics have been set to new tunes, while the original libretto of Hong’s *Palace* has been incorporated to complete the musical structure and give it shape. Hong’s *Palace* would be presented as a ‘play within play’, acted out with the aid of the revolving stage for a juxtaposition of dimensions of the actual and the imagined for the protagonist. The audience would be transported between the Tang (618-907) and the Qing worlds in an enticing time-tunnel of drama. The storyline is made even more coherent through dance, which serves to provide the link between incidents in the play. Yet all in all, naturalism and realism rule at the end of the day.

Leung Hon-wai (Music Designer and Director)
劇情簡介

康熙八年（1669年），康熙以太學生疏於實學，責成參與唱曲的太學生，洪昇因操筆《沉香亭》而被天子詰問，幸得大學士明珠之子納蘭性德居中斡旋，兩人成為好友。是時三藩之乱，納蘭以《沉香亭》為千古文人鳴屈，不涉於忠君治世，勸勸洪昇當以治世為務，以符聖君之志。洪昇因而著手重撰《舞闕宴》一劇。

洪昇十四年（1675年），洪昇與梨園票友趙容升同，招來吳中名伶朱素月為師弟邵小月，一同搬演《舞闕宴》一折《春睡》，卻被嚴父趕出家門，只好帶同妻子黃蘭次到北京投靠岳父黃漢。洪昇在京與納蘭性德父子，但明珠却因劇中一句話似有影射他和大學士索額圖之間的明爭暗鬥而大怒。及後，洪昇與趙容升因席演《舞闕宴》並不是一部成功之作，決定易稿創作《長生殿》。另一方面，黃蘭次一直很恨他創作《沉香亭》的雄心，今不復在，但他卻不知洪昇在京寄食岳祖之悲，夫妻幾番翻臉，黃蘭次終別天獨自南歸。

洪昇為江蘇巡撫為文作序，得一厚禮並向郭小月求婚，納之為妾，因江蘇巡撫為索額圖姦釁，更令明珠對洪昇恨之徹骨。康熙二十八年（1689年），即《長生殿》改寫完成後翌年，洪昇在未過佟皇后圍百事，私家演戲而遭明珠命人參奏一本，洪昇被革去功名，驅逐出京。

時光荏苒，康熙四十三年（1704年），洪昇獲邀欣賞江南織造曹寅為其安排演出三晝夜的《長生殿》，席間觸及多年來的隱痛，令他感到十分唏噓，於歸家的小舟上高唱一句「可憐一曲長生殿，斷送功名到白頭」，溺水身亡。

主演：梁漢威、吳千鋒、尹飛燕、王超群、梁煒康、溫玉瑜、謝國璋、阮德鑑

Synopsis

The story takes place in the Qing Dynasty. In the 8th year of his reign (1669), Emperor Kangxi is displeased with the phenomenon that scholars of the Imperial College are participating in opera performances and neglecting their formal studies. Hong Sheng is reprimanded for writing The Pavilion of Aloe Wood. Nalan Xingde, son of Grand Secretary Nalan Mingzhu, intercedes with the Emperor for Hong, and the two young men become good friends. At the time, the country is troubled by the uprisings of three feudal lords. Xingde tells Sheng that Pavilion is a story about redressing the wrongs done to scholars of the past, while a play indicating a pledge of loyalty to His Majesty or a proposal of new ideas that would be conducive to the management of state affairs might be more appropriately regarded as the order of the day. He encourages Hong to write in those directions so as not to displease the Emperor. So Hong starts to write Dance of the Rainbow Dress.

Six years later, Sheng and an amateur performer, Zhao Rongsheng, invite Deng Xiaoyue, a prized pupil of the famous actor Zhu Suyue of the Jiangsu Province, to perform an excerpt from Dance of the Rainbow Dress. As a result of this, Sheng is expelled from home by his father. He has no choice but to seek refuge, together with his wife Huang Lancing, at the place of his father-in-law, Huang Ji, in Beijing. There he sees Xingde and his father Nalan Mingzhu again. But when watching the play, Nalan Mingzhu is enraged by a line which hints at his conflict with the Grand Secretary Suoeto. Later, Sheng and Rongsheng agree that Dance of the Rainbow Dress is not a successful work. They then decide to work on another play, The Palace of Eternal Life. On the other hand, Sheng's wife, Lancing, failing to empathize with his frustration and humiliation of living under his father-in-law's roof, tells him that she is totally disappointed with him, because he has lost the drive he once had in the creation of The Pavilion of Aloe Wood. After some bickering, Lancing leaves him and returns to the south alone.

By writing an introductory passage for the Governor of the Jiangsu Province, Hong receives a handsome reward. He proposes to Deng Xiaoyue and makes her his concubine. As the Governor belongs to Suoeto's party, Nalan Mingzhu takes it further to heart and holds a boiling grudge against Sheng. In 1688, the writing of The Palace of Eternal Life is completed. Then Sheng is eager to stage it in the next year, so although the nation is still mourning the death of Empress Tongzhi, he holds a private show at home. Nalan Mingzhu seizes the opportunity and arranges to have another official to paint Sheng black in front of the Emperor. Sheng is therefore stripped of his title, and banished from the capital.

