BEIJING COMEDY THEATRE · SEASON PROPOSAL

Looking Back, Looking Forward

Suyang: a season of youth, memory and the Lu Yi spirit

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A season about how a tradition is carried

Suyang — looking back, looking forward — is a proposal for a four-part summer season at Beijing Comedy Theatre. It asks how the Lu Yi spirit, a public-service artistic tradition associated with the Yan'an Lu Xun Academy of Arts, can be transmitted by young theatre-makers without becoming a slogan.

The season is built as four movements. **Glimmer** looks at historical memory through dance and regional opera. **New Birth** turns to ordinary lives in the reform era. **Exploration** tests the balance between artistic quality and the market. **Spring Shoots** gives young companies and student troupes a competitive showcase. Across the four units, the programme mixes established productions with a new in-house play, *Double Carp*.

The commercial strategy runs through the programme. The proposal uses a differentiated ticket system, a campaign built around youth and co-creation, partnerships with universities and cultural institutions, and a mixed funding model of internal investment, sponsorship and public funding; ticket income is modelled separately. The estimated season cost is **CNY 4,994,500**; the fundraising target is **CNY 7.05 million**.

Double Carp is the season's laboratory. Set in a Republican-era opera troupe, the 90-minute play uses letters, a moving screen, costume and makeup to hold three lives in one room. Its design and marketing plan show how a small in-house production can connect the season's historical theme to a younger audience without reducing the play to a period costume display.

> The proposal's underlying argument is simple. A public theatre keeps a tradition alive by giving young artists a stage, a budget, an audience and a serious argument about why the work matters now. Repetition of the tradition's vocabulary is not enough.

Season	Summer 2025 · Beijing Comedy Theatre
Structure	Glimmer · New Birth · Exploration · Spring Shoots
Programme	Eight productions, a youth competition and the in-house *Double Carp*
Budget	CNY 4,994,500 · fundraising target CNY 7.05 million

PART I · THE SEASON

1. A season with a thesis

Beijing Comedy Theatre's summer season is usually discussed as a programming exercise: which shows, which dates, which ticket prices. *Suyang* begins from a different premise. A season is also an argument about what a public theatre is for.

The title combines two movements. *Su* suggests tracing a source, going back upstream; *yang* suggests looking forward, or looking up. The season therefore refuses the usual choice between heritage and novelty. It asks what the Lu Yi spirit would mean for a young audience that did not grow up with it, and what a contemporary theatre can learn from a tradition that treated art as a form of public responsibility.

The Lu Yi reference, without the monument

Lu Yi refers to the Lu Xun Academy of Arts, founded in Yan'an in 1938. Its legacy is often summarised through four words: national, innovative, practical and popular. The proposal turns these four words into four programming questions. What makes a work national without turning culture into costume? What makes it new without making novelty an end in itself? What makes it practical without reducing art to a service? What makes it popular without confusing popularity with quality?

The season makes its argument through programming. Each unit places a different kind of work beside a different kind of audience. History is approached through dance and regional opera; the reform era through family drama and musical theatre; the market through two large commercial musicals; the future through a youth competition. With the in-house play, the season moves from describing inheritance to testing it.

From theme to programme

The four units form a sequence. **Glimmer** establishes the historical and emotional stakes. **New Birth** moves the question into the lives of ordinary people. **Exploration** exposes the tension between artistic ambition and commercial survival. **Spring Shoots** asks who will carry the argument next. The in-house production runs alongside this sequence, using a small cast and a single set to test the same questions at laboratory scale.

The proposal also plans how the season will be communicated. Most audiences first meet the season through a title, a poster, a ticket link, a short video or a programme note. Those forms carry the artistic programme to the public. The marketing plan starts with who is being invited, then turns to channels.

The proposal in its own words

The season takes as its starting point a question about how young people in the new era should transmit and develop the Lu Yi spirit. It begins from the word "people", a word that runs through the cultural DNA of the Chinese nation, and follows the movement of history from "the people in history" to "the people in reality". It asks how "the people's art" works in the market and what a "new people's art" might become. It looks back in order to look forward.

The Lu Yi spirit is usually described through four qualities: national, innovative, practical and popular. The proposal tests those qualities against contemporary practice rather than treating them as a fixed checklist. It asks what a national work is when it refuses costume-pageant thinking; what an innovative work is when novelty is not its own justification; what a practical work is when art is not reduced to a service; and what a popular work is when popularity does not substitute for quality.

The season is divided into four units that connect four questions: how inherited stories are remade, how realist narrative can be deepened, how the market can be tested without surrendering artistic judgment, and where the next generation of artists will come from. The first unit, **Glimmer**, looks at historical memory through the eyes of ordinary people. The second, **New Birth**, turns to the reform era and the lives that were pulled from the land into the city. The third, **Exploration**, puts artistic quality and commercial success in the same room. The fourth, **Spring Shoots**, gives student and social theatre companies a competitive platform and asks what they would do next.

Why the theme matters

Artistic production is changing under the pressure of the market. “Popularity” carries more weight than it did a decade ago, and many works pursue fast consumption and easy entertainment. Some observers conclude that contemporary art has moved away from the social responsibility and intellectual seriousness of the Lu Yi period, or even that it has betrayed the core of the Lu Yi spirit.

The proposal takes the opposite view. The Lu Yi spirit has not disappeared. In a more plural value system and a more complex media environment, inheritance cannot mean a mechanical return to Yan’an. It has to become a method: creators and audiences pay attention to thought and cultural responsibility, enter the details of ordinary life, and take seriously work with social and historical depth. Art should come from the people and serve the people.

Four commitments follow from this. The season connects tradition and modernity in order to build cultural identity. It responds to changing times by testing new artistic forms. It carries the Lu Yi spirit by holding to the direction of a people’s art. And it asks creators to enter reality and accept cultural responsibility.

PART I · THE SEASON

2. The four units

Each unit is organised around a distinct relationship to memory, audience and the market. The titles are deliberately open; the productions give them specific meaning.

Unit	Core question	Productions
Glimmer	How can historical experience be staged without turning it into a museum display?	Dance drama *The Orphan of Zhao*; Puzhou opera *Loyalty Through the Ages*.
New Birth	How did ordinary people live through the reform era, and what remains unresolved?	*One Day, Three Autumns*; *Teacher Gui Mei*; musical *Dongguan East*.
Exploration	Can a work be both artistically serious and commercially viable?	*When Spring Passes*; musical *The Orphan of Zhao*; musical *The Imperial Guard*.
Spring Shoots	Who gets to make the next argument, and with what support?	Youth competition; *Fracture and Reconstruction*, *Under the Neon*, *Migrants*; masterclasses, forum and showcase.

Glimmer · the historical trace

The first unit begins with two works that approach the same historical material from different theatrical traditions. The dance drama *The Orphan of Zhao*, performed by the China National Opera and Dance Drama Theater, turns the familiar story of Cheng Ying's rescue of the orphan into a physical, image-led score. Black, white and red dominate the stage; rope rings create a visual pressure around the performers. The production is a large-scale classical dance work with a modern stage language.

The Puzhou opera *Loyalty Through the Ages*, from the Shanxi Puzhou Opera Art Research Institute, treats Guan Yu's legend through traditional vocal music and a modern orchestral arrangement. Its scale is deliberately different: a large ensemble, a historical battlefield and a regional form that carries a local audience's memory. Placing the two works together prevents "history" from becoming a single style.

New Birth · the ordinary life

The second unit moves from heroic history to the textures of ordinary life. *One Day, Three Autumns*, from Gulou West Theatre, follows Chen Mingliang and four women whose lives intersect across a changing Henan. Dance, Peking opera and multimedia staging hold several temporalities in one body. *Teacher Gui Mei*, from the Yunnan Provincial Drama Theatre, stages Zhang Guimei's work in education; its scale is intimate, its ethical question public. The musical *Dongguan East*, from Mahua FunAge, follows a migrant worker, A Qiang, through the factories and collective memories of the 1980s. Together the three works ask what "the people" means when the people are specific, tired, funny and contradictory.

Exploration · the market test

The third unit is the most commercial and the most exposed. *When Spring Passes*, by Drama Nine, is a three-hander about a woman scientist in the Republican era; its minimal ink-wash design and a score inflected by pingtan, the narrative song style of the region make a small-scale work feel large. The musical *The Orphan of Zhao*, by Shanghai Xu Jun Theatre, is a large commercial production that has toured widely; its stage machines, psychological characterisation and orchestral score turn the old story into a visual spectacle. *The Imperial Guard* adds a second large musical, mixing electronic fusion with traditional instruments, martial

movement and a sculptural sword device. The unit does not pretend that artistic quality and commercial success are the same thing. It puts them in the same room and asks the audience to see the negotiation.

Spring Shoots · the next argument

The fourth unit is a competition and a support structure. Student and social theatre companies are invited to submit short works on the theme "critique and construction". Three representative pieces — *Fracture and Reconstruction*, *Under the Neon* and *Migrants* — use technology, interactive form and documentary observation to describe a generation's relationship to work, city and family. The unit includes masterclasses, a directors' forum, a showcase in the Fun Space and an awards event. The aim is to give young makers a production context, an audience and a reason to continue.

Production notes

Production	Plot	Stage language	Scale
Dance drama *The Orphan of Zhao*	Cheng Ying rescues the orphan; a story of loyalty and sacrifice.	Black, white and red stage; rope-ring installation; classical dance with modern stage design.	90 minutes; full company.
Puzhou opera *Loyalty Through the Ages*	The legend of Guan Yu and his loyalty.	Traditional Puzhou vocal music with a modern orchestra; a large historical battlefield.	50-piece orchestra; large historical production.
One Day, Three Autumns	Chen Mingliang and four women whose lives intersect across a changing Henan.	Dance, Peking opera and multimedia storytelling; a female perspective.	Large theatre; interactive touring production.
Musical *Dongguan East*	A Qiang, a migrant worker, builds a life in the factories of Dongguan.	Projection recreates 1980s factory life; songs and symbols carry collective memory.	20 principal performers plus crowd.
Teacher Gui Mei	Zhang Guimei's work in education.	Traditional and contemporary theatre; a long touring record.	Wang Baoshe, Chang Hao and company; more than 100 performances in over 20 cities.
When Spring Passes	A woman scientist in the Republican era holds to her research.	Minimal ink-wash design; pingtan-inflected score; three performers; immersive dialogue.	Three performers; chamber scale.
Musical *The Orphan of Zhao*	A contemporary reconstruction of Cheng Ying's rescue of the orphan.	"Soul character" staging; large-scale stage machines; orchestral score.	Large theatre; more than 100 touring performances.
Musical *The Imperial Guard*	The Imperial Guard is drawn into a struggle over imperial power.	National-style electronica, martial movement and a sculptural sword device.	2024 box-office success; large theatre.

