

2008.8.7-9.14

臺北藝術節十年鉅獻

藝遊未盡

2008·10TH

TAF

TAIPEI ARTS FESTIVAL



Hua-yen Sūtra – Mind as a Skilful Painter

August 29-31, 2008

Metropolitan Hall, Taipei Cultural Center

Produced by

Zuni Icosahedron

Creative and Production Team

Original Text

Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh

Creative Consultant (Script and Text)

Venerable Sik Hin Hung

Creative Consultant (Hua-yen Siddham alphabet chanting)

Venerable Sik Tsang Chit

Academic Consultant

Dr. Li Kwok-fu

Director and Designer

Mathias Woo

Music Director and Compose

Yu Yat Yiu @ People Mountain People Sea

Costume Designer

William Chang

Movement Designer

Yuri Ng

Chinese Calligraphy Artist (Digital Images)

Tong Yang-tze

Creative Writing

Lin Xi

Digital Images

Lawrence Choi

Special Appearance (Hua-yen Sūtra Chanting)

Tobias Gremmler

Venerable Sik Tsang Chit

Venerable Sik Chi Tak

Venerable Sik Chor Yin

Venerable Sik Kwong Wing

Venerable Sik Po Chuen

Venerable Sik Sing Kwun

Venerable Shi Ru Jing

Venerable Shi Chuan Hao

Venerable Shi Heng Hui

Shan Xiao Ming (Nanjing)

David Yeung

Dick Wong

Chan Ho Fung

Pun Tak Shu

Performers

Yonfan

Narration (Recorded)

Chau Chin Tung

Percussion Coordinator

Edgar Hung (Piano)

Musicians

Ho Yi On (Percussion)

Dennis Cheng (Dizi)

Yu Yat Yiu (Percussion)



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Technical Director

Production Manager

Lighting Designer

Sound Designer

Production Coordinator / Stage Manager

Deputy Stage Manager

Costume Coordinator

Video/ Multi-media Operator

Wardrobe Assistant

Company Manager (Administration and Programme)

Company Manager (Finance)

Creative Coordinator

Rehearsal Master / Subtitle Operator

Publicity and Media Coordinator

Programme Coordinator

Text Arrangement and Translation

Billy Chan

Lawrence Lee

Tennison Siu

Chung Chak Ming

Chow Chun Yin

Carmen Cheng

Jessie Dai

Fong Hiu Tan

Chan Wai Yee

Doris Kan

Jacky Chan

Chan Ho Fung

Pamela Tsui

Luka Wong

Bowie Chow

Theresa Leung

Mo-yung Yuk Lin

Ernest Ng

Paul Law

Terence Chan

2

www.taipeifestival.org

電話 : (02)2528-9580 #191-199

傳真 : (02)2528-9512

Email : info@taipeifestival.org

主辦單位



臺北市政府

承辦單位

台北市文化局

台北市文化基金會

贊助單位

永豐銀行

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The Art of Multi-Media

Zuni Icosahedron (Hong Kong)

Zuni Icosahedron, with a history of 26 years, is the premiere of Hong Kong's avant-garde and experimental theatre. It has always stayed on the cutting edge of media technology in presenting the interactive relationship between multi-media and theatre, as well as in probing the possibilities of form and content in 'theatre space' through experimentation and exploration. Zuni has been most inspiring in developing the aesthetics of theatre in Chinese society, with its experimental and subversive nature, and this could be seen in the interactive experiments in the narrative (or rather non-narrative), form and space in their early works. The same spirit could be found in the multi-media design in lights, images, sounds and spaces as in the attempts in the area of cross-media performances, to cross-boundary political and civil area, and to cross-region international cultural exchanges. The topics covered stretch from popular culture to social taboos, from the traditional to the contemporary.

Mathias Woo, the director of the performance, pushes the limits and boundaries of multi-media to the ultimate in his experimentation of 'theatre space', with his magical manoeuvrings over texts, images, spaces and modern technologies in his theatre works. He has worked with top-notch Chinese dramatists, such as Stanley Lai (Taiwan), Meng Jinghui (China), and Edward Lam (Hong Kong), shedding his influence on the creativity of multi-media theatre in Chinese society.

