

How important is the opera Tang the Playwright: A Life of Dreams in the history of Chinese theatre and opera?

### 《汤显祖》这部歌剧在中国歌剧历史上扮演着什么角色？

上海音乐学院原创歌剧《汤显祖》侧重于挖掘这位在传世之作《牡丹亭》背后的文化伟人汤显祖，和他所经历的不寻常的一生，向人们展示其罕为人知的中国传统士君子的人文情怀和铮铮风骨。这部歌剧的音乐融入民族乐器和传统戏曲元素，体现出强烈的中国风和鲜明的民族性。通过充满诗意的重唱、合唱和意识流独白唱段，和观众一同回顾汤显祖虽才华横溢、政绩卓著，却仕途坎坷、无以施展的一生；一同回味他真率坦荡、执着豪迈，不畏强权，为国家天下、黎民百姓慷慨陈词的坚硬与柔软；一同追溯士君子精神世界中从真情到至情不断升华的过程，探寻文学家、戏剧家之所以伟大的根由，在于他对人生处境的悲悯，对永恒价值的追寻，对美的一切都保有热爱。本剧一改昆曲《牡丹亭》所投射出的关于汤显祖形象的单一指向，准确塑造了值得中国人骄傲的文化伟人的新形象，体现了中华民族不懈追求真、善、美的精神历程。

This original opera Tang the Playwright: A Life of Dreams made by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music casts a new light on the ups and downs of Tang's life. By presenting selected events that best annotate Tang's personality and virtues, it discloses the reason for his greatness as a litterateur and a playwright and explains why the love displayed in Tang's masterpieces has shown the spiritual strength of eternity shared by all mankind. With integration of Chinese traditional musical instruments and traditional opera elements, it displays a strong Chinese national flavour. The play touches most upon the love and the spiritual world of the nobility, as demonstrated through the protagonist Tang. Building on the theatrical heritage of the Kun Opera Mu Dan Ting (The Peony Pavilion), this opera adds more colour to the image of Tang Xianzu by portraying a cultural giant who is also a national pride of China.

How did Tang Xianzu's works reflect the time and place in which he lived?

### 汤显祖的四大名著是如何反映了当时的时代风貌？

汤显祖的“临川四梦”，指的是《牡丹亭》、《紫钗记》、《邯郸记》和《南柯记》四剧的合称。它的形式之唯美、内容之丰富、涵义之深刻，都令后人赞叹不已。前两个可谓是“至情至性”之作，是儿女风情戏，极具浪

漫主义精神；后两个可谓是“至真至善”，是社会风情剧，写出了人世间仕途上的起起伏伏、坎坷悲哀。或许“四剧”皆有梦境，才有“临川四梦”之说，“四剧”本身也是汤翁毕生心血凝聚成的人生之梦。

Tang's renowned Four Dreams in Linchuan are Mu Dan Ting (The Peony Pavilion), Zi Chai Ji (The Purple Hairpin), Han Dan Ji (The Handan Dream) and Nan Ke Ji (A Dream under the Southern Bough) respectively. The four works amaze numerous people with their artistic forms, exquisite storylines and realistic significance. The first two works are romantic stories, relating what we understand as the supreme love and moral integrity; the other two are more of realistic works, giving a panorama of the then society and the ups and downs of people's lives in it. From my eyes, maybe it's due to the relevance to dreams in all four works that we name them the Four Dreams in Linchuan. From certain point of view, Tang's life as a playwright also reflects his own dreams coming true.

How famous was he in his own lifetime?

### 汤显祖在其有生之年有多出名？

汤显祖的生活的年代是中国的明朝时期，当时文坛注重的创作主流，是诗文而非戏曲。虽然不少文人雅士也在诗文写作之暇，从事传奇剧本的创作，但是这些文人对戏曲的基本态度，没有他们写作诗文时为求“传之不朽”的执着与认真的精神，也就难臻艺术的大雅境界。但汤显祖则不同，他虽然在当时以诗文著称，在戏剧创作上展现出了独特的个人风格，被人誉为一代才子。

Tang Xianzu lives in the Ming Dynasty in China. At that time, the literary circles mainly focus on poetry and prose instead of drama. Therefore, very few people pursue as earnestly in writing drama as in poetry and prose. Tang is an exception though. He's famous not only in poetry and prose, but also display creativeness in drama writing and always fly his own colors. Moreover, as we can see in this play, Tang says that "For nobility, the real cause is to serve the people and the country; Poetry and theatre are nothing but a pastime", which shows that he holds lofty ideals and grand aspirations too. He's a noble and upright man in conduct and governance in addition to the fact that he's a great litterateur and playwright.

