

香港劇場年鑑 2016

舞蹈 · 戲曲 · 戲劇

HONG
KONG
THEATRE
YEARBOOK
2016
Dance
Xiqu
Drama



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龍貫天：邁闊我的戲曲路

周嘉儀

(編按：本文由龍貫天口述，周嘉儀執筆。)

二〇一六年，對我的演藝生涯而言，是饒有意義的一年！這一年，我有個「龍貫天精選專場」演出為我度身訂造、原創撰寫的《孫子無雙》和《銅雀菩提》，以及有別於傳統的戲碼《毛澤東之虛雲三夢》；這一年，我獲得香港電台「戲曲天地梨園之最2016」中「梨園之最文武生」的榮譽；這一年，我獲推選為代表戲曲範疇的香港藝術發展局（藝發局）二〇一七至二〇一九年度的委員，並擔任戲曲組別的主席……

首先，作為演員，演出既要重量，也要重質。「梨園之最文武生」的稱號，代表著我有最高的演出量，這包括了我在劇場和戲棚的演出，可以反映出觀眾對我有很高的認受性。至於「質」，相信李居明為我撰寫的幾個劇本，對我個人在粵劇表演藝術的提昇，正是一枝強心針！

我和李大師的合作始於二〇一三年的《錢塘金粉》，其後兩年再有《孫子無雙》和《銅雀菩提》，經過這三齣古裝劇，至二〇一六年他竟然拋出一個被稱之為「粵劇新浪潮」的時裝劇《毛澤東之虛雲三夢》。其實我每年都會參演不同的新編粵劇，不過劇本的質素就十分參差，許多時都基於人力或財力的問題，未能盡善盡美，而且演出的場數不多，又難有重演

之期，皆會令演員覺得有一絲遺憾。可是，演李大師的作品，卻是我對自己的挑戰之餘，又是一種享受，因為他會不惜工本滿足演員的要求，提供先進的舞台設備和調度、專業出色的工作班底，以及不同的演出團隊和故事題材，簡直是給演員一個「夢工場」的最佳投資者，更兼他的文學水準甚佳，不會無的放矢，每個故事總有一個特別的訊息帶出，雖然對於他的說教方式或有些爭議，但偶爾夾雜在戲中，不太刻意賣弄，我覺得也是可以接受的。記得我們首個合作的《錢塘金粉》，是我自讀書年代在珠江戲院看白茵姐的電影《蘇小小》已很喜歡的故事，某次演出不但安排在白天放映這套電影，晚間演後的謝幕還竟把當年的阮郁與蘇小小（周驄、白茵）請來，作為演員的我，怎能不既驚喜又感動呢？

這些年的這些戲，讓我不斷增長知識和見聞，因為李大師總會搜羅許多相關的資訊，令我更深入理解他的劇作。在我而言，最初是很棘手的，因為以我對一般戲曲的認知，有時真不知從何入手，但就像練功一樣，過程是辛苦，但練成後，便做得十分舒服、流暢。最令我意外和激動的一齣戲就是《毛澤東》，由於這個題材很敏感，聰明的李大師以激將法問我「敢不敢演？」，我也不加思索的回答一個字「敢！」，結果在首演後不到四個月的時間，便在農曆新年前後作跨年的重演，回想真有點神奇，也要對大師敢作敢為和多元化地推廣粵劇，表示敬佩！



戲曲天地梨園之最

2016頒獎典禮



龍貫天在「戲曲天地梨園之最2016」榮獲「梨園之最文武生」。

照片提供：香港電台



《毛澤東之虛雲三夢》（2016）

照片提供：戲裏乾坤（周家儀）

說到我的粵劇之路，屈指一算從一九七九年入行、一九九四年擔正「文武生」，一眨眼已超過三分一個世紀了。雖然起步較遲，不是「紅褲仔」出身，出道之際又是粵劇剛從低潮再起，但我明白到社會越發達、資源越多，演員便會越依賴，而人生沒有壓迫力、沒有危機感，是幹不成大事的，所以我一直本著由文武生「揸庄」（即主導）的傳統來領導劇團的演出。我自一九九四年「上位」有自己的班牌，便開始肩負起劇本整理的工作，與南鳳合作的「龍鳳劇團」，是不斷學習排演流行戲碼的，而與陳咏儀合作的「天鳳儀劇團」，則排演新戲、整理舊劇本兼備，戲碼亦比較多元化，嘗試演繹不同的人物角色，真的有如全面和粵劇表演藝術長期作戰！這些幕後工作是鮮為行外人所知的，因為我的名字並沒有印在製作人員的名單上。

