

For immediate release



CCDC Presents 40th Anniversary Season Opening Performance
A Double Bill of Helen Lai's Brand-new Creation and Classic
***Winterreise · The Rite of Spring* Tickets Now on Sale**

[Hong Kong, 1 April 2019] In celebration of the 40th anniversary of its founding, the **City Contemporary Dance Company (CCDC)** will raise the curtain of the Company's anniversary season with the ***Winterreise · The Rite of Spring***, a signature piece by Helen Lai, the city's acclaimed iconic Hong Kong choreographer. Born into a musical family, Helen Lai has decoded the two music masterpieces and further encoded into the new context. Working in close partnership with the excellent team including set designer Esther Kwok, lighting designer Lawmanray, costume designer Taurus Wah and sound designer Anthony Yong, the performance intertwines composite rhythms with emotional dance to immerse audience in a sensory journey of poetic and tempestuous hallucination.

***Winterreise · The Rite of Spring* will be staged at Kwai Tsing Theatre for five performances from 26 April to 5 May 2019.**

Inspired by Franz Schubert's *Winterreise* in 1827, Helen gives this masterpiece a choreographic makeover with the ten songs selected from the *Winterreise* cycle, leading you to the inner journey of a wayfarer travelling alone on the wintry road. First premiered in 1984, Helen revisits her choreography in 2019 in an updated production with live performances by bass-baritone Apollo Wong, who has sung major roles in numerous operas, as well as International Chopin Piano Competition winning pianist Colleen Lee. Intricately lyrical and melodic, Helen infuses her renewed piece with a strain of dramatic melancholy.

Choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky to music composed by Igor Stravinsk, the *Rite of Spring* promoted a legendary riot in the theatre audience on the opening night at its first premiere in 1913. Helen Lai's choreographic makeover of this master piece does not set out to be a traditional performance. Taking inspiration from the legendary opening night, she dazzles the audience with the epic duo piano music and calls upon the tussle of power between the choreographer, performers and audience, revealing a subtle three-way tug-of-war pervaded with conflicts and mutual restraints. Helen Lai's *Rite of Spring* premiered at

Hong Kong Cultural Centre Concert Hall in 1992 and subsequently made its debut in Taiwan by Cloud Gate Dance Theatre. In addition to the rocking line-up of all the CCDC dancers, this homecoming production in 2019 has invited six guest dancers including Chou Shu-yi and Irene Lo and live music performance by pianists Helen Cha and Colleen Lee. All these are combined to bring about a refreshing turn to the audience.

“Helen Lai is the only choreographer who works with the legend of the opening night, and then subverts the legend itself.” Lin Hwai-min

Acting the role of a young man in white clothes in *The Rite of Spring*, Chou Shu-yi alludes to Vaslav Nijinsky in a subtle way. By coincidence, Helen and Chou Shu-yi discovered their mutual fascination for this masterpiece in a random chat. She considers Chou to be the right dancer to take up this part of the dance. “Chou Shu-yi is a great dancer with an in-depth understanding of the character and movement. Swooning with a romantic melancholy though, he is able to demonstrate his gift of versatility in the performance. Honestly, his part is our re-creation which derives from his suggestion of revising the original version. It embeds our effort to instill freshness in the piece.”

Willy Tsao, Artistic Director of CCDC said, “Helen Lai is one of the founding members of the CCDC. She and her works represent a particular era of the Company. We are truly looking forward to this performance, which does not only present her classic piece, but also stage a brand-new creation.”

Winterreise·The Rite of Spring is presented and produced by CCDC. Tickets priced at \$300, \$240 and \$180 are now available at URB TIX.

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Editor's Note:

Winterreise·The Rite of Spring

Date and Time: 26-27*. 4. 2019 [Fri, Sat] 8pm

3*-4.5. 2019 [Fri, Sat] 8pm

5.5.2019 [Sun] 3pm

Venue: Auditorium, Kwai Tsing Theatre

Price: \$300 | \$240 | \$180

*With meet-the-artist after performance

Suitable for ages 6 and above

High resolution photos: <https://goo.gl/uG8gD9>

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CCDC reserves the right to substitute artists and vary advertised programmes