Tang Xianzu has been referred to as 'the Shakespeare of the East' – what are some of the similarities and difference between his work and Shakespeare's?

### **汤显祖被誉为东方莎士比亚，他跟莎翁有何共同及不同之处？**

伊丽莎白时代的莎士比亚是西方戏剧天才，而中国明代的汤显祖则被人称为是中国的莎士比亚，他们是同辈人，虽相隔天涯海角，但相似之处颇多，差异亦显著，两位都集中反应了当时的中、西方社会生活、思想观念、文化传统、审美心理以及戏剧艺术实践等方面的区别。二人同时光照东西方文坛，都在本国和世界文学史上占有重要地位。他们堪称世界戏剧的两座高峰，在 16 世纪晚期和十七世纪初同时出现在东半球的中国和西半球的英国，是世界戏剧史上的一大奇迹。

Shakespeare is a genius playwright during the Elizabethan era in the West, while Tang Xianzu who lives in the Ming Dynasty in China is called "Shakespeare of the East". They live almost in the same age, and in 2016 when we first created the musical version of Tang Xianzu, we wanted to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the passing of the two literary giants. In their works, we find a great deal of information about the societies that they lived in, the views and values of people at that time, the culture and tradition, aesthetics, etc. They are both peaks in the literary world in their countries and weigh a lot in the world theatrical arena. A parallel wonder in the world history of theatre, we may say.

How has the way Chinese audiences responded to these plays changed over the centuries since they were written?

### **汤显祖的名作自面世以来，随着时代变迁被改编，中国观众对此有什么看法？**

汤翁的“临川四梦”曾在不同时代被人们诠释和演绎，之所以人们对“四梦”如此着迷，是汤翁的文学魅力。“临川四梦”的现代演绎不论对于古老艺术的传承,还是现代艺术的结合,毫无疑问都取得了成功的经验，也获得了观众的认可，体现了中国观众对经典艺术的追寻和崇尚。

The Four Dreams in Linchuan have been adapted and brought to the audiences in different ages. The reason why people are so attracted to the "four dreams",

I think is his literary charisma to a large extent. Modern interpretations of the “four dreams”, not only inherit the essence of ancient arts, but combine modern performing skills and techniques. They have won recognition and acclaims from the audiences in China, who’ve shown great respect and love for the artistic classics.

How popular are the plays today in contemporary China?

### 汤的临川四梦在当代中国出名吗？

“临川四梦”是汤显祖唯情思想在艺术上的集中体现,其中情、梦、戏三个重要概念在“临川四梦”中得到具体的发挥和鲜明的体现,这也是“临川四梦”巨大的文学魅力。“临川四梦”在当代的改编版本及演出场次之多足以说明其在中国的知名度。

The Four Dreams in Linchuan are the artistic achievements of Tang Xianzu that emphasize much on three concepts, i.e., love, dream and theatre. In contemporary China, the Four Dreams are frequently adapted and performed in various forms, which is a best demonstration of its popularity.

How did the works change when they were adapted as Kun opera?

### 当临川四梦改编为昆曲的时候都做了些什么改变？

临川四梦这四部作品之所以能穿越数百年的时光,成为人们心目中的经典,是文学本身的魅力,也是昆曲的魅力。昆曲的唱腔有南曲和北曲之分。正因为有这样的腔调,才能做很多身段,并有足够空间将身段、眼神、脚步,开扇子、关扇子,这一系列程式有机融合起来。在“临川四梦”改编成当代昆曲时,舞台表演的“程式化”已不再完全沿用昆曲创作之初的程式化特征,对一些细节方面的处理有了些许调整,比如人物形象的表演,加入了演员对于人物角色新的阐释,形象的塑造和人物表演不拘泥于程式,人物感情更加外化,表情更加丰富自然,趋于通俗化。

Though created several hundred years ago, the Four Dreams in Linchuan are still classical works in Chinese people’s eyes. It’s due to the charisma of literature, also the beauty of Kun Opera. The Kun Opera can be divided into two schools: the Southern and the Northern. In both schools, performers will combine their gestures, footsteps, expression in eyes, use of fans together to

deliver a full meaning. When the Four Dreams are adapted to modern Kun Opera, there are no longer strict standardized requirements on performance. Details can be adjusted, performers' understanding of the roles can be integrated, presentation of emotions are more outward and natural, all in an attempt to help audience better understand the characters and the story.

How would you describe the music, and how does it reflect the drama in the plays?

