

# 2016 September London Kun Opera

## *The Peony Pavilion*



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中文 / English

**400 Year Anniversary Special Performance**  
In Memory Of Tang Xianzu And William Shakespeare  
The Great Oriental Love Story Of Romeo And Juliet

2016 **28Sept.** Part I love is Dream  
2016 **29Sept.** Part II love is Death  
2016 **30Sept.** Part III love is Life

Ticket Price: £65 £55 £45 £30 £15

**7:30pm. Troxy**  
490 Commercial Road, London E1 0HX  
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Organizer: Department of Culture, Jiangsu Provincial Government / Suzhou Municipal Government  
Co-organizer: Suzhou Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, TV, Press and Publish  
Performing unit: Suzhou Kun Opera Theatre

牡丹亭  
The Young Lovers' Edition  
The Peony Pavilion

Chinese Embassy in the UK | Culture Department of Jiangsu | Government of Suzhou | UKCTC

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# 《牡丹亭》

## The Peony Pavilion



### 表演概况 Performance Overview

昆曲青春版《牡丹亭》在伦敦演三场。江苏省文化厅将组建文化代表团于 9 月 25 日至 30 日在英国举行“精彩江苏—中国昆曲英伦行”。9 月 28 日在莎士比亚的故乡上演汤显祖的戏剧作品昆曲青春版《牡丹亭》的同一天，由江苏省文化厅引进的莎士比亚经典剧目《威尼斯商人》也将在江苏保利大剧院同步上演。两位世界级戏剧大师的经典剧目将隔空牵手，上演精彩纪念文学巨匠汤显祖和莎士比亚的跨越时空对话“汤莎会”。

Contemporary Kun Opera "*The Peony Pavilion*" – three performances debut in London. Jiangsu Provincial Government and the Ministry of Culture have organized delegations to attend "Wonderful Jiangsu - Chinese



Kun Opera in Britain Tour" between September 25 to 30, 2016. The 3-day performance is to be held at Troxy Theatre in London, the United Kingdom. On September 28, Tang Xianzu's *"The Peony Pavilion"* debuts in London, the hometown of William Shakespeare. It is also the same day as the classic Shakespearean repertoire "Merchant of Venice" be on-stage in Jiangsu's Poly Grand Theatre. Two world-class master playwrights of the classical opera repertoire will join hands beyond time and space through "Tang-Shakespearean dialogue – to commemorate arts and literary" at this cross-national performance.

## 故事概要 Story Summary

《牡丹亭》绘声绘色地再现了中国古典文学史上这一凄美的爱情故事。中间穿插京剧大师梅兰芳与于振飞出演的《牡丹亭》选段，灵动地再现了中国古代女子在当时社会环境压迫下对理想爱情的美好祈愿。汤显祖《牡丹亭》向现代人们展示了中国古代妇女在“贞洁观”和与之相关的“烈女观”影响下，身心所受到的双重压迫。

*"The Peony Pavilion"* once again revives the classical Chinese literary history of the poignant love story. Beijing Opera master Mei Lanfang will be starred and interspersed with Yu Zhenfei in *"The Peony Pavilion"*. Their roles actively highlight that in the midst of social oppression, the hope for ideal love from ancient Chinese women remain. Tang's *"The Peony Pavilion"* showcases the "concept of chastity" and "paragons view" of the dual physical and mental factors caused by social oppression – a main message to endure love for modern women.



## 起源与发展 Origin and Development

江苏是昆曲的发源地，也是汤显祖的“第二故乡”。按照文化部统一部署，江苏派出文化代表团前往英国。“精彩江苏—中国昆曲英伦行”系列活动包括三个部分：一是由江苏省苏州昆剧院担纲呈演的中国昆曲青春版《牡丹亭》全本（上、中、下）将在英国伦敦 Troxy 剧场演出 3 场，该项目已列入文化部 2016 年度对外文化工作框架和 2016 年江苏省委省政府重点文化交流项目“精彩江苏进剑桥”活动。二是苏州昆剧院昆曲折子戏演出小组将走进剑桥大学、牛津大学、伦敦大学等国际一流名校，给英国的观众全方位呈现昆曲的无穷魅力。三是在剑桥大学进行昆曲与莎剧专家研讨和对话，并在剑桥大学国王学院正式启动“昆曲数字博物馆”建设项目。

