



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
OFFICIAL SELECTION
2020

Septet

The Story of Hong Kong

7

Directed by

SAMMO HUNG
ANN HUI
PATRICK TAM
YUEN WO PING
JOHNNIE TO
RINGO LAM
TSUI HARK

Produced by
JOHNNIE TO



Presented by
Media Asia Film 寰亞電影
CMA 影視 4K

Produced by
MILEWAY IMAGE

Distributed by
Media Asia Film 寰亞電影

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The 73rd Cannes Official Selection

***Septet: The Story of Hong Kong* 《七人樂隊》**

An omnibus film presented by Media Asia and China Film Media, a production of Milkyway Image, *Septet: The Story of Hong Kong* has been selected for the official lineup of the 73rd Cannes Film Festival. The film is composed of seven short films in honor of Hong Kong by seven of the city's most revered directors - Tsui Hark, Ann Hui, Sammo Hung, Patrick Tam, Yuen Wo Ping, [Ringo Lam](#), and Johnnie To, who produced the film and directed one of the seven segments. It is another Johnnie To's film selected by Cannes Film Festival after *Breaking News*, *Election*, *Triangle*, *Vengeance* and *Blind Detective*.

It all began with an idea by Johnnie To: despite their renowned international repute and countless accolades under their belts, many Hong Kong directors of his generation still share the same passion for filmmaking and an unwavering love for their city. Johnnie To rallied his like-minded director friends Sammo Hung, Ann Hui, Patrick Tam, Yuen Wo Ping, [Ringo Lam](#), and Tsui Hark to make a movie about Hong Kong. It would be shot on film as a tribute to the bygone era of filmmaking, and the stories would span from the 50s to the future. Each director shot a short movie around 10 minutes each for their allotted decade. Each segment would be a special melody imprinted with the director's feelings for Hong Kong.

Seven of Hong Kong's most revered directors with distinctly unique styles come together for the first time to compose a symphony of stories for their city. Just as septet is a group of seven people playing music together, *Septet: The Story of Hong Kong* is a sonorous symphony created in concert by seven singularly accomplished directors, including Sammo Hung's *Exercise*, Ann Hui's *Headmaster*, Patrick Tam's *Tender is the Night*, Yuen Wo Ping's *Homecoming*, Johnnie To's *Bonanza*, [Ringo Lam](#)'s *Astray* and Tsui Hark's *Conversation in Depth*.

Production Information

Presented by: Media Asia Film Production Limited, China Film Media Asia Audio Video Distribution Co., Ltd.

Production Company: Milkyway Image (Hong Kong) Ltd.

Film Title: *Septet: The Story of Hong Kong* 《七人樂隊》

Film Genre: Drama

Producers: Johnnie To, Elaine Chu

Directors: Sammo Hung, Ann Hui, Patrick Tam, Yuen Wo Ping, Johnnie To, [Ringo Lam](#), Tsui Hark

Screenplay by: Sammo Hung, Au Kin Yee, Lou Shiu Wa, Melvin Luk, Patrick Tam, Yuen Wo Ping, Johnnie To, Yau Nai Hoi, [Ringo Lam](#), Tsui Hark, Roy Szeto

Starring: Timmy Hung, Francis Ng, Sire Ma, Jennifer Yu, Gouw Ian Iskandar, Yuen Wah, Ashley Lam, Ng Wing Sze, Wu Tsz Tung, Eric Tsui, Simon Yam, Mimi Kung, Lam Yu Hin, Cheung Tat Ming, Emotion Cheung, Lam Suet, Lawrence Lau

Duration: 113 mins

Territory: Worldwide

Release Date: 4th quarter of 2020

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Exercise 《練功》

Director: Sammo Hung (洪金寶)

Screenplay by: Sammo Hung (洪金寶), Au Kin Yee (歐健兒)

Starring: Timmy Hung (洪天明)

An old Chinese saying has it that if you don't work hard when you're young, you'll pay for it when you're old.