PART I · THE SEASON

3. Production line-up at a glance

The season mixes large-scale spectacle with small-room work. The table records the production, company, form and planned run; the programme rationale is set out in Section 2.

Production	Company	Form	Planned run
The Orphan of Zhao	China National Opera and Dance Drama Theater	Dance drama	2 performances
Loyalty Through the Ages	Shanxi Puzhou Opera Art Research Institute	Puzhou opera	3 performances
One Day, Three Autumns	Gulou West Theatre	Drama	2 performances
Teacher Gui Mei	Yunnan Provincial Drama Theatre	Drama	2 performances
Dongguan East	Mahua FunAge	Musical	2 performances
When Spring Passes	Drama Nine	Drama	3 performances
The Orphan of Zhao	Shanghai Xu Jun Theatre	Musical	3 performances
The Imperial Guard		Musical	3 performances
Youth competition	Student and social theatre companies	Showcase	3 performances

PART I · THE SEASON

4. Season calendar

The main auditorium runs from June to August 2025. The Fun Space programme runs in August. The tables below preserve the source schedule, including load-in, technical and load-out days.

Main auditorium · June 2025

Dates	Production	Schedule
4–8 June	Dance drama *The Orphan of Zhao*	Load-in and technical work 4–5 June. Performances 6 June at 19:30; 7 June at 14:30 and 19:30; 8 June at 14:30. Load-out 8 June, 19:00–22:00.
20–21 June	Puzhou opera *Loyalty Through the Ages*	Load-in and technical work 20 June, 8:00–18:00. Performances 20 June at 19:30; 21 June at 14:30. Load-out 21 June, 19:00–22:00.
27–29 June	Musical *Dongguan East*	Load-in and technical work 28 June, 8:00–18:00. Performances 27 June at 19:30; 28 June at 14:30 and 19:30; 29 June at 19:30. Load-out 29 June, 22:00–24:00.

Main auditorium · July 2025

Dates	Production	Schedule
4–6 July	*One Day, Three Autumns*	Load-in 3 July, 8:00–20:00. Technical work 4 July, 13:00–18:00. Performances 4 July at 19:30; 5 July at 14:30 and 19:30; 6 July at 19:30. Load-out 6 July.
12–13 July	*Teacher Gui Mei*	Load-in and technical work 12 July, 13:00–18:00. Performances 12 July at 19:30; 13 July at 19:30. Load-out 13 July.
25–27 July	*When Spring Passes*	Technical work 25 July, 13:00–18:00. Performances 25 July at 19:30; 26 July at 14:30 and 19:30; 27 July at 19:00. Load-out 27 July.

Main auditorium · August 2025

Dates	Production	Schedule
1–6 August	Musical *The Orphan of Zhao*	Load-in and technical work 1–3 August; technical rehearsal 4 August, 13:00–18:00. Performances 4 August at 19:30; 5 August at 14:30 and 19:30; 6 August at 14:00. Load-out 6 August.
24–27 August	Musical *The Imperial Guard*	Load-in 24 August, 8:00–20:00; technical work 25 August, 13:00–18:00. Performances 25 August at 19:30; 26 August at 14:30 and 19:30; 27 August at 14:30. Load-out 27 August.

Fun Space · August 2025

Dates	Production	Schedule
9–10 August	*Double Carp*	Load-in and technical work 8 August. Performances 9 August at 19:00; 10 August at 19:00. Each performance runs about 90 minutes.
15–17 August	Youth competition works	*Fracture and Reconstruction* 15 August at 19:00; *Under the Neon* 16 August at 19:00; *Migrants* 17 August at 19:00. Each programme runs about 180 minutes including the showcase.

Why this rhythm

The season alternates scale. A large historical dance work is followed by a regional opera; a family drama is followed by a musical; a small three-hander is followed by two commercial musicals. The rhythm protects the small works from being swallowed by the large ones and gives the audience a reason to return rather than treating the season as a single blockbuster.

The in-house production sits in the Fun Space by design. *Double Carp* is a chamber play with a single set, a small cast and an intimate address; a smaller room allows the design to be seen as a system rather than as scenery. The room also lets the production work as a laboratory for the season's larger argument.

PART I · THE SEASON

5. Ticketing and access

The main auditorium is divided into five seating zones, A–E, and six price bands. The pricing logic protects the premium seats while keeping the lower zones accessible.

Differentiation by zone

Zone A is the premium central block; Zone B surrounds it; Zones C and D sit further back and to the sides; Zone E is the rear stalls. The design allows the theatre to price the same production differently without changing the artistic offer. It also allows the season to reserve lower-priced seats for students, community groups and first-time audiences.

Ticketing is also a tool for access. A public theatre that talks about "the people" has to make the room reachable to people who do not usually buy premium seats.

Packaging and groups

The proposal uses season passes, early-bird windows and group bookings for companies, unions and universities. Group sales are particularly important for the historical and civic titles; they turn a single ticket into a social event and give the marketing team a concrete audience to address.

Student and community access is handled through targeted allocations rather than a single discount. The aim is to build a habit of attendance, not a one-off promotion.

Seat inventory

Zone	Seats	Location
A	254	Premium centre
B	378	Wide centre surround
C	178	Mid-rear and side blocks
D	168	Rear corners and restricted view
E	206	Rear stalls
Total	**1,184**	

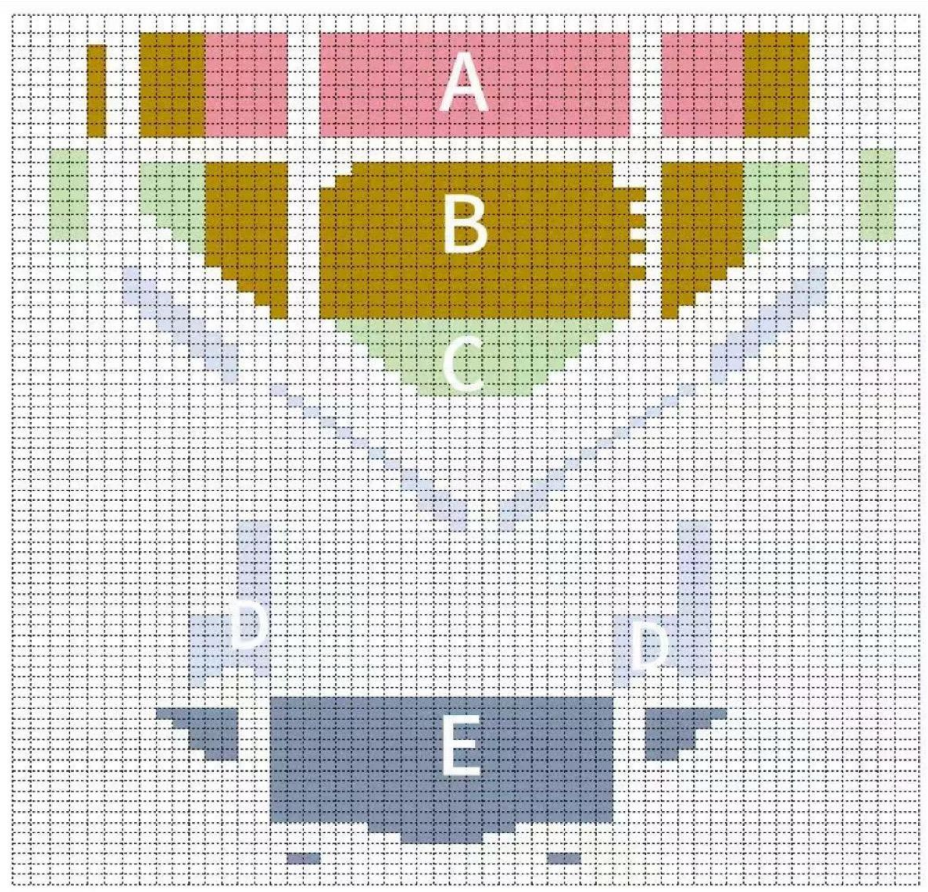
Ticket prices

Prices are in CNY. Each production lists five price bands.

Production	Price bands
Dance drama *The Orphan of Zhao*	280 · 380 · 580 · 880 · 1,080
Puzhou opera *Loyalty Through the Ages*	80 · 180 · 280 · 380 · 480
One Day, Three Autumns	180 · 280 · 380 · 680 · 880
Musical *Dongguan East*	180 · 280 · 380 · 680 · 880
Teacher Gui Mei	80 · 180 · 280 · 380 · 480
When Spring Passes	180 · 280 · 380 · 580 · 680
Musical *The Orphan of Zhao*	280 · 380 · 580 · 880 · 1,080
Musical *The Imperial Guard*	280 · 380 · 580 · 880 · 1,080

What the five zones are for

Zone	Position	Role in the pricing plan
A	Premium centre, closest to the stage	Full-price and opening-night seats; the visible “best seat” offer.
B	Wide surround of the centre	Core audience seats; season passes and group bookings.
C	Mid-rear and side blocks	Access tier for students, educators and first-time attenders.
D	Rear corners and restricted-view seats	Lowest-priced access; community and school allocations.
E	Rear stalls	Flexible inventory for group sales and late releases.



Seating zones A–E.

Reading the map

The map sets prices for the season as a whole. The same zone can carry different prices for a dance spectacle, a regional opera and a small chamber work. The zones keep a visible ladder of access while protecting revenue from the most expensive productions.

The lower-priced zones are where the season meets schools, community groups and younger audiences who may become regular attenders. A public theatre's pricing policy is legible in the cheapest seat as much as in the most expensive one.

PART I · THE SEASON

6. Marketing and public engagement

The campaign starts with two audiences, then turns to channels. The first is culturally engaged: history lovers, educators, students and readers who already care about the Lu Yi reference. The second is the theatre audience proper: people who go to drama, musicals and dance and who can be persuaded by a strong programme.

Two audience paths

For the historical path, the campaign translates "Lu Yi spirit" into concrete stories: who the young artists were, what they argued about, how they made work in difficult conditions. The tone is documentary and reflective, not celebratory. For the theatre path, the campaign foregrounds scale, stars, genre and the pleasure of a summer season: the dance spectacle, the musicals, the regional opera, the small discoveries.