In 2004, Mathias Woo was invited by the National Theatre Company of China to stage *18 Springs*, a drama adapted from the novel of the same title by Eileen Chang. It was presented with an original concept in theatre time and space; and with a minimal employment of the multi-media in sound, image and installation. The outstanding and immaculate performance of the actors brought out the spirit and essence of the book to the utmost. In 2005, another of Mathias Woo's works, an interpretation of *Fragments d'un Discours Amoureux* by Roland Barthes was invited to Taipei. The confusing entanglement and the various manifestations of lovers under the influence of popular culture and symbols of love were expressed powerfully and successfully through the use of music, experiments in form and content. This was all made possible through the special design of space, transforming the auditorium of Novel Hall into magical theatre space. In 2008, Taipei Arts Festival has brought the audience

into the multi-media theatre space of Mathias Woo and Zuni, exploring the various spaces created by the multi-media enchantments of the two performances, the spiritual space of *Hua-yen Sūtra* and the architectural space of *The Life and Times of Louis I. Kahn*.



Hua-yen Sūtra

Scene 1 Mind as a Skilful Painter

Scene 2 Hua-yen Sūtra (Buddhāvataṃsaka-mahāvaipulya-sūtra)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. What is Hua-yen Sūtra? | Original text: Venerable Sik Hin Hung |
| 2. Practice | Original text: Venerable Sik Hin Hung |
| 3. How is the Avatamsaka realm? | Original text: Venerable Thich Nhat Nhan |
- (excerpt from *Cultivating the Mind of Love*)

Scene 3 The Avatamsaka realm

1. The Hua-yen Siddham alphabet (chanting)
2. Following the Volition of Sentient of Beings (music)

Director's Notes on Hua-yen

Mathias Woo (Director and Designer)

29 May 2007

I am a person who strongly adheres to principles. This is perhaps related to my experience with Catholicism. The Catholic's absolute faith in God is charged with an astonishing power. I dropped the religion because I began to have doubt about this kind of absolute faith. I lost confidence in the system of Catholicism. Yet I still believe in the Catholic doctrines that advocate love and justice. Since then I have transferred this strong attitude of adhering to principles onto art. All these years I have been searching for...

About two years ago, I was invited by Mr Ray Chen to create a multi-media work for a calligraphy exhibition of Ms Tung. I selected an exhibition space of 20m by length and 12m by width at the Taipei Fine Arts Museum. A total of 16 sets of digital projectors was installed in this space. Tung's calligraphy of the 16 characters from the Heart Sutra was projected through 16 sets of computers. These 16 characters convey a meaning of "Emptiness does not differ from form, form does not differ from emptiness; whatever is emptiness, that is form". The white space was sometimes bright and sometimes dim, sculpting the movement and texture of the calligraphy. I like this work as it embraces a sense of spirituality that is so simple and direct. Then I began to read the Heart Sutra more in detail. I also started to reflect on the motives behind my creative endeavours, as well as the relationship between art and religion.

Modern art in the West is a kind of reaction questioning Catholicism and Christianity, and the societal systems built upon these two religions. In the 1960s, the aesthetics of Zen started to become one of the major forces in the movement. However, the capitalistic system of our world today has alienated art into a kind of economic activity. We live in societies whose structures are mainly built upon these two religions. In fact the concept of globalization has its origin in Catholicism. This concept of global uniformity has brought immense creativity, yet damages are also immense. The 911 incident is a rebellion against the pressure of this kind of globalization. Global warming is also one of the warning signs of the end of the way of life represented by Western civilization.

Regarding such a warning, Buddhism offers a way out. Putting aside the mythical part of Buddhism, we can clearly see that Buddhism is a way of life that allows us to go beyond material and sensual desires. Buddhism does not emphasize an absolute unity or compliance from its followers. It asks us to start from self-knowledge. We are asked to get to know our body, our desires and our mind. Through



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self-knowledge we will be able explore and develop our life. The concept that “everyone can become a Buddha” is itself a self-discovering journey. Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh reminds us that we have to start becoming aware of our breathing, our walking and drinking in order to understand ourselves. With this understanding, we learn how to let go of our blind grasping.