Jiangsu Province is the birthplace of the Kun Opera. It is also Tang Xianzu's "second home." China's Ministry of Culture has unified delegation to the United Kingdom through the "Wonderful Jiangsu - Tour". The tour consists of three parts: First, Jiangsu's Suzhou Kun Opera Theatre that features the *"The Peony Pavilion"*



will be on stage in 3 performances – Begin, Mid-Term and Final) in London's Troxy in Theatre. This performance project initiative has been included in the 2016 Ministry of Culture Foreign Cultural Framework and as an important project-exchange by the Jiangsu provincial government. Second, the Suzhou Kun Opera Theatre team will perform in the globally recognized elite institutions – such as Cambridge University, Oxford University, University of London, Europe's leading MBA institution – London Business School – and more to show the Chinese opera charm to the British audience. Third, the Suzhou Kun Opera Theatre team will have Kun-Shakespearean opera expert discussions and dialogue at the University of Cambridge, followed by an official launch of Digital Museum Opera" construction project at the King's College of the University of Cambridge".

## 中英关系 Sino-British Relations



中国国家主席习近平 2015 年 10 月在伦敦访问时曾提到：“汤显祖与莎士比亚是同时代的人，他们两人都是 1616 年逝世的。明年是他们逝世 400 周年。中英两国可以共同纪念这两位文学巨匠，以此推动两国人民交流、加深相互理解。”

During Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to London in October 2015, he mentioned: "Tang Xianzu and William Shakespeare were contemporaries, whom both passed away in 1616 and reach their 400th anniversary of death and remembrance in 2016 next year. The UK and China shall commemorate these two arts and literature master playwrights, to promote exchanges between the peoples in the two nations and to deepen mutual understanding."

## 相关出版 Relevant Publishing



为响应习主席的提议，中国外文出版发行事业局和中国国际出版集团旗下的海豚出版社在 2016 年伦敦书展上隆重推出《莎士比亚悲剧六种》与《牡丹亭》，并于 2016 年 4 月 12 日举办新书首发式暨研讨会，以此纪念这两位伟大的剧作家，希望藉此推进中英文化双向交流，弘扬独特的中国戏曲文化，帮助海外读者深入了解中国传统文化，推动中国文



化“走出去”。荣誉出席贵宾包括驻英国大使馆倪坚临时代办、中国外文出版发行事业局副局长和中国国际出版集团副总裁方正辉，著名汉学家、历史学家、原大英图书馆中国部负责人吴芳思、萨瑟伦书店总经理安德鲁·麦格秦、以及大英图书馆东亚部首席负责人萨拉·切苏拉等出席并致辞，以及来自中英两国出版界、学术界、媒体界的 100 多人出席活动。

In response to the proposal of Chinese President Xi Jinping, China Foreign Publishing Career Company and China International Publishing Group's Dolphin Press introduced *"Six Kinds of Shakespearean Tragedy"* and *"The Peony Pavilion"* in April 12, 2016 at London Book Fair, followed by a book-release seminar to commemorate these two excellent playwrights, hoping to promote Sino-British cultural exchange, advocate the unique Chinese opera culture to reinforce understanding of the Chinese traditional culture from overseas audience, and support China's national Cultural "Going Out" Strategy.

Honourary attending guests include the Chinese Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Mr. Ni Jian, Vice President of Foreign Publishing Career Company and China international Publishing Group, Mr. Fang Zhenghui, famous scholar, historian, former British Library Head of China Section, Ms. Wu Fangsi, General Manager of SaseLun Bookstore, Mr. Andrew McGregor, Chief of East Asia Section of the British Library, Mr. Sala QiesuLa delivered speech and more than 100 people from the British and Chinese publishing, academia and the media industry attended the event.