最難忘的一役，是「天鳳儀」有一屆貼演《唐宮恨史》，在宣傳單張都已發出的情況下，居然有三個劇團同期演出這戲碼，為此我用了一個星期的時間做劇本整理，把戲軌改動並命為《唐宮艷史之金盆洗祿兒》，解決「撞戲」的危機。這個經驗帶給我的啟示，就是一樣的人物，能寫成不一樣的故事，像唐滌生的名劇《洛神》，早已演到家喻戶曉，在我剛萌起要以另一個版本演繹曹植與甄宓的故事，無獨有偶，李大師也有

這個念頭，由於他總是想起用不同的演員組合，我對此也無所謂，因為大家有不一樣的人生經驗，故不同的對手會有不同的想法，就是這樣，我和陳韵紅、彭熾權的對戲便擦出了激烈的火花，著實令人鼓舞！

再回頭說到「量」，要應付每年二百多場在劇場和戲棚的演出，選演的戲碼是個大學問。神功戲是由主會包場的演出，但除了他們指定點演的戲碼，我還是有機會交些其他的劇目。在沒有票房收益的壓力下，我會藉此機會去搬演一些較為冷門、不常見於舞台的戲碼，《血濺烏紗》就是一例，另一齣《跨鳳乘龍》亦是，我有意演此劇多年，卻礙於它並不賣座，但想到為甚麼電影受歡迎，舞台演出會不濟呢？終於能在戲棚做到，還反應不俗，看來神功戲真是個理想的「實驗室」！與不同劇團和演員組合合作演出不同的劇目，能夠積聚經驗，好為日後演出裝備自己，如《宋徽宗·李師師·周邦彥》很有心做了許多音樂性的設計、《西樓錯夢》有大量的唱曲讓我練了幾個月、《黃蜂尾後針》是個反面人物卻帶喜劇味道，以至由《一自落花成雨後》改編的《飛花再世緣》要我自己再整理修訂等，都使我得益不淺。

我成為一個專業演員的路，絕不平坦，因為當時恰值粵劇的低潮，但能有今日的成就，我有兩個感恩：艱苦的歷程、讓我的人生搬

上舞台。那段時間，我在戲曲舞台之外，兼演舞台劇和電視劇，爭取觀眾的認識和認可之餘，也能同時擴闊我的藝術視野。和名演員的合作令我獲益良多，如舞台劇《虎度門》的謝雪心、電視劇《碧血青天珍珠旗》的王戎、韓義生和劉松仁等，而「台灣影帝」王戎更給我上了寶貴的一課，掌握到拍電視劇時表情不能像舞台上般凌厲，因為在螢光幕有很多近攝鏡頭，令我在《我來自潮州》演得更得心應手……反正是，識人越多，學得越多！

演藝是必須要薪火相傳的。除了劇本的保存和整理，更需要接班人的培訓，所以我從二〇一二年便開始為「香港八和會館」與油麻地戲院場地伙伴計劃「粵劇新秀演出系列」

擔任藝術總監。這個以三年為一屆的資助計劃，演到第二屆的第二個年度，不經不覺我已為新秀們排演了超過三十齣不同前輩名伶的名劇，上演了近一百場之多，同時也主講了多場導賞講座。說起來，這個新秀的

「演出搖籃」是絕對有需要的，但卻也有利有弊：利者，是能夠讓演員有機會認識不同的戲碼，累積經驗，有助承傳，令行業不衰退；弊者，是新秀們的工作量多了，以為自己已經已有足夠的本錢謀生，不再向計劃提供空檔台期，增添了總監們開戲選角找不夠合適的演員擔演。我除了親自指導外，更會請來資深的前輩演員來助陣，像最好的「姍