The two paths meet in the youth competition. It gives the season a forward-looking story and a cast of young makers who can speak in their own voices. It also creates content that is cheap to produce and native to social platforms.

Core creative ideas

- **Youth.** The season is presented as a conversation between a tradition and the generation that inherits it, not as an anniversary retrospective.
- **New perspectives.** Each unit is framed by a question, not by a genre label. "What does people's art mean now?" is more useful than "a season of classics".
- **Co-creation.** The youth competition, workshops and open calls invite audiences to make something, not only to consume.
- **Arts education.** Masterclasses, talks, school outreach and community events turn the season into a learning programme.

Programme of events

The opening event is a short performance by students from the Central Academy of Drama, the Shenyang Conservatory and the Central Academy of Fine Arts, framed as "today's Lu Yi students". A Peking-opera flash mob in a nearby park brings the season into the neighbourhood. A shadow-puppet performance and workshop in the Fun Space connects the historical unit to a family audience. A producers' talk with the creative teams of the musicals turns the commercial productions into a case study for young makers. The youth competition is a testing ground for new talent as well as a question about the future of theatre; it includes masterclasses, a directors' forum, a showcase and an awards ceremony.

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6. Marketing and public engagement · continued

Audience and content plan

The season has two audience directions. The first follows the historical transmission of the Lu Yi spirit and addresses people with a sense of cultural mission: history enthusiasts and audiences connected to education. The second follows the value of theatre as an art form and addresses the deeper theatre audience: people who already go to drama and care about form, performance and directorial choices.

The content plan has four principles. The first is to make the season young. The second is to offer a new perspective on familiar material. The third is to invite the audience to co-create rather than receive. The fourth is to make art education part of the public offer rather than a separate programme.

The season uses the youth competition and the theatre forum to show the Lu Yi spirit from a new angle and to increase the interest and participation of universities and young theatre-makers. It gives the new-media campaign a thematic shape, so that each platform has a subject rather than a generic announcement. It uses the opera flash mob for community work and grassroots access. It uses workshops and masterclasses to reach different groups and to make art education concrete.

Campaign events

Opening. The season opens with a song-and-dance showcase performed by today's Lu Yi students from the Central Academy of Drama, Shenyang Conservatory and Central Academy of Fine Arts.

Unit 1, community flash mob. At Dongdan Park, the theatre stages "One strike of the gong, the play begins", a Peking-opera flash mob that takes opera into the neighbourhood.

Unit 2, shadow puppetry. The Fun Space hosts two subsidized public shadow-puppet performances by the Beijing Shadow Puppet Theatre, with evening workshops on traditional aesthetics, intangible heritage and family theatre.

Unit 3, producers' talk. The producers and publicity directors of the musicals *The Orphan of Zhao*, *When Spring Passes* and *The Imperial Guard* discuss box-office success and operating strategy, giving young creators concrete examples of how a good work reaches the stage.

Youth competition. The programme includes a masterclass series with teachers from the Central Academy of Drama, Shenyang Conservatory and Central Academy of Fine Arts; a youth theatre forum with directors such as Zhu Hongxuan, Liu Xiaoyi and Xu Jun, plus a salon called "When Generation Z meets the Lu Yi spirit"; an open call for short works on "critique and construction" from university and social theatre companies; and a showcase in the Fun Space for selected works, with industry guests.

Closing and awards. The season closes with an awards event for the most popular production, director, actor, producer and backstage workers. The winners are chosen by online and onsite audience votes.

New media

The campaign treats Xiaohongshu, WeChat and podcasts as the main online platforms, with Weibo, Douyin, Bilibili and video accounts as secondary. Official accounts publish performance information, series articles,

live broadcasts of events, backstage footage, interactive activities and performance clips. Invited creators promote ticket sales and events. “Post a repo, win a gift” activities increase discussion. Each platform receives content shaped to its own habits.

Xiaohongshu. Invited accounts include @Theatre Affairs Bureau, which reworks campaign images and return-stage video; @Inside and Outside the Play, which posts event information and direct footage of known performers; @Ticket Checker Yunbaoer, which posts ticket information and recommendation repos; @Yun Ge’s Row One Seat, which posts recommendations and runs ticket draws in comments; and @Qing Xuexue, which posts high-definition return-stage video and production information. Ten smaller accounts, including @Zaojunmiao Primary School Student, post post-show repos.

WeChat. The theatre, the production companies and the local culture and tourism bureau publish features on the Lu Yi spirit, historical material, production introductions and backstage stories. An online quiz, “How much do you know about Lu Yi?”, offers limited merchandise to successful participants. Theatre criticism accounts, including @Intermission Theatre and @Drama Focus, publish themed reviews.

Podcasts. Theatre podcasters with an existing following discuss the season. @I’m Standing at the Theatre Door hosts conversations with the creative team and shares viewing experiences; @On-Site Screening talks about theatre and the industry in a more informal format.

Weibo. A super-topic, “#My Lu Yi DNA”, invites users to upload family cultural objects or photographs of participation in folk theatre, and to tag Poly Theatre for a chance to receive season merchandise. @Beam Theatre posts backstage rehearsal material and production and event information.

Douyin, Bilibili and video accounts. A campaign, “#Add a Danmaku to a Classic” and “#1001 Ways to Open a Classic”, invites creative dubbing and re-editing of classic theatre clips; winners receive opening-night tickets. Ten marketing accounts, including @China Musical Ping’an Calendar, post highlights, merchandise and event benefits.

Outdoor advertising and merchandise

The campaign uses the theatre’s LED screen, the plaza and subway advertising. It also connects theatre with the real economy through a partnership between the theatre and the China National Arts and Crafts Museum / Hongde Education. After each performance, a joint merchandise stall opens in the Fun Space, selling products from both institutions and sharing revenue.

The merchandise includes a joint tote bag in DuPont paper with a canvas lining and leather handle; a joint AR ticket that leaves a moving season memory when scanned; a joint ticket holder; and a blind bag of quote stickers. Each object is designed to carry a fragment of the production’s language rather than a generic logo.

PART I · THE SEASON

7. Campaigns, channels and merchandise

The channel plan follows how theatre content travels: a strong image, a short extract, a recognisable face, a sentence that can be shared. The season needs a coherent voice on the platforms where its audiences already are. Presence on every platform is optional.

Platform logic

Xiaohongshu carries visual discovery: production stills, costume details, backstage rehearsals and short recommendations. **WeChat** carries long-form context, ticket links and institutional trust. **Podcasts** carry conversation: directors, translators and producers in a longer format. **Weibo** carries topical hooks and public conversation. **Douyin, Bilibili and video accounts** carry short extracts, creative dubbing, rehearsal footage and behind-the-scenes material.

The campaign avoids treating every platform as the same channel with a different aspect ratio. A rehearsal clip that works on Douyin needs to be rewritten for WeChat. A WeChat essay needs to be reshaped before it can run on Xiaohongshu.

Content formats

- **Short extracts with a turn.** A scene is cut around a decision or a reversal, so that a viewer who has not seen the play can still understand what is at stake.
- **Extensions of a character's situation.** A secondary character or an unanswered question becomes a short text, giving the audience a reason to want the full work.
- **Backstage and process.** Rehearsal, design and load-in content makes the season's labour visible and gives the campaign a human voice.
- **Interactive calls.** The "#1001 ways to open a classic" challenge invites audiences to re-voice or re-edit a classic scene; selected entries receive opening-night tickets.

Offline and merchandise

LED screens, plaza advertising and subway placements extend the campaign beyond the theatre. The most distinctive partnership is with the China National Arts and Crafts Museum: a joint merchandise line includes a tote, an AR ticket that animates a season memory, a ticket holder and a blind box of quote stickers. The collaboration also gives the season a second institutional context and a physical presence in another cultural venue.

Merchandise is used for ticket bundles, press gifts and audience rewards. The design principle is that an object should carry a fragment of the production's language, not a generic logo.

Evaluation

The campaign team tracks attendance, channel reach, group sales and post-show feedback, and adjusts during the run. The campaign team judges success by which invitation actually brought someone into the room; impressions are secondary.

PART I · THE SEASON

8. Fundraising

The fundraising target is **CNY 7.05 million**. The model mixes internal institutional support, public funding, sponsorship and in-kind contributions.

Source	Mechanism	Target
Poly Theatre	Co-organiser; venue, equipment and part of operating costs	20% · CNY 1.40 million
Central Academy of Drama	Co-organiser; staff, funding and university outreach	10% · CNY 0.70 million
Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism	Post-review subsidy for realist and opera productions	7% · CNY 0.50 million
China National Arts Fund	Large-scale stage work creation fund	28% · CNY 2.00 million
Xifeng Liquor	Title sponsor / cultural placement	35% · CNY 2.45 million
China National Arts and Crafts Museum	In-kind: cultural products, joint merchandise	No cash contribution

Funding sources in detail

Poly Theatre. As co-organiser, Poly provides the venue and equipment and carries part of the operating cost. The relationship also enriches its artistic resources, strengthens its industry position and social image, supports ticket and ancillary sales, and creates a mixed revenue model.

The Central Academy of Drama. As one of the hosts, the academy provides staff and financial support and uses its university network for promotion. The season also gives the academy teaching material, strengthens students' practical experience, raises its public profile, helps with student recruitment and supports academic exchange.

Beijing Municipal Bureau of Culture and Tourism. As the cultural authority, the bureau may support the season because it carries the Lu Yi spirit and contributes to the local cultural-tourism economy. Support may take the form of policy and funding.

China National Arts Fund. The season's Lu Yi theme and its transmission of the spirit fit the fund's direction. Large-scale stage works in opera and drama can receive up to CNY 2.5 million.

Xifeng Liquor. The company has a deep historical and cultural background that fits the season's theme. It can take a title sponsorship or embed cultural elements, strengthening its brand meaning and reaching new markets. Xifeng has sponsored performance events before, although public information does not confirm a season at this scale. The estimate below treats it as a title sponsor and assumes a substantial commitment.

China National Arts and Crafts Museum / Beijing Hongde Education. The museum supports the season's cultural mission and audience development. Its contribution is in-kind: cultural products and joint merchandise, not cash.

Financial institutions. Bank loans and copyright pledges can provide working capital and ease cash-flow pressure while the season is being delivered.

