



Chun-Mei Taiwanese Opera Troupe

The Scented Mirage

2026.9.12 Sat. 14:30

2026.9.13 Sun. 14:30

Weiwuying Opera House

Duration is 160 minutes, with a 20-minute intermission.

Performed in Taiwanese dialect; Mandarin and English surtitles provided.



National Kaohsiung
CENTER FOR THE ARTS

WEI WUYING

衛武營 國家藝術文化中心
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

Synopsis

The scent of Kyara, the sinking of an empire.

Kyara — supreme agarwood, the “King of Scents.” Its five-colored smoke can soothe, beguile, or lull into deep slumber.

When a soul of iron meets an exotic scent: is it a hero betraying his nation, or a soul claiming freedom?

Following the sudden death of King Xisa, the capital falls into a cold, calculated power struggle. The successor, Dugu Haitang, uses “order” as his weapon, branding the valiant general An Dunning a traitor under the spell of a foreign queen. In this ruthless game, the hero who helped build the Empire is reduced to a pawn to be sacrificed for a new ruler's ambition.

In that exotic land, filled with the rich aroma of Kyara (Agarwood), An Dunning encounters the renowned Queen Dongfang. But she is not the seductress the rumors claim. Hidden in her rug, she unveils a grand vision of shared peace and sovereign power, guided by her political ambition to protect her land. By showing him a truth the Empire tries to hide, she awakens a dignity in An Dunning that had long been buried.

Confronted with a cold marriage and the restraints of empire, An Dunning breaks free from the bonds of power and forges a new path. In a daring move, he runs toward the East—the only place that truly understands his soul.

Chun-Mei Taiwanese Opera Troupe reimagines the legendary story of Antonius and Cleopatra, led by Golden Melody Award–winning performers, including an exceptional mother–daughter leading duo.

Led by KUO Chun-mei as General An Dunning, a warrior torn between loyalty to his nation, the pull of love, and his own will, ultimately forging his own path. Opposite him, SUN Kai-lin portrays Dugu Haitang, the adopted son of the former king—outwardly upright yet masterful in political intrigue, manipulating public opinion to stir the tides of a nation. Completing the trio, JIAN Jia-yi appears as Queen Dongfang, the legendary Eastern queen whose beauty became the subject of myth, here reimagined not as a femme fatale but as a powerful ruler commanding her own destiny.

Producer | KUO Chun-mei



Born into a renowned Taiwanese Opera family in Kaohsiung, KUO Chun-mei stepped into the spotlight in early childhood and assumed the mantle of the leading male role (*Sheng*) at just sixteen. Her career reached national heights through her captivating performances in television operas such as *The Great Han Restoration* and *Justice and Honor*. Her portrayal of the charismatic and chivalrous protagonist "Bai Yun-tian" became a cultural phenomenon, winning the hearts of audiences across Taiwan.

A visionary artist, she collaborated with jazz musician SU Tong-da in 2007 on the pioneering crossover album *I'm Riding a White Horse*, earning widespread acclaim for blending traditional vocals with modern arrangements. Currently the leader and principal *Sheng* of the Chun-Mei Opera Troupe, she was honored with the Best Actor of the Year award at the 2021 Golden Melody Awards for Traditional Arts and Music for her masterful performance in *Rain on the Stage*. Celebrated by the media as the "Idol of Taiwanese Opera" and compared to international icons like Takeshi KANESHIRO and the top stars of Japan's Takarazuka Revue, her artistry is characterized by a dashing stage presence, refined movement, and a depth of acting that reflects a lifetime of mastery.

Producer's Note

Burning Up Recklessly for *The Scented Mirage*

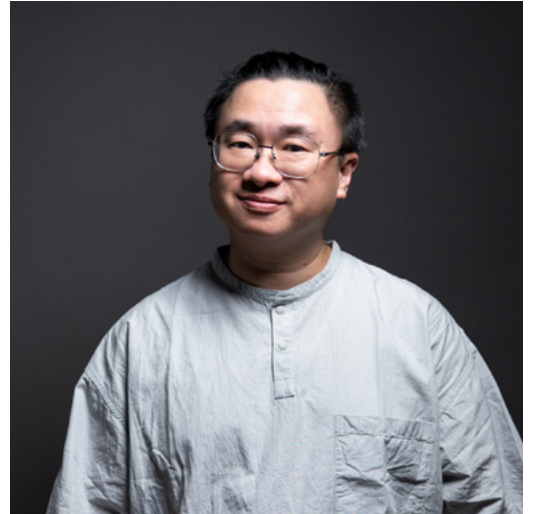
Hello, everyone! I'm Chun-mei. On one hand, I'm thrilled and honored that our new large-scale production will once again meet you on the indoor stage at Weiwuying. On the other hand, my head has been spinning with stress. Day in and day out, all I could think about was: what kind of subject matter can be brought to life? For me, figuring that out is a hundred times harder than just giving a great performance. It's been quite a challenge!