姐姐」——「細女姐」（任冰兒）、最好的「楊柳嬌」——「鳳姐」（南鳳），這是「一對一、手把手」的教導，所以大前提是演員必需把劇本熟讀才來學！而對於二〇一七至一八年度的最後一個演出，我還打算多做二線演員的培養工作，讓未有機會的新人多參與演出，以及嘗試在「社區推廣場」引入由在社區參加粵劇培訓的小朋友演出折子戲，向社區人士展示粵劇的魅力。作為副主席的我，更是必需要推動新進演員加入「八和」，除了增強他們對粵劇的歸屬感，更要令他們尊重這個行業，覺得自己是個專業人士，因為畢竟他們近年來受用了粵劇界在人力、物力、財力上提供的大量資源，我更期望有些在學的青少年，將來會把粵劇從興趣走向專業。

最後一個部分，是關於擔任藝發局委員和戲曲組主席，這是我從粵劇跨出一大步，走向戲曲的範疇的轉捩點！這要從自一九九四年我擔任香港八和會館理事說起……

之前提過，粵劇文武生要「揸庄」主導，上位這一年我便被選入「八和」理事會，開始在演出以外為業界服務，至二〇〇三年成為四位副主席之一的核心人物，更於二〇〇六至二〇一二年擔任三屆粵劇發展諮詢委員會的委員，聯同學界、關心粵劇的社會人士，以及專責藝術和旅遊的發展局代表、政府部

門代表等就粵劇的推廣、保存、研究及發展向民政事務局局長提供意見。在藝發局前兩屆（二〇一〇、二〇一三）的選舉中，由「八和」推薦的戲曲界別候選人阮兆輝和劉惠鳴皆榮膺「票王」、「票后」，得票之多並非全是由自己界別所投，可見其他藝術界別的投票人對「八和」弟子的認同。今次在汪明荃和「輝哥」（阮兆輝）的建議下，我代表戲曲界別出選，在沒有對手的情況下，自動當選，實屬幸運！

但當上了戲曲組的主席，我卻面對一個難題，就是因為有太多的演出或其他項目的參與，涉及利益衝突而需要避席主持會議。可喜的是，在大會遇上來自戲劇界別的李俊亮，我倆曾在二〇一一年毛俊輝為中國戲曲節監製及導演的《李後主》合作過，比較容易有共識，所以邀請他在擔任戲劇界別的主席之餘，也拔刀相助做我的副主席，既能彌補我避席的不足，又能讓我更宏觀地去探索戲曲的發展。對於藝發局的年度獎項（即「藝術家年獎」和「藝術新秀獎」）多年來都具有不少爭議性，未如理想，這或因是部分評審不太熟悉我們的界別，所以我將建議請最熟悉業界的「八和」成立一個內部的提名小組，讓最有分量的人士有機會參選，令這兩個獎項更具認受性。而作為藝發局的委員，我將會更常接觸到其他藝術界別的代表，亦必定有更多機會參與他們的活動，間接令我的戲曲之路更寬更廣……

所謂「行其位、素其位」，我首先還是要做好演員的本分，繼而是承傳、推廣的工作，再接觸不同的事物，看看有甚麼發展的空間。總而言之，只要是投身戲曲，便要竭盡所能，當然要為生活而勞碌，但也要尊重並為行業的將來發展而努力，必須要有心，不可只為一己成名！在邁向從藝四十年的路上，回望過去，不論收穫，便會有越大的收穫，倘若是越想有收穫，相反收穫卻只會越細……

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周嘉儀

現為香港藝術發展局戲曲界別審批員、粵劇發展基金演出評核小組成員。作為中國戲曲愛好者，從「攝影」角度切入欣賞、接觸及鑽研逾七十個劇種，擔任活動策劃工作之餘，以自由工作人身分投放大量時間參與有關戲曲的工作，發表劇照及文章、藝術行政、舞台監督、劇本整理及創作、戲曲研究等，自一九九七年先後在《文匯報》、《戲曲品味》、《戲曲之旅》等平面媒體撰寫專欄，至二〇一四年更在網上藝術平台「art-mate.net」建立「戲裏乾坤·戲曲全接觸」網頁，並在Facebook以「戲裏乾坤」及「戲曲新姿」專頁，分享有關戲曲的資訊。

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Loong Koon-tin: Towards Wider Vistas in Xiqu

Annie Chow

(Editor's note: This article is based on the transcription of an interview with Loong Koon-tin.)

