



Building Interdisciplinary Bridges Across Cultures

Wai-On Ho

Abstract

My PhD is an original combination of text, music, visuals and production ideas that amalgamates childhood impressions of Cantonese opera with my professional training of Western Classical music, drama and research. The core is a 12-act humorous Quben (曲本 quasi libretto cum script) called “Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor”, to be read for pleasure and as the basis for multi-venue performance. The Quben and elements provided are like pieces in a kaleidoscope, the possibilities are endless: my prototype can be developed into performances ranging from opera, musical, film, TV series, concert/dance/Internet performance, stage/radio play, folk/jazz piece...to educational workshops. Quben (pronounced: chuben, u as German ü; en as in happen) is the basis of ‘big drama’ (what Cantonese opera is called in Cantonese) – a quasi libretto cum script that performers at the time of my childhood had freedom to modify for their performance, and is the basis for new versions. I have no training in Cantonese opera. My project is an attempt to retain some of these characteristics in a new format that can be understood by Westerners and enjoyed by the general public, in the same way that Cantonese opera was enjoyed by even the lowest strata of society during my childhood.

Bio

Wai-On Ho is a PhD candidate. She is a composer and creator/director of cross-cultural combined arts work/projects. She has written works for vocal, choral, instrumental, ensemble, orchestral, electro-acoustics, music theatre, music-dance-theatre and cross-cultural combined arts have been performed in the UK and abroad since 1974. She founded Inter-Artes (1988) to create and perform works that combine music, dance, drama and visual arts across different cultures and has staged many such projects in Britain and abroad with the support of major funding bodies. She is a recipient of an Arts Council of England New Collaboration Fund award (1995) for research and development of artistic environment creation on the principles of Chinese landscape gardening.