## 《牡丹亭》对中国和英国的影响 The Impact of "The Peony Pavilion" to China and the UK

《牡丹亭》是中国文化艺术的重要展现。说到《牡丹亭》，不少人都知道是中国明代著名剧作家汤显祖的剧作，是中国民族艺术宝库中的一块瑰宝。把中国昆曲《牡丹亭》带到英国不仅带给旅居海外的中国人温暖回顾，同时也将昆曲艺术与中国表演艺术的高雅精致展示给英国和西方观众。英国观众或大多数西方人对中国戏曲的认识可能只是京剧，昆曲的艺术介绍将带给西方观众不同感受。另外，英国是国际著名戏剧的故乡，将《牡丹亭》搬上伦敦舞台可得到全球瞩目。

*"The Peony Pavilion"* is an important representation of Chinese arts and literature. The majority of the Chinese citizens know *"The Peony Pavilion"* is China's national art treasure, created by the famous Ming Dynasty playwright Tang Xianzu. Introducing the Chinese opera *"The Peony Pavilion"* to the United

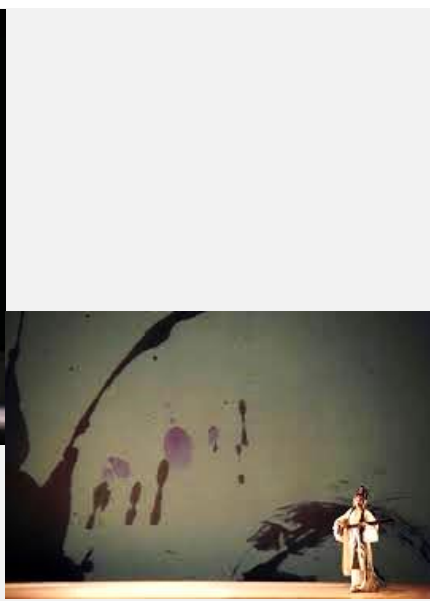
Kingdom not only brings a reflection of wisdom, taste and home to Chinese people, but showing the elegance of Kun Opera through such refined Chinese performing arts to the UK and Western audiences. The majority of British Western audience may only aware of Chinese opera as Jing Opera. Hence hopefully by introducing Kun Opera through "*The Peony Pavilion*" to Britain's London, the world's home theatre, Kun Opera can receive more understanding and coverage from the international community.

## 国际认可 International Recognition



英国戏剧界人士于 2006 年美国看了《牡丹亭》的演出后，特别邀请《牡丹亭》团队来伦敦表演，让英国人民共同欣赏昆曲。当年在美国的《牡丹亭》剧目演 12 场全部爆满。除了华人观众，参与的观众都是美国学术界和文化界的专业人士，以及有的场次美国人观众占 7 成。他们对《牡丹亭》演出的反应出乎意外的热烈。据表演团沟通表示，这些反应来自于外国人对于中国有如此古老而优美的戏曲，这样高的美学成就、音乐、舞蹈、服装和表演，融为一体，使他们大开眼界，惊讶无比。特别是舞蹈中优雅的水袖动作，是在过去和现代西方舞台上没有见过的。

After the first performance of "*The Peony Pavilion*" debuted in the United States in 2006, British theatre team invited the "*The Peony Pavilion*" team to perform in London – for the British people to collectively appreciate Kun Opera. "*The Peony Pavilion*" debuted in the United States had 12 performances with full audience capacity. In addition to Chinese audience, many of which were American academic, arts and literature professionals, with some performances having American audience occupying 70% capacity. Their reaction to "*The Peony Pavilion*" had a strong and welcoming turnout. Such strong and welcoming reaction, according to the "*The Peony Pavilion*" team, were due to Americans' surprise from China's level of elegance and exquisiteness of ancient opera and drama and the well-integration of music, dance, costumes and performance, which together making it an eye-opener. A notably fact was the graceful sleeves water dance movements, which is not seen on the Western stage.



