

# 香港劇場年鑑2015

舞蹈・戲曲・戲劇

HONG  
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THEATRE  
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Dance  
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## 在香港推廣京劇的幾點心得

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（編按：香港近年大力推廣戲曲的欣賞和發展，本地的粵劇固然是重點項目，但各地方戲曲尤以京崑等劇種亦應加以推廣，既增加本地觀眾對傳統藝術的認識，亦可以之滋長粵劇的發展。二〇一五年年鑑初次探討京劇在香港社區的推廣與發展。）

「香港有京劇咩？」，這是「香港青年京劇學院」向區議會申請資助時，議員對學院主席梁漢勇先生提出的質疑，簡短的問題，帶出了時下推廣京劇面對的挑戰。

### 把京劇送到社區

香港青年京劇學院自二〇〇四年起，參與康樂及文化事務署（康文署）「社區文化大使計劃」，除二〇〇五年外，每年針對特定主題，舉辦演出、工作坊、展覽、講座等一系列推廣活動，至今已超過十載，是全香港唯一在社區演出京劇的機構。學院透過邀請內地演員、樂師來港，與本地資深及新進演員、樂師交流合作，先後呈獻「梅、荀、程、尚」四大旦角流派，以及「李（多奎）」派老旦表演藝術，每年到十八區演出逾二十場，累積了豐富劇目。「觀眾在大劇院看不到的戲，在社區都能看到」，是梁漢勇先生的願望。談及與康文署的合作，梁先生感激「社區文化大使」提供平台，讓本地演員有機會實習、成長，讓京劇接觸更廣泛的觀眾。

初時，京劇在社區沒有觀眾基礎，加上語言隔閡，要人們願意走進會堂觀看，需要一個過程。幸而，香港觀眾是懂得欣賞的，許多人完場後表示十分認同這門藝術，贊同應該推廣。甚至出乎意料地，連相對冷門的老旦戲也十分受歡迎。因為社區觀眾的年齡與劇中人相近，容易產生共鳴。在十八區推廣逾十載，學院逐漸掌握到各區觀眾的特點：黃竹坑喜歡京劇的觀眾最多，每次演出也有很多人捧場，反饋亦佳；天水圍的居民有許多是新移民，他們沒有看戲的習慣；荔枝角、青衣等地會堂距離屋邨較遠，觀眾相對較少，宣傳難度最大；在油麻地演出，則完全不用擔心觀眾問題。

「社區文化大使」要求每次演出有三百名觀眾入場。現時，學院正在考慮如何改善部分社區觀眾數目不足的問題。困難之一在於缺乏有效的宣傳渠道，無法將演出訊息及時傳遞給觀眾。在社區會堂，只有演出當日才可以擺放宣傳單張，能夠接觸到的觀眾數目有限。另一方面，部分持有戲票的觀眾不能準時出席，亦影響入座率。假使每場派發三百張門票，有三分一觀眾入座已經算好。若是超額派票，雖觀眾人數容易達標，又要擔心萬一出席率高，會堂無法容納。學院希望未來可以藉由康文署幫助，在社區中尋找協辦單位，共同努力拓展觀眾。

## 培育本地京劇人才

香港青年京劇學院的培訓教育主要從三個層面開展：一是訓練職業演員，二是培育業餘京劇愛好者，三是與中小學校合作推行京劇課程。

若要京劇穩定持久發展，本地訓練出身的演員和樂隊不可或缺，當他們透過固定演出獲得觀眾認可，京劇才可有一席之地。雖然向內地人才請益交流是不可避免的，僅僅倚賴邀請外來演員演出卻非長久之計，因此梁先生有心培育本地演員和樂師人才。

對於專業演員及業餘學員，首要一項，便是練功。戲曲以基本功為基礎，練腰、練腿、跑圓場、吊嗓子，就如同吃飯，一日不可中斷，比如內地戲校的學生，他們每天早晨起床便開始練功，直到晚上；如若業餘學員不練功，在台上也就站無站相。對於專業演員，若沒有扎實的基本功作為基礎，連一晚連續多個小時的戲也因功力、氣力、體力等不足而無法勝任，更談不上成為角兒。

梁先生以廣東戲為例，有的年輕演員唱功好，卻不肯練功，若在上世紀八十年代，有人肯出錢，可能已經捧紅了演員；現在多了內地戲校出身的演員來競爭，觀眾的選擇便不同了。粵劇一晚演出要持續四五個小時，

