

BIRDS OF THE WORLD
UNITE!



等候發落鳥

CorMORANTs



<Cormorants>

One of the <1001 stories>

Takeover of Performance Ensemble

Part of Leeds Year of Culture 2023

*Produced by
Centre for Community Cultural Development*

*Supported by
Hong Kong Arts Development Council
(Cultural Exchange Grant)*

Production Team

Playwright & Actor

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Co-director

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Stage Manager

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UNITE!



The cormorant and his fellow migratory birds have journeyed to many places. Setting off from Crimea, this time the cormorant started his journey with a difference – the sky has become crowded, the humans erratic, and even the ground is cracking. Where is left to land?

Combining striking imagery and poetic language, *Cormorants* tells the story of our relationship with nature, and each other, from a bird's eye view.

“I am a migratory bird; they call us cormorants...”

By the Chief Playwright & Actor – Augustine Mok

During the territorial dispute between Turkey and Greece over the Aegean Sea, graffiti on the streets said that the Aegean Sea belongs to the fish. They were charged with incitement. Inciting who? The fish? This time, with this play, are we inciting the birds?

Yes, I really hope that the birds, sea turtles, and tropical rainforests can strike back at the humans who have been messing with nature. I remember seeing young Americans burying cars during the first Earth Day, which made me decide that I would never own a car in my lifetime. Similarly, the young activist at the United Nations' conference boldly questioned "How dare you?" to those who are harming our planet. I strongly identify with and respect the young people of today who have not given up.

As for the old seafood, I still have hope for them, and hope for the future of this world.

Leeds Playhouse and Theatre Ensemble 1001 Stories have come together to present the creative and experienced lives of elders in the UK and around the world in a two-week event, with the theme 'Are you ready for a revolution?' How is today's revolution different from the one we aspired for in the 1960s? Both old seafood and young seafood can participate in it together, right?

By Co-director - Indy

I often say that Mok Chiu Yu is the father of People Theatre of Hong Kong. In fact, many theater forms and training methods in Hong Kong have been introduced by him in the past thirty years. Although he may not know all the masters he invites, he is always looking for interesting things to bring to Hong Kong.

"Diaoyu Islands belong to the fish in the sea, the turtles in the water, and the birds in the sky." Mok often says this.

In the 1970s, he had already become a migratory bird, chasing different times and revolutions, seeking people and things worth knowing, learning, and longing for, and bringing back what he saw and heard to his homeland to build a "nest" and spread his beliefs and ideas.

In Last July, I brought the first draft of <Cormorants> with me to England. The concept was an extension of a section of his previous solo <My Life on the Fringe> about the migratory bird, Cormorant. He combines the bird's inherent migration with his own stories, past wanderings, invasion of Ukraine, climate change, ecological and economic decline drifting in different countries due to human harm and environmental destruction, starting from Crimea and crossing the UK, Japan, India, Hong Kong, and Ukraine through song, performance art, music, poetry, masks, movement, video, and monologue, showcasing his worldview of the past, present, and future.

By Co-director - Banky

During the COVID outbreak, a hamster showing symptoms at a pet store, the authorities ordered the humane destruction of all hamsters and small animals in pet stores across Hong Kong. This incident during the COVID outbreak was chilling and heart-breaking, and it raised concerns about animal rights and the necessity of certain social policies.

Thank you to Mok Chiu Yu for presenting the various problems caused by humans in the world from the perspective of migratory birds through <Cormorants>. We hope to inspire humans to reflect on life, survival, and existence. The world does not belong to humans alone, nor is it dominated by individual groups. One of the important lines in the play is "Diaoyu Island belongs to the birds." I have heard this thought-provoking line from Mok Chiu Yu himself, and it is a great reminder that expands one's thinking.

The world should never be judged by a single standard, choice, or possibility. If we are willing to look at the world from different perspectives, we may find more diverse and possible answers, and the world will progress accordingly. Directing <Cormorants> has given me many inspirations. The world belongs to us, as well as you and them. The power of people's theatre has been further enhanced, and it is no longer just "Theatre of the People", "Theatre for the People", "Theatre by the People", but "Theatre of All", "Theatre by All", "Theatre for All". ALL IS LOVE. ALL ABOUT LOVE.

By Production Manager - Elisa

Many times, I have been on overseas tour with the Arts with the Disabled Association Hong Kong, Centre for Community Cultural Development, and Asian People's Theatre Festival Society. Like the protagonist in the play <Cormorants>, I have been to different places.

Taking different positions in projects ranging from organizer, manager, producer and creator, I always feel the challenge and the fulfillment when we get to meet and share with each other.

As a member of Centre for Community Cultural Development, I am very excited to bring to Leeds this solo performance and the coming community music shows by eleven Hong Kong community music members, in this <1001 Stories> Takeover of Performance Ensemble

I believe the takeover and the exchange will be a great success. Special thanks to the support of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and the invitation from Performance Ensemble.

By Multimedia Designer - Yukko

When pandemic hit in Hong Kong,
We all stayed home, all day long,
Depressed and anxious, I knew,
Change was needed, action due.

To Mexico, I flew away,
But there too, the virus did stay,
Yet in new culture and language,
I found peace, slow living - a passage.

Now in Canada, a month's stay,
Diversity and harmony in every way,
Thankful to Mok, for this production,
Who knows, maybe birds will have their revenge in action.

To make a change, take action today,
That's what I learned along the way,
So let's unite and make a stand,
Together, we can change the land.

www.yukkochan.net

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By International Liasion - Joyce

Earlier, I pitched a story about protecting humanity's future. I was told that protecting the next generation is too easy to say, why don't you challenge yourself to tell a story about protecting the previous generation? I was like WTF.

After watching Mok's run through, I finally understood. Such a cultural treasure from Hong Kong. He is a carrier that links Hong Kong's past to present for over 50 years, offering unique first-person perspectives on the tumultuous changes in society and humanities. I regret not having the chance to appreciate Hong Kong artists when I was young, but luckily, I met Mok in the same era, I will surely hold on to this giant and look beyond his shoulders to a broader view.

The big lesson I learned is about 'cherishing'. There are too many examples of people not knowing how to cherish until it's gone. When abroad, I often think about what it means to preserve Hong Kong culture. Even though drinking milk tea, eating Siumai, listening to Cantopop, and watching Hong Kong movies are part of it, I still feel powerless. 'Conservation' seems to be nothing but nostalgic reminiscing. What about ten or twenty years later? What about when our children grow up to become authentic BBCs (British Born Chinese)? Will they call us old-fashioned and outdated when we revisit old stuff? Mok is in his 70s, still living in the moment, evolving, and moving forward. I found the answer today; we need to cherish every moment to protect Hong Kong's cultural treasure – Mok Chiu Yu, who is continually reinventing himself. HKers, assemble!

About Centre for Community Cultural Development

Founded in 2004, Centre for Community Cultural Development (CCCD) is an arts organisation comprising a group of experienced artists, dramatists, community artists and social workers dedicated to the practice of community arts and people's culture.

For over a decade, CCCD has been promoting various community art forms, facilitating overseas exchanges, breaking down geographical boundaries, integrating communities, and promoting the cultivation and empowerment of community culture through the arts, empowering people to grasp and face social change.

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