



YAN Jun 嚴俊 (1917.12.17–1980.8.18)

Director, Actor

With the original name Yan Zongqi, Yan was born in Beijing to a family of Nanjing descent. His father was an engineer for the railway bureau; his uncle was Yan Hua, a musician and his aunt was Yan Fei, a theatre and film actress. He moved to Shanghai in 1937 and studied at a university there. Yan was a well-known theatre actor in early years. In 1938, he joined Guohua Film Company in Shanghai and made his screen debut with *The New Hell* (1939). He joined a theatre troupe in 1940 and had the opportunity to act alongside Shi Hui and some other actors. In 1942, Yan returned to the big screen and played the leading role for the first time in *The Moon Hides Behind the Clouds* (1943). He co-starred with Li Lihua in the well-received *Blossomed Orphanage* the same year. Yan's versatility in acting won him the nickname 'man with a thousand faces'.

Yan came to Hong Kong for career advancement after the war. He starred in a number of films for Great Wall, Yung Hwa, Hsin Hwa, Cathay, Shaws and MP & GI, including *A Strange Woman* (1950), *Awful Truth* (1950) and *Modern Red Chamber Dream* (1952) for Great Wall; *The Mortal Wind* (1954), *Beauty in the Maelstrom 1st Chapter* (1956), *Yang Kwei-fei, the Magnificent Concubine* (1962) and *Empress Wu Tse-tien* (1963) for Shaws. He last acted in the Taiwan film, *Unsung Heroes of the Wilderness* (1971), directed by Wang Xinglei.

Yan made his directorial debut with Yung Hwa Motion Picture Industries Ltd's *Love Eternal* (1953). He directed 50-plus titles throughout his career, with masterpieces such as *Singing Under the Moon* (1953), which brought Linda Lin Dai to stardom; *The Orphan Girl* (1956) that brought the child star Josephine Siao Fong-fong into limelight; MP & GI's *The Romance of Liang Shanbo and Zhu Yingtai* (1964); as well as Shaws' *The Grand Substitution* (1965), a period feature that bagged Best Film at the 12th Asian Film Festival. Meanwhile, Yan directed a series of contemporary thrillers such as *The Pink Murder* (1959), *Appointment with Death* (1959), *A Shot in the Dark* (1960), *I, Murderer* (1961), and the wenyi title *Mist over Dream Lake* (1968) for Shaws. He last worked as a director for *The Jade Faced Assassin* in 1971. Yan also founded film companies such as Cathay, Golden Dragon and Hehe. Among them, Cathay gained the support of International (the predecessor of MP & GI); some of its outstanding productions included *Merry-Go-Round* (1956), *Rain Storm in Chinatown* (1956) and *The Valley of the Lost Soul* (1957).

Yan retired in 1972 due to heart disease. He immigrated to New York, US with his wife Li Lihua the following year, where he was involved in banking and catering businesses. He passed away on 18 August 1980.
