

Press Release: For Immediate Release

To: Feature/Arts and Culture/Lifestyle – Assignment Editors/Editors/Reporters

## French May Arts Festival 2024 Spotlight Theatre Programmes: ‘Let the Mirror Speak’ Premieres in Asia This May

*From a French playwright’s imagination of the Hungry Ghost Festival, to a Hong Kong playwright’s love letter to the French–Hong Kong community:*

*An invitation to hold up a mirror to the city through the parallel universe of theatre.*

**12 April 2024, Hong Kong** — French May is delighted to introduce two key theatre programmes from its 2024 festival: *Good Fortune* and *Pas des deux à Hong Kong*. Both works mark the final phase of the Hong Kong–France theatre exchange project ‘Let the Mirror Speak’, for which playwright–directors Wu Hoi Fai (Hong Kong) and Nicolas Kerszenbaum (France) have spent two years researching and developing new works across Paris and Hong Kong. This exchange project is dedicated to showcasing different facets of French and Hong Kong cultures to their respective counterparts, just as a mirror reflects a city’s authentic personality.

### ***Good Fortune* by Nicolas Kerszenbaum**



Joining forces with Hong Kong actors Holmes Cheung, Esther So, and Franchesca Wong, Nicolas Kerszenbaum attempts to read Hong Kong’s fortune by interweaving folklore beliefs with theatrical imagination. Building on the playwright’s exploration of divination sticks and palm readings during his 2023 Hong Kong residency, the play’s premise revolves around the Chinese saying ‘Fate first, luck second, fengshui third’ – suggesting that however the cards are stacked in one’s life, effective feng shui can alter life’s course. *Good Fortune* follows the fates of three characters during the Hungry Ghost Festival, against the backdrop of a Hong Kong where one can no longer differentiate the living from the dead, the rich from the poor, a memory from a wish.

*Good Fortune* premiered in November 2023 at Théâtre 13 in Paris and was warmly welcomed by the French audience.

Kerszenbaum is a director and playwright with degrees in performing arts and economics. In 2005, he founded the theatre group *franchement, tu*, with which he created over twenty works. He has worked with Tréteaux de France – Centre Dramatique National and teaches theatre for La Sorbonne University and several French high schools. His recent projects include *Good Fortune* (2023), *A Thai Mirror* (2022) for the Bangkok-based company B-Floor Theatre,

and *Persephone* (2022) and *A Beautiful Stranger* (2019) for La Poudrerie – le Théâtre des Habitants. In 2023, he adapted Joseph Conrad's book *Heart of Darkness* as a night walk in a forest and won the Villa Médicis Hors les Murs for his four-episode theatre series *Kairos* (2023).

| Artistic Team                    |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Artistic Director and Playwright | Nicolas Kerszenbaum (France)  |
| Performers                       | Holmes Cheung, Esther So and Franchesca Wong (Hong Kong)  |
| Programme Information            |   |
| Date and Time                    | 10 – 11* May 2024 (Fri to Sat), 8pm   |
| Venue                            | Theatre, Hong Kong City Hall  |
| Ticket                           | \$220 (URBTIX)  |
| Language                         | In Cantonese with English surtitles   |
| Remarks                          | Runtime is approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes with no intermission.<br>* A post-performance talk will be held in the auditorium on 11 May. |

### ***Pas de deux à Hong Kong* by Wu Hoi Fai**

After extensive research and interviews with the French community in Hong Kong, together with a play reading in Hong Kong and a three-week residency in Paris, artistic director Wu Hoi Fai has crafted the stage production *Pas de deux à Hong Kong*. This play is an ethno-drama shedding light on the lives of French residents of Hong Kong, and a love letter addressed to every person who has called Hong Kong home. As an open, transnational city, Hong Kong has welcomed countless overseas nationals to its shores. French people in particular have been migrating to Hong Kong since the early twentieth century. Before the pandemic, French-Hong Kong residents represented the largest French community in Southeast Asia. Amidst this rich historical background, Wu leads a young creative team to ponder the multi-faceted definition of being 'French' and a 'Hongkonger', as well as the interconnections between the two geographical locations.



Wu is the artistic director and co-founder of Pants Theatre Production, a theatre group that promotes documentary theatre in the local art scene. Wu is also an examiner of the Hong Kong Arts Development Council and a head adjudicator of the Hong Kong School Drama Festival. His works in documentary theatre include *Once Upon a Time in Choi Yuen Chuen, 1967*, and *What About Art in Hong Kong?* His recent ethnographic theatre works include *Estate Agent*, *On the Record*, *Together in Search of Light*, and *Eternal Flame in the Dark*.

| Artistic Team                             |   |
|---|---|
| Creator and Director                      | Wu Hoi Fai (Hong Kong)  |
| Creator, Choreographer and Movement Coach | Kenny Leung (Hong Kong)   |
| Performers                                | Lui Long Kwan, Melodee Mak, Michael Mok, Wong Ka Chun, Tang Wing Hong, Liu Ho Man, Tse Wai Sze, Pearlmi Tam, Michelle Lo (Hong Kong)        |
| Programme Information                     |   |
| Date and Time                             | 31 May – 1* June 2024 (Fri to Sat), 8pm<br>1* – 2 June 2024 (Sat to Sun), 3pm   |
| Venue                                     | Theatre, Sheung Wan Civic Centre  |
| Ticket                                    | \$220 (URBTIX)  |
| Language                                  | In Cantonese and English with Chinese and English surtitles   |
| Remarks                                   | Runtime is approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes with no intermission.<br>* A post-performance talk will be held in the auditorium on 1 June. |

Audiences can enjoy a 10% special discount for purchasing standard tickets for both programmes in one purchase.

‘Let the Mirror Speak’ is funded by the Arts Capacity Development Funding Scheme of the HKSAR Government.

More detailed information for individual programmes is available on the website [www.frenchmay.com](http://www.frenchmay.com). Tickets are available from today at URBTIX [www.urbtix.hk](http://www.urbtix.hk).

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**Note to editors:**

High-resolution photos: <https://bit.ly/3x8Szif>

Details of all programmes available at: [www.frenchmay.com](http://www.frenchmay.com)

**About French May Arts Festival**

Established in 1993, French May is one of the largest cultural events in Asia. With about 100 programmes presented across two months, we showcase the most diversified art forms: from heritage and contemporary arts, paintings and design, to classical music and hip-hop dance, cinema and circus. The festival has become an iconic part of Hong Kong’s cultural scene, reaching over 200,000 visitors each year.

French May brings the arts to everyone, not only in cultural venues, but also in public spaces, shopping malls, and more, inviting everyone across Hong Kong to enjoy art in their daily lives. To promote accessible arts for all, French May places a strong emphasis on education through outreach



programmes, guided tours, workshops, masterclasses and free performances. The festival strives to reach the widest possible audience and contribute to the education of young people, people with disabilities, and under-resourced communities, working closely with over 50 local institutions and organisations to establish barrier-free arts access.

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