## 作者简介 Author Overview



汤显祖

(1550—1616) 字义仍，号海若、若士、清远道人。江西临川人。明代著名戏曲家，文学家，被称为“东方的莎士比亚”。万历十一年（1583年）中进士，任太常寺博士、詹事府主簿、礼部祠祭司主事。任遂昌知县五年间，写就了著名的《紫钗记》、《牡丹亭》等戏曲。

汤显祖是中国明代后期伟大的戏剧家和文学家。他先后创作了《牡丹亭》、《紫钗记》、《南柯记》、《邯郸记》等享誉世界的戏剧作品，并留下 2200 多篇诗、文、赋，许多作品广为流传，成为中国古代文学艺术的瑰宝。与莎翁一样，汤显祖的艺术和思想成就令人瞩目、历久弥新。

Tang Xianzu is a world exceptional dramatist, writer and playwright in the China late Ming Dynasty. He created "*The Peony Pavilion*," "*The Purple Hairpin*," "*Nanke Dream*," "*Handan*," other world-renowned theatre productions, and more than 2,200 poetry articles and literatures. Many of his works are considered China's ancient literature and art treasures and are widely circulated. Similar to Shakespeare, Tang's artistic achievements and ideas remain timeless and remarkable.

首先，汤显祖在中国戏剧史上享有承前启后的重要地位。他善于博采众长，能充分汲取儒、释、道等中国优秀传统文化的滋养，并把浪漫主义手法引入传奇创作，对原有的戏剧表演形式大胆创新，开拓出更加灵活自如的艺术创作空间。他的代表作《牡丹亭》包括 55 出剧目，层次众多，背景宏大，演绎出跌宕起伏、扣人心弦的精彩剧情，对当时及后世的戏剧创作产生深远影响。

First, Tang Xianzu's retains a prominent position in the history of Chinese drama and literature. He excels at absorbing the three roots of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, introduces romance into the legendary theatre, demonstrates bold and innovative creations in traditional performances, and develops a space that highlights flexibility and comforts for artistic creation.

His masterpiece "*The Peony Pavilion*" include 55 operas in multiple levels. The piece has profound background story with cycling interpretation that brings the audience excitements. This story has a remarkable impact on dramatic opera creation in past, present and future.

其次，汤显祖的戏剧作品彰显独具一格的艺术价值。他的作品艺术特色鲜明，不仅注重展示人物细腻的内内心世界，抒发悲欢离合的丰富情感，还充满华美清新的诗情画意，创作出不少脍炙人口的唱词。他在《牡丹亭》中用梦幻的艺术形式诠释现实生活，在情与理的相互交融中成功塑造鲜活的人物形象。因此这部作品一经问世，就使许多人为之倾倒，反映出独特的艺术造诣和经久不息的艺术魅力。

Second, Tang Xianzu's dramatic works highlight unique artistic values. His work of art is distinct and highly recognizable. It not only focuses on the characters by unveiling their delicate inner worlds through rich



expression of emotional joys and sorrows, but also his popular creation of many poetic lyrics. His *"The Peony Pavilion"* interprets real life in the form of fantasy and shapes the characters through intertwining love and reasoning. Thus this work, *"The Peony Pavilion"* has created a huge impact in China's arts, opera and literature, and has gathered insurmountable love and attention since its debut. It is a great reflection of Tang Xianzu's unique and prolonged artistic charm.

第三，汤显祖的戏剧作品蕴含超越时代的思想内涵。得益于富有传奇色彩的人生经历，他对当时的社会问题有着深邃的哲学思考，并在戏剧创作中探究人与自然的关系，领悟人性善恶是非的本质。《牡丹亭》流露出的广大妇女反抗封建压迫、追求个性解放的进步思想，引起强烈的社会共鸣，体现出超越时代的人文精神，深刻影响了中国近现代的思想启蒙。

Third, Tang Xianzu's wisdom and ideological content in his art works surpass ahead of its time. He had a philosophical view towards the social problem at that time, which he explored the relationship between men and nature and uncovered the elements of evil and decency in his drama creations. *"The Peony Pavilion"* displayed the majority of women fighting against feudal oppression, the pursuit of progressive thinking through individual liberation. This provoked strong social resonance, reflected the era beyond human spirit and made a profound impact on China's modern ideological enlightenment.