Why this mix

Internal support lowers the fixed cost of the venue and gives the season an institutional home. Public funding connects the programme to cultural policy without making the season dependent on a single grant. Sponsorship provides the scale that ticket income alone cannot carry. In-kind partnerships add reach and production value without adding cash costs.

The plan also mentions bank loans and copyright pledges as contingency instruments. These are financing tools. They should be used only after the season's cash flow and ticket assumptions have been stress-tested.

The target exceeds the season-level cost by CNY 2.06 million. The difference is treated as working capital, in-house production and contingency. Ticket income is modelled separately.

PART I · THE SEASON

9. Season budget

The estimated cost of the season is **CNY 4,994,500**. The budget below sets out the main categories and line items.

#	Item	Quantity	Unit price	Subtotal (CNY)
I	**Imported productions**			**4,690,000**
1	Unit 1 · Glimmer: dance *The Orphan of Zhao*	2 performances	20,000	400,000
2	Unit 1 · Glimmer: Puzhou opera *Loyalty Through the Ages*	3 performances	13,000	390,000
3	Unit 2 · New Birth: *One Day, Three Autumns*	2 performances	200,000	400,000
4	Unit 2 · New Birth: *Teacher Gui Mei*	2 performances	100,000	200,000
5	Unit 2 · New Birth: musical *Dongguan East*	2 performances	120,000	240,000
6	Unit 3 · Exploration: *When Spring Passes*	3 performances	100,000	300,000
7	Unit 3 · Exploration: musical *The Orphan of Zhao*	3 performances	600,000	1,800,000
8	Unit 3 · Exploration: musical *The Imperial Guard*	3 performances	300,000	900,000
9	Unit 4 · Spring Shoots: youth competition (three showcases)	3 performances	20,000	60,000
II	**Marketing and publicity**			**147,500**
10	Campaign events			71,600
11	New-media publicity			40,000
12	Offline advertising and traditional media			8,000
13	Merchandise and related costs			17,900
14	Event photography			5,000
15	Performance filming			5,000
III	**Administration and logistics**			**37,000**
16	Office supplies			5,000
17	Communications			2,000
18	Youth competition travel	45 person-days	300	27,000
IV	**Insurance and reserve**			**120,000**
19	Insurance			20,000
20	Contingency			100,000
Estimated total				**4,994,500**

PART I · THE SEASON

9. Season budget · detailed tables

Marketing budget

Category	Item	Amount (CNY)
Campaign events	Opening event	38,000
	Peking-opera flash mob	10,000
	Talk / sharing event	500
	Shadow-puppet performance and workshop	15,600
	Youth competition unit	8,000
	Closing and awards	1,000
New media	Xiaohongshu creators	13,000
	WeChat theatre accounts	8,000
	Weibo	4,000
	Podcasts	5,000
	Douyin	2,000
	Owned accounts	4,000
Offline	LED screen and subway lightbox	8,000
Merchandise	Tote bag	7,900
	AR ticket	3,500
	Ticket holder	4,000
	Quote-sticker blind box	1,500
Filming	Event and performance filming	8,000
Detailed marketing total		**142,000**

Revenue sensitivity

Occupancy	One imported performance	All imported performances
100%	509,980	4,589,820
90%	458,982	4,130,838
80%	407,984	3,671,856
70%	356,986	3,212,874
60%	305,988	2,753,892
50%	254,990	2,294,910
40%	203,992	1,835,928
30%	152,994	1,376,946

Occupancy	One Double Carp performance	All Double Carp performances
100%	69,000	207,000
90%	62,100	186,300
80%	55,200	165,600
70%	48,300	144,900
60%	41,400	124,200
50%	34,500	103,500
40%	27,600	82,800
30%	20,700	62,100

PART I · THE SEASON

10. Risk and resilience

The proposal identifies nine risk areas and pairs each with a management response. The plan makes risk visible early enough to act on.

Risk	Response
Funding shortfall, broken cash flow or sponsor withdrawal	Detailed cash-flow planning; diversified income; staged commitments; contingency reserve; early warning at the board level.
Imported production cancels	Contractual penalties; confirmed deposit and insurance; backup programme; clear communication with ticketholders.
Load-in or technical rehearsal delays	Buffer days in the calendar; experienced crew; daily production meetings; priority rules for shared equipment.
Safety incident	Venue risk assessment; emergency plan; insurance; trained front-of-house and technical staff.
Low occupancy and slow cost recovery	Market research before contracting; differentiated pricing; group sales; dynamic campaign review; realistic break-even modelling.
Marketing underperforms	Weekly dashboard; reallocation across channels; creator-led content; direct outreach to universities and unions.
Negative reviews from competitors or audiences	Quality control; rapid audience feedback; transparent response; separation of criticism from organised attack.
Force majeure	Early notification; refund or exchange policy; insurance; remote or reduced format where feasible.
Alcohol sponsor and youth-facing marketing	Keep sponsor branding out of school, under-18 and youth-competition materials; legal review; age-appropriate channels; no alcohol messaging in the in-house play campaign.

Risk responses, section by section

1. FUNDING SHORTFALL, BROKEN CASH FLOW OR SPONSOR WITHDRAWAL

1. **Financial planning.** Build a detailed financial plan so that the use and movement of funds are clear before the season opens.
2. **Diversified financing.** Raise money through sponsorship, investment, loans and public funding, and reduce dependence on any single source.
3. **Contractual protection.** Set out rights and obligations in the contracts, including the consequences of withdrawal.
4. **Risk reserve.** Hold a reserve for sudden funding gaps.

2. A CONTRACTED PRODUCTION WITHDRAWS

1. **Contractual protection.** Sign detailed agreements with each production, with clear liability and compensation terms.
2. **Insurance.** Insure imported productions against the economic loss caused by cancellation.

3. LOAD-IN, LOAD-OUT OR TECHNICAL REHEARSAL DELAYS

1. **Time management.** Reserve enough time for get-in and get-out, and manage the schedule strictly.

2. **Professional crew.** Hire an experienced get-in and get-out team.
3. **Communication.** Keep all parties clear about the timetable and requirements.

4. ACCIDENT, INJURY OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY

1. **Safety inspections.** Inspect stage equipment and the venue regularly.
2. **Training and drills.** Train all staff and run emergency exercises.
3. **Emergency response.** Establish a response mechanism that can act immediately after an incident.
4. **Insurance.** Carry insurance against the economic loss.

5. LOW OCCUPANCY AND SLOW COST RECOVERY

1. **Market research.** Research demand before the programme is fixed, and choose productions with a credible audience.
2. **Pricing.** Set ticket prices from cost and market research; use the package schemes described above.
3. **Marketing.** Use social media, partnerships and word of mouth to build awareness and desire.
4. **Flexible adjustment.** Adjust the schedule and campaign in response to real sales. If two consecutive performances cannot cover the performance fee, consider stopping that title and replacing it with a backup.

6. WEAK EXECUTION OF THE MARKETING PLAN

1. **Budget management.** Allocate the budget so that the key campaign activities are protected.
2. **Evaluation.** Measure each activity and adjust the plan from the data.
3. **Creative marketing.** Use low-cost, high-idea tactics such as social-media challenges and word of mouth to increase awareness.

7. NEGATIVE REVIEWS FROM COMPETITORS OR AUDIENCES

1. **Quality control.** Keep the script, casting, direction and stage effect under review at every stage.
2. **Audience feedback.** Open channels for comments, collect them quickly and make adjustments.
3. **Crisis communication.** Prepare a response plan with positive stories and events, so that criticism can be answered promptly and the public conversation kept in balance.

8. UNFORESEEN EVENTS

1. **Contingency plan.** Prepare a plan for natural disasters, public-health emergencies and other disruptions.
2. **Early notice.** If a date must change, tell the audience as early as possible by phone, message and official account, and apologise.
3. **Refund and exchange.** Give audiences the choice of a refund or a ticket for another date. This protects their rights and reduces the loss caused by the change.
4. **Insurance.** Insure the event against the risks that cannot be controlled.

The risk that matters most

The commercial risk is obvious; the artistic risk is subtler. A season that talks about “the people” can become a season that speaks for the people rather than to them. The proposal’s protection against that is structural:

the youth competition, the community events, the small-room production and the public talks all create situations in which the institution has to listen as well as address.

The budget's contingency is deliberately modest. The contingency does not substitute for planning. The real resilience comes from a programme that can be adjusted without losing its argument: a production can be replaced, a channel can be dropped, a date can move, but the four-unit structure and the in-house play should remain legible.

PART I · THE SEASON

11. Viability and public value

The proposal's case for viability rests on more than ticket revenue. It argues that the season produces four kinds of value at once: artistic, civic, institutional and commercial.

Seven advantages

- **Institutional credibility.** Two established partners — Beijing Comedy Theatre and the Central Academy of Drama — give the season professional standing and access to young talent.
- **Cultural depth.** The Lu Yi reference gives the programme a historical argument that can be communicated beyond a single production.
- **Genre range.** Dance, regional opera, drama, musical theatre and youth work reach different audiences without losing a common frame.
- **Youth pipeline.** The competition and masterclasses create a route from student work to professional presentation.
- **Integrated communication.** The campaign is built into the programme rather than added after the line-up is fixed.
- **Evaluation.** The proposal treats attendance, group sales and audience feedback as planning data, not post-hoc decoration.
- **Dual benefit.** The season is designed to produce cultural and economic value; the two are treated as compatible.

What success would look like

A sold-out house counts, but success also means a season in which a regional opera finds a new audience, a young company gets a second invitation, a school group returns, a spectator writes a serious response, and the in-house play teaches the institution something it did not know before. Those outcomes are harder to measure than revenue, but they are the reason a public theatre exists.

> The proposal's wager is that a season can be commercially serious and intellectually generous at the same time. The budget makes the first possible; the programme makes the second necessary.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

12. *Double Carp*, a play inside the season

Double Carp is a 90-minute play in several acts, set in a Republican-era opera troupe. It is written in heightened, partly monologic prose, with a linear plot and elements of Chinese opera. The play is the season's smallest production and its most concentrated argument.

The story begins with a stack of old letters. Zheng Yousheng, a gifted singer and the son of a prostitute, writes to Xiang Zhizuo, the son of a Grand General, under the pen name Chen Yu (陈鱼). Chen Yu (陈渔), his senior sister, carries the letters between them. Xiang imagines the writer as a woman; Yousheng keeps the mask. As she delivers the letters, Chen Yu (陈渔) begins to fall for Xiang.

