

Film Archive's "Morning Matinee" series to showcase classic films produced by Tao Yuen (with photos)

The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present the programme "Where Peach Blossoms Bloom" in the "Morning Matinee" from January to April next year. Fifteen classic films produced by Tao Yuen Motion Picture Development Company will be screened, enabling the audiences to revisit the great works from Tao Yuen in the 1950s and the 1960s.

Tao Yuen was founded in 1958 by Li Wui-tao, a towering figure in both the cultural and educational sectors. The company put a focus on making films that were both entertaining and educational. In "The Stormy Night" (1960), child star Fung Bo-bo's father in the film puts the whole family in harm's way by taking a second wife. The film is Fung's first film for Tao Yuen which had also established her reputation as a leading child star of Hong Kong. "The Magic Cup" (Part One and Concluding Episode) (1961) featuring Fung as a little girl without mother tells the story of the girl, under the guardianship of the Magic Cup Genie, defeating villains in their evil scheme and helping her father find a good match to form a beautiful new family. "Adventure of a Blind Kid" (1967) is the final film produced by Tao Yuen and was produced for raising fund for the Ebenezer School. Based on the true stories of blind musicians including Yip Man-chiu, the film depicts the courage and resilience of the visually impaired persons.

Many famous directors and renowned Cantonese opera actors participated in Tao Yuen's film production, including popular Cantonese opera actress Yam Kim-fai. She had performed in "The Golden Cat" (1961), "Happy Wedding" (1959), "The Random Harvest" (1960) and "The Mysterious Heroine" (1962), which were directed by Lung To. She collaborated with director Fung Fung, starring in anti-war-themed film "The General and the Tyrant" (1961). Yam also co-starred with her partner Pak Suet-sin in popular films "A Respectable Tutor" (1959) and "The Lion's Roar" (1959), directed and scripted by Cheung Wai-kwong.

Tao Yuen actively brought in new blood into the Hong Kong film industry in the 1950s and 1960s. "The Happy Reunion" (1962) was tailor-made for new actress Ho Lan, whose performances of the dual role as an elegant maiden from a rich family and a rude countryside girl were spot-on. "Madame Rose" (1964), starring Ho and two other new actors Fong Sum and Ko Ming, unveils a long-standing grudge that spans across two generations behind a love triangle. The three young actors gave spectacular performances with their outstanding acting skills in the film.

Though most of the films produced by Tao Yuen are mostly in Cantonese, there are two outstanding Mandarin films. "The Girl with a Thousand Faces"

(1959) features famous actress Grace Chang, who plays the double role as a young girl with a passion for art and an actress deeply in love with a university student. The other Mandarin film, "Rivals in Love" (1959), with Diana Chang Chung-wen in the leading role, highlights the message of women's autonomy while showcasing Chang's beauty with gorgeous and exquisite costumes.

Some of the films will be accompanied by post-screening talks hosted by Li Wui-tao's son Eric Li, with Fung Bo-bo and Assistant Curator I of the HKFA Priscilla Chan. For details, please refer to the programme schedule on www.filmarchive.gov.hk/en/web/hkfa/pe-event-2023-tmc-ss.html.

"The Girl with a Thousand Faces" and "Rivals in Love" are in Mandarin while the others are in Cantonese. All films are with Chinese lyrics, except "Madame Rose", and without subtitles.

Tickets priced at \$30 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For programme details, please visit the abovementioned website or call 2739 2139.