Life was rough during the 50s. It was difficult just to get by, let alone find success. Becoming an apprentice in a performance troupe was one way to get somewhere in life.

Sammo is the leader of the pack — he and the other kids are supposed to practice kung fu diligently every day under the watchful eyes of their strict master. Sammo's heart is set on success, but there is no shortcut and his days are a mix of blood, tears, sweat, and hope. The bond between the master and his apprentices deepen amidst the yelling and scolding. One day, Sammo slacks off and is severely punished; and the fateful day becomes an unforgettable turning point in his life.

Time flies, and Sammo is now an elderly man. He reminisces on the years he spent practicing with his fellow apprentices and learning from his master.

“Exercise” is based on “Seven Little Fortunes,” a group of seven martial arts actors who trained under Chinese opera master Yu Jim Yuen during the 50s in Hong Kong. Sammo Hung is a member of the group, having joined at a young age. Practice begins early in the morning and ends late at night. Strict teachers produce great students. The harsh training prepares him well, and he grows up to become an influential figure in Hong Kong martial arts cinema.

Sammo Hung



Having started out as a member of the esteemed performance troupe “Seven Little Fortunes,” Sammo Hung worked his way to become one of the most significant figures in martial arts cinema. The producer, director, screenwriter, and actor is known affectionately as “Big Big Brother” in the industry. In 1989, he received the Best Actor award at the 33rd Asia Pacific Film Festival for his role as Yu Jim Yuen, his master in real life, in the film *Painted Faces*.

Having dedicated his life to raising awareness for martial arts cinema and with widely acclaimed films including *Ip Man*, *Ip Man 2*, *The Monkey King 2* and *Paradox*, Hung's achievements are unparalleled in the industry.

Headmaster 《校長》

Director: Ann Hui (許鞍華)

Screenplay by: Lou Shiu Wa (呂筱華)

Starring: Francis Ng (吳鎮宇), Sire Ma (馬賽)

In the 60s, most families were struggling to get by, but they worked hard to send their children to schools despite their circumstances. Schools were overwhelmed with students and classes took place even on rooftops.

The headmaster, who often gets so wrapped up in his work that he forgets his meals, sees it as his duty to help students realize their potentials. Under his guidance, the kind and graceful Miss Wong becomes a beloved mentor to many students. While the headmaster and Miss Wong do not talk much, they seem to understand each other intuitively. To them, the school is home.

It is now 40 years later. The much older headmaster is invited to a reunion organized by the students. While going through old photos and reminiscing about the past, the students discuss Miss Wong's celibacy and her untimely death in the prime of life. The topic unlocks a hidden corner from the past, and the headmaster's thoughts drift off to a long-forgotten classroom.... But just like flowers that bloom once in a lifetime, their unrequited love was purely a thing in the past.

“Headmaster” is a story about teacher-student relationships during the 60s. Through the lens of a retired primary school headmaster, Ann Hui revisits teaching anecdotes from 1961. With only limited resources, running a “rooftop school” is like treading on thin ice. Thankfully, the headmaster and teachers share the belief that children cannot be without an education, and they work to help them grow with confidence and dignity.

Ann Hui



The renowned director, producer, and screenwriter Ann Hui is best known for *The Golden Era* and *Our Time Will Come*. Hui was a rising young director in the Hong Kong New Wave Cinema movement during the 70s and 80s, with a knack for portraying the lives of ordinary people in extraordinary times. Her films won her actresses two major awards at the Berlin International Film Festival and the Venice Film Festival, and she herself has been awarded Best Director 16 times. Hui is one of the few influential female directors in Chinese-language cinema.

Tender is the Night 《別夜》

Director: Patrick Tam (譚家明)

Screenplay by: Melvin Luk (陸渺回)

Starring: Jennifer Yu (余香凝), Gouw Ian Iskandar (吳濠滔)

As the economy soared during the 70s and 80s, people aspired for more. Emigration, in particular, became popular, but it also drove many people apart. An Fei is a middle-class teenage girl who attends a prestigious school, while Ka Lam is a quiet boy from an average background. She is about to move somewhere else for good, and tonight is their last night together.