2016 was a significant year in my career as a performing artist. Two original operas which were tailored for me, *The Peerless Military Strategist* and *Romance at the Copper Fowl Terrace*, were performed under the special programme Loong Koon-tin Operatic Gala. These were followed by *Three Fickle Dreams of Chairman Mao*, an opera which is wildly different from traditional fare. What's more, I was awarded the honour of Top Wenwusheng (civil and martial male role) by the RTHK Radio 5 programme *The World of Xiqu*. I was also elected Council Member of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC) for the 2017-2019 term, representing Xiqu, as well as Chairman of its Xiqu Group.

As an actor, I value both the quantity and quality of my work. The honour of Top Wenwusheng was testimony to me being a top performer in terms of quantity, counting my performances at both indoor theatres and outdoor bamboo theatres. It also reflected the extensive recognition I had garnered from audiences. As for quality, the new operas Edward Li wrote for me were a huge boost, bringing me to new heights as a Cantonese opera performer.

My collaboration with Master Li began with the 2013 *Glitz and Glamour of Qiantang River*. Then came two other period operas — *The Peerless Military Strategist* and *Romance at the Copper Fowl Terrace* — two years later. In 2016, he presented the ambitious *Three Fickle Dreams of Chairman Mao*, a modern opera hailed as the "Cantonese Opera New Wave". Every year I act in a number of new Cantonese operas, but the quality of the scripts can vary vastly, mainly due to limited manpower and funds. The new operas are given only a few showings, and the chance of rerun is slim. The cast cannot help but feel a tinge of regret over the limited runs. Yet it is both challenging and enjoyable for me to work with Master Li. He would spare no effort in fulfilling the cast's requests, providing state-of-the-art stage facilities, a thoroughly professional crew, plus a wide range of acting partners and subject matters. He is the best ever investor who offers actors a "dream factory". A writer of literary prowess, he creates works of substance — each of his operas carries a particular moral message. His style may sound preachy to some, but I think it is fine to touch on these moral messages in the works at times. I still remember the first project we collaborated on, *Glitz and Glamour of Qiantang River*. It was based on *So Siu Siu*, a film starring Pak Yan. I have always loved this story since I watched the film at Ruby Theatre in my schooldays. On one



Loong Koon-tin was awarded the honour of Top Wenwusheng by the RTHK Radio 5 programme *The World of Xiqu*.
Photo courtesy: Radio Television Hong Kong



Three Fickle Dreams of Chairman Mao (1963)
Photo courtesy: Annie Chow

occasion, I was going to perform the opera in the evening. Li organised a screening of the film during the day, then had the leads (Chow Chung and Pak Yan) join me on stage during the curtain call at the end of the evening performance. How could any actor not be astonished or touched by this?

Over the years, these collaborations have helped me grow, as Master Li always provides a wealth of resources that enables me to deepen my understanding of his works. It was a real challenge at the beginning, since my knowledge of Xiqu did not always give me the right insights into his works. It is akin to practising the fundamentals of Xiqu — toil and sweat is inevitable, but once you get to know the ropes, it instills finesse into your performance on stage. *Chairman Mao* came as the biggest surprise, because the subject is a touchy one. The clever Master Li provoked me into doing it with the question: "Dare you play the role?" "Yes!" I replied, without the slightest hesitation. As it happened, the play was rerun at the turn of the Lunar New Year in less than four months after its premiere. In retrospect, it seems magical. Master Li's fearlessness and his varied efforts in promoting Cantonese opera fills me with awe.

Speaking of my career in Cantonese opera, I joined the profession in 1979 and worked my way up to

performing as *wenwusheng* in 1994. Almost 40 years have passed. I was a late starter, since I did not begin training at an early age. By the time I entered the fray, Cantonese opera was still finding its way out of the doldrums. I knew early on that the wealthier a society is, the more dependent actors become; without external pressure or a keen sense of crisis, actors would fall into mediocrity. Therefore, I have always committed myself to following the tradition of heading an opera troupe as *wenwusheng*. Ever since 1994 when I first topped the bill and put together my own troupe, I have been reworking old scripts of our predecessors. At Lung Fung Opera Troupe, Nam Fung and I have worked on restaging popular operas; at Tin Fung Yee Opera Troupe, Emily Chan and I have presented both new and old plays in a wider repertoire. Playing different characters is nothing short of a long battle against the demanding art form of Cantonese opera! These efforts behind the scenes are little known to those outside the field, because my name was not included in the list of producers.

