

Film Archive to screen five films of renowned Cantonese opera actor Yuen Siu-fai (with photos)

To celebrate the 70th anniversary of the career of renowned Cantonese opera actor Yuen Siu-fai in performing arts, the Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will present the screening programme "From the Heart – Celebrating the 70-year Career of Yuen Siu-fai". Five of his most accomplished films will be screened from November 22 (Wednesday) to November 26 (Sunday) at the HKFA Cinema to allow audiences to revisit Yuen's splendid trajectory from child star to renowned Cantonese opera artist.

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Five selected films include "Story of Father and Son" (1954), "How Nazha Rescued His Mother from the Snake Mountain" (1960), "Torrents of Spring" (1960), "Seven Fights with Nine Tail Fox" (1964) and "The Legend of Lee Heung Kwan" (1990).

"Story of Father and Son" tells the tale of a small boy played by Yuen, who relocates to the city from the countryside with his father, finding themselves being misfits in the new environment. The contrast between the class snobbery depicted in the film and the innocent face of child star Yuen invites audiences' sympathy for the character. In addition to featuring famous actors Pak Yin, Ng Cho-fan and Siu Yin Fei, Yuen's real-life brother, Yuen Siu-hoi, also acts in the film, playing Yuen's caring neighbour.

With an adorable and charming screen presence as a child star, in "How Nazha Rescued His Mother from the Snake Mountain", Yuen brings the title character's boldness and stubbornness to life. His nimbleness and agility are also on prominent display in the fighting and spear-sparring scenes. "Torrents of Spring" portrays the love affair between Su Erning played by Tian Qing and Meiniang played by Jeanette Lin Tsui. Playing Lin's little brother in the film, Yuen shows his unforgettable acting with a full range of facial expressions for a character, who is by turn innocent and mature.

"Seven Fights with Nine Tail Fox" tells the story of the Monkey King played by Yuen conquering three evil spirits, played by Yu So-chow, Josephine Siao Fong-fong and Connie Chan Po-chu, on the journey to the West with his master played by Kwan Hoi-shan. The lively and mischievous portrayal of the Monkey King by Yuen in the film, and his rare appearance in female attire that looks delicate and enchanting, are particularly worth noting.

In support of the Cantonese Opera Day this year, the HKFA specially selects Cantonese opera film "The Legend of Lee Heung Kwan" which centres around the love story between famed courtesan Lee Heung-kwan and scholar Hou Chiu-chung for screening. Yuen, in his prime, portrays an agile and diplomatic character Yeung Lung-yau with his impeccable appearance and

supreme skills in singing and movement. The duets between Hung Sin Nui's "Nui style" and Law Ka-bo's "Shrimp style" vocal performances are also a treat.

The screenings of "Story of Father and Son" and "The Legend of Lee Heung Kwan" will be accompanied by a post-screening talk. Yuen and film researcher Sam Ho will be the speakers at the talk for the former, while Cantonese opera researcher Leonard Wong will be the speaker at the latter.

All films are in Cantonese. "Torrents of Spring" and "Seven Fights with Nine Tail Fox" are with Chinese lyrics. "The Legend of Lee Heung Kwan" is with Chinese subtitles, while other films are without subtitles.

Tickets priced at \$45 will be available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk) from tomorrow (November 1). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For programme enquiries, please visit www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en/web/hkfa/pe-event-2023-ysf.html or call 2739 2139.

This year, the Cantonese Opera Day presented by the LCSD will be held on November 26 (Sunday) at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre and the Hong Kong Space Museum. The programme will include Cantonese opera excerpts and Cantonese operatic song performances, Cantonese music performances, an exhibition, talks and demonstration sessions. Admission is free with tickets. Programme details and free ticket distribution arrangements will be announced later.