演員以唱為主並無不可，不過職業演員要清楚自己的特點，安排清楚唱與做的比例，有人適合六分唱、四分武，也有人適合三分唱、七分武，無論哪種比例，也一樣要練功，沒有一技之長，便無法與人競爭。

梁先生對學生也是這樣要求。盧成龍，今年十六歲，工武生，每天在梁先生監督底下練功四次。工花旦的梁齡勻今年十四歲，雖然功課很多，仍堅持每天練習至少半小時。二〇一六年八月初，他們二人首次參與由香港藝術發展局（藝發局）資助的《京劇藝術戲寶專場（一）》，在油麻地售票演出，觀眾的反饋令梁老師十分欣慰。

對於參加學校課程的中小學生，則須採用不同教學方法。學校課程旨在培養學生對京劇的興趣，通過一個階段的訓練，增加對這門傳統藝術的了解，進而在結業演出中粉墨登場。不過，學生們課後要參加補習及課餘活動，十分忙碌，要求他們捱苦練功是不可行的。

此前，香港青年京劇學院得到藝發局「2013/2014戲曲人才培育計劃（四）」資助，訓練本地京劇演員，是該計劃首次資助外省戲。培訓採用教學與演出結合的方式，學員在課堂上接受老師的口傳心授，同時參與二十至三十場「社區文化大使」和戶外演出實習。計劃歷時大約一年半，已於二〇一六年八月完成。

該計劃的性質是為新進演員提供職業訓練，招收的五位學員都是本地人，大部分學員同時也參加粵劇訓練及演出，因此課程內容除京劇外，亦注重結合粵劇表演的需要，教授小快槍等通用技巧，希望對於學員在廣東班的演出有所幫助。梁先生坦言，單靠做京劇在香港無法生存，學員必須京粵雙線發展。香港人學習京劇受語言掣肘，殊非易事，可喜幾位學員態度認真，也勤力練功。計劃完成時，盧成龍、梁齡勻兩位學員可以擔綱演出《火燒裴元慶》、《霸王別姬》、《思凡》等劇目，另外三位學員各自也能夠在一套劇目中擔任主要角色。

好的演員不僅要能唱能打能翻，還要扮相好、「個頭」好，因此人才難求。現在劇團的幾位演員和樂師年事已高，尋找接班人是最大挑戰。

### 政府資助與京劇發展

京劇是全國性劇種，其藝術或多或少地影響著各地地方戲的發展，對於粵劇也不例外，但是若要在香港作為獨立劇種生存，則需要諸多方面的配合。學院曾在社區做調查，詢問觀眾會否自己購票入場觀看京劇表演，大部分人回答「不會」，因為「沒錢」，其實只是不願拿錢出來看戲。可見適合京劇獨立生長的环境尚未成熟，其在香港的生存發展離不開各方資助。

梁先生感謝康文署、藝發局、區議會提供平台，給京劇一方土壤，這體現了政府機構的藝術眼界和擔當。他直言，在目前的社會環境下，戲曲藝術不能以企業形式來經營，內地曾改革院團體制，要求部分劇團自負盈虧，結果都無以為繼。香港有政府的資助，觀眾才可以看到京劇演出。

與政府合作過大大小小的項目，梁先生談及多年來的感受。

康文署的經理工作認真，克己奉公，支持京劇發展。「社區文化大使」做了十年，已經在社區播下一顆京劇的種子，難能可貴。若沒有政府的支持，憑個人是沒有辦法投入資金每年做二十幾場演出的。下一年度，學院希望將「新四小名旦」陳永玲的流派藝術帶來香港，目前已經遞交申請，正在等待批覆，通過後才可以著手準備。政府工作人員曾問，「如果我們不做，你們會怎樣？」梁先生回答：「那就沒有了」。

藝發局對遞交上去的申請實行「同業相互審批」原則。雖然評審中有來自其他外省戲推廣機構的代表，相互間可能存在競爭關係，但是整個過程透明度高，評語皆是公開的，無論讚揚、批評大家都能看到，不失為讓同業間相互監督、激勵的好機會，有利於劇種長期發展。已故粵劇表演藝術家梁漢威先生曾表示，



照片鳴謝：梁漢勇先生



照片鳴謝：梁漢勇先生

「我支持你㗎，第一價錢平，第二在社區做咁多嘢」，一句話教梁先生感念至今。

在區議會，並非每一位議員也認識京劇，因此在申請資助的過程中，需要針對細節做出許多解釋，不過為了推廣京劇藝術，這是不可或缺的前期鋪墊。

若說資助政策可以改進之處，並非沒有。例如當戶外演出因天氣等不確定因素取消時，主辦方不會向劇團支付足額的費用。實際情況是，所有參演人員已經預留了這個時段沒有接其他工作，職業演員「手停口停」，也有年紀大的演員從居住地深圳專程趕回香港，取消演出等於全部人員空忙一場，作為團長也覺得對不起大家，因此每次做戶外演出前也非常擔心，壓力很大。

