

PRESS RELEASE

Yellow Earth Theatre presents
RUNNING THE SILK ROAD
written by Paul Sirett
conceived and directed by David Tse Ka-shing

The Pit, Barbican Centre
24 – 28 June, 7.45pm
And on tour

Presented in association with Beijing Opera Theatre and Watford Palace Theatre

In the year of the Beijing Olympics, a group of friends from London set themselves an epic challenge - to run the ancient Silk Road trading route to China, carrying an "alternative" Olympic flame. Once on the road, complications and conflicts test friendships and soon threaten their chances of success.

Running the Silk Road, a new play by Olivier nominated writer Paul Sirett, draws on many of the myths contained in a classic 2,000 year old Chinese text 'The Classic of Mountains and Seas'. These stories, telling of flood and drought and warning of the destruction of the Earth, are interspersed throughout the modern text and will be performed in Mandarin Chinese (with surtitles) by the spectacular, acrobatic Beijing Opera performers from China.

The cast of *Running the Silk Road* also includes Saraj Chaudhry, Betsabeh Emran and Nicholas Chee Ping Kellington.

Director David Tse Ka-Shing, director of Yellow Earth since 1995 and winner of a Windrush Arts Award, studied Beijing Opera movement with Lee Siu Wah and with Jamie Guan for the West End production of *M. Butterfly*. David's extensive credits include a bilingual China / UK *King Lear* for the RSC *Complete Works* festival, the Shanghai International Festival, the UK Arts Festival in Chongqing and UK national tour; as well as a bilingual Hong Kong / UK production of *The Nightingale* for the Hong Kong Arts Festival and UK tour. David has also presented a groundbreaking series on the lives of British Born Chinese for BBC Radio 4.

Paul Sirett is a playwright and dramaturg. His most recent production was the Olivier Award nominated musical *The Big Life*, which transferred from the Theatre Royal Stratford East to London's West End. Other productions include: *A Night in Tunisia*, *Worlds Apart*, *Crusade*, *Jamaica House* (all Theatre Royal Stratford East, London); *Rat Pack Confidential* (Nottingham Playhouse, Bolton Octagon & London West End); *Lush Life* (Live Theatre, Newcastle) and *Skaville* (Soho Theatre, London).

Running the Silk Road is designed by Yoon Bae with music composed by Suki Mok and lighting design by Douglas Kuhrt.

Sponsored by CHINA NOW

Notes for Editors

Yellow Earth Theatre was established in 1995 by five British East Asian performers. Under Artistic Director and Founder member, David Tse Ka-shing, the company has won many awards including the inaugural Pearl Arts Award (2004), the Windrush Award (Arts Achievement Award to David Tse Ka-shing 2004) and Sainsbury's Checkout Theatre Award (1999).

Yellow Earth produces quality touring productions, many of which have found an international market. For the last four years, Yellow Earth Theatre has run a scheme called *Yellow Ink* to support emerging British East Asian (BEA) writers. The company aims to seek, nurture and present new exciting British East Asian voices in the UK through *Yellow Voices* (new writing) and *Yellow Stages* (new directors).

In November 2008, Yellow Earth Theatre presents the bi-annual ***Typhoon Festival*** at the Soho Theatre in London. Three international East Asian play readings will be presented alongside the three new BEA pieces developed during the *Yellow Voices* initiative.

Beijing Opera Theatre, founded in 1979, is one of the most prestigious Beijing Opera theatres in China. Beijing Opera, or Peking Opera, is a form of traditional Chinese theatre which combines numerous disciplines: music, vocal performance (speech and song), mime, dance, combat and acrobatics.

Beijing Opera arose in the late 18th century and became fully developed and recognised by the mid-19th century. The form was extremely popular in the Qing Dynasty court and has come to be regarded as one of the cultural treasures of China. Major performance troupes are based in Beijing and Tianjin in the north and Shanghai in the south. The repertoire of Beijing Opera includes over 1,400 works, which are based on Chinese history, folklore, and increasingly, contemporary life.

Yellow Earth's collaboration with Beijing Opera performers from China will experiment with the form, encouraging highly trained performers to use their skills in new and surprising ways, with opera sequences written by Paul Sirett and composed by Suki Mok. Yoon Bae's design will also experiment and contemporise the form.

RUNNING THE SILK ROAD
TOUR VENUES

Newcastle

Northern Stage
28 – 31 May, 8pm
Tickets £7 (£5 concessions)
Box Office 0191 230 5151
Book online www.northernstage.co.uk

Liverpool

Liverpool Everyman
3 - 7 June, 7.45pm
(matinees Wed 1.30pm & Sat 2.00pm)
Tickets £8 - £12.50
Box Office 0151 709 4776
Book online www.everymanplayhouse.com

Bury St Edmunds

Theatre Royal, Bury St Edmunds
10 - 11 June, 7.30pm
(matinee Wed 2.00pm)
Tickets £7 - £20.50
Box Office 01284 769505
Book online www.theatreroyal.org

Exeter

Northcott Theatre Exeter
12 – 14 June, 8.00pm
Tickets £15
Box Office 01392 493 493
Book online www.exeternorthcott.co.uk

Watford

Watford Palace Theatre
17 – 21 June, 7.45pm
(matinees Wed 2.30pm & Sat 3pm)
Tickets £14 (concessions £12)
Box office 01923 225671
Book online www.watfordtheatre.co.uk

London

The Pit, Barbican Centre
24 – 28 June, 7.45pm
Press Night: 25th June at 7.45pm – please check
Tickets £15
Tickets Box Office 020 0845 120 7550
Media Enquiries 0845 120 7550
Book online www.barbican.org.uk

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