The play uses the opera troupe as a pressure chamber in which love, class, gender and artistic survival are forced into the same room. The period setting is a frame for that pressure chamber. The season's historical unit asks how a tradition is inherited; *Double Carp* asks what it costs to perform a self that others have imagined for you.

Why this play belongs in this season

The play gives the season a laboratory. It is small enough to rehearse and revise, but ambitious enough to test the season's design language, its audience development and its argument about inheritance. It also gives young performers and designers a production credit in a season otherwise dominated by touring works.

The play is treated as a market-facing work. Its target audience is younger than the traditional drama crowd, with a particular focus on women aged 15–35. The design and marketing are built around that ambition without pretending that a period setting is automatically a contemporary story.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

13. Synopsis

The play takes place in the 1930s, in and around Leping House, a struggling opera troupe. The story follows three people whose lives are held together by letters and torn apart by the meanings those letters acquire.

The play

Double Carp is a multi-act play with a running time of about 90 minutes. It is set in the Republican era and is a literary play, written in a semi-poetic monologue style. It follows a single linear narrative from a single point of view and traces the links and developments between the characters' feelings. On top of the dramatic form, it incorporates a large amount of Chinese opera: the troupe setting and an opera story run beneath the surface, and classic opera excerpts are woven into the action. The result is a detailed portrait of the distinct appeal of Chinese opera and of the emotions that people carried through a particularly turbulent period.

The creative starting point is the Republican-era opera troupe. The production wants to take the audience back into a time of upheaval and change. In that history, the troupe was one of the important carriers of culture. Through a handful of hurried letters, the play connects the fates of three people. Their choices are constrained by circumstances, and behind them stands a larger group of people caught by the times, caught in human conflict. The audience may be struck by the pure attraction between the characters, or moved by the helplessness of the people inside the story. Either way, the play asks them to think about the resilience of a troupe living on the margins, the resonance of literature and feeling, and the class difference between ideal and reality.

Theatre is a tool for emotional resonance. *Double Carp* aims to touch a corner of the audience's inner life. Historical traces and emotional recognition are woven together; opera and story combine into a picture of love and hate. The culture of the period is also a culture of collision. The Republican-era troupe reflects the cultural life of the time and carries the transmission of traditional art. Western culture had a deep influence on Chinese society; dress and behaviour became more modern, and emotional expression became more direct and passionate. That expanded the space for opera performance and management. The confusion and romance of the era pushed the troupe toward its last splendor and created an artistic landscape that lived by moving toward death.

Synopsis

The story takes place in the 1930s at Leping House and follows Zheng Yousheng, the abandoned son of a prostitute, as he grows up. In this turbulent time the troupe is a living carrier of traditional culture, but it survives precariously, like grass at the edge of the road. Talented men and beautiful women are only a fleeting appearance; the pure pursuit of art and literature is inevitably silenced by the noise around it.

Zheng Yousheng is a gifted singer, the son of a prostitute. He makes his name in the troupe but can never escape the shadow of his birth. He loves literature and art, but he does not dare to pursue his own happiness. In the troupe he is cared for by Chen Yu, his elder troupe-sister; the two have grown up leaning on each other and have become the closest family.

Xiang Zhizuo is a talented son of a Grand General. He is gifted, but trapped by his family's pressure and expectations. A desertion during a battle estranges him from his father. A chance meeting allows him and

Zheng Yousheng to find a deep resonance in poetry and in their inner lives. Their letters become a rare psychological comfort for Yousheng.

As the story moves forward, the bond between Yousheng and Chen Yu is tested. Yousheng must choose between feeling, loyalty and personal dreams: should he remain loyal to his elder sister and the troupe, or fight for Xiang and for freedom? The cruelty of fate turns every beautiful expectation into foam. News of Xiang's engagement arrives, Chen Yu is hiding a secret of her own, and Yousheng finally chooses solitude and departure.

Double Carp is distinguished by deep feeling, strong poetry and complex relationships. It shows the solitude and struggle of a person from a low background who pursues art and love. Every letter, every meeting and every shift of feeling is full of helplessness and longing. Together they become a song of the times. Whether it is Yousheng's self-sacrifice or Xiang's tragedy of birth, the play asks the audience to feel the unfairness of fate and the complexity of the human heart.

Zheng Yousheng

Yousheng is a brilliant singer, the son of a prostitute, raised inside the troupe. He is gifted, sensitive and unable to escape the shadow of his birth. He loves literature and art but does not dare to claim a life of his own. Under the pen name Chen Yu (陈鱼), he writes to Xiang. Chen Yu (陈渔), his elder troupe-sister, has protected him since childhood and carries the letters; the two are less one depending on the other than two people who have learned to lean on each other.

Xiang Zhizuo

Xiang is the talented son of a Grand General. He is intelligent and cultured, but trapped by his family's expectations. A desertion during a battle estranges him from his father. When he meets Yousheng, the two discover a shared language of poetry and feeling. Xiang imagines that Chen Yu, the writer of the letters, is a woman; their correspondence becomes a rare emotional comfort for Yousheng.

Chen Yu

Chen Yu (陈渔) is Yousheng's senior sister, the troupe's senior performer and the courier of the letters. She is clever, stubborn, loyal and capable of cruelty. Her care for Yousheng is real; her love for Xiang grows as she carries the letters, and it is entangled with her own desire for the security and respect she has never had.

The turn

Xiang's engagement is announced. Chen Yu is hiding feelings of her own. Yousheng chooses solitude and departure. The play ends with the cost of misplaced love.

> The letters connect three lives, and the feeling they carry never lands in the right place.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

14. Directorial concept

The director's concept begins with a physical image: a stack of yellowed letters, handled until the paper has softened. The production looks back without nostalgia and attends to what the letters left out.

Misplaced love

Every character in the play loves something in the wrong place. Chen Yu (陈渔)'s love is entangled with her own desire for a life she was denied. Xiang's love is directed at the imagined Chen Yu (陈鱼). Yousheng's love is a stubborn pursuit of his own neglected inner world. The production lets these errors coexist as they do in the letters, without turning them into a moral lesson.

Xiang's inability to accept Chen Yu (陈鱼) as a person comes from a deformed upbringing under patriarchal pressure, which left him loving an image rather than a person. Yousheng's devotion is a stubborn pursuit of his own neglected inner world.

The letters

Double Carp begins with a stack of old, yellowed letters. I am looking back, telling a small, incomplete story that is nevertheless covered in sunlight. Everyone in the story carries a twisted, knotted tragic point, and the thread that runs through all of them is "misplaced love".

Chen Yu (陈渔)'s love is misplaced because what she loves, at bottom, is her own desire. She looks like a detached figure who steers events, but she is the most thoroughly tragic person in the story. She is made of too many compromises: clever, stubborn, loyal, sincere, and capable of cruelty. She is the strong shape that the troupe and the times have beaten her into; beneath the smooth surface is a sharp self.

She does love Yousheng. She wants to protect her junior, who is a simpler version of herself. She also loves Xiang, because in a few brief meetings, with her identity hidden, she receives a kind of absolute respect she has rarely known. She loves the worldly achievement he can offer; she loves her own desire. Even so, the feeling is never entirely hers. The words are not hers, and his heart is not turned toward her.

Chen Yu keeps facing this cruelty. Perhaps because she has survived so many disappointments and displacements, she still chooses to live after everything has burned. That resilience pushes her to sing, unsteadily, and to keep walking.

Xiang Zhizuo misplaces onto the name Chen Yu (陈鱼) his love for an imagined perfect companion. It is less useful to say that he cannot accept that the person behind the name is a lowly male performer than to say that he cannot accept Chen Yu as anyone at all. People sink deeper into the perfect figure they have invented. Xiang grew up in a deformed environment; he is a stubborn but weak rebel. The imagined Chen Yu is the light that satisfies every need of his inner world under his father's authority. In a sense he is the author of the tragedy: his helpless "weakness" and his seemingly unbreakable "strength" twist together and push the relationship over. When his idealism collapses, he remains a romantic; the green branch that grows from the crack in the rock is his short life.

For Yousheng, love is at bottom a pursuit of his own inner world. His childhood was incomplete; he grew up stumbling along with his elder sister. They were less one depending on the other than two people leaning on

each other. In that environment, stubborn practice was enough to give them food, an identity and a skill. No one taught them how to love or how to be loved. When he meets a kindred spirit, he has only reckless testing and almost stubborn persistence; he keeps hoping that if he gives enough feeling, something good will come. More than a deep attachment to Xiang, this is a stubborn pursuit and nourishment of the inner world that was never cared for. He is like fireworks, blazing brightly and leaving at the same time. Because he burns so brightly, his life is beautiful like an incomplete but moving painting.

The core of the tragedy is the pressure of the environment, the deformed twin of weakness and stubbornness, and the way each character's unspoken persistence creates the outcome. Rather than simply exploring the feelings among three people, I want the production to show its analysis of human nature: our pursuit of resonance in the depths of the soul keeps adding weight in desire, loading it with worldly expectations or a spiritual value larger than itself. This is also a very market-facing story. I hope each audience member can find a trace of themselves in one of the characters and feel some recognition, perhaps a smile of release, perhaps a few tears. Either is the best gift we can give the three of them. Perhaps they never stood side by side; they faced each other at cross purposes and embraced, wounding each other. When the old story opens, we are all struggling inside our own desire, awkwardly and romantically embracing that light called "kindred spirit".

From letters to stage

The production treats the letters as physical objects and as a structure. They are read, folded, carried, hidden and re-read. The stage makes the movement of the letters visible. A screen, a table, a mirror and a few chairs are enough. The design refuses the usual period-drama clutter and asks the audience to watch the acts of writing, carrying and receiving.

The tone is restrained. The emotional climaxes are played in near-stillness rather than in raised voices. The production draws the audience in without overwhelming them. That intimacy is also a commercial choice: it makes the play portable, affordable and suitable for the Fun Space.

