

## The Zuni Life Insight Theatre

### Hua-Yen Sūtra 3.0 - Pu Xian's Virtuous Actions for Awakening

12 - 14 December, 2013

Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

Presented and Produced by

Zuni Icosahedron

*"The profundity of Buddhist scriptures revealed in a simple way and presented with good taste"*  
- Cheung Kum Moon (Asia Times)

*"Staging the World of Hua-yen in an avant-garde theatre leads the Gen-Xers into the spiritual world of Buddhism"*  
- Humanity Magazine (Taiwan)

*"A significant milestone in the performing arts history of Hong Kong...continuing and manifesting the two thousand years old legacy of Chinese aesthetics of "Xie Yi", focusing on the inner nature and spirit of the subject."*  
- Venerable Sik Jue Zhen (The Hong Kong Buddhist Association)

**THE WORLD OF HUA-YEN | THE RETURN OF THE BUDDHA'S LIGHT | HUA-YEN SIDDHAM  
ALPHABET CHANTING | THE TEN DIRECTIONS ARE BUT ONE THOUGHT**

### The First-Ever Cross-boundary Collaboration between Art and Religion in Hong Kong

#### A Multimedia Performance based on the Buddhist Classics *Hua-Yen Sūtra* (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*)

In 2007, Zuni premiered the performance *Hua-Yen Sūtra*, using the chant of Hua-Yen Siddham alphabets, music, songs, mirrors and lighting, to interpret and re-create how the Buddha Shakyamuni gave his teachings at the Hua-Yen assembly and to elicit the important concepts contained in the Sūtra. Director Mathias Woo said, "Buddhism is about a joyful way of living that transcends material desire... the concept that everyone can become a Buddha is itself a process of self-discovery." Therefore, everyone can benefit from the philosophy, whether Buddhist or not.



In 2008, the performance was re-run as *Hua-Yen Sūtra 2.0 - Mind as a Skilful Painter*. The theme "Mind as a Skilful Painter" comes from a hymn in the *Hua-Yen Sūtra* in which the "Mind" is likened to a painter; and the "World" a painting, hence leading the audience to reflect on the relationship between "Mind" and "World". Integrating Buddhist philosophy with multimedia and modern theatrical art, the show is an experiment on the interaction between art and religion. Through the interpretation of the colours and lights as described during the Buddha's teaching; the chant of Hua-Yen Siddham alphabets with profound spiritual aspiration, the performance unfolded the boundless inspiration and resonance from religion and art.

Premiered in 2007 and rerun in Hong Kong and Taipei in 2008, the show is now returning as *Hua-Yen Sūtra 3.0 - Pu Xian's Virtuous Actions for Awakening*.

## About *Hua-Yen Sūtra 3.0 - Pu Xian's Virtuous Actions for Awakening*

### Chapter on the Aspiration Vows of Pu Xian

The "Chapter on the Aspiration Vows of Pu Xian" is also called *Entering the Inconceivable State of Liberation through Virtuous Actions and Vows*, which is listed under *Entering the Dharma-realm*, the last chapter of the 80-fascicle *Hua-Yen Sūtra*. The ten great vows for virtuous actions by Pu Xian show the purpose of spiritual practices. These ten great vows are themselves the overall guiding principle for the theory and practice as expounded in the entire *Hua-Yen Sūtra*. With this chapter as a basis, *Hua-Yen Sūtra 3.0* is inspired by Pu Xian Bodhisattva's ten great vows of virtuous actions for enlightenment. The coming performance will be infused with new arrangement of music and lyrics.

### THE WORLD OF HUA-YEN • THE RETURN OF THE BUDDHA'S LIGHT

The *Hua-Yen Sūtra* is believed to be the first teaching of the Buddha Shakyamuni after his enlightenment under the Bodhi tree. The teaching was delivered not through the media of language, sound or speech. Instead, the Buddha emanated light from every pore of his entire body to inspire the bodhisattvas, gods and deities who attended the teaching. It was later elaborated and interpreted by Pu Xian (Samantabhadra Bodhisattva) through language, text, icon and image. Centering on "light" as its fundamental creative element, the premiere of the performance *Hua-Yen Sūtra* explored the use of different types of light from focusing lights to flashlights, projector's lights and mirrors' reflecting lights. This year *Hua-Yen Sūtra 3.0 - Pu Xian's Virtuous Actions for Awakening* continues the journey of the exploration of light using the technology of theatre lighting and digital image projection, which will generate a live interaction with the compounds of language, calligraphy, music and stage installation. The Buddha's light - the light of



enlightenment - will be created real-time on stage, and touched and felt by everyone in the theatre.

