



Joseph KOO 顧嘉輝 (b. 1933)

Composer, Musician

Born in Guangzhou and a native of Suzhou, Jiangsu, Koo moved to Hong Kong with his family in 1948. His sister, Carrie Ku Mei, is the singer and actress known as 'Little Lark'. Koo organised an orchestra in his early days and took part as the conductor. In 1960, he received a scholarship from Berklee College of Music to study in the US, where he researched into jazz and music composition. After returning to Hong Kong, he caught up with the upsurge of pop songs in Mandarin films and began composing for Shaw Brothers (Hong Kong) Ltd's films. His first work was 'Dream' for *Love Without End* (1961). Koo won Best Music with *The Dancing Millionairess* (1964) in 1965 and Best Music (Non-musical) with *Till the End of Time* (1966) in 1967 at the Golden Horse Awards in Taiwan. He created numerous theme songs and soundtracks for Shaws, with works in films such as *The Crimson Palm* (1964), *Pink Tears* (1965), *The Lark* (1965), *Inside Forbidden City* (1965), *The Joy of Spring* (1966), *That Tender Age* (1967), *Song of Tomorrow* (1967), *Unfinished Melody* (1969), *The Singing Escort* (1969), *Farewell, My Love* (1969), *Young Lovers* (1970), *My Son* (1970), etc. By the 1980s, he was still composing for Shaws' productions such as *Heroes Shed No Tears* (1980). He had also written music for films of other companies, including *Escorts over Tiger Hills* (1969), *Outside the Window* (1973), *The Fate of Lee Khan* (1973), *Games Gamblers Play* (1974), *Chelsia My Love* (1976), *The Butterfly Murders* (1979), *The Sword* (1980) and *A Better Tomorrow* (1986). In 1991, Koo won Best Film Music with his collaboration with James Wong and Romeo Diaz in *A Terracotta Warrior* (1990) at the 10th Hong Kong Film Awards.

When Television Broadcasts Limited (TVB) launched in 1967, Koo became the conductor of its orchestra and composed theme songs for its drama series, including the theme song of *The Fatal Irony* which became a great hit. Koo, together with musicians at the time such as Sam Hui, set the trend of Cantopop songs. He was then regarded as the first generation of Cantopop composers in Hong Kong. In the 1970s and 80s, Koo wrote numerous theme songs and soundtracks for TV dramas, which many of them have become classics. He faded out from the industry at the end of the 1980s and migrated to the US.