倪坚说，文明因交流而多彩，艺术因互鉴而丰富。围绕爱情这一人类永恒的戏剧主题，莎士比亚曾说：“真爱无需理由”、“真诚的爱情永不是一条平坦的道路”，汤显祖用“情不知所起，一往而深”来精彩解读。两位文学巨匠不仅身处同一时代，而且在艺术创作上也心有灵犀。在中英双方共同努力下，汤学与莎学能交相辉映，共同为打造中英关系黄金时代提供文化助力，为促进东西方文明对话架起心灵沟通的桥梁。

The Chinese Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Mr. Ni Jian, said "Civilization becomes colorful through exchange, arts become rich by mutual learning. Surrounding the eternal dramatic theme of human love, Shakespeare once said: " We love truly only when we love without reason" and "The course of true love never did run smooth." Tang Xianzu conveys human emotions by saying " Never could we recall when the love or affection arose in heart. But once involved in it, we fall deep and long". The two literature playwright giants not only lived in the same era, but also joined minds in their artistic creations. With dedicated joint-efforts between the UK and China, the arts and wisdom from Tang Xianzu and William Shakespeare can reinforce each other, together bridging East-West civilization dialogues and a new golden era of exchange for Sino-British cultural relations.





## 汤显祖与莎士比亚 Tang Xianzu and William Shakespeare

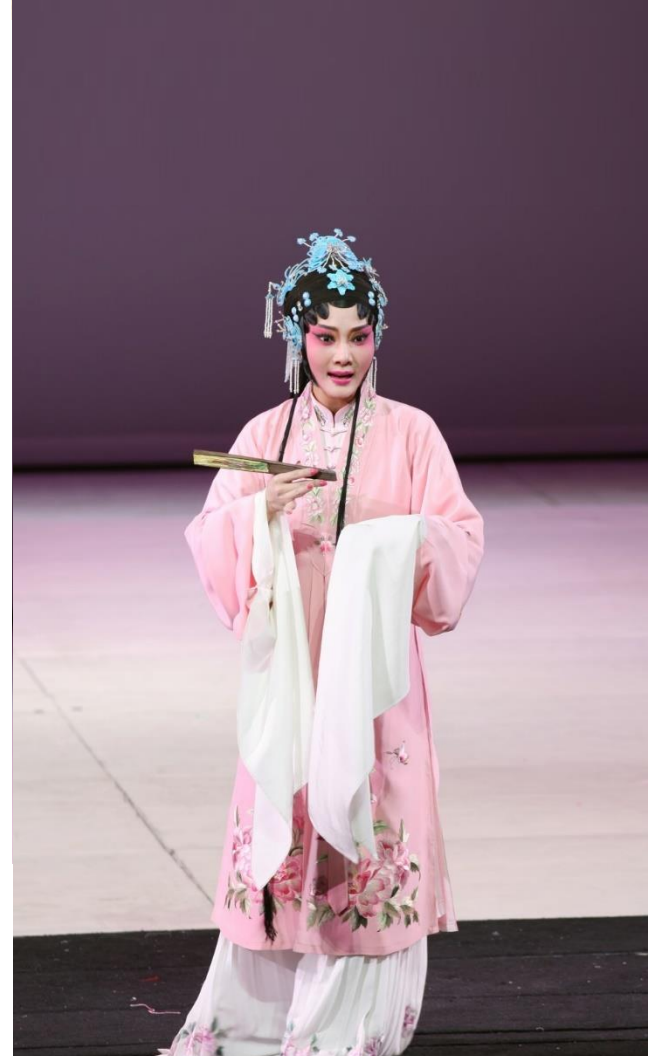
汤显祖与莎士比亚是同时代的的东西方文学巨匠。当今大众可能对后者更为熟悉，对前者的文学与戏剧作品了解不多。事实上，两人的艺术与思想成就既有相通之处，又各有千秋。作为英国文学史上最杰出的戏剧家，莎士比亚在中国家喻户晓，被亲切地称为莎翁。他的作品题材广泛，艺术形象栩栩如生，给人深刻的思想启迪，深受全世界人民喜爱。莎翁作品的上映次数远远超过其他任何戏剧家，其中《罗密欧与朱丽叶》、《哈姆雷特》、《威尼斯商人》等剧目多次登上中国舞台。

Tang Xianzu and William Shakespeare are arts and literature playwright giants of East and West. As coincidental as fate and time, they both lived in the same era. While the majority of the audience today are more familiar with the latter, and have little understanding of the former playwright, the achievement of the two arts and thoughts are in fact common. As the most distinguished playwright of the English literature, Shakespeare's name also affectionately penetrated the Chinese households, with a special nickname "Shaweng". His works covered a wide range of topics and lively art imageries, which provided profound ideological inspiration and love to the people around the world. In terms of the number of works release, Shakespeare by far has the most release than any other dramatists. His renowned works include "*Romeo and Juliet*," "*Hamlet*," "*The Merchant of Venice*" and other operas, which have repeatedly boarded the Chinese stage.