### **SANSKRIT CHANTING · HUA-YEN SIDDHAM ALPHABETS**

Chanting of Sanskrit letters in the Siddham alphabets is one of the homage rituals relating to the *Hua-Yen Sūtra*. Siddham alphabet chanting is the foundation for the practice of Buddhist chanting and reciting. As the longest serving one in the legacy of Buddhist chants and the most famous one of all, Hua-Yen Siddham alphabet chanting is the focal point of the musical part of the performance. Performers, led by a group of Buddhist monastics, will chant the alphabets accompanied by various kinds of dharma instruments. The coming performance *Hua-Yen Sutra 3.0*, with new arrangement of music and lyrics, is inspired by Pu Xian Bodhisattva's ten great vows of virtuous actions for enlightenment as detailed in the chapter entitled "The Aspiration Vows of Pu Xian" in the *Hua-Yen Sūtra (Avatamsaka Sūtra)*.

### **THE TEN DIRECTIONS ARE BUT ONE THOUGHT · THE AWAKENED MIND ENLIGHTENS FAR AND WIDE, TRUTHFULLY, INFINITELY**

The creative team of *Hua-Yen Sūtra* gathers the most vibrant and creative members of the Buddhist community and creativity industries of Hong Kong. The high-calibre team works together to try to bring forth the infinite vastness of the world of Hua-Yen in theatre space, touching the truth that the mind creates everything (all is but mental construction).

### **Architecture is Art Festival 2013**

Featured in *Architecture is Art Festival 2013*, the performance *Hua-Yen Sūtra 3.0 - Pu Xian's Virtuous Actions for Awakening* uses real-time interaction of stage lighting, digital images, language, calligraphy, music and installation to create the Buddha's Light - the light of enlightenment. With the Buddhist monastics chanting the Hua-Yen Siddham alphabets, the multimedia performance creates for the audience a unique theatrical space in which the World of Hua-Yen, constructed by light and sound, can be experienced, and unfolds the boundless inspiration and resonance from the interplay among religion, architecture and art.

### **The Creative Team**

Building upon the text created by Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, a world-famous meditation master, poet, scholar and peace activist, Venerable Sik Hin Hung is the creative advisor for script and text for *Hua-Yen Sūtra 3.0 - Pu Xian's Virtuous Actions for Awakening*. As creative adviser on Sanskrit chanting, Venerable Sik Tsang Chit will be leading a group of 10 Buddhist monastics to deliver a captivating live chanting of the Siddham alphabets. The performance is directed and designed by Zuni's Co-Artistic Director Mathias Woo, with overall music created and arranged by Yu Yat Yiu @ PMPS; creative writing by Lin Xi;



costume design by William Chang; digital images by Chinese calligraphy artist Tong Yang-tze from Taiwan; and movement design by Yuri Ng, as well as Zuni's performers David Yeung, Dick Wong, Pun Tak Shu, Cedric Chan.

Original Text: Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh

Advisor (Script & Text): Venerable Sik Hin Hung

Advisor (Hua-Yen Siddham Alphabet Chanting): Venerable Sik Tsang Chit

Director, Scriptwriter & Designer: Mathias Woo

Music Director & Composer: Yu Yat-yiu@PMPS

Costume Designer: William Chang

Movement Design: Yuri Ng

Chinese Calligraphy (Digital Images): Tong Yang-tze

Creative Writing: Lin Xi

Performers: Yuri Ng, David Yeung, Dick Wong, Pun Tak Shu, Cedric Chan

Special Appearance (Hua-Yen Siddham Alphabet Chanting) : Venerable Sik Tsang Chit, Venerable Shi Guo Ding, Venerable Shi Yue He, Venerable Sik Chi Ping, Venerable Sik Chi Sau, Venerable Sik Sing Kit, Venerable Sik Tsing Ming, Venerable Sik Yan Chi, Venerable Sik Sing Kwun, Venerable Sik Tin Man

## The Team Profiles

### **Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh    Original Text**

A world-famous meditation master, poet, scholar and peace activist. He was nominated by Martin Luther King, Jr. for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1967. In 2006, he was selected by Times Magazine as one of 60 Asian heroes in the event "60 Years of Asian Heroes". Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh set up Van Hanh Buddhist University in Vietnam. In 1969, he founded the Unified Buddhist Church in France, and in 1982 he established Plum Village in France, giving teachings of the way of living in mindfulness and promoting a spiritual pureland for world peace.