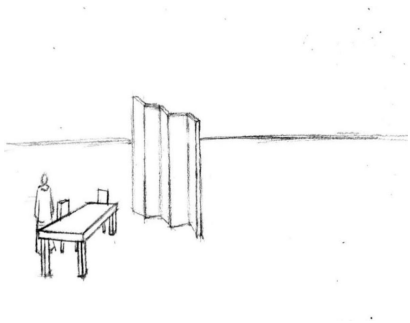
PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

15. Stage design

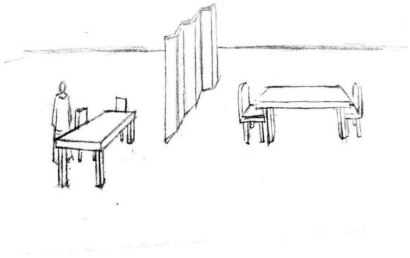
The stage design is built around a single moving element: a folding screen. The screen is the externalisation of Yousheng's inner world; its movement is the production's main visual grammar.

One side of the screen is painted with flowers and birds; the other is gold and red. The flower-and-bird side belongs to Yousheng's ordinary inner life, the self formed in the troupe. The gold side belongs to his stage identity, the opera role that gives him status and allows him to refuse the people he does not want. Under light, the gold becomes brilliant; outside it, it turns muddy. The design uses that instability rather than resolving it.

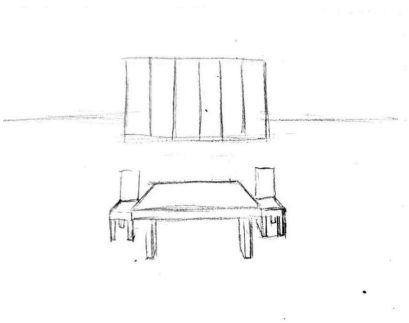
When a letter is delivered, the screen moves. The movement changes the space between the characters. At times the screen separates them. At times it turns to reveal the other side. At the end, it can be folded flat, leaving the stage bare. The audience sees the construction of the image as well as the image itself.



Stage sketch, scene 1.



Stage sketch, scene 2.



Stage sketch, scene 3.



Screen study, flower-and-bird side.



Screen study, gold-and-red side.

The screen and the rooms

The screen is the externalisation of Yousheng's psychological environment. Each time it is pushed during the delivery of a letter, it marks a change in that environment. The flower-and-bird side is his ordinary inner state.

He grew up in the troupe and became famous playing Yu Ji; that role is the foundation of his self-respect and the reason he can refuse people he dislikes. Gold is Yu Ji's colour. Under stage light it is bright and commanding; outside the light it turns muddy and dark, just as Yousheng's inner state differs on and off stage. The red side is the sign of desire, his longing for a kindred spirit, and the impulse that finally drives him toward revenge.

The table and chairs in Yousheng's room are the traditional opera table and chair without their embroidered covers. They represent Yousheng after the star's aura has been removed and the Yu Ji costume taken off. They also suggest that, in this room, he does not put worldly advantage first. The table and chairs are red, forming a colour relationship with the reversed red screen and externalising his inner world. Xiang's room also uses one table and two chairs, echoing Yousheng, but the same furniture is arranged differently. The visual image says directly that the two men are kindred spirits who are similar and different.

The room

The playing space is shallow. A long table, a mirror, two chairs and a low bench are enough. The table is where the letters are written; the mirror is where the face is made up; the chairs are where people wait. The design keeps the floor visible, so that the movement of the screen and the actors can be read as choreography.

The colour palette moves from warm paper and ink to a colder grey as the play progresses. The final scene strips the stage back to a single light and the folded screen. The production builds a room in which a letter can change its meaning. It does not attempt a replica of a Republican-era theatre.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

16. Costume design

The costumes translate character into fabric, colour and silhouette. The design principle is restraint: each character has a dominant palette, one period reference and one detail that reveals what the character cannot say.

Character	Palette and material	Design idea
Zheng Yousheng	Pale blue, blue-grey, soft cream; cotton and linen; subtle pink or off-white accents.	A sensitive, gifted man formed by a harsh environment. The soft palette and fine details suggest an inner life that the world does not protect. The final opera costume turns the same body into a stage image.
Chen Yu	Yellow-green, jade green, gold and silver accents; qipao with a light shawl.	A fallen young lady who has learned to survive. The green suggests vitality and adaptability; the gold and silver recall a former status without restoring it.
Xiang Zhizuo	Grey-brown, cream, pale grey; linen with a subtle sheen; wine red or dark green accents.	A talented son trapped by his family. The restrained suit and soft fabric suggest refinement; the tightened tailoring and elaborate buttons suggest control.
The servant	Dark grey, ink green, brown; durable cotton-linen, coarse cloth.	A practical, functional costume with multiple pockets and adjustable cuffs. The design communicates service, loyalty and a life lived in the background.

Costume notes

ZHENG YOUSHENG · EVERYDAY COSTUME

Yousheng is the star of a Republican-era troupe, but his fate is miserable, his heart fine and kind, his talent quick, his character weak. The costume has to show the contradiction: the troupe's hope, and a life bought by his elder sister's sacrifice. His base tone is therefore sorrowful. He has talent and no luck; he has virtue and lives in a dirty place. He is a small flower growing out of mud, struggling and easily crushed. The design principle is the beauty of tragedy and the delicacy of the soul.

The main palette is soft, slightly melancholic pale blue and light blue-grey. These colours show the character's sensitive, kind interior and hint at the sadness and helplessness of his fate. At the collar, cuffs or hem, a warm touch of pale pink or off-white suggests the kindness and hope that have not been extinguished, like a thread of light in the dark. The materials are fine, soft cotton and linen, close to the character's sensitive nature and able to communicate gentleness and goodness through touch. The details matter: delicate embroidery, complex frog buttons, fine pleats. They show artistic cultivation and an inner sensitivity. The accessories are simple and full of atmosphere: an old jade pendant, a plain sandalwood bracelet. They show taste without display, in keeping with a weak and kind character.

The overall atmosphere combines tragedy and beauty. The design keeps the characteristics of Republican-era troupe dress while adjusting the cut to modern viewing habits, so that the character looks three-dimensional rather than costume-historical. Colour, material, cut and accessories work together to create a beauty that lets the audience feel the sadness and helplessness of the fate and the delicacy and goodness inside it.

ZHENG YOUSHENG · OPERA COSTUME

This is the costume for the final scene, when Yousheng meets Xiang Zhizuo for the last time. The design digs into the character's traits and fate through detail and overall silhouette: the fine, kind, weak interior and the sadness of the fate. The main colour is a low-saturation blue-grey, a metaphor for sadness. At the cuffs, collar or hem, pale white, light yellow or pale grey-blue suggests struggle and helplessness.

The material is soft, fine silk; the character sings his last startling song and goes to his death beautifully. The cut combines the traditional opera long gown of the Republican period, fine frog buttons and loose sleeves. It fits his status as the troupe's star and shows his personal charm. Delicate embroidery, complex patterns and fine pleats show artistic cultivation and sensitivity. The design avoids too much display and chooses a low-key, restrained style, which also carries the character's weakness. Small opera elements in the accessories, such as a tiny painted-face charm or a miniature opera prop, reinforce his identity and act as a metaphor for his fate.

The overall design keeps the characteristics of Republican-era troupe dress and makes the character vivid and real. Colour, material, cut and accessories create a tragic beauty: the audience feels the sadness and helplessness of the fate and the delicacy, goodness and weakness inside it, and sees the beauty and tragedy of the character.

CHEN YU

Chen Yu is a fallen young lady of the Republican era. The costume shows, through detail and overall style, the toughness and unyielding spirit inside her reduced circumstances. The main colour is yellow-green. Chen Yu was sold to a troupe as a child. Though she lives in adversity, she keeps going, stays close to her junior, and shows a stubborn vitality and optimism. She is also a little worldly and smooth. Her qipao therefore uses a lively green, with gold, silver or pale blue accents. The accents recall her former respectable status and suggest the purity and hope that have not been erased inside her.

The material combines cotton and linen, which represent her present reduced life, with a refined, elegant cut and lace underskirt that hint at her former refined life. The style is based on the traditional qipao, moderately modified: the length is shortened and the cut adjusted to modern taste while keeping the flavour of Republican dress. A simple woollen shawl, not luxurious, shows her former taste and education and her elegance and composure in difficulty. The accessories avoid elaborate jewellery; a simple pearl necklace suits her reduced status and shows inner purity and dignity.

XIANG ZHIZUO

Xiang is the eldest son of a Grand General in the Republican era: a young man who loves literature, struggles, is unloved, quick-minded, frustrated and controlled by his family. The costume reflects his complex character, family position and inner struggle. The main palette is low-key and restrained: elegant grey-brown, soft cream or slightly melancholic pale grey. These colours show his marginal position in the family and his inner struggle and depression. At the tie, cuffs or lining, a bright or deep wine red or dark green suggests the talent and passion that the family has not bound, like a caged phoenix that remains splendid in difficulty.

The material is soft, textured linen with a natural sheen. It fits the refined, literary image and communicates sensitivity through touch. The cut is a precise, restrained suit with loose sleeves and trousers, fitting the household of a Grand General and showing personal charm and talent. The design adds a moderate sense of constraint: close tailoring, complex buttons or fine ties. These are metaphors for family control and for inner struggle. At the collar, cuffs or hem, fine embroidery, patterns or text show inner richness and quick talent. The result is a double character: the marginal, struggling position in the family, and the talent and longing for freedom, love and escape.

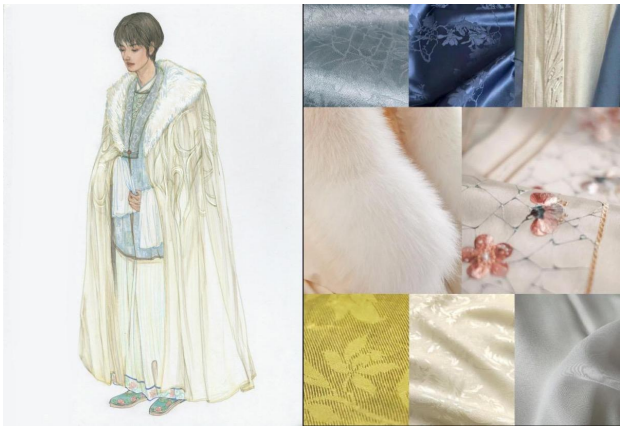
THE SERVANT

The servant's costume shows his status, his service and the master-servant relationship with the young master, while incorporating Republican-era dress and context. The main colours are low-key and practical: dark grey, ink green or brown. They fit his status and the period. The materials are durable and easy to clean: cotton-linen blend, coarse cloth or linen. They suit daily labour and his plain character. The design uses traditional Republican elements and wearing habits: a short jacket, loose trousers and simple cloth shoes. Functional details include multiple pockets, adjustable cuffs and trouser hems. They make it easier to carry things and adjust the clothes, and they express the service relationship and practicality. The accessories are simple and useful: a cloth belt, cloth shoes or a simple head covering such as a scarf or hat. They meet daily needs without display, in keeping with his humble status.

