

LIFE

Bard reboot opens theater gala

Tadashi Suzuki returns to the Chinese capital with his radical reworking of the Shakespearean classic *King Lear* to launch this year's NCPA International Theatre Festival. **Chen Nan** reports.

It was a cold and snowy night 35 years ago when the legendary Japanese theater director Tadashi Suzuki premiered his version of the classic Shakespearean tragedy *King Lear*, performed by actors on an outdoor stage in the mountains of Toyama prefecture on Japan's Honshu island.

Among the audience that night in the village where the director and his Suzuki Company of Toga are based were theater critics from the United States and Europe, who were so impressed by the play that they later took it to the West.

In 1988, the play toured the US for six months, which saw American actors stage more than 100 shows before later opening at the Moscow Art Theatre featuring an all-male Russian cast.

In 2014, Suzuki brought the play to China for the first time collaborating with a group of young Chinese actors, including actor Tian Chong, then aged 25, who played the lead role.

Five years later, the play is now returning to the capital with three performances having been staged at the National Center for the Performing Arts from Thursday to Saturday.

With actors from five countries — China, Japan, South Korea, Russia and the US, who all perform in their mother tongues onstage, the play opened the 2019 NCPA International Theatre Festival.

"We've been staging *King Lear* for more than 30 years now and we have never stopped adding new ideas into the play, which keeps it alive," said Suzuki at the NCPA on June 4. "I always want to create plays that can be shared by people from different cultures. *King Lear* fulfills my vision for melding different cultures into a play."

All the actors received training from Suzuki, who is known for his "Suzuki method" of acting. The director, who was born in Shizuoka, Japan, in 1939, has been a theater pioneer since he was a college student at Waseda University. He has developed his own method of training actors, which focuses on the human body's expression of animal energy as the basis for theater performance.

In his adaptation of *King Lear*, Suzuki sets the story in a nursing home, where a nurse reads to an old man from William Shakespeare's *King Lear*. As he looks back on his life, the elderly man's memories begin to merge with the story of the play. The old king divides his kingdom among his three daughters, Edgar, Goneril and Regan, but the story ends up in betrayal and death. The old man, who is abandoned by his family, also dies of madness and despair in the end.

"It's a fusion of reality and fanta-



sy. I was inspired by the fact that many elderly people stay in nursing homes now. They are left behind and die alone," says Suzuki, 80. "The play has been well received worldwide because it's seen as a common social problem affecting lots of countries, including Japan and China."

After *King Lear*, 10 plays from Russia, Germany, Britain and China will be staged in 42 shows during the 2019 NCPA International The-

ater Festival, which runs through September.

Since 2015, the NCPA International Theatre Festival has been offering international theatrical productions, dialogue sessions, art exhibitions and theater workshops to audiences.

Highlights of this year's festival will include a rendition of *Don Juan* by Bulgarian director Alexander Morfov of the Komissarzhevskaya Theater of St. Petersburg, Russia, and the NCPA's Chinese version of *Jane Eyre* based on English writer Charlotte Bronte's popular novel of the same title which premiered at the NCPA a decade ago.

The Chinese play, *Love Letter*, which is directed by Russian dramatist Yuri Eremin, will close the festival. Revolving around the romance between the two lead characters spanning from 1975 to 2015, the play, which features well-known TV host Zhou Tao in the lead role, premiered in Beijing on Aug 16, 2018, and toured China later year.

PHOTOS PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Contact the writer at chennan@chinadaily.com.cn

Xi's call to preserve heritage leads to excavation

BEIJING — Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core has given a series of important instructions and made arrangements to retain cultural roots and safeguard the soul of the nation by promoting the protection of cultural and natural heritage.

In May 2017, President Xi instructed that a cultural belt be built along the Grand Canal.

"The Grand Canal is precious heritage passed down to us by our ancestors and its culture that should be protected, inherited and used," he said.

Answering Xi's call for "protecting and promoting traditional Chinese culture and preserving the historical context", archaeologists have completed an archaeological survey of cultural relics throughout the Xiongan New Area as well as the archaeological exploration and initial excavation of 50 ancient sites and tombs in the 100 square kilometers initial development zone of the area.

As for the protection of the ancient city of Zhengding in Hebei province, Xi has stressed the upholding of the concept of ancient city protection, that is, protecting its historical and cultural values.

During an inspection tour in Beijing, Xi pointed out that history and culture are the soul of a city and people should cherish the city's historical and cultural heritage like their own lives.

When the general secretary visited the Xi'an Museum in Northwest China's Shaanxi province, the first issue of concern to him was the protection of the Small Wild Goose Pagoda.

He said the principle of "restoring it to what it was" should be upheld in ancient building protection.

In Guosheng village in the Dali Bai autonomous prefecture, in Southwest China's Yunnan province, Xi said that while building a new countryside, attention must be paid to "preserving local flavor and style, rural landscape, green mountains and clear waters, and letting nostalgia set in."

When visiting Xiguan, a traditional cultural area in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, Xi walked into the Cantonese Opera Art Museum and encouraged fans of the art form to carry forward Cantonese Opera.

During a tour of the northwestern province of Qinghai in August 2016, Xi visited the provincial environmental monitoring center.

Speaking through the video-phone system, Xi asked about the management and protection of the ecological resources in the region of Sanjiangyuan, the source of China's three major rivers.

In July 2018, Xi presided over the third meeting of the central committee for deepening reform at which a guideline on strengthening reform in the protection and use of cultural relics was approved.

Participants at the meeting said that boosting the reform process when it came to the protection and use of cultural relics was of great significance to the preservation and inheritance of China's cultural heritage.

Speaking about the document, Liu Yuzhu, the head of the National Cultural Heritage Administration, said: "Its formulation has an epoch-making significance to the reform and innovation process when it comes to cultural relic work."

Port Network Authority of the Sardinian Sea

The Port Network Authority of the Sardinian Sea announces that it intends to select a private partner for the management of the Maritime Station, of passenger services, of parking areas for cars, trailers and semi-trailers, and support services to road transport and to the users of the commercial area of the port of Olbia "Isola Bianca", as well as for the planning and execution of the necessary works for the redevelopment and the financial management of the Maritime Station property and the uncovered areas intended for the services. With this exploratory notice, the Administration intends, therefore, to request the submission by qualified economic operators of project finance proposals pursuant to art. 183, paragraphs 15 and 16, of Decree Law 50/2016, which concern the redevelopment and management of the public property and the services identified above. The project finance proposals may be submitted no later than 10.00 a.m. on 09.09.2019 in accordance with the procedures set out in the full Public Notice available, together with the complete administrative and technical documentation, on the page dedicated to this procedure at the web address: www.adspmareadisa Sardegna.it.

The President: Prof. Avv. Massimo Deiana

