

SHA welcomes new Cantonese opera association

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, today (March 21) welcomes the commercial sector's initiative of setting up the Cantonese Opera Innovation Association, a non profit-making organisation dedicated to promoting Cantonese opera and introducing innovative management to the Cantonese opera sector with the Cantonese opera master artists and presenters of performances.

Dr Ho said, "Cantonese opera as a unique indigenous performing art is an important part of our local culture. Hence, the government welcomes the private sector and various other sectors of the community to provide resources and take the initiative to actively take part in promotion of Cantonese opera and its management. I look forward to the Association's setting a good example of supporting the development of local culture and arts to the commercial corporations and community organisations. I believe that through collaboration between the government, the sector itself and various sectors of the community, this valuable traditional art can be effectively preserved with further development."

In May 2004, the Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee was established to advise the government on promotion, preservation, study and development of Cantonese opera. To provide funding for programmes and activities aiming at studying, promoting and preserving Cantonese opera, Cantonese Opera Development Fund was set up in November 2005. Since the establishment of the fund, more than \$20 million have been raised from various sectors of the community. The fund will reserve \$6 million to fund Cantonese opera performances, training and study, educational and promotional activities in 2007-08. Another \$6 million funding will be allocated for setting up the Hong Kong New Talent Cantonese Opera Troupe.

Apart from the fund, the government will also promote the development of Cantonese opera through the Hong Kong Arts Development Council's funding schemes for Cantonese opera, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department organising Cantonese opera programmes, and training programmes for Chinese traditional theatre by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. In concluding, the fund and the government plan to spend an estimate of \$40 million to support the development of Cantonese opera in the 2007-08 financial year.

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