The most memorable battle has to be Tin Fung Yee Opera Troupe's *Sorrowful History of the Tang Palace*. By the time the programme leaflets were being distributed, it dawned on us that two other troupes were going to restage the same play at the same time. Immediately I spent one week revising

the script, before renaming it *Amorous History of the Tang Palace: Washing the Bandit Godson in a Gold Basin*, so as to avoid the clash. This experience taught me something: One and the same character can inspire different stories. For instance, Tong Tik-sang's *Nymph of the Luo River* has been staged so often that it is a household name. Just when I was thinking of reworking this famous story between poet Cao Zhi and beauty Zhen Fu, it so happened that Master Li had the same idea. He prefers casting different actors for the same roles, which works perfectly for me, as we actors have our own life experiences and ways of thinking. Eventually, Chan Wan-hung, Pang Chi-kuen and I shared the stage and generated a whole lot of excitement!

As for "quantity" which I mentioned earlier, given that each year I have to turn in more than 200 performances at indoor theatres and bamboo theatres, much wisdom is needed when it comes to choosing repertoire. Ritual plays are commissioned by the presenter. On top of what is requested by the presenter, there is room for me to slot in different operas. With no box office pressure, I may put on some lesser known operas, such as *The Bloodstained Black Gauze Cap*. Another example is *Happy Wedding*. I had been meaning to stage this opera for years. The film version fared well, but it flopped every time it hit the stage. At

long last, I managed to bring it to the bamboo theatre, and audience feedback was positive. Ritual plays are, after all, a great "laboratory"! Working with different troupes and cast helps me to expand my experience and equip myself for future roles. For instance, *The Emperor, the Courtesan, the Poet* has many well crafted music scores; *Dream of the West Chamber* has swathes of tunes for me to practise for months; *The Wicked Woman* features an anti-heroine with a comedic touch; *Reincarnated Romance of Flying Petals*, adapted from *A Mistaken Incest Story*, is the handiwork of mine. They have been great learning experiences.

My path as a professional actor has been far from easy, because Cantonese opera was caught in a slump when I got started. Reflecting on my accomplishments today, I am grateful for the toil I have been through, which ultimately becomes part of my craft on stage. At one time, I also performed in the theatre and TV drama series alongside Cantonese opera. This helped me to win over a wider audience and broaden my vistas as an artist. My collaborations with star actors have done me a world of good, such as Susan Tse in *Hu Du Men*, Wang Yung, Hon Yee-sang and Damian Lau in *The Great General*. Wang Yung, an acclaimed Best Supporting awardee from Taiwan, taught me something valuable: I came to realise that I need to

downplay my facial expressions while acting on TV, where close-ups are commonplace. This stood me in good stead in the ensuing *The Pride of Chaozhou*. To sum it up, the more people you know, the more you get to learn!

The performing arts have to be passed down through generations. Alongside preservation and compilation of old scripts, we need to nurture new talent to carry the torch. So, starting from 2012, I have been Artistic Director for the Cantonese Opera Young Talent Showcase under the Chinese Artist Association of Hong Kong (CAAHK) and Yau Ma Tei Theatre's Venue Partnership Scheme. It is a three-year subsidised programme. By the second year of its second edition, I had worked with the young talents in staging more than 30 famous operas by veterans of different generations in nearly 100 performances, and hosted a great number of appreciation talks.

This cradle for new talent is essential, despite the upside and downside it invariably has. The upside is that it allows actors to widen their repertoire and accumulate experience, so that the art is passed down and the profession stays strong. The downside is that some young actors, who now have more work opportunities, may think that they are fully fledged and stop reserving time slots for the Showcase. The

result is that the Artistic Directors have difficulty finding suitable actors to fill the roles. While I also teach, I have invited seasoned veterans to lend a hand, like Yam Bing-yeo, the best Lady Sheung in *Merciless Sword Under Merciful Heaven*; and Nam Fung, the best Lady Yeung in *Red Silk Shoes and the Murder*. We handhold our students on a one-to-one basis, so we demand that they study the script thoroughly before class! In regard to the final Showcase performance for 2017/2018, I have decided to groom more actors of the second echelon, so that those who are yet to make their debut will have the opportunity to participate in the performance. I am also planning to extend the Outreach Performance to child actors who receive Cantonese opera training in their own communities. They may perform opera excerpts so that more people could appreciate the charm of Cantonese opera.

