



## MA Si-tsang 馬師曾 (1900.4.2–1964.4.21)

### Actor

A native of Shunde, Guangdong, Ma was born in Guangzhou with the original name Ma Bak-lo. Born into a family of scholars, Ma had a strong passion for Cantonese opera and had run away from home to become an apprentice in a troupe. He later honed his skills under the tutelage of Leng Yuen Hang. In the 1920s, gaining the recognition of the famous Cantonese opera artist, Chin Lei Kui, he made his name with *A Perfect Match*. By the time he had already established himself as a popular Cantonese opera artist across Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. His versatility in mastering civil, martial, comedic roles and even female characters won him the accolade of the 'Cantonese Opera Maestro'. His signature 'Ma Tune' is one of the most cherished vocal styles in Cantonese opera.

In 1935, he made his screen debut with *Scent of Wild Flowers*, an adaptation of his celebrated opera, followed by other adaptations such as *The Witty Patriarch* (1937), *The Vagabond Prince* (1939) and *Bitter Phoenix, Sorrowful Oriole* (produced in 1941 and released in 1947).

During the War of Resistance against Japan, he toured in Guangzhouwan and Guilin with his opera troupe and nurtured Hung Sin Nui, whom he later married. After the war, he returned to Hong Kong and continued to perform on the opera stage while starring in films. Alongside Cantonese opera films, he also appeared in contemporary works such as *Kaleidoscope* (1950), *Red and White Peonies* (1952) and *As You Desire* (1952). Ma and Hung later joined The Union Film Enterprise Ltd as shareholders. He also starred in *Parents' Hearts* (1955), *Anna* (1955) and *Love* (in two parts, 1955) produced by the company.

He settled in Guangzhou with Hung in 1955 and served as the head of the Cantonese Opera Theatre of Guangdong. He played the leading role in titles such as *The Lost Kite* (1957) and *Butterfly Beauty* (1959) in Mainland. *The Yuan Playwright Guan Hanqing* (1960) was his last film. Ma passed away in Beijing on 21 April 1964.