“Do you have to leave?”

“You will soon forget all about Hong Kong!”

“How about we die together?”

Two teenagers in a green room late at night, hurling insults and hurting each other. Deep inside, they are afraid of what the future holds. She wants to offer herself to him, and he reads her poems by Yeats. The spiteful words convey only a fraction of what lies beneath the lovers’ discourse. He is her first and only dream.

Tender is the night, and Central has never been sadder than under the music of Pachelbel.

The seventeen-year-olds Yip Ka Lam and Yu An Fei are in love, with an intensity that can only be found in teenage love. An Fei is leaving Hong Kong for good with her family, and Ka Lam, in denial about her imminent departure, refuses to see her. On the very last night, Ka Lam relents. He visits An Fei’s now empty apartment, and the sight fills him with sadness. He knows he cannot stay any longer for he does not have the strength to say goodbye. An Fei tries to stop him, saying she wants to lose her virginity to Ka Lam this very last night. She needs a memory to hold on to. Ka Lam resists her advances and calls her selfish — it will only make him suffer even more in the future. The painful quarrel leaves the two dejected, as they realize there is nothing they can do. The lovers resign to reality. After An Fei leaves, Ka Lam also chooses to leave, but in a different way.

Patrick Tam



A prominent figure in Hong Kong New Wave Cinema, Patrick Tam is celebrated for his experimental style and edgy cinematography. He won Best Film Editing twice at the Hong Kong Film Awards for *Days of Being Wild* and *Ashes of Time*. Currently a visiting professor in the Academy of Film at Hong Kong Baptist University, he is dedicated to training a new crop of filmmakers. His 2007 movie *After This Our Exile* took home Best Film, Best Director, and Best Screenplay at the Hong Kong Film Awards.

Homecoming 《回歸》

Director: Yuen Wo Ping (袁和平)

Screenplay by: Au Kin Yee (歐健兒)

Starring: Yuen Wah (元華), Ashley Lam (林愷鈴)

1997 is fast approaching. Some anticipate Hong Kong's handover to China, while others choose to leave. His son has decided to emigrate with his family, but he, an old man who lives alone, can neither understand English nor drive. He would become a useless man abroad, unable to communicate or go anywhere on his own. And besides, he has to light incense for his wife every day. He has to stay.

But his granddaughter needs to move in with him temporarily to finish out the school year, before joining her parents abroad. With two generations between them, the pair lives for the first time together and miscommunication ensues. He likes traditional snacks while she prefers hamburgers. She speaks English, while he interprets the world through the language of martial arts ethics.

One day, a hooligan tries to bully his granddaughter, and grandpa transforms into a martial arts hero and fights him away. It breaks the ice between the two, and they grow closer. He teaches her kung fu, and she teaches him the alphabet. After she joins her family abroad, his loneliness only grows. Time passes. His granddaughter is all grown up and returns to the city, bringing with her a big surprise for grandpa.

In “Homecoming,” an elderly man has long adjusted to living alone when his son entrusts her daughter to him temporarily. Their huge generation gap results in comical situations at first, which ultimately help to strengthen their bond instead. Yuen Wo Ping brings us a story about generation gap, and suggests that there is always a way for families to come together in spite of their differences.

Yuen Wo Ping



One of the most successful and influential names in Hong Kong action cinema, Yuen Wo Ping was the stunt coordinator behind major action films such as *Kung Fu Hustle*, *The Grandmaster*, and *Ip Man 3*. He also has his roots as one of the students of Yu Jim Yuen alongside Jackie Chan and Sammo Hung. He has won the Hong Kong Film Award for Best Action Choreography six times, and made his name as an internationally-renowned martial arts choreographer for his work in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and *The Matrix*.

***Bonanza* 《遍地黃金》**

Director: Johnnie To (杜琪峯)

Screenplay by: Johnnie To, Yau Nai Hoi (游乃海), Au Kin Yee (歐健兒)

Starring: Ng Wing Sze (伍詠詩), Wu Tsz Tung (胡子彤), Eric Tsui (徐浩昌),

Hong Kong's streets are paved with gold. It is true... as long as you find yourself at the right time with the right amount of greed and courage.