Still, no matter how tough it was, I firmly believe that with true dedication, there are always more solutions than problems. Our production team set sail long ago, and through endless meetings and brainstorming sessions, a clear direction and outline for the story gradually took shape. Our troupe has always dared to push boundaries and innovate on the foundational skills of singing, reciting, acting, and martial arts in Taiwanese opera, so we decided to take a bold step by drawing inspiration from Western classics.

As a performer, my focus is relatively straightforward: delivering a nuanced, layered portrayal of my character. But as a producer, simply playing my own part well is no longer enough. For this production, our troupe sought to highlight the dan (female) role and frame the core narrative around a woman's perspective. Consequently, we weighed every casting choice with immense care to ensure the best possible match between actors and characters. The decision for our lead actress went through several twists and turns before being finalized. I am incredibly satisfied with the final cast and have full confidence in what we've built.

Bringing an original production from scratch to the stage is grueling work, both in pre-production and throughout the creative journey. Yet, it also brings moments of joy. Even when I catch myself complaining about the hardship and exhaustion, the moment the curtain rises and I feel the audience's overwhelming support and enthusiasm, I'm reminded of how wonderful it is to create an original production. All the hardships fade away, and all that is left to say is: See you at the theatre!

Director | **SUNG Hou-kuan**



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SUNG Hou-kuan is the Artistic Director of Taipei Seagull Theatre. He holds both an MFA and a BFA in Theatre Arts from the Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA). A dedicated educator in the field, he has previously served as a lecturer at both TNUA and National Taiwan University.

Awards & Expertise

Sung's directorial and writing work seamlessly spans modern theatre and traditional opera, including Taiwanese Opera, Peking Opera, and Glove Puppetry. He is recognized for his ability to innovate within traditional forms, earning him significant acclaim:

Who's Koxinga ?: Winner of the Performing Arts Award (22nd Taishin Arts Awards) and Best Director (35th Golden Melody Awards for Traditional Arts and Music).

The Prequel of hero Tāi-kiap Pik-tshó-ong: Winner of the Jury Prize (34th Golden Melody Awards for Traditional Arts and Music).

Director's Note

When political power and personal desire become inextricably bound, is love a form of redemption, or the deadweight accelerating our fall?

Adapted from Shakespeare's classic *Antony and Cleopatra*, *The Scented Mirage* is more than a tragic cross-cultural romance. It is a bewildering struggle of a middle-aged man who, defeated in a ruthless political arena, desperately clings to a second chance at love in a foreign land.

On stage, the production draws upon the abstract, evocative essence of traditional Taiwanese and Chinese opera. Banners and flags serve as the core visual motif—representing fractured political factions while transforming into warships braving the waves, carving out the visceral tension of power within the space. A sloped, revolving stage conjures shifting imagery of vessels and the sea over time, steadily building toward the story's climax: the irreversible, fateful surge of the Battle of Actium.

This production is a clash between two distinct worlds: Daqin (Rome) stands for cold, unyielding rationality and strict order, while Kyara (Egypt) radiates an exotic mirage of romance, intuition, and sensuality. When severe political realities collide with unbounded romantic longing, the fluttering banners and revolving slopes will sweep both the characters and the audience toward an ending that is fated for doom, yet dazzlingly sublime.

Chun-Mei Taiwanese Opera Troupe

Founded in Kaohsiung in 2000 by the acclaimed Sheng (male lead) virtuoso KUO Chun-mei, the Chun-Mei Taiwanese Opera Troupe is defined by its relentless spirit of innovation. A trendsetter in the contemporary scene, the troupe maintains a vibrant presence at traditional festivals while consistently pushing the boundaries of the art form through sophisticated, large-scale theatrical productions. Renowned for its bold storytelling and avant-garde staging, the troupe's annual premieres are highly anticipated events that continue to captivate audiences and redefine the landscape of Taiwanese Opera.

Leading Actor

KUO Chun-mei starring as An Dunning



SUN Kai-lin starring as Dugu Haitang



JIAN Jia-yi starring as Dongfang Kyara



Artistic and Production Team

Producer | KUO Chun-mei

Director | SUNG Hou-kuan

Playwright | LEE Ji-wen

Dramatic Advisor | LIN He-yi

Music Designer | CHOU Huang-hsiang

Stage Designer | CHEN Qiong-zhu

Costume Designer | HSU Hsiang-feng

Lighting Designer | SUNG Yung-hung

Martial Arts Coach | CHANG Shu-yu

Movement Designer | CHEN Zhi-lei

Stage Manager | CHENG Chu-hsin

Head of Stage | CHOU Chih-wei

Production Electrician | CHIU Yu-wen

Managing Producer | JHU Hong-cheng, KAO Mei-tzu

Managing Director | CHENG Chiu-mei

Leading Actor | KUO Chun-mei, SUN Kai-lin, JIAN Jia-yi

Production Team of Weiwuying

Production Team of Weiwuying

Program Coordinator | Janet WANG

Technical Coordinator | Luca HUANG

Marketing Coordinator | TSAI Hsiang-jen

With All the Staff of National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying)