The overall design uses colour, material, cut and accessories to create an atmosphere of loyalty and humility. The audience should feel the servant's character and the period, and see a person whose identity and work are written into the clothes.



Zheng Yousheng, costume board.



Zheng Yousheng, final opera costume.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

Costume plates

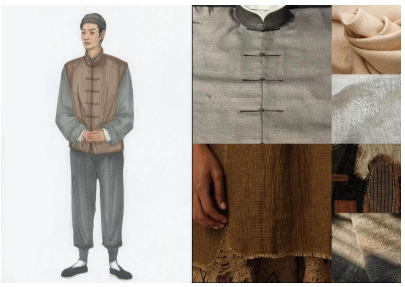
The three plates group the remaining characters. Each board combines a full-length figure with fabric swatches, so that silhouette, proportion, colour and material can be read together.



Chen Yu, costume board.



Xiang Zhizuo, costume board.



The servant, costume board.

Chen Yu's board is the warmest of the three: jade green, gold and silver, a qipao softened by a pale shawl. Xiang's board is cooler and more constrained: grey-brown linen, a precise suit, a dark accent at the collar. The servant's board is the most practical: dark cotton, multiple pockets, a short jacket and loose trousers. The three palettes keep the class differences visible without turning costume into caricature.

How the costumes work on stage

The costumes are designed to be read at a distance and at close range. At a distance, colour and silhouette identify the character. At close range, the fabric and the details carry the emotional information: a worn cuff, a repaired seam, a button that does not match. The production uses costume as a second script.

The final scene changes Yousheng into an opera costume. The change exposes the moment when the private self and the stage self become indistinguishable, and the audience sees how much of the character has been produced by the roles he was given.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

17. Makeup design

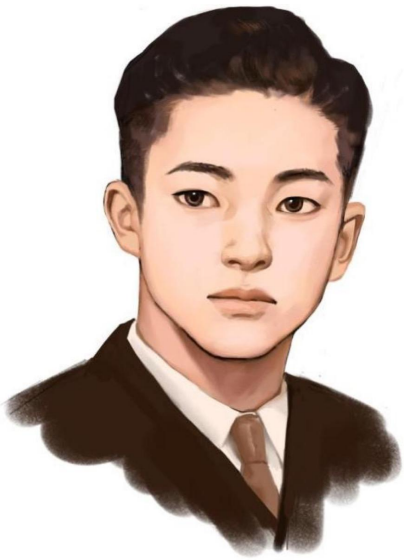
The makeup follows the same principle as the costumes: each face should look like a person. The three character portraits establish age, temperament and the trace of the opera world without turning the face into a mask.



Zheng Yousheng, makeup study.



Chen Yu, makeup study.



Xiang Zhizuo, makeup study.

Yousheng's face is kept pale and slightly tired; the opera makeup in the final scene is applied in front of the audience, so that the transformation is visible as labour. Chen Yu's makeup is warmer and more controlled; her face is a social surface that she has learned to manage. Xiang's face is younger than his responsibilities; the design emphasises the unfinished quality of a person who has been loved as an idea rather than as a man.

The production avoids heavy historical styling. The audience should be able to read the faces as contemporary people who happen to live in another time.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

18. Production plan and budget

Double Carp is planned as a small in-house production in the Fun Space. The production model is deliberately lean: a single set, a small cast, a limited costume plot and a short rehearsal period.

Production phases

Phase	Work
Development	Script revision, design research, casting, music and movement workshops.
Pre-production	Set construction, costume fittings, makeup tests, lighting plot, marketing assets.
Rehearsal	Table work, scene work, movement and opera coaching, technical rehearsal.
Load-in	Screen installation, lighting focus, sound check, costume and prop setting.
Run	Two performances in the Fun Space, with a press and industry showing.
Load-out	Strike, storage, post-production review and documentation.

The production budget covers personnel, design and construction, costume and makeup, venue and technical support, marketing and contingency. The planning logic keeps fixed costs low, spends on the design elements the audience will actually see, and reserves a contingency for the screen and costume work.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

19. Marketing *Double Carp*

The marketing plan for *Double Carp* begins with a specific audience: younger theatregoers, especially women aged 15–35, who are active on visual and conversational platforms and who are willing to try a small production if the invitation feels intelligent rather than educational.

Positioning

The play is positioned as a contemporary chamber work with a period surface. The campaign leads with the letters, the mirror and the question of how a letter can make a person appear. It avoids the two traps of period drama marketing: nostalgia for a lost world, and a reverence that makes the work feel like homework.

The visual language uses the screen, the gold and red palette, the folded letter and the mirror. The copy is short and concrete: a sentence from a letter, a question, a name. The campaign opens with a single striking image and withholds the plot, so that the audience wants to know what happens.

Channels and content

- **Short video:** rehearsal fragments, costume tests, the screen in motion, a letter being folded.
- **Xiaohongshu:** visual notes on the design, the characters and the period; creator visits and short reviews.
- **WeChat:** a long-form essay on the play's themes, the director's note and the ticket link.
- **Podcast:** a conversation with the writer/director and the designers about adapting a play for a small room.
- **Live:** a preview, a stage tour, a post-show talk and a workshop for students.

Merchandise and partnerships

The merchandise extends the play's visual language: a letter set, a ticket holder, a small mirror, a printed programme and a limited poster. The merchandise gives the audience a way to take the play's central object home.

The campaign also uses the season's partnership with the China National Arts and Crafts Museum to place the play in a broader cultural context. A joint event on paper, folding and letter-writing connects the play's material world to a craft audience.

Evaluation

The production tracks ticket sales, group bookings, opening-week conversion, social engagement and post-show feedback. The campaign's key test is whether a younger audience that does not usually attend this theatre felt invited.

PART II · THE IN-HOUSE PRODUCTION

19. Marketing Double Carp · continued

Audience and positioning

The primary audience is younger theatregoers, especially women aged 15–35. This group is already the main audience for contemporary drama, has relatively high purchasing power and is active on social platforms. The campaign therefore treats the play as a light emotional drama for a broad entertainment market, while keeping its period texture, its Chinese opera culture, its idea of a people's culture, its theme of class pressure and resistance, and its "misplaced love" as the points of entry.

The box-office rankings of the past two years show that, apart from imported productions and revivals of classic scripts, the strongest drama and musical titles are usually works about feeling and the value of life, and they share a strong literary quality. The questionnaire data collected for this proposal points in the same direction. For a play positioned this way, the campaign needs to pay more attention to the creative team, to the emotional value of the script and to the story's fit with the market.

The campaign therefore starts from the play's literary quality and gives it a market-facing package. It also connects the play to the season's themes of "new birth" and "youth". It gives the actors and creative team a lively, humorous presence that contrasts with the period material, so that the campaign feels light without misrepresenting the play.

Channels

New media is the centre of the campaign. The team uses Weibo, WeChat, Douyin and other platforms to release trailers, backstage footage and actor updates, and to talk with the audience. Because the cast and creative team are young and engaging, the team also makes regular rehearsal and performance vlogs from the first day of rehearsal, and develops a small self-produced variety series based at Beijing Comedy Theatre. The series shows the daily life of a young company, breaks the mystery around the production, and gives the audience an easy way into the people on stage.

In the middle and later stages of production, the team invites theatre influencers, culture accounts and creators from Xiaohongshu, Weibo and WeChat to visit rehearsals and see the work. It also uses traditional media, including radio, broadcast and interviews, to reach a wider audience. Outdoor advertising near the theatre supports the campaign.

Materials

Posters, flyers and other printed material are made with a younger design studio. The aim is a clean, striking image that carries the Republican-era character of the play. The merchandise is varied and fan-facing: film-style stills, a memory book, a ticket holder, a key ring and other objects drawn from the design, the script and the actors. The objects are used both as ticket gifts and as separate sales items, so that they support promotion and revenue at the same time.

Video is central. In addition to a trailer, the team makes multiple vlogs across the rehearsal and production process to shorten the distance between audience and company. It also makes a "round-table" micro-variety series: from the start of rehearsal, different members of the creative team are invited to the theatre café each week for simple games and conversations about the play. The goal is a young, multi-directional video presence that can break out of the theatre audience and generate continued discussion.

Events

Press conference. Before the opening, the theatre holds a press conference for theatre bloggers, media and audience representatives. The full company appears together for the first time; the event introduces the production and includes a short performance of opera excerpts, creating an early "first look" moment.

Livestreams. The cast's existing following is used through repeated livestreams on the official account and the actors' own accounts. The streams share rehearsal life and answer audience questions in real time.

Preview footage. Bloggers and media are invited to the preview and allowed to film and upload selected excerpts. The material gives the campaign a final burst of curiosity and heat before opening.

Stage tour. During the two-week run, the theatre offers free stage tours. Audiences walk on the set and hear about the props, the screen and the design choices, so that they see the detail behind the production and the quality of the work.

Fan-creation challenge. After the first week, the team opens a call for audience re-creations. Selected works are performed at the final special encore. The challenge invites the audience to imagine other possible worlds for the characters and gives the play a longer discussion life.

Evaluation

The team tracks audience numbers in real time and uses them to adjust the campaign for later performances. It monitors discussion on WeChat accounts, Douban and Weibo, follows the reach of each activity and takes audience repos seriously. It also runs online and onsite questionnaires to collect expectations and satisfaction, and uses the answers to improve the campaign and the audience experience.

APPENDIX A

Appendix A · Season tables

Season calendar, seating, ticket prices, marketing budget and revenue sensitivity.

A1 · Season calendar

Period	Venue	Programme and planning notes
July 2025	Main auditorium	Load-in and technical preparation; *One Day, Three Autumns* 4–6 July; *Teacher Gui Mei* 12–13 July; *When Spring Passes* 25–27 July. Technical days and load-out occupy the gaps.
August 2025	Main auditorium	Load-in and technical preparation; musical *The Orphan of Zhao* 1–6 August; *The Imperial Guard* 22–27 August; load-out 7–8 and 28–31 August.
August 2025	Fun Space	*Double Carp* 9–10 August; youth competition works 15–17 August; technical days 8 and 11–14 August.