### 牡丹亭和罗密欧与朱丽叶 The Peony Pavilion and Romeo & Juliet

《罗密欧与朱丽叶》的诞生于《牡丹亭》前两年。世界如同一个美妙的巧合，东西方几乎同时产生了两部伟大的爱情故事。这两个故事都是讲了对爱情的热烈追求，可以说是生死恋。不同之处是，沙翁的《罗密欧与朱丽叶》是个爱情悲剧，以两个恋人双双殉情而结束，而汤显祖的《牡丹亭》中的杜丽娘伤情而死之后，又因俊逸书生柳梦梅的爱情而还魂，是一部浪漫的喜剧。

"Romeo and Juliet" came before the "Peony Pavilion" by two years. It seems as if a beautiful coincidence that the East and West both generated the world's most classic and greatest love stories –



almost at the same time. Both stories convey the pursuit of strong love through life and death. The difference is, Shakespeare's *"Romeo and Juliet"* is a love tragedy, which has a sentimental end through death for its lover. *"The Peony Pavilion,"* on the other hand, is a romantic comedy as it lets the female protagonist dies and resurrects to life through love.

## 当代昆曲与传统京剧 Modern Kun Opera and Traditional Beijing Opera



青春版《牡丹亭》在戏剧的念、唱、做、打，皆是所谓昆曲的四功五法，由昆曲老师傅手把手教出来，都是十分规范的。青春版《牡丹亭》不同之处是选角几方面选择年轻演员，在舞台灯光、设计等方面更加符合现代人的审美观念，以及在舞蹈方面，例如“惊梦”一折，两个恋人对舞时，更加亲密一些。以前的昆曲艺术已经处于危机之中，演员老化，第一线演员大多都60多岁，观众大多数是老年人，以及年轻人对

昆曲没有热情。因此，这样一部青春版《牡丹亭》就是要训练出一批昆曲年轻演员，从而吸引年轻观众。青春版《牡丹亭》做得很成功，在中国大陆二十几个大学演出，也包括港台大学，反应都是空前热烈。自2004年首演至今已经上演137场，两岸四地和美国，2008年第一次抵达英国。昆曲是比京剧历史更悠久的中国剧种。英国有深厚的历史文化传统，对昆曲之高雅而古老的艺术形式充满理解和欣赏。





Contemporary *"The Peony Pavilion,"* on one hand, preserved the traditional opera singing, speaking, acting, playing, which come to the so-called four-works five-methods in Beijing opera. Four-works five-methods in opera is standard, as it taught by a renowned opera master. Contemporary *"The Peony Pavilion,"* on the other hand, brought in elements of youth by casting younger performers, along with integrating modern stage lighting, design, aesthetic views and concepts, as well as in dance. For instance, an act called "Surprise Dream," more intimate elements were added when the two lovers come to dance. Kun Opera was in a crisis in face of aging performers and audience – the front line of the actors were mostly over 60 years old – and that young people were not enthusiastic about the Kun Opera. Hence, with the contemporary and modern version of *"The Peony Pavilion,"* groups of younger opera performers were trained and thus attracted younger audience. Contemporary *"The Peony Pavilion"* has been very successful. It has already launched performances for more than two dozen universities in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, with unprecedentedly warm, strong and welcoming reactions. Contemporary *"The Peony Pavilion"* premiered in 2004, and has now completed 137 performances across four districts in cross-straits, the United States and debuted in London, United Kingdom in 2008. The United Kingdom has deep historical and cultural traditions, which enable the audience to appreciate and understand the elegance of Kun Opera and distinct art form.



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