

Panel on Home Affairs and Panel on Development

**Joint Subcommittee to Monitor the Implementation of the
West Kowloon Cultural District Project meeting on 10 Jun 2013**

Submission of the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre

The Hong Kong Repertory Theatre wishes to give its views on the issues of communication and cooperation between the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority and the Arts Community as follows.

Our Vision

Being one of the nine Government-funded major performing arts groups and also the territory's leading professional theatre company, the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre is obliged to help develop Hong Kong as a cultural metropolis, with view to the new established performing arts facilities in the West Kowloon Cultural District. In so doing, we look forward to communicate and cooperate with West Kowloon Cultural District Authority to a larger capacity.

The three major theatres (Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, Chung Ying Theatre Company and Zuni Icosahedron) have a common goal for residency in WKCD for development of more collaboration. The 600-seated "Medium Theatre" completed in Phase 1 of the District will be an ideal "home base" for HK Rep. Other facility such as the Arts Education Centre is also our target for execution of our drama education activities.

Communications with the Arts Sector

The WKCD Authority is expected to exchange views with potential resident companies on the following issues:

Artistic Direction

One of the worries shared by local groups is that WKCD will become a replica of Broadway and West End—which only features those international big-name productions, and put aside local culture. To avoid such trend, the Authority should exchange views with future resident companies on artistic positioning of each performing venue, and listen to their interest in venue operation and management, and to take steps to shape the District a unique mix of Chinese culture and Asian touch.

Hardware Design

We expect that a clear policy on venue partnership could be announced by the Authority as soon as possible. Once the resident companies are chosen, they will have a position to give performing facility requirement and feedback on the "hardware" design from "the users" point of view. In fact, professional inputs from the arts groups would help "characterize" each individual venue to fit specific artistic purposes and professional development of resident companies.

Manpower Development

The phased completion of cultural facilities in the District will surely add to the demand of local arts administrators. The *Policy Address 2013* announced that “additional funding of \$150 million will be allocated to strengthen the training of arts administrators with different levels of experience in the next five years, including internships, further studies and diversified professional training”. It provides career opportunities for arts administrators working in WKCD. Currently various government-funded arts groups are taking up additional responsibilities in training of new arts administrators. It is desirable for the Authority to maintain a synergy with the arts industry in terms of manpower training and employment.

Collaboration with the Arts Sector

The WKCD Authority may consider the following ways of collaboration with the arts sector:

Software Development

Prior to the inauguration of new venues in the District, the Authority shall develop programmes of a diversified nature jointly with local arts groups within or outside the District as its “software warm-up”. For instance, HKRep is planning an “International Black Box Festival 2014” with four visiting theatre groups from Singapore, Taiwan, Japan and U.K. To tie in the Festival, the Authority expressed its interest in co-organizing with us a seminar on “New Play Development Mechanism” by drawing reference from overseas venues and companies. Experts in this field will be invited to share their successful experience on the topic—which might bring forth a further study to position one of the three black box theatres in the District as “New Works Centre”. We believe that collaborations or the like will benefit software development of WKCD.

Commissioning Works

The Authority can consider commissioning new works and investing in those high-budget “blockbuster” productions with great artistic values and high return potential, like musicals, to build up WKCD’s own brand of signature classics.

Venue Operation

The Authority may invite bids from those capable and able resident companies to take part in the operation and management of selected venues in the District—which includes programming, marketing, audience building, arts education, stage operation, venue and hiring management as well as catering services. This means to help resident companies to develop their business in a more independent and resourceful manner.

Hong Kong Repertory Theatre
27 May 2013