

■ Two Short Peking Opera Classics “Songqin Yanli” and “Liang Wei Jiangjun” Are Performed at NCL

Trends Educational Foundation and National Central Library jointly host a special performance of two pieces of short Peking opera classics, “Songqin yanli” and “Liang wei jiangjun” in September. They were produced by the Department of Jing Ju at the National Taiwan College of Performing Arts, with the college’s students performing them through a cooperative education endeavor.

Opera 1: “Songqin yanli”

“Songqin yanli” is a funny opera written for a comedic role. That comedian plays the role of a mother named Mrs. Chen who is marrying off her daughter. Mrs. Chen does not understand the proper etiquettes and customs, even though there is someone there directing the ceremony. So because Mrs. Chen is too obsessed with what the bride attendant says, many hilarious faux pas result. The opera also aims to make fun of the standard rules for opera. For example, when they go to get in the sedan chair, the actors get behind a curtain and follow along with the sedan-chair bearers. But Mrs. Chen actually sits on the ground. So the procession is halted. The bride attendant tries every means of persuasion to get Mrs. Chen to stand up and walk with them. Mrs. Chen does finally get up but complains on the way, “I tried sitting on the stage sedan chair, but no. I have to walk in it instead!” The role is also called *caidan* (female comedian). In traditional operatic art it is a rather unpopular role. It is often just reciting lines and reciting poetry with a wooden clapper. The stage actions and costume are often over the top. On stage the role requires a lot of laughing, yelling, amusing oneself, and pulling pranks. There is even room for impromptu insertions, showing off the actor’s quick-wittedness and brilliant ideas.

Opera 2: “Liang wei jiangjun”

The classical short Peking opera “Liang wei jiangjun” was originally called “Liang jiangjun.” Some called it “Jiameng Pass” or “Zhanma chao.” It features amazing acrobatic fighting between Wu Sheng and Wu Jing. The story comes from chapter 65 of the Romance of the Three Kingdoms, which tells about Ma Chao’s orders to attack the Jiameng Pass that was under the

control of Liu Bei. Zhang Fei comes out of the pass to battle. The two were evenly matched in strength, so they fought from sunup to sundown with no clear victor. Liu Bei was watching the battle from a high tower on the side. When he saw how skilled Ma Chao was in martial arts, he suddenly was taken with him and left his tower so that the two of them would not harm each other. In the opera, Ma Chao is performed by the handsome Wu Sheng, while Zhang Fei is performed by imposing Wu Jing. When fighting during the day, they two are dressed in form fitting clothes. Ma Chao is in white, symbolizing he is brave and bellicose with his long spear. During their night fights, they switch to close hand-to-hand combat. The two have to have a strong background in martial arts and be in sync with each other in order to sell the performance that they are both equally matched.

On September 11 and 25, a total of 320 people came to enjoy the operas. The performers’ amazing performance was met with a lively response by the audience. It was an exquisite operatic feast enjoyed one and all.



Authentic Playground performs at NCL.

■ The 2021 Pacific Neighborhood Consortium (PNC) Annual Meeting "Digital Libraries" Organized by the National Central Library Held on 28 September

The PNC is one of the most important specialist international academic organization events of the year in Pacific Rim countries. Its annual conference is held in different parts of the Pacific Rim every year, and organizes speeches related to