A2 · Seat inventory

Zone	Seats	Location
A	254	Premium centre
B	378	Wide centre surround
C	178	Mid-rear and side
D	168	Rear corners and restricted view
E	206	Rear stalls
Total	**1,184**	

A3 · Ticket prices

Prices are in CNY. Each production lists five price bands.

Production	Price bands
Dance drama *The Orphan of Zhao*	280 · 380 · 580 · 880 · 1,080
Puzhou opera *Loyalty Through the Ages*	80 · 180 · 280 · 380 · 480
One Day, Three Autumns	180 · 280 · 380 · 680 · 880
Musical *Dongguan East*	180 · 280 · 380 · 680 · 880
Teacher Gui Mei	80 · 180 · 280 · 380 · 480
When Spring Passes	180 · 280 · 380 · 580 · 680
Musical *The Orphan of Zhao*	280 · 380 · 580 · 880 · 1,080
Musical *The Imperial Guard*	280 · 380 · 580 · 880 · 1,080

APPENDIX A · CONTINUED

Marketing and revenue tables

A4 · Marketing budget

Category	Item	Amount (CNY)
Campaign events	Opening event	38,000
	Peking-opera flash mob	10,000
	Talk / sharing event	500
	Shadow-puppet performance and workshop	15,600
	Youth competition unit	8,000
	Closing and awards	1,000
New media	Xiaohongshu creators	13,000
	WeChat theatre accounts	8,000
	Weibo	4,000
	Podcasts	5,000
	Douyin	2,000
	Owned accounts	4,000
Offline	LED screen and subway lightbox	8,000
Merchandise	Tote bag	7,900
	AR ticket	3,500
	Ticket holder	4,000
	Quote-sticker blind box	1,500
Filming	Event and performance filming	8,000
Detailed marketing total		**142,000**

A5 · Revenue sensitivity

Occupancy	One imported performance	All imported performances
100%	509,980	4,589,820
90%	458,982	4,130,838
80%	407,984	3,671,856
70%	356,986	3,212,874
60%	305,988	2,753,892
50%	254,990	2,294,910
40%	203,992	1,835,928
30%	152,994	1,376,946

Occupancy	One *Double Carp* performance	All *Double Carp* performances
100%	69,000	207,000
90%	62,100	186,300
80%	55,200	165,600
70%	48,300	144,900
60%	41,400	124,200
50%	34,500	103,500
40%	27,600	82,800
30%	20,700	62,100

A6 · Marketing timeline

Phase	Timing	Activity
Warm-up	1.5 months before	Key visual; cast and creative announcement; account begins publishing rehearsal images and video.
Early campaign	1 month before	Stills; poster, flyer and programme design and printing; merchandise; promotional film; variety content; official account and ticketing promotion; preview and launch invitations.
Pre-show	2 weeks before	Press conference and livestream; preview clips; daily countdown posters in the final week.
Run	Performance period	Stage photography; star and creative content; influencer reviews; call for audience re-creations.

APPENDIX B

Appendix B · *Double Carp* production tables

B1 · Production calendar

Period	Work
21–27 Feb 2025	Concept meeting; open call for cast; collect actor information and audition videos; online production meeting; design meeting; script reading.
28 Feb–6 Mar	First-stage rehearsal; script revision; first meeting to confirm set, costume and makeup direction.
7–13 Mar	Makeup test; run-through; 20-minute excerpt recording; second-stage rehearsal.
14–20 Mar	Second-stage five-minute excerpt; finalise design and submit budget.
11–24 Apr	Coordinate actor schedules; design meetings; release open call; control design progress with director and designers; confirm third-stage plan and personnel; prepare rehearsal props; measure costumes.
25 Apr–1 May	Third-stage rehearsal.
2–15 May	Finalise design and start prop construction; design lighting; fourth-stage rehearsal; refine music and lighting.
16–22 May	Fifth-stage rehearsal; costume fitting.
23–29 May	Set completed; stage rehearsal with props; costume photography; technical rehearsal; dress rehearsal.
30–31 May	Preview; technical adjustments.
1–12 Jun	Performances; exact times to be confirmed.

B2 · Production budget · campus version

Category	Amount (CNY)	Note
Personnel	0	Waived in the campus version
Set construction	10,180	Screen, opera table, European table, silk velvet
Props	1,000	Small props
Costume	3,000	Five performers
Makeup	500	Five performers
Daily consumables	200	Office supplies and first-aid
Contingency	1,000	
Total	**15,880**	

B3 · Production budget · commercial version

Category	Amount (CNY)	Note
Personnel	239,900	Creative, technical and performer labour
Production	55,000	Set, props, costume, makeup, music, lighting and sound rental
Administration	18,840	Stage management, printing, meals, transport, flexible costs
Transport	17,000	Rehearsal, load-in and load-out
Venue	22,000	Rehearsal room and event space
Marketing	385,000	Separately funded and not included in the production total
Load-in	10,000	
Insurance	5,100	17 people at CNY 300
Contingency	25,000	
Production total, excluding marketing	**392,840**	

B4 · Line-item production budget

Item	Campus	Commercial	
Producer		waived	12,000
Playwright		waived	30,000
Director		waived	30,000
Composer		waived	10,000
Lighting, set, props, costume and makeup design		waived	50,000
Lighting design		waived	10,000
Set design		waived	10,000
Props design		waived	10,000
Costume design		waived	10,000
Makeup design		waived	10,000
Opera coaching		waived	8,000
Graphic design		waived	8,000
Publicity coordination		waived	8,000
Ticketing coordination		waived	8,000
Stage management		waived	32,400
Technical crew		waived	6,300

Item	Campus	Commercial
Performers	waived	43,200
Personnel subtotal	**0**	**239,900**
Set construction	10,180	20,000
Props	1,000	10,000
Costume	3,000	5,000
Makeup	500	4,000
Music recording	/	4,000
Lighting and sound rental	/	12,000
Production subtotal	**14,680**	**55,000**
Stage management supplies, printing, meals, local transport, flexible costs	200	18,840
Rehearsal, load-in and load-out transport	/	17,000
Rehearsal room and event space	/	22,000
Marketing and publicity	/	385,000
Load-in	/	10,000
Insurance	/	5,100
Contingency	1,000	25,000
Total, excluding marketing	**15,880**	**392,840**

B5 · Production budget line items

Line item	Campus	Commercial
Producer	0	12,000
Playwright	0	30,000
Director	0	30,000
Composer	0	10,000
Lighting design	0	10,000
Set design	0	10,000
Props design	0	10,000
Costume design	0	10,000
Makeup design	0	10,000
Opera coaching	0	8,000
Graphic design	0	8,000
Publicity coordination	0	8,000
Ticketing coordination	0	8,000
Stage management: 30 days at 200/day	0	18,000
Stage management: 3 days at 800/day	0	14,400
Stage crew: 2 people, 3 days at 300/day	0	1,800
Lighting control: 3 days at 300/day	0	900
Sound control: 3 days at 300/day	0	900
Multimedia control: 3 days at 300/day	0	900
Dresser: 3 days at 300/day	0	900
Makeup crew: 3 days at 300/day	0	900
Lead actors: 3 people, 30 rehearsal days at 300/day	0	18,000
Lead actors: 3 people, 3 performance days at 800/day	0	14,400
Supporting actors: 2 people, 10 rehearsal days at 300/day	0	6,000
Supporting actors: 2 people, 3 performance days at 800/day	0	4,800
Personnel subtotal	**0**	**239,900**
Set construction	10,180	20,000
Props and purchases	1,000	10,000
Costume	3,000	5,000
Makeup consumables	500	4,000
Music recording	0	4,000
Lighting and sound rental	0	12,000
Production subtotal	**14,680**	**55,000**
Stage-management supplies	0	500
Printing	0	500
Meals: 12 people, 33 days at 40/day	200	15,840
Local transport	0	1,000
Flexible costs	0	1,000
Administration subtotal	**200**	**18,840**
Rehearsal transport	0	2,000
Load-in transport	0	10,000
Load-out transport	0	5,000
Rehearsal room: 30 days at 700/day	0	21,000
Event space: 1 day at 1,000/day	0	1,000
Media publicity	0	350,000
Press release and launch	0	10,000
Merchandise production	0	20,000
Public relations	0	5,000

Load-in	0	10,000
Insurance: 17 people at 300/person	0	5,100
Contingency	1,000	25,000
Total, excluding marketing	**15,880**	**392,840**

APPENDIX B · CONTINUED

Full costume notes

Costume notes for the four principals.

Zheng Yousheng

Yousheng is a gifted singer formed by a harsh environment, and the costume keeps that contradiction visible. The main palette is pale blue, blue-grey and soft cream, with a small warm accent in pink or off-white at the collar, cuff or hem. The colours suggest an inner life that has not been protected by the world. Cotton and linen give the clothes a soft, slightly worn texture; embroidery, frog buttons and fine pleating carry the character's sensitivity without making him decorative. The final opera costume turns the same body into a stage image: it is the moment when the private self and the performed self become impossible to separate.

Chen Yu

Chen Yu is a fallen young lady who has learned to survive. Her main palette is yellow-green and jade green, with gold, silver and pale blue accents. The qipao is based on a Republican-era silhouette but shortened and adjusted for contemporary movement; a simple shawl and pearl necklace suggest a former refinement without restoring it. The green communicates vitality and adaptability; the gold and silver remember a status she has lost. The fabric combines cotton-linen with a more polished material, so that the costume can read as both practical and slightly out of place.

Xiang Zhizuo

Xiang is a talented son trapped by his family. His palette is grey-brown, cream and pale grey, with wine-red or dark-green accents at the tie, cuff or lining. The suit is precise but not flamboyant; the soft linen and restrained cut suggest a literary temperament, while the tightened tailoring and elaborate buttons suggest control. The costume should feel like a cage that has been made to look like good manners. A small embroidery or patterned detail at the collar or hem carries the talent that the family has not allowed him to use.

The servant

The servant's costume is the most functional in the play. Dark grey, ink green and brown are used for durable cotton-linen or coarse cloth; the cut is a short jacket with loose trousers and cloth shoes. Multiple pockets, adjustable cuffs and a simple cloth belt make the costume practical for carrying props and moving through the set. The design communicates service, loyalty and a life lived in the background. It should not look like a comic servant; it should look like someone who knows the house better than the family does.