



NG Kwan-lai 吳君麗 (1934–2018.9.26)

Actress

Born Ng Yin-wan (some suggested her real name was 'Ng Wan') and a native of Zhongshan, Guangdong province, Ng Kwan-lai was born in Shanghai. Arriving in Hong Kong with her family in 1952, she enrolled at the Hong Kong Academy of Cantonese Opera in 1953 and was trained by Cantonese opera *huadan* (young female) actor Chan Fei-ning. Ng made her stage debut in 1954 and formed her own opera troupe, Lai Sing Opera Troupe, in May 1956 as she established herself in principal young female roles. She became renowned as a *daomadan* (young female warrior) in *How Leung Hung Yuk's War Drum Caused the Jin Army to Retreat*. Ng widened her repertoire to include *qingyi* (virtuous female) and *guimendan* (highborn female) roles, and earned the accolade 'Mesmerising Beauty with Golden Voice', referring to her stunning appearance and sweet vocal.

Ng made her first film, *The Model and the Car*, in 1955 prior to forming Lai Sing Opera Troupe. She signed with the newly formed Dongfang Film Company and starred in many films including *How Hung Ming Thrice Defeated Chow Yu* (1956), *King Oh Assassinates the King of Qin* (1956), and *Bloodshed in the Cho Palace* (1956) along Sun Ma Si-tsang and Yam Kim-fai, the two preeminent actors in scholar-warrior roles. With the rise of Cantonese opera films, popular repertoires of Ng during the Lai Sing era were adapted into films including *The Beauty's Grave* (1957), *Two Immortals at the Pavilion of the Moon* (1958), and *Lee Sam-neung* (1959) with Ng in the leading role. Since 1960, Ng became the principal *huadan* at Tai Shing Film Co and frequently co-starred with Yam Kim-fai in opera films including *The Unroyal Prince* (1960), *Showdown at the Hall of Yim* (1962), and *A Half-moon Night* (1964). Ng also starred in *wuxia* films as well as contemporary *wenyi* films and comedies. Woo Fung is often cast as her on-screen partner in contemporary films including *River of Mandarin Duck* (Part 1 & 2, 1960), *The Bridge* (Part 1 & 2, 1961), *A Couple in Cold War* (1962), and *Near the Li River* (Part 1 & 2, 1963). In 1962, Ng formed the Sun Lai Sing Film Co to make her own productions including *Good Companion* (1962), *Eternal Love* (1963), and *The Widow* (1964). In the mid- to late 1960s, Ng and Lam Kar-sing co-starred in more classics including *Uproar in Jade Hall* (1967), *Love and War* (1967), and *Madame Lee Sze-sze* (1967). The last film appearances by Ng were *A Long Journey* (1967), *Silver Moon* (1967), and *My True Love* (1967), all contemporary *wenyi* films in colour produced by Kin Shing Film Co.

Ng Kwan-lai joined Lam Kar-sing's Chung San Sing Opera Troupe in the 1970s, and co-starred with Lam in a 26-episode TV programme on Cantonese opera for Rediffusion Television (RTV). The programme significantly documented the two opera veterans and their arts. Ng rarely appeared on stage after 1991. She re-appeared on television in 2008 and starred in the sitcom *Off Pedder* produced by Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) for a year. Ng passed away in Hong Kong on 26 September 2018.