### **您如何评价这场音乐会的音乐呢？它们如何反映每一幕中的剧情？**

这部歌剧的音乐在创作中大量运用了汤显祖同时代的傩戏、宜黄戏等音乐元素，比昆曲更全面真实丰富地体现中华民族音乐戏曲艺术的审美经验。在每一幕不同的剧情中，观众可以发现交响乐、戏曲、爵士、流行音乐、淮扬戏及当地采茶戏等各种元素。音乐创作中结合了现代流行音乐编曲语汇，引发故事悬念、构筑戏剧音乐主干，辅以丰富而清晰的叙事节奏，形成既古雅又现代的风格特色。在诗韵、戏韵中探索中国歌剧的独特品格。

Even better than Kun Opera, we've combined numerous music elements in this play, such as the Nuo theatrical music, Yihuang theatrical music, etc., all of which can be sourced back to the same age when Tang Xianzu lived. Also, in different scenes, audiences will find elements of symphonic music, traditional operas, jazz, pop, Huai-yang local theatre, etc. In this way, the storyline is highlighted, the rhythm of narration is clear and well-controlled, and we are able to present the unique Chinese opera style that is equally traditional and modern.

How important are dreams in Tang Xianzu's most famous plays? What are the plays about?

### **梦在汤显祖的名著中扮演着什么重要的角色？述说了怎样的故事？**

汤显祖主张因情成梦、因梦成戏,而戏则须讲究意趣神色,达到艺术美的目的。情是贯穿并推动四梦发展的主要线索和动力,也是艺术的起源和本质所在;梦是真情和至情的表现,也是二者的理想化和艺术化;戏则是写梦,是将理想化的饱含情的梦化为具体的艺术形象,因此必须在主题立意、精神神趣、艺术表现和艺术风格等审美要素上达到有机统一,实现其审美价

值。《南柯记》、《邯郸记》是亦真亦假、情真情幻的人生仕途；《紫钗记》则体现出“情义无价,钱财皆空”的感人真诚。《牡丹亭》之梦更是荡气回肠:生而死、死而生,寻寻觅觅,终于获得了圆满的结局。

Three aspects—love, dream and theatre—go through Tang’s entire life. Love is the major clue and driving force of the Four Dreams, which also constitutes the origin and essence of his art. Dreams are the representation of his pursuit for true love and uprightness, or to say the artistic form of the two. Theatre is about dreams, in an attempt to specify and bring to the stage what he loves and dreams of. Dream under the Southern Bough and The Handan Dream describe the journey of life being an official that is either real or imaginary; The Purple Hairpin depicts his understanding of how love and honesty overwhelm the fortune. The Peony Pavilion is the most thought-provoking: people in love will transcend the boundary of life and death, and in the end, lovers will revive to gain a happy ending.

Who are the main characters and how are they represented in the music?

**谁在歌剧音乐会中担任主要角色？他们是如何在音乐中呈现自己的角色的？**

此次担任汤显祖的主唱是胡斯豪，他的声音特点是高音部分充沛，亢畅不挡。音域宽，磁性足，更好地诠释出汤显祖真率坦荡的人格特征和执着超迈的精神气质。担任汤显祖妻子吴氏的主唱是陈京蔚老师，剧中吴氏是美好理想和忠贞不渝的化身，象征汤显祖“初心不改，百折不回”，充分开掘了以往并不广为人知的汤显祖曲折人生、人格特征和精神气质。

Tang Xianzu is played by HU Sihao this time. His loud and sonorous singing will best interpret Tang’s characters—sincere, upright and noble. Tang’s wife, Madam Wu is played by Ms. CHEN Jingwei. In this play, Madam Wu embodies Tang’s unswerving commitment to ideals and love, and this story casts a new light on the ups and downs of Tang’s life.

How are the four plays, or operas, treated in this performance by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music?

**临川四梦在这场音乐会中担任了什么角色？**

《汤显祖》这部歌剧在尊重历史和忠于史实的基础上，有意借鉴汤翁写梦境的手法，可谓“戏中戏”。精选汤显祖一生几段重要的经历，巧妙植入他的“临川四梦”（《紫钗记》、《牡丹亭》、《南柯记》、《邯郸记》）创作心路，全面而深刻地再现了汤显祖不寻常的一生，他化个人情爱为天地大爱、坚守理想、持己高尚、不计一己之利害一时之得失，矢志报国为民。剧中精选了汤显祖一生几段重要的经历——大婚、赶考遇阻、直言上书、被贬、调任、纵囚、丧子等，真实再现了汤显祖不寻常的一生。

