

Film Archive's "Morning Matinee" to screen classic comedy duos (with photos)

Comedy is one of the major genres of Hong Kong cinema, featuring numerous acclaimed comedians. The Hong Kong Film Archive (HKFA) of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will present the programme "Dynamic Duos: Laugh Out Loud" in the "Morning Matinee" series, screening the comedies of four comic pairings from different eras. The films will be shown at the HKFA Cinema at 11am on Fridays from July to September.

In the 1950s, Cantonese opera star Sun Ma Si-tsang and radio star Tang Kei-chen came to the big screen by teaming up as the "two fools". In "Two Fools in Paradise" (1958), the duo will do anything for a buck, and in doing so provide a feast of laughter through their follies. "Two Fools Catch the Murderer" (1959) is a hybrid of comedy and crime film themed on making a living. "Wrong Connection" (1959) centres on a series of cross-dressing jokes in which the duo disguise themselves as housemaids, and later Sun Ma even does a double gender reverse by posing as the rich boyfriend of Law Yim-hing. The duo are forced to join the army in "A Fool in the Army" (1959) – and they try hard to escape. Yiu Kwang-chao, plays a plump commander and steals the show by making a hilarious visual contrast alongside the skinny Sun Ma and Tang. The fun-filled songs in the four films are depictions of the reality of society at the time.

Two hefty comedy stars, the Cantonese-speaking Leung Sing-por and the Mandarin-speaking Liu Enjia, co-starred in various comedies featuring the cultural clash between northerners and southerners in the '60s. "The Greatest Civil War on Earth" (1961) and "The Greatest Wedding on Earth" (1962) highlight the business competition between the duo, which nearly ruins the marriage of their children. In "The Greatest Love Affair on Earth" (1964), Leung wears a gaudy wig and a fancy dress to pose as a rich woman helping her friends find love. The flirtatious Leung takes the spotlight by dancing with Liu hilariously. "The Greatest Civil War on Earth" will be accompanied by a post-screening talk hosted by Andrew Leung and May Ng.

The typical screen personas of the Hui brothers – the smart Michael Hui versus the clumsy younger brother, Ricky Hui – remained their signature comedic appeal in the '70s and '80s. In their classic work, "The Private Eyes" (1976), Michael Hui stars as the frugal owner of a detective agency, while Ricky Hui plays a bumbling assistant, making a satirical comedy on how the mean boss exploits his employees. "The Contract" (1978) follows the Hui brothers' messy scheme to get Michael Hui's contract from his current boss secretly, so as to free him to join another TV station. Michael Hui plays a mean boss again in "Chicken and Duck Talk" (1988), whereas Ricky Hui gets his moment to shine when he jumps ship to the enemy, a fried chicken restaurant nearby, thus competing with the Chinese-style roast duck restaurant owned by

Michael Hui.

Stephen Chow is synonymous with "mo lei tau", embodying the Hong Kong style of nonsensical humour. In the '90s, Chow and his partner Ng Man-tat became a popular comic pairing in Hong Kong cinema. In "All for the Winner" (1990), Chow comes to Hong Kong from the Mainland and stays with his uncle, Ng. Knowing Chow has supernatural powers, Ng then gets him to unleash his powers in the gambling world. "Royal Tramp" (1992) features Chow as the witty and mischievous Wai Siu-bo who encounters Ng, a sinister eunuch in the palace. The scene in which Chow prompts Ng to pose as Guan Yu from "Romance of the Three Kingdoms" to fight the villain is comic gold. Chow is a spoiled rich kid in "Sixty Million Dollar Man" (1995), and is gravely injured in an explosion when saving his biological father, Ng. Luckily, a scientist turns Chow into a cyborg in order to save his life.

"The Greatest Civil War on Earth", "The Greatest Wedding on Earth" and "The Greatest Love Affair on Earth" are in Mandarin and Cantonese, while the other films are in Cantonese. "The Private Eyes", "Chicken and Duck Talk", "Royal Tramp" and "Sixty Million Dollar Man" have Chinese and English subtitles and the other films are without subtitles.

Tickets priced at \$30 are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). For credit card telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme details, please call 2739 2139 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/ce/CulturalService/HKFA/en_US/web/hkfa/programmesandexhibitions/2018mm-ddlol/index.html.



