



## YAO Min 姚敏 (1917.11.13–1967.3.30)

### Music

Yao was born in Shanghai with the original name Yao Zhenmin. He had a well-off childhood and was fond of lingering in the Great World Amusement Park, probing into the art of regional operas. After his father passed away, he worked as a sailor for several years, during which he became interested in western pop music. Yao returned to Shanghai in the late 1930s and formed Datong Troupe with his two sisters Yao Ying and Yao Lee. The trio became popular organising live music programmes for radio stations in Shanghai. Once a leader of a small scale band at Zhang Shankun's Great world, Yao also taught himself various instruments as well as music composition, and later became a mentee of the renowned Japanese composer Hattori Ryoichi. He joined Pathé Records in Shanghai in 1938 and Guohua Film Company the following year. He started composing film songs in *Young Propagandists* (1941), which featured Zhou Xuan.

While Yao's music career was interrupted by the War of Resistance against Japan, he became a prolific and popular songwriter after the war; his records were sought after all over China and Southeast Asia. Yao came to Hong Kong in 1950 and joined Rediffusion Radio. He headed the department of composition of Hong Kong Pathé Records that was founded in 1952. In 1954, he composed soundtracks for director Wang Yin's movie *A Romantic Person has Romantic Debts*. The next year, he wrote music for the film *Chin Ping Mei*, a Shaw & Son's Ltd production which starred Li Xianglan. The film song 'Second Spring', he wrote for Shaw & Sons Ltd's *Flesh and Flame* (1956), was later rearranged in the Hollywood production *The World of Suzie Wong* (1960), which became the renowned 'The Ding Dong Song'. He also composed a number of popular songs for Motion Picture and General Investment Co Ltd (MP & GI), including *Mambo Girl* (1957), *Calendar Girl* (1959; Best Music [Silver Gong] Award at the 6th Asian Film Festival), *The Wild, Wild Rose* (1960) and *It's Always Spring* (1962). He won Best Music (Golden Harvest) Award and Best Music with Shaws' *Les Belles* (1961) at the 8th Asian Film Festival and the 1st Golden Horse Awards respectively. Yao lapsed into illness and passed away on 30 March 1967.