The digital world is made up of the digits “0” and “1” upon which an infinite digital world is thus created. The inspiration for the multi-media design of the performance *Hua-yen Sutra* originates from the concept of “One” and “Many”, or “Unity” and “Diversity”, in the World of Hua-yen. Constructed by the digital basics of “0” and “1”, the collaterals of pictures, calligraphy and images are then re-structured and integrated. Sounds and images are mutually penetrated under the digital synthesis with sounds driving the movement of images, and images driving sounds reciprocally. Each of the chanting tone of the Hua-yen Siddham-Sanskrit alphabet is transformed into visual images as well as sounds within. The variation in sound textures and the diversity in tonal changes project a feeling that these sounds are not simply made for what they are, but they are to be flowed into and merged with our heart.

The image of the Buddha is an important form in Buddhist art. In a digital era, how will the Buddha be presented? The Buddha statues, especially those fragmented ones, have brought me immense imagination. Looking deeply into the faces of these Buddha statues, we can feel a sense of beauty and equanimity entering our heart, our mind, through our eyes. These Buddha faces, created by crafted hands, are full of joy and happiness.

Light and mirror are mutually dependent. Without light, a mirror cannot reflect the world. Through light, a mirror is able to record the world, and through the mirror, we can see the world as well as the image of ourselves.



Hua-yen Sūtra Creative Team**Mathias Woo****Director and Designer**

Mathias Woo was born in Hong Kong, and studied architecture in Hong Kong and London. He participates actively in multi-media theatre works, criticism on cultural policies, arts education, architectural design and scriptwriting. He joined Zuni in 1988 and being the Executive Director of the organization. He has produced, designed and directed more than 50 theatre works, and his works have been invited to places like Tokyo, Beijing, Nanjing, Taipei, Singapore, Berlin and Krakow.

His recent theatre productions include *Hua-yen Sutra*, multimedia architecture music theatre *The Life and Times of Louis I. Kahn*, his adaptation of Ray Huang's famous book *1587, A Year of No Significance*, *The East Wing West Wing Social Theatre Series*, *Hong Kong Style* adapted from his own writing, and collaboration with Edward Lam, *18 Springs*. In 2008, Mathias Woo collaborated with Jiangsu Kunqu Opera House to put on a new production of Kunqu opera, *Tang Xianzu's Dream on Dreams*. His screenplay work *Happy Birthday*, co-written with Sylvia Chang, was nominated for the Best Screenplay in the 26th Hong Kong Film Awards. Mathias is also active in publishing. He was editor for the cultural journal "E+E" in Hong Kong. Other publications include the series of *Hong Kong Style* and *Hong Kong Odyssey* both of which explore the aesthetics of architecture and urban planning in Hong Kong.

Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh**Original Text**

Thich Nhat Hanh (Thây) is a Zen Master, poet, a scholar, and a peace activist. He served as chair of the Buddhist Peace Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks during the Vietnam War, and was nominated by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for the Nobel Peace Prize. He was also honored in Time Magazine's 60 Years of Asian Heroes in 2006. Thich Nhat Hanh founded the Unified Buddhist Church (Eglise Bouddhique Unifiée) in France in 1969, during the Vietnam war. He founded the Van Hanh Buddhist University in Saigon and the School for Youths of Social Services in Vietnam. When not traveling the world to teach "The Art of Mindful Living", he teaches, writes, and gardens in Plum Village, France, a Buddhist monastery for monks and nuns and a mindfulness practice center for lay people.

Venerable Sik Hin Hung**Creative Consultant (Script and Text)**

Venerable Sik Hin Hung MA (London) is a Buddhist monk ordained under the Mahayana tradition. He is one of the Founding Fellows of the Centre of Buddhist Studies of The University of Hong Kong where he is also teaching. He has published books and articles on Buddhism, psychotherapy and personal growth. Ven. Sik is also the director of Awareness Spiritual Growth Centre. The motto of the center found by him is "Be mindful of your heart!"



