



CHAN Man-cheong 陳文昌 (1932–2013.2.4)

Actor

A native of Jieyang, Guangdong, Chan Man-cheong received training in singing Chaozhou-dialect songs in his hometown. He moved to Hong Kong in the 1950s and joined the film industry as a *luogu* (gongs and drums) musician in Chaozhou-dialect dubbed films. In 1960, he was recruited to act when Hsi Kin, Tung Shan Film Co.'s production manager, discovered that he possessed a throaty vocal quality that was perfect for the *chousheng* (male clown) roles. Chan's first film as an actor was *Strange Visitor* (1960), in which he also performed as an accompanist. In the ensuing two years, Chan appeared in most of the Tung Shan's productions, totalling over 20 films. In 1961, he also appeared in *At the Wharf* (1961) and *Di Qing Wreaks Havoc at the Manor of Ten Thousand Flowers* (1961), both productions of Fanny Ha's Yifan Film Company. When Tung Shan began producing fewer films after 1963, Chan appeared in films for other companies, such as Eng Wah, Ling Tung, Zhongyi, Bian Sing and Guang Hua, amongst others.

Chan specialised in playing villains. Whether it's the greedy older brother of the female lead in *The Story of Splashed Water* (1962), a treacherous character with devious ways in *The Riverside Pavilion* (1962), a perverted criminal in *The Huntsman's Tale* (1962), or a greedy and cowardly official in *Wife in Disguise* (1963), Chan's acting was always delicate and expressive. He was also praised for both his exemplary singing and acting skills in his portrayal of loyal and humble small-time characters, such as the stepson in *An Upright Stepson Crying on the Streets* (1961), the frog seller in *Fortune from Heaven* (1962) and the merchant who helps wronged souls in *Meeting in the Barn* (1966).

In 1964, Chan acted in *Romantic Autumn* (1964) and *An Expected Fortune*, produced by Fanny Ha's Ngai Yip Film Co. In that same year, Chan went on a year-long concert tour to Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and other countries with Ha and other fellow actors such as Cheng Shun-ying and Chow Lok. When Chaozhou-dialect films hit a lull in the 1960s to 70s, Chan made full use of his gifted unique vocal and shifted his focus to Chaozhou opera performances. Chan was one of the few regular actors in the Tung Shan who remained active in the Chaozhou opera world. Over the years, Chan also travelled with Xintiancai Chaozhou Opera Troupe, and other Chaozhou opera troupes to perform in countries such as Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia and the US. Chan remained in Hong Kong through his later years, periodically accepting invitations to perform and demonstrate his prowess on stage. Chan passed away in Hong Kong on 4 February 2013.