

Huayi Chinese Festival of Arts

Kit sings her way Home

The national icon was the undisputed star of the otherwise unsatisfying show that was not quite a musical or a concert

review concert

KIT CHAN - MY MUSICAL JOURNEY

Esplanade Concert Hall/Last Saturday

boon chan

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Local singer Kit Chan's comeback is complete. After announcing a hiatus from the Mandopop scene in 2004, fans started seeing more of her last year with a lead role in the musical, *December Rains*. Last month, she released her new album *Re-interpreting Kit Chan*.

But what fans wanted most of all was to see her perform live once more as a singer, and so tickets to her two gigs at the Huayi Chinese Festival of Arts were quickly snapped up.



Kit Chan was in fine form and captivated fans with her familiar favourites. PHOTO: THE ESPLANADE

They were not disappointed. She was in fine form and her rich, warm tones, particularly in the lower register, kept the audience captivated on her familiar hits such as *Heartache* and *Tug Of War*.

As a not-quite-musical and not-quite-concert however, *My Musical Journey* was not quite satisfying.

There was a chronological narrative arc, delivered by former deejay Danny Yeo onstage, to give some structure to the programme. But it merely felt like an overlong gushy testimonial from a friend and fan.

The time would have been better spent having Chan do her thing, considering that the show was a relatively short 90 minutes.

Nor did the segments provide much of an insight into her musical journey. And even if there had been any interesting anecdotes or poignant reminiscences, one would rather have heard it from Chan herself.

The decision to have her perform with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra and the Meridian Junior College Choir worked better. It was certainly a novelty hearing pop songs presented in this unusual fashion and the plaintive erhu solo of *Worry* was a lovely interlude.

For the most part though, the orchestra and choir played a supporting role as the unmistakable star of the evening was Chan.

She was delicate and vulnerable on the Cantonese ballad *Waiting*, beguiling on the late Leslie Cheung's *Chase* and she shone on the show-stopping *Dazzling*. She even took the hoary old chestnut that was *The Moon Represents My Heart* and made the hackneyed sentiments sound heartfelt.

The inclusion of several covers was not surprising given that her new album consists wholly of them, but it does point to a certain conundrum.

Despite releasing more than 10 albums, she has relatively few big, well-known hits. It would be interesting to see how she handles the line-up when she gets round to doing her solo pop concert.

For the encore, she gave fans a mash-up of Michael Buble's *Home* and her signature song, *Home*. While she was relaxed and comfortable on stage throughout, it would have been nice to see more of this playful side of her.

The gig proper ended with the Mandarin version of the Dick Lee-penned *Home*. As she held court with this National Day song in her white blouse and full red skirt, the message was clear: A national icon was back where she belonged – on stage and in the spotlight. She was home.

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