

Government endeavours to develop performance venues for Cantonese Opera

The following is the Home Affairs Bureau's response to media enquiries on the tenancy of Sunbeam Theatre:

The Government has always been aware of the development needs of Cantonese Opera, as well as the issue of tenancy renewal of the Sunbeam Theatre. It is also aware that the tenant of Sunbeam Theatre has all along been positively discussing tenancy renewal with the owner. The Home Affairs Bureau earlier sent a letter to the owner of the Sunbeam Theatre to explain the Government's efforts in promoting Cantonese Opera, and asked the owner to take into account the aspirations of the Cantonese Opera sector for the continued operation of the theatre, with a view to obtaining the owner's continued support for the development of Cantonese Opera.

The Government understands the importance of adequate resources for the development of Cantonese Opera. Established in November 2005, the Cantonese Opera Development Fund has granted about \$17 million to support more than 210 projects. The Government also supports the development of Cantonese Opera through various measures. These include support by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to about 500 Cantonese Opera and operatic singing performances each year; on-going funding of performance, education, promotion and other development projects by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council; and the subsidy by the Home Affairs Bureau for Cantonese Opera programmes organised by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

To provide more performance venues for Cantonese Opera, the Government will explore venues of different scales to meet the development needs of Cantonese Opera. The relevant projects include conversion of the Yau Ma Tei Theatre and the Red Brick Building into a small theatre and multi-function rooms (scheduled for completion in 2011); construction of a medium-sized theatre, large practising rooms and audio-recording studios at the Annex Building of the Ko Shan Theatre (scheduled for completion in 2012); and building a large theatre, a small theatre and practising facilities in the Xiqu Centre of the West Kowloon Cultural District (scheduled for completion in 2014/2015).

More time slots at the venues of the LCSD will be provided for staging of Cantonese Opera, catering for the needs of the sector. The relevant measures include supporting the Cantonese Opera sector to take part in the "Venue Partnership

Scheme” in Sha Tin Town Hall and Tuen Mun Town Hall; the priority venue hiring policy for Cantonese Opera performances in Ko Shan Theatre; and a proposal to implement priority venue hiring policy for Cantonese Opera groups in several major venues (the Grand Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, the Concert Hall of Hong Kong City Hall, the Auditorium of Kwai Tsing Theatre and the Auditorium of Tsuen Wan Town Hall).

The Government will continue to explore the feasibility of developing performance venues for Cantonese Opera in different areas and encourage the Cantonese Opera sector to make more use of the LCSD’s venues in various districts for staging performances.

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