### 以粵劇帶動京劇

梁先生廿一歲來到香港，最初跟隨班政家黃肇生先生以及林家聲、羅家英、南鳳等老倌做龍虎武師，也曾拍電影做武行，有感於前輩年輕時及時行樂，老來晚景慘淡，他早早開始儲錢投資，自置了服裝、道具、練功房，無需靠京劇為生，因此今日才有條件憑著興趣、信念堅持做推廣。他感恩京劇給了自己衣食，所以要回報。

要京劇不依賴資助，獨立生存，是梁先生的一個願望。一種設想是藉助粵劇帶動京劇，譬如在一晚粵劇折子戲演出中，摻夾一個京劇折子戲，讓觀眾慢慢接受。至於如何將京劇與粵劇從藝術上融合，是需要長期思考與實踐的，他為此專程到八和粵劇學院進修鑼鼓課程。對於學生盧成龍，梁先生也冀望他可以雙線發展，在以粵劇為主業的同時，能夠協助推廣京劇。

梁先生相信，早晚有一天，大部分人會喜歡京劇藝術：「因為確實好，不要在意有沒有人看，先把自己準備好，每天都要練功。」

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# A Few Notes on Promoting Beijing Opera in Hong Kong

Kang Di

(Notes from the editor: In recent years, the appreciation and development of Chinese opera (Xiqu) have been vigorously promoted in Hong Kong. While Cantonese opera has been a focus of promotion, other regional opera styles, especially Beijing opera and Kun opera, also deserve attention. Promotion of other Chinese opera styles not only enhances the local audience's knowledge of traditional arts, but also contributes to the development of Cantonese opera. This article in the Hong Kong Theatre Yearbook 2015 is the first attempt to study the development and promotion of Beijing opera in local communities.)

"Is there such a thing as Beijing opera in Hong Kong?" That was the question raised by the councillors when Mr Liang Hanyong, Chairman of The Hong Kong Youth of Chinese Opera College (the College), applied for a grant from the District Councils. This brief inquiry underlines the challenges Beijing opera promotion faces in Hong Kong.

## Bringing Beijing Opera to the community

Since 2004, the College has been a performing arts organisation under the Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD). For more than a

decade, except for 2005, the College has been devising annual themes for its performances, workshops, exhibitions and seminars. It is the only organisation giving Beijing opera performances in the community in Hong Kong. The College invites mainland Chinese performers and musicians to Hong Kong for artistic exchange with local performers and musicians, experienced and emerging. It has presented Beijing opera shows in the four *dan* (female role) schools, the "Mei", "Xun", "Cheng", "Shang" schools, as well as the "Li (Duokui)" school of *laodan* (senior female role) acting. In staging more than 20 performances in the 18 administrative districts annually, the College has built an extensive Chinese opera repertoire. Liang hopes that "community performances will become so diversified that audiences will have access to operas that are not even performed in large theatres." Liang is grateful to the LCSD for its Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme, which serves as a platform for local performers to practise and grow, and for Beijing opera to reach a broad spectrum of audiences.

At the beginning, the community audience base of Beijing opera was rather small. Coupled with dialect barrier, it took some effort to encourage people to attend the performances at the community halls. Fortunately, the Hong Kong audience is appreciative of Beijing opera. Many felt that they could relate

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to this art form and support its promotion, and even operas spotlighting the *laodan* were popular beyond expectations. One can attribute this to the age similarity between the principal character and the community audience. After over a decade's endeavour in the 18 administrative districts, the College has come to an understanding of district-specific preference. Wong Chuk Hang homes the largest number of Beijing opera lovers who crowd all performances and respond enthusiastically. New immigrants in Tin Shui Wai are yet to develop the habit of Chinese opera-going. The community halls in Lai Chi Kok and Tsing Yi are far from public housing estates, drawing less audience and complicating publicity drive. Attendance has never been a problem in Yau Ma Tei.

The Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme requires 300 audience members at every performance. The College is therefore looking for ways to raise audience count in communities that fall short of the requirement. One of the problems is the lack of effective publicity channels, which makes it impossible for performance information to reach the audience in a timely manner. Leaflets are only allowed in community halls on the day of the concert, which limits their reach to potential audience. Meanwhile, some ticket holders show up late, lowering the attendance rate. Should 300 tickets be given out, it

is considered an achievement if one-third of ticket holders attends the performance. Yet, if the total number of tickets given out exceeds venue capacity, the risk of over-occupancy shadows the possibility of reaching audience target. The College is looking up to LCSD to line up community-based co-organisers when it comes to audience development.

### **Nurturing local Beijing opera talent**

The College conducts training of local talent in three areas: professional performers' training, amateur performers' training, and Beijing opera courses offered in primary and secondary schools.

For Beijing opera to develop in Hong Kong at a steady pace, it is essential to have locally trained performers and musicians. Only when their skills are consistently recognised over a succession of performances can Beijing opera find its footing in this city. While there is the necessity to invite mainland Chinese professionals to Hong Kong, relying on overseas performers is not a sustainable strategy. Therefore, Liang is determined to nurture local performers and musicians.

What is essential for both professional and amateur performers is foundation training. Basic Chinese opera curriculum includes core and kicks training,



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*pao yuan chang* (running the circle), and *diao sang zi* (vocal training). Training is an everyday routine. Students in mainland opera academies start their foundation training first thing in the morning, and they train until evening. Without solid foundation training, amateur performers cannot even stand properly on the stage, while professional performers will not have the skills or physical stamina to act in a hours-long performance, let alone playing leading roles.

Liang says some young Cantonese opera performers sing well but are shaky in foundation training. Back in the 1980s, such performers could rise to fame with the support from their patrons. Nowadays, with more mainland Chinese opera academy trained actors on the scene, the audience has more to choose from. As a Cantonese opera performance may last up to four or five hours, it is understandable that some performers focus on singing. However, professional actors decide on the proportion of singing to physical movement in a performance according to their own strength and weakness. Some of them sing 60% and move 40% of the performance duration; some sing 30% and move 70%. Regardless of the proportion, foundation training is essential. An actor cannot compete without developing a unique strength.

Liang demands the same of his student learners. Lo Shing-lung, a 16-year-old specialising in *wusheng* (male military role), does four rounds of foundation training daily under Liang's supervision. Leung Ling-wan, aged 14, specialises in *huadan* (lead female role). Despite her heavy school work, she persists in foundation training of at least 30 minutes every day. In early August 2016, the two performed in *Showcase Performance of Peking Opera Classic Repertoires I* sponsored by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC). It was a ticketed performance at Yau Ma Tei Theatre. Liang found the audience's response highly encouraging.

Liang adopts a different approach when it comes to secondary and primary school students. The objective of school courses is to arouse interest in Beijing opera. After gaining a better understanding of the traditional art form through training, students perform in full gear at the end of the course. Yet most of the students are occupied with make-up classes and extra-curricular activities, and it is impossible to demand their dedication to foundation training.

The College was a grantee of the HKADC's "2013/2014 *Xiqu* Internship Scheme (4)". It was the first time that a regional opera that originated outside of Guangdong Province had been given a grant under the Scheme. The grant was to support a



Photo courtesy: Mr Liang Hanyong



Photo courtesy: Mr Liang Hanyong



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local Chinese opera performers' training programme that featured a combination of classroom learning and performance practice. Learners received instructions from teachers in the classroom, and went on to perform in 20 to 30 outdoor concerts of the Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme. The training lasted around 18 months and concluded in August 2016.

Five locals were admitted to this vocational training programme designed to further the skills of young performers. As most of them also train and perform in Cantonese opera, the programme curriculum covered techniques required for both Beijing and Cantonese operas, such as *xiao kuai qiang* (small fast spear). Liang hopes the training has enhanced the learners' skills in Cantonese opera as well; as Liang points out, one cannot make a living by being a Beijing opera performer only. Dialect barrier makes it particularly difficult for Hong Kong people to excel in Beijing opera. What was reassuring was that the learners were serious and hardworking. Upon completion of the training programme, Lo Shing-lung and Leung Ling-wan were capable of playing leading roles in *Burning Pei Yuan Qing*, *Farewell My Concubine*, and *Thinking about the Secular World*. The other three learners also played main roles in a performance.

A good performer must excel in singing, possess

martial art skills and a decent appearance, and be of the right height. Therefore, it is difficult to find the right talent. The few performers and musicians in the College's troupe are in their elderly years. Identifying successors has been a serious challenge.

