

Film Archive's "Hidden Treasures" features unsung hero of Hong Kong cinema (with photos)

The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present "The Fixer from Guangzhou" as part of the "Hidden Treasures" series, featuring Luk Wan-fung, who was an active producer and scriptwriter in the 1950s and '60s. Four notable works produced by Luk's companies will be screened on July 20 and 21 at the HKFA Cinema. All the screenings will be followed by post-screening talks conducted in Cantonese.

In the early 1950s, Luk came to Hong Kong from Guangzhou and founded the Wan Fung, Seven Happiness and Kam Kwong Movie film companies, producing nearly 100 films. When Luk was in Guangzhou, he always helped people in the industry with their problems and as such built good relationships with them. After moving to Hong Kong, Luk gained support from film celebrities and Cantonese opera stars by getting them to appear in his films, including the well-known "Two Fools" film series starring Sun Ma Si-tsang and Tang Kei-chen. With his market acumen, Luk was able to make films across different genres to meet audiences' entertainment needs.

Luk's early production "Homeward Bound!" (1954) is directed by Wu Pang and features two popular film stars at the time, Cheung Ying and Fong Yim-fun. The movie tells of a husband leaving his family and hometown to make a living and showcases the endurance of women during hardship as well.

Sun Ma Si-tsang was a close friend of Luk and appeared frequently in his films. The contemporary sing-song comedy "Who Will Get the Pretty Girl?" (1955) features three operatic superstars, Sun Ma, Pak Suet-sin and Law Kim-long. Caught in a love triangle with the two male leads, Pak takes steps to test her suitors by all means.

The sing-song film "A Beauty in Times of War" (1959) was made to commemorate the second anniversary of the movie company Seven Happiness. Scripted by Luk under the pseudonym Luk Chung, the film is based on the historical story "King Or Assassinates the Qin Emperor". Director Yeung Kung-leong created the ambience of scenes through orchestrated mise-en-scène unlike that of other Cantonese opera films. The film is a rarity with opera big names Ho Fei-fan, Leung Sing-por, Lan Chi Pak and Mak Bing-wing performing together on-screen. Moreover, the female lead Lam Dan, Luk's wife, lights up the film with her elegant temperament.

Scripted by Luk and directed by Lee Tit, "The Three Murderers" (1959) is a hybrid of melodrama and suspense thriller. Starring Ng Cho-fan, Pak Yin, Lee Ching and Lam Dan, the film tells of a murder case that uncovers a complicated marital relationship.

All films are in Cantonese and without subtitles.

Tickets priced at \$45 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For credit card telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries, please call 2739 2139 or visit www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en_US/web/hkfa/programmesandexhibitions/2019ffg.html.