As Vice-chairman of the CAAHK, I am duty-bound to encourage young actors to join the association to enhance their sense of belonging towards Cantonese opera, and to ensure that they respect the profession and see themselves as professionals. They have, after all, availed themselves of vast resources from the Cantonese opera industry in recent years. It is also my hope that more teenage learners would view Cantonese opera as a vocation rather than a mere pastime.

Lastly, let me talk about my appointment as Council Member of the HKADC and Chairman of its Xiqu Group, which marks a turning point in my career from Cantonese opera to Xiqu in the broader sense. It all goes back to 1994 when I first became one of the CAAHK Directors.

As I mentioned earlier, *wenwusheng* in Cantonese opera has to take a lead role. The year I was promoted to the title, I was elected to the CAAHK's Board of Directors, where I began to serve the industry in addition to being an artist. In 2003, I became one of the four Vice-chairmen; from 2006 to 2012, I had the privilege to serve as a three-term member of Cantonese Opera Advisory Committee, where I joined hands with academics, Cantonese opera enthusiasts, as well as representatives of Hong Kong Tourism Board and government departments in making suggestions to the Secretary for Home Affairs regarding the promotion, preservation, research and continued development of Cantonese opera. During the 2010 and 2013 HKADC elections, Yuen Siu-fai and Lau Wai-ming, the two Xiqu candidates recommended by the CAAHK, became the top candidates. Many of the votes they secured were not from the Cantonese opera industry — a measure of the recognition that CAAHK members garnered from other arts sectors. This time, thanks to the recommendation by Liza Wang and Yuen Siu-

fai, I ran as the Xiqu sector's representative and was lucky to win by default.

However, I had a major hurdle to overcome as Chairman of the Xiqu Group: my extensive involvement in various projects dictated that I often had to abstain from chairing meetings, lest there would be conflict of interest. Thankfully, I met fellow Council Member Indy Lee from the Drama Group. We had worked together on 2011 Chinese Opera Festival's *The Last Emperor of Southern Tang* produced and directed by Fredric Mao. We had no problem reaching a consensus on many issues, so I asked him to help me out by doubling as Vice-chairman of the Xiqu Committee. He would cover for me during my absence, and I could put myself in the position to examine the development of Xiqu on a macro level. Over the years, the HKADC annual awards (i.e. Artist of the Year and Award for Young Artist) have been a subject of dispute. A likely reason is that some of the assessors might not be too familiar with our sector. Therefore, I suggest that the CAAHK, which knows our sector best, set up an internal nomination panel so that the most deserving artists could enter the contest, in turn making the awards more acknowledgeable. As Council Member of the HKADC, I will deepen my exchange with representatives of other sectors to expand my artistic possibilities.

As the Chinese saying goes, "Observe one's position and act within bounds." Most importantly, I should first fulfill my duties as an actor. Preservation and promotion will be next, followed by exposure to new inspirations for the development of Xiqu. To conclude, once you go into Xiqu, give it your all. We all toil to make a living. And yet, you must respect your profession and do your part for its future, you must work with your heart, not just for the sake of being famous! Looking back on the past 40 years as an artist, I am more convinced than ever that the less you care about rewards, the more you are going to get — and the opposite applies.

(Translated by Elbe Lau)



Annie Chow

Annie Chow is currently Xiqu Examiner at the Hong Kong Arts Development Council, and Performance Assessor at the Cantonese Opera Development Fund. She is a Xiqu enthusiast who approaches the art form from a “photographic” perspective and she has studied over 70 genres. An event coordinator by profession, she has devoted considerable efforts to Xiqu as a freelancer; such as penning reviews and taking production stills, arts administration, stage management, scriptwriting and adaptation, and academic research. Since 1997, she has written various columns for print media such as *Wen Wei Po*, *Opera Preview* and *Journey to Chinese Opera and Drama*. In 2014, she created for the online arts platform *art-mate.net* a separate webpage titled *All About Xiqu*. She currently manages two Facebook pages, *Xiqu: An Insider’s View* and *The New Faces of Xiqu*, to share information on the art.

