

Contemporary Legend Theatre -

The Kingdom of Desire

10.9 Fri.　14:30 Original Cast
(WU Hsing-kuo, WEI Hai-min)

10.11 Sun. 14:30 Legacy Cast
(WU Hsing-kuo, WEI Hai-min, CHU Po-cheng, HUANG Jo-lin)

Weiwuying Opera House

Duration is 170 minutes with a 20-minute intermission.
Performed in Mandarin with Mandarin and English

National Kaohsiung CENTER FOR THE ARTS
WEI WU YING
衛武營 國家藝術文化中心
國家表演藝術中心 National Performing Arts Center

A Classic Reimagined and a New Chapter in Its Legacy

Kingdom of Desire, the 40th Anniversary production of the Contemporary Legend Theatre. Starring WU Hsing-kuo and WEI Hai-min, with CHU Po-cheng and HUANG Jo-lin.

Kingdom of Desire is adapted from William Shakespeare's tragedy Macbeth and stands as a landmark work of the Contemporary Legend Theatre. The production fuses the aesthetics of traditional Chinese opera with contemporary theatrical language, reimagining a Western classic through an Eastern performance lens. Over the years, the production has toured extensively, reaching 34 international cities and leading theatres worldwide. It has been featured at major international festivals including the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, the Festival d'Avignon, and the Hong Kong Arts Festival, where it has received widespread critical acclaim.

Rooted in the core disciplines of Peking opera—singing, speech, movement, and codified physical expression—and enhanced by modern stagecraft, the work creates a powerful visual and emotional experience. At its core, the production probes the darkest depths of human nature, confronting themes of desire, ambition, power, and destruction. It reveals how obsession and fate intertwine, driving individuals toward irreversible consequences, and exposes the abyss where human will collides with destiny. Marking the 40th anniversary, two special editions of the production will be presented. On October 9, the classic version stars WU Hsing-kuo and WEI Hai-min. On October 11, a legacy edition brings the two masters together with their protégés, CHU Po-cheng and HUANG Jo-lin, sharing the leading roles on stage. This rare master–disciple collaboration highlights a rich sense of artistic lineage and heritage.

Synopsis

It was the Warring States Period (475~221B.C.) in ancient China and feudalism saw its peak. The nation of Chi fell prey to the greed and ambition of Earl Wei-Lei. East City Defender, Au-Shu, and his deputy, Meng, were called upon to put down Earl Wei-Lei's rebellion. On the way home from their triumphant expedition, they encountered a Mountain Spirit, who revealed that Au-Shu would become an earl; and that he would later become the Lord of Chi whereas Meng's son would succeed Au-shu as Lord.

It turned out that Au-shu was indeed conferred the Earldom of Wei-Lei. When Lady Au-Shu knew that, she urged her husband to usurp the throne. On the very night of his appointment, Au-Shu committed regicide and laid the blame on the guard, thus fulfilling his desire to become the Lord of Chi.

For fear of history repeating itself, Au-Shu put up a contract for the lives of Meng and his son. Meng's son narrowly escaped his death but his father was not so lucky.

Meng's ghost caught Au-Shu off guard at the banquet and frightened him into confessing his misdeeds. On the other hand, the assassin who reported the missing of Meng's son was slain by Lady Au-Shu for his blunder.

To avenge his father's death, Meng's son led the army of neighboring state, Yen, and marched towards the city. Burdened with guilt, Lady Au-Shu kept trying to rub from her hands imaginary stains of blood and drove herself insane. Finally, she took her own life. After learning of his wife's death, Au-Shu rushed down to the woods trying to reason with the Mountain Spirit and the latter again predicted that he might as well hold the throne, unless the forest moved. As soon as Au-Shu brought the relieving news back to the castle, his worst nightmare came true; the forest moved. The Yen army was cutting down branches for shields. This was the fatal blow for the Chi army and Au-Shu was shot dead by an arrow.

Team Introduction

Contemporary Legend Theatre

Founded in 1986 by WU Hsing-kuo, Contemporary Legend Theatre (CLT) is committed to building a bridge between traditional Chinese opera and contemporary theater. CLT is recognized globally as a pioneer in intercultural, cross-disciplinary performances and has been invited to perform at reputable venues as well as festivals in over twenty countries. It is the only performing arts group in Taiwan that has staged performances at the top three art festivals around the world: Edinburgh International Festival, Festival d'Avignon, and Lincoln Center Festival.

Director & Lead Performer | WU Hsing-kuo



WU Hsing-kuo is an actor, playwright, and director. He is one of the rare few performing artists who work across film, TV, traditional opera, contemporary theater, and dance. His many accolades include Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, Taiwan's National Literary and Art Award, and Order of Brilliant Star with Grand Cordon. In 1986 he co-founded the Contemporary Legend Theatre and the troupe has produced more than 25 productions thus far. He established Hsing Legend Youth Theatre in 2016, under the umbrella of Contemporary Legend Theatre, to provide intensive training and showcase opportunities for young talent in Taiwan.