### **Government subsidies and the development of Beijing opera**

Being a national art form, the aesthetics of Beijing opera influences to a greater or lesser extent the development of regional operas, including Cantonese opera. Yet for Beijing opera to stand on its own feet in Hong Kong, cooperation from many different parties is required. According to the findings of a community survey conducted by the College, most respondents answered in the negative when asked if they would pay out of their own pocket for a Beijing opera show ticket, the reason being "lack of funds", which really denotes an unwillingness to pay to see a performance. This shows that a mature artistic environment is yet to be cultivated for the independent development of Beijing opera in Hong Kong. To thrive and develop in the city, Beijing opera is still in need of subsidies from different sources.

Liang is grateful for the opportunities offered by the LCSD, HKADC and the District Councils, which he believes reflect the government's artistic vision and

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its commitment to Beijing opera. He contends that in the current social environment, it is unlikely for Beijing opera troupes to operate as enterprises. The theatre reform in mainland China required theatre companies to support themselves, which led to the closing down of many theatre troupes. Only with government subsidies in Hong Kong could the audience gain access to Beijing opera performances.

Liang has participated in government projects of various scales throughout the years. He shares his feelings about working with different organisations.

Liang finds LCSD managers serious and dedicated to the development Beijing opera in Hong Kong. The Community Cultural Ambassador Scheme has been running for a decade, planting the seeds of Beijing opera in the communities. Without governmental support, it is not possible for individuals to fund the production of more than 20 concerts annually. The College is planning to introduce to Hong Kong the “*Chen Yong Ling*” school, one of the four new *dan* schools, for which a grant application has been made, results pending. Preparation work could only begin upon grant approval. Some government officials have asked Liang, “What will you do should we stop working on this?” Liang replied, “Then it is not going to happen.”

The HKADC has a peer-assessment system in

place. Among the peers are representatives from organisations promoting regional opera styles other than Beijing opera and who may potentially be competing for resources. However, the system is transparent and the comments are made public, regardless of whether they are complimentary or critical. Liang sees it as a decent mechanism of peer-monitoring and mutual encouragement that contributes to the long-term development of Chinese opera in Hong Kong. The late performing artist Leung Hon-wai once said to Liang, “You guys have my support. What you ask for is peanuts, yet you have done so much in the community.” Liang has always remembered those words.

Not every District Councillor understands Beijing opera. A lot of explanations about finer details are required throughout the funding application process. Such effort can be considered part of the necessary ground work for Beijing opera promotion.

There are areas for the grant policy to be improved. For example, the current policy does not require the government to pay the opera troupe in full for performances that are cancelled due to poor weather conditions or force majeure. However, those participating in the production have reserved their time for the performance and turned down other offers. They do not make any income from cancelled



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performances. Some elderly performers travel all the way to Hong Kong from Shenzhen, only to find the whole team running about for nothing. As the leader of the College's troupe, Liang feels he is letting everybody down when cancellation happens, and hence he finds it particularly stressful before outdoor performances.

### **Beijing opera to gain traction through Cantonese opera**

Liang moved to Hong Kong when he was 21. He started out working as a martial artist under Wong Shiu-san, a producer, and Cantonese opera maestros such as Lam Ka-sing, Law Kar-ying, and Nam Fung. He also performed as a stuntman in a number of films. Seeing that many senior actors had fallen on hard times as they lived recklessly in their youth, Liang started saving and investing at a young age. He purchased his own costumes, props and training studio, which provided him with alternate sources of income other than performing Beijing opera. Nowadays Liang promotes it solely out of passion and his faith in the art. He feels an obligation towards Beijing opera, as he did rely on it for his livelihood for a time.

Liang wishes that Beijing opera would find its footing in Hong Kong without government subsidies. One

of his ideas is to arouse interest in Beijing opera through Cantonese opera. For example, a Beijing opera excerpt may be included in the rundown of an evening Cantonese opera performance, as a step-by-step approach to introduce Beijing opera to the audience. It takes thought and practice to combine Beijing opera and Cantonese opera in an artistic unison. Working towards that objective, Liang is taking gong and drum lessons at The Cantonese Opera Academy of Hong Kong. Liang also hopes that his apprentice Lo Shing-lung could continue to develop his career in Cantonese opera while assisting him in the promotion of Beijing opera.

Liang is confident that most people will fall in love with Beijing opera one day: "It is truly exquisite. For now, let's not be concerned whether there is audience or not. We should make ourselves prepared and train every day."

(Translated by Joanna Lee)

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**Kang Di**

Kang Di is a lover of Chinese opera, writer; MA candidate in *Xiqu* Studies at the Chinese National Academy of Arts, and former Chinese editor of the Hong Kong Arts Festival.

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