### **Venerable Sik Hin Hung    Advisor ( Script & Text)**

Born in Hong Kong, Venerable Sik Hin Hung obtained his Bachelor degree in Computer and International Trade from Oregon State University, USA. He later became a Buddhist monk ordained under Venerable Master Shen Yi. In 2001, Venerable Sik Hin Hung was one of the Founding Fellows of the Centre of Buddhist Studies at The University of Hong Kong. He is also the director of Awareness Spiritual



Growth Centre, highlighting the motto "Be Mindful of Your Heart" and urging people to look after their mental health.

**Venerable Sik Tsang Chit Advisor (Hua-Yen Siddham Alphabet Chanting)**

Born in Hong Kong, Venerable Sik Tsang Chit was first ordained at Fat Yu Ching She in 1993, and subsequently at Wanfo Monastery in Taichung, Taiwan, in 1994. He graduated from the Department of Philosophy of Hong Kong Buddhist College, and Yuan Kuang Buddhist College in Taiwan. He is currently the Abbot of Tung Lin Kok Yuen and Fat Yu Ching She.

**Mathias Woo Director, Scriptwriter & Designer**

Co-Artistic Director cum Executive Director of Zuni Icosahedron, Mathias Woo leads a career as a scriptwriter, director, producer as well as curator, and is recognised for a portfolio of more than 60 theatre works. His recent works include *Eighteen Springs, 1587, A Year of No Significance, Remembrance of Karaoke Past*, the *East Wing West Wing* series and "Multimedia Architecture Music Theatre" series. In 2009, he launched "Architecture is Art Festival".

**Yu Yat-yiu @ PMPS Music Director & Composer**

Graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 1992, Yu Yat-yiu has been active in performing arts, working as a composer and sound designer. Yu also composes music for many Hong Kong pop singers, such as Anita Mui, Miriam Yang, Cass Pang, Anthony Wong, HOCC, Juno Mak, Eman Lam, Gigi Leung, etc. Yu also writes columns for *Next Magazine, Milk X Monthly* and *South China Morning Post Greater China*.

**Yuri Ng Movement Design & Performance**

Artistic Director of the Hong Kong Ballet Group, YURI and company danciNG. Yuri Ng received ballet training in Hong Kong, and later at Royal Ballet School in England and National Ballet School in Canada. Since his return to Hong Kong in 1993, he has choreographed for various performing companies and organisations. Ng received the Artist of the Year Award – Choreographer from the Hong Kong Artists' Guild in 1997; and in 1998, he was awarded Prix d'Auteur at the 6th Rencontres Choreographiques Internationales de Seine-St-Denis (Bagnole) with his choreography of *Boy Story*. His choreography of *Ciao Ciao Suzie Wong* received the Hong Kong Dance Alliance Dance Award of 1999.

**Tong Yang-tze Chinese Calligraphy (Digital Images)**

Graduated from Department of Fine Arts, National Taiwan Normal University (Taipei, Taiwan) and later obtained Master of Fine Arts from The University of Massachusetts, USA. Tong Yang-tze is



devoted to producing creative works in calligraphy.

### **Lin Xi Creative Writing**

Lin Xi leads a career as a lyricist, writer and media worker. He worked for newspapers and record companies. He is currently Advisor for Commercial Radio.

## Programme Details

Tickets are now available at URBTIX outlets

**Venue** : Grand Theatre, Hong Kong Cultural Centre

**Shows** : 8:15 pm / 12 - 14 December, 2013 (Thur-Sat)

3:00 pm / 14 December, 2013 (Sat)

**Ticket Price** : \$140, \$190, \$280, \$420, \$1,000\*  
(\*Charity ticket)

### **Programme Enquiries**

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