Lead Performer | WEI Hai-min



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An internationally acclaimed Peking Opera artist and distinguished exponent of the MEI School, WEI Hai-min became the first formal disciple of MEI Bao-jiu in 1991. She is currently a principal performer of GuoGuang Opera Company and a leading artist with Contemporary Legend Theatre.

Over the course of her career, WEI has performed in nearly 150 productions, excelling in both traditional classics and contemporary works. Her signature productions include *Kingdom of Desire*, *The Lady of Loulan, The Golden Cangue*, and *Meng Xiaodong*.

Her numerous accolades include the Golden Melody Award (2008), National Award for Arts (2007), Plum Blossom Award (1996), Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World (1996), and Asia's Most Outstanding Artist Award (1993). In recent years, she has devoted herself to Peking Opera education and the transmission of the art form. In 2023, she formally began taking on disciples, continuing her commitment to passing on and promoting the artistry and aesthetics of Peking Opera.

Lead Performer | CHU Po-cheng



A member of Contemporary Legend Theatre and Hsing Legend Youth Theatre, CHU Po-cheng holds a master's degree in interdisciplinary performing arts at National Taiwan University of Arts. Specializing in wusheng (martial male roles) and laosheng (senior male roles), he has studied under WU Hsing-kuo, KUO Hung-tien, CHANG Fu-chun, HSU Po-ang, TAI Li-wu, CHAO Yung-wei (Beijing), and WANG Li-chün (Shanghai).

His performance credits with Contemporary Legend Theatre include *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Faust, 108 Heroes – Tales from Water Margin II, The Lady of Loulan*, and *Julius Caesar*. With Hsing Legend Youth Theatre, he has appeared in *Wu Song – The Tiger Warrior, Young Crossroads*, and *2221 – The Everlasting Flower*, as well as Tai Gu Tales Dance Theatre productions *The Endless Womb* and *Landscape of the Heart*.

CHU was named Best Young Performer at the 34th Golden Melody Awards for Traditional Arts and Music and was selected for a New York fellowship supported by the Asian Cultural Council.

Lead Performer | HUANG Jo-lin



A graduate of the National Taiwan College of Performing Arts, HUANG Jo-lin has studied under WEI Hai-min, PAI Ming-ying, WANG Feng-yun, CHENG Jung, PAN Chieh-hua, and CHOU Hsueh-wen.

Her traditional Peking Opera repertoire includes *Strolling in the Garden, Losing Her Son and Descending into Madness, Farewell My Concubine, A Visit to the West Lake and Borrowing an Umbrella, The Matchmaker,* and *The Drunken Concubine*.

She has performed leading roles in Contemporary Legend Theatre's *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Faust*, and *The Lady of Loulan*, as well as Hsing Legend Youth Theatre's *Wu Song – The Tiger Warrior* and *Young Crossroads*.

Creative and Production Team

Artistic Director, Adaptation, Director: WU Hsing-kuo

Producer & Choreographer: LIN Hsiu-wei

Original Author: William Shakespeare

Au-Shu Cheng ｜ WU Hsing-kuo, CHU Po-cheng

Lady Au-Shu Cheng ｜ WEI Hai-min, HUANG Jo-lin

Composer: LIU Sung-huei

Singing Arranger: WU Hsing-kuo, MA Chin-liang

Rehearsal Director: WANG Kwan-chiang

Scenic Designer: DENG Kuen-yen

Lighting Designer: CHOU Kai (Premiere), LIN Keh-hua, WONG Choo-yean(2026)

Costume Designer: LIN Ching-ru

Art Director: Ken CHEN

Photographers: Ken CHEN, David TSAI , YANG Wen-ching, KUO Cheng-chang, HSIEH An

Calligraphy: TUNG Yang-tzu

Graphic Design: YE Yun-ling

Supervisory Organization ｜ Ministry of Culture Taiwan

Presenter ｜ Contemporary Legend Theatre

Co-Presenter ｜ National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying)

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Audio Description Production Team

Audio Description and Touch Tour Commissioned by National Theater & Concert Hall and National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts (Weiwuying)

Audio Description & Touch Tour Coordination ｜ KAO Pei-chi

Audio Description Design ｜ WU Yi-ying

Live Audio Description Narration ｜ TSENG Yun-fan

Touch Tour Design & Facilitation ｜ WU Yi-yingTouch Tour Model Production ｜ SIAO Deng-ji

Audio Description Project Coordination ｜ Culture Fantastic

Audio Description Production ｜ In.the.light.spot Audio Description

Audio Description Equipment ｜ GIS AV SOLUTIONS CO., LTD.

Production Team of Weiwuying

Program Coordinator | HSU Han-shu

Technical Coordinator | SHIH Yun-chin

Marketing Coordinator | LAN Hung-ling

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

Weiwuying Online Questionnaire