This original opera Tang Xianzu selects several important episodes in Tang's life to accompany his composition of the renowned Four Dreams in Linchuan, i.e., Zi Chai Ji (The Purple Hairpins), Mu Dan Ting (The Peony Pavilion), Nan Ke Ji (A Dream under the Southern Bough) and Han Dan Ji (The Handan Dream). The opera gives insight into Tang's life and his extraordinary commitments to ideals and moral standards, who abandons personal emotions for a greater love to the world. Tang's image as a tragic hero is represented on the stage as one that always prioritizes the interests of the country and its people over personal gains. In this play, both Madam Wu (Tang's late wife) and Du Liniang (the heroine created by Tang) embody his unswerving commitment to ideals and love. Several important episodes of Tang's life are presented, such as his wedding, his failed attempts in imperial exams, his submission of a written statement to the higher authority, how he's getting demoted, release prisoners on festivals, loses his own child, so as to present his unusual life.

What are the challenges for the musicians in a performance like this?

### **音乐家们在这样的音乐会中最大的挑战是什么？**

《汤显祖》原来的歌剧版本，在舞台上丰富的布景、灯光及多媒体，这些都可帮助演员们更身临其境投入在戏剧情景里，也可让演员们更加放松。此次来澳演出时可能因为有部分演出场地不能完全满足布景等硬件条件，呈现的会是音乐会版本，演员们需要运用表演来传递戏剧场景等，所以此次赴澳演出对音乐家和演员们的表演及演唱要求更加严格了。

In the full version of opera Tang Xianzu, we have the theatrical setting, lighting, multi-media, etc. , all of which will help actors and actresses to get involved in all scenes, and perform in a more relaxed way. This time, however, due to the restrictions of halls, we don't have much room for the theatrical settings.

Therefore, we choose the concert version; our performers have to help the audience understand the whole story. Therefore, it's more demanding for musicians and vocalists.

What do you hope the audience will come away with?

### 你认为观众能在这场音乐会中收获些什么？

歌剧《汤显祖》是近年来上海音乐学院创作成果的一个缩影。我们走出国门，带出去的不仅是一部歌剧，更要传承和弘扬中国传统文化，让世人了解中国的人文情怀和精神风骨。上海音乐学院始终鼓励学生通过参演经典作品，提升自身的审美空间及技能水平，同时进入原创剧目的艺术实践，成为行业中极具潜力的青年演员。

此次经过不断精心打磨，呈现给观众的《汤显祖》，从叙事转向表现主义风格，全剧围绕“情”这一主题，以主人公汤显祖心理线索为串联，构建出带有精神意味的戏剧情境。汤显祖创作的杜丽娘形象在剧中多次隐现，映射汤显祖这位悲情英雄一生初心不改、百折不回、理想不灭的人格特征和精神气质。在音乐上，更多地融入了民族乐器和传统戏曲元素，既符合剧情的开展，又体现出强烈的中国风和鲜明的民族性。

音乐是世界通用的语音，作为国家高端音乐人才培养高地和优秀音乐作品的孵化基地，上海音乐学院有责任创作出更多更好的中国歌剧，传承和发扬中国传统文化，并通过扎根自身传统的独特表达，“翻译”传递给当代人，并与全世界人民一同分享，讲好中国故事，传达中国声音。

The opera Tang the Playwright: A Life of Dreams is a representative of artistic practices made by the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in late years. A long way from China, we bring more than an opera; we hope to inherit and spread the Chinese traditional culture and let the world know more of the humanistic ideals and strength of character of Chinese people.

We always encourage students to participate more in the stage performance of Chinese classics, so as to promote their professional skills, aesthetic levels and turn into talented young performers in the circle.

The play touches most upon the love and the spiritual world of the nobility, as demonstrated through the protagonist Tang. Also, Du Li-niang, the heroine in Tang's play The Peony Pavilion shows up in the play. In the original work, Miss

Du encounters and falls in love with a dream lover when she falls asleep, wastes away and dies of lovesickness, only to be brought back to life by the pursuit of love; she embodies Tang's ideal for the most genuine love.

Music is a common language of the world. Shanghai Conservatory of Music (SHCM), formerly the National Conservatory of Music, is a highly internationalized music institution with the longest history in China, whose organizational system, educational mode, teaching materials and alumni have deep influence upon Chinese modern and contemporary music education. As the "cradle for musicians", SHCM is responsible for composing more and better Chinese operas, to inherit and spread excellent Chinese traditional culture, to "translate" Chinese ancient culture to the contemporary generation. We are also willing to relate good Chinese stories, to let other countries hear Chinese voices and share our heritage with the world.