

For Immediate Release

## West Kowloon Cultural District Authority and The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong launch Cultural Exchange Programme for young Cantonese opera talents

(1 April 2015, Hong Kong) The West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) today announced a collaboration with the Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong (CAAHK), a well-established professional organisation for Cantonese opera performers, to launch a **Xiqu Cultural Exchange Programme** that enables young artists to learn from key Xiqu institutions and experts in the region.

This new initiative represents a continuation of WKCDA's on-going effort to provide long term support and training opportunities to emerging talents, following the successful staging of two programmes of the 'Rising Stars' series during the Chinese New Year in February of 2014 and 2015.

In collaboration with the CAAHK, the **Xiqu Cultural Exchange Programme** will commence by sending a delegation of 10 emerging talents to Hangzhou, China to visit the Zhejiang Xiaobaihua Yue Opera Troupe, an acclaimed all-female troupe led by leading Yue opera artist Ms Mao Weitao, from 1 April (today) to 7 April. The Troupe presented a number of well-received performances at Hong Kong Arts Festival 2015 in end March.

"Carrying forward the spirit of Rising Stars of Cantonese Opera, we continue to foster the development of Xiqu through educational and training drives," said **Mr Louis Yu, WKCDA's Executive Director, Performing Arts**. "The opportunities for Hong Kong young artists to have direct dialogues and in-depth exchange with key institutions and experts of different Xiqu genres are precious, which will immensely widen their artistic horizons and benefit their professional development in this traditional art form."

During the 7-day Hangzhou trip, 10 Cantonese opera young talents, including Chan Chak-lui, Li Pui-yan, Doris Kwan, Kwan Wai-sham, Juliana, Man Shuet-kau, Man Wah, Szeto Chui-ying, Wang Kit-ching, Wong Hai-wing, and Wong Kit-fong, Janet, will take part in a series of artistic training and learning sessions, taught by the Troupe's Xiqu experts, on various aspects such as singing technique, acting skills and body movement. Mr Yuen Siu-fai, Vice-chairman of the CAAHK, Ms Mao Weitao, Head of the Zhejiang Xiaobaihua Yue Opera Troupe and Mr Louis Yu will also engage in conversations with young artists from Hong Kong and Hangzhou to share their own experience in artistic pursuits and exchange ideas of arts management and collaboration.

"Cantonese opera and Yue opera have their own distinct aesthetics under the broad and profound artistry of Xiqu, but the basic features or principles are consistent from one local performance form to another," said **Ms Liza Wang, Chairman of the CAAHK**. "We are delighted to send 10 young artists to participate in this exchange programme. I hope they can seize every educational opportunity and better equip themselves with a view to getting prepared for their future career development."

Following the trip to Hangzhou, the **Xiqu Cultural Exchange Programme** will continue to organise similar activities in the coming months.

"Through these occasions, we also hope to establish Hong Kong-based Xiqu network that is well-connected to regional Xiqu industry, as well as develop long-term and close partnership with the

professional Xiqu institutions and bodies to prepare for the future Xiqu Centre which is targeted for completion in mid-2017," added **Mr Louis Yu**.

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### Photo caption:

A delegation of 10 young Cantonese opera artists departed for Hangzhou, China this morning.



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### Notes to editor:

#### West Kowloon Cultural District

The West Kowloon Cultural District is one of the largest cultural developments worldwide. Its vision is to create a vibrant cultural quarter for the city, a vital platform for the local arts scene to interact, develop and collaborate, and major facilities to host and produce world-class exhibitions, performances and arts and cultural events. It will provide 23 hectares of public open space including ample green space, a green avenue and a harbourfront promenade, and will be closely connected with the neighbourhood.

#### The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong

Founded in 1953, The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong is a professional organization for Cantonese opera performers in Hong Kong. The Association aims to develop the art of traditional Cantonese opera and promote this invaluable cultural heritage to the community. It is also dedicated to the welfare of fellow performers. The Association is a registered charitable organization in Hong Kong and actively participates in charitable events in the community. Currently the venue partner of Yau Ma Tei Theatre, the Association presents the Cantonese Opera Young Talent Showcase with over 450 performances starring over 100 emerging Cantonese opera artists during 2012-15.

#### Zhejiang Xiaobaihua Yue Opera Troupe

The Zhejiang Xiaobaihua Yue Opera Troupe has a special bond with Hong Kong: their debut in the city 30 years ago turned them into a household name across China. Yue opera is one of the Chinese operas that features all-female troupes and the Zhejiang Xiaobaihua is foremost among them. Known for their poetic and graceful singing, the Zhejiang Xiaobaihua under leadership of opera superstar Mao Weitao, is also innovative and experimental.