Time flies. Fifteen years have passed. Sheng is invited by Cao Yin, Commissioner of Imperial Textiles in Jiangning, to a show of The Palace of Eternal Life in his honour. The performance is going to last for three days and three nights. During the banquet, Sheng is much saddened as all the pains that he has tried to hide over the years become raw again. In the boat on his way home, he piteously breaks out in song and sighs, "A lifetime of honour and position lost to the lamentable Palace of Eternal Life" before he throws himself into the river and gets drowned.


演出時數約3小時30分鐘(包括中场休息)
Running Time: Approx. 3hrs 30mins with an intermission
Hon Fung Cantonese Opera Institute

The Hon Fung Cantonese Opera Institute was set up in 1980 by Leung Hon-wai, a leading actor in Cantonese opera. The Institute has, in addition to an acting cast, a team of backstage talents including dramaturges, scriptwriters, vocal and music advisers, stage managers, costume designers, set designers and prop designers. Its performance of the original historical play Li Shimin, the Prince of Qin in late 1995 set the style of its performance which combines literature, history and traditional theatre, and manifested its quest for innovation and change. Since then, Hon Fung has been keeping up its unique creative path and introduced new elements into its productions, such as advanced stage technology and new presentation formats. Examples are The Military Order, Xixing Reforms, Hu Xueyan, An Incident at Tongque Tower, The Han Regime, Eighteen Songs of a Nomad Flute, The Glorious Zhenguan Years, The Story of Siu Ming Sing - A Legendary Star etc.

Apart from conducting studies and research on Cantonese opera and seeking reform, the Institute is also devoted to the training of young artists. Over the years, many outstanding artists have come out of the Institute, such as Chan Hung-chan, Cheung Mo-ling, Leung Wai-hong, Au She-yin, Wu Yuen-chun, Leung Yuk-yeo, Pao Siu-kei and Lee Wan-wah. In 1998, Hon Fung Creative Chinese Opera was set up which organized a series of creative and experimental performances and talks on Cantonese sung music theories to provide more performing and learning opportunities for new members.
演員介紹

梁漢威 Leung Hon-wai

香港粵劇藝術促進會主席，康樂及文化事務署粵劇製作顧問，香港粵劇研究院院長，十五年學歷，一生八十年創立漢風粵劇研究院，積極培育新人，精通粵劇鑿筋及音樂，除演出外，更致力研究粵劇唱腔及音樂發展。二〇〇〇年梁獲粵劇發展局頒授「粵劇藝術成就獎」。二〇〇六年獲香港特別行政區政府頒發榮譽勳章。

他現任中美洲的香港粵劇藝術推廣協會名譽主席及香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問，主要致力推廣及發展粵劇藝術。

吳千烽 Ng Chin-fung

自幼愛好音樂，十二歲從師粵劇名伶鄭少奇，並拜師粵劇名伶馬師。十六歲入讀香港粵劇學院，後以粵劇為業，現為香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問。

他現任香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問，主要致力推廣及發展粵劇藝術。

溫玉樓 Wan Yuk-yu

自幼喜愛粵劇，隨其父親溫錦泉及父親的門生雲徳及馬師。十八歲入讀香港粵劇學院，後以粵劇為業，現為香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問。

他現任香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問，主要致力推廣及發展粵劇藝術。

謝國偉 Tse Kwok-cheung

八和粵劇學院第五屆畢業生，粵劇名伶陸仲賢之子。現為香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問。

他現任香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問，主要致力推廣及發展粵劇藝術。

阮德鍵 Yuen Tak-cheong

領導香港粵劇發展局，為香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問。

他現任香港粵劇發展局名譽顧問，主要致力推廣及發展粵劇藝術。
新編粵劇《遺恨長生殿》製作花絮
Production Snapshots of the new Cantonese Opera, *Eternal Lament at the Palace of Eternal Life*

10.7.2010 (星期六 Sat) 2:30pm
香港文化中心行政大樓四樓一號會議室
AC1, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

講者：梁漢威、王趙群、區文鳳
Speakers: Leung Hon-wai, Wong Chiu-kwan, Au Man-fung

新編粵劇《遺恨長生殿》演後藝人談
Meet the Artists Session -
*Eternal Lament at the Palace of Eternal Life: a new Cantonese Opera*

31.7.2010 (星期六 Sat) 2:30pm
香港文化中心行政大樓四樓二號會議室
AC2, Level 4, Administration Building, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

講者：梁漢威、吳子鋒、尹飛燕、王趙群
Speakers: Leung Hon-wai, Ng Chi-fung, Wan Fai-yin, Wong Chiu-kwan

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「洪昇與《長生殿》—人生舞台三百年」展覽
Exhibition on Hong Sheng and *The Palace of Eternal Life - A Legacy of Chinese Theatre for Three Hundred Years*

5 - 18.7.2010
葵青劇院地下大堂 Foyer, Kwai Tsing Theatre

6 - 21.7.2010
高山劇場地下大堂 Foyer, Ko Shan Theatre

免費參觀 Free Admission

葵青劇院 Kwai Tsing Theatre
地址：新界葵涌興華路12號
Address: 12 Hing Ning Road, Kwai Chung, New Territories
查詢 Enquiries: 2408 0128

高山劇場 Ko Shan Theatre
地址：九龍紅磡高德道77號
Address: 77 Ko Shan Road, Hung Hom, Kowloon
查詢 Enquiries: 2740 9222

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地址：九龍尖沙咀麼地道10號
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