Venerable Sik Tsang Chit Creative Consultant (Hua-yen Siddham alphabet chanting)

Born in Hong Kong, Venerable Sik Tsang Chit was ordained at Fat Yu Ching Seh Buddhist Monastery in 1993. In 1994, he received the full precepts at Wanfo Temple in Central Taiwan. He graduated from the Department of Philosophy of the Hong Kong Buddhist College, as well as the Yuen Kuang Buddhist College in Taiwan. He is currently the Abbot of Tung Lin Kok Yuen and Fat Yu Ching Seh Buddhist Monastery in Hong Kong.

Dr. Li Kwok-fu Academic Consultant

Dr. Li Kwok-fu, Ph.D in Philosophy (New Asia Institute of Advanced Chinese Studies), Associate Researcher in Chi Lin Cultural Department. Part-time Teaching Consultant, Centre of Buddhist Studies, The University of Hong Kong. Visiting Associate Professor, The International Buddhist College, Thailand. His major research is on Tien-Tai and Hua-Yen schools.

Yu Yat-yiu @ People Mountain People Sea Music Director & Composer

Yu Yat-yiu graduated from the Chinese University of Hong Kong with a Bachelor degree of Social Science, major in Geography and minor in Music. Ever since his graduation in 1992, Yu has been active in performing arts, working with The Nonsensemakers as director, Edward Lam Dance Theatre as dramaturge and Zuni Icosahedron as composer and sound designer. In recent years, Yu composes music for many Hong Kong pop singers, such as Anthony Wong and Anita Mui. Apart from that, he also participates in film scorings.

William Chang Suk-ping Costume Design

William Chang is a famous Art Director, he has received Technical Grand Prize of Cannes Film Festival 2000, and also has won many times of Best Art Direction Award, Best Costume & Make up Award of Hong Kong Film Awards and Golden Horse Film Festival. His works include, Wong Kar Wai's 2046 (2005), In the mood for Love (2000), Happy Together (1997) and Ashes of Times (1994), etc.

Yuri Ng Movement Design

Yuri is currently Artistic Director of the Hong Kong Ballet Group and YURI and company danciNG. He was awarded the *Adeline Genée Gold Medal* from the Royal Academy of Dancing in 18 years old before joining The National Ballet of Canada as a dancer. Yuri 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 *Sixth Rencontres Choreographiques Internationales de Seine-St-Denis* (Bagnolet) with his choreography of *Boy Story*. Since his return to Hong Kong in 1993, Yuri has choreographed numerous works including *A Brave New World of Suzie Wong* (Hong Kong Arts Festival 2001), *Min Jian Chuan Qi*, an experimental project on Chinese folk dancing for Hong Kong Dance Company in 2005, *Devil's Tale*,

in collaboration with Hong Kong Sinfonietta and Pak Suet Sin's Cantonese Opera's *Dream of the West Chamber*.

TONG, Yang-tze Chinese Calligraphy (Digital Images)

Born in Shanghai. BFA, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei, Taiwan. MFA, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA.

Lin Xi Creative Writing

Lin was General Manager of Music Factory, Programme Creative Officer of Asia Television Limited, and Creative Director of the Advertising Department of Commercial Radio. He is currently the Chief Production and Creative Director of Commercial Radio. In the mid-1980s, Lin started his career as a lyricist for the music industry of Hong Kong. He was also founder of the poetry journal "One-Ninth".

Zuni Icosahedron

Zuni Icosahedron, founded in 1982, is a Hong Kong Based non-profit charity arts organization in Hong Kong. Being an international experimental theatre company, Zuni has produced more than 150 original productions of alternative theatre and multi-media performances, and has been active in video, sound experimentation and installation arts, as well as in the area of arts education, arts criticism, arts policy and international cultural exchange. Over the years, Zuni has been invited to over 30 cities in Europe, Asia, and America for exchange and performances. Zuni was given a 3-year grant by Hong Kong Arts Development Council to facilitate its creative operation since 1999, and now is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.



Zuni Icosahedron is financially supported by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

Artistic Director: Danny Yung

www.zuni.org.hk

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