Take the internet bubble in 2000. Buy stocks at the right moment and sell them before the bubble bursts. You don't even have to know how the internet works. You just have to take a leap of faith.

Or, take the SARS outbreak in 2002. If you had the guts to spend half a million dollars on an apartment recently infested with the virus, you would have made more than 10 times in return.

Or, prior to the 2008 subprime mortgage crisis, if you had invested in the stock market — any stocks at all — you would have made some serious money. At least until the through-train scheme was suddenly shelved, and the Hang Seng Index plunged from 33,000 to 8,000 points.

Hong Kong's streets are paved with gold — a belief many Hongkongers once held to be true. The “Oracle of Omaha” advises us to be fearful when others are greedy, and be greedy when others are fearful. But many still struggle to find out when they can be greedy and when they need to be fearful.

“Bonanza” follows three nobodies who have unrealistic dreams of becoming wealthy in a city of seemingly unstoppable economic growth. Jack, Fai and Kat are always coming up with grand schemes to get rich quickly, but their tendency to disagree invariably causes them to miss the window of opportunity. By exploring the characters' obsession with money, Johnnie To delivers a searing probe into human greed. The desire to make fast money may ultimately cost you everything.

Johnnie To



With acclaimed films including *Election* and *The Mission*, Johnnie To has 26 Best Director nominations and six wins under his belt. His films are consistently shown in international film festivals. In 2006, his film *Election 2* received much fanfare in the Cannes Film Festival. His film *Exiled* was screened and became an instant favorite in festivals around the world including the Venice Film Festival and the Toronto International Film Festival. In 2012, *Life Without Principle* was screened in competition at the 68th Venice Film Festival, and was screened at the 31st Toronto International Film Festival, the 59th San Sebastián International Film Festival, the 2011 Hong Kong Asian Film Festival, the 16th Busan International Film Festival, and the 55th Asia-Pacific Film Festival.

Astray 《迷路》

Director: **Ringo Lam** (林嶺東)

Screenplay by: **Ringo Lam** (林嶺東)

Starring: Simon Yam (任達華), Mimi Kung (龔慈恩), Lam Yu Hin (林宇軒)

All of us yearn for happiness, but we often go astray while hunting for it.

Wah and his wife and son have not been back to Hong Kong ever since they immigrated to the United Kingdom years ago. As soon as they set foot on Central, Wah is flabbergasted that he cannot locate any of the landmarks he used to know. Finding himself a total stranger in his native city, he gets lost in thoughts and is fatally hit by a car.

When his wife and son are bidding their final farewell to him, they remember him often saying, “Whatever you do, it is the most important to live a happy life.” Many places are far better than Hong Kong, but none inspired the same tenderness in Wah as Hong Kong.

In “*Astray*,” a husband returns to his hometown with his wife and son to celebrate the New Year in 2010. Bringing with him an old photograph from his childhood, he hopes to retrace the footsteps of his late father. Unfortunately, the happy journey becomes a painful memory. His wife discovers that he has been capturing everyday moments with his film camera, and she passes the films to his son.

In **Ringo Lam’s “*Astray*,” memories are kept alive in old photographs. Even when the city is no longer the same, family love never changes, even across generations.**

Ringo Lam



Ringo Lam was a Hong Kong director best known for his action crime thrillers. His most famous films include *Wild City* and the *On Fire* trilogy. *City on Fire* is not only one of the most iconic Hong Kong crime movies, but also inspired Hollywood director Quentin Tarantino’s *Reservoir Dogs*, which became a classic crime drama in American cinema. Ringo Lam has passed away on December 29, 2018.

Conversation in Depth 《深度對話》

Director: Tsui Hark (徐克)

Screenplay by: Tsui Hark (徐克), Roy Szeto (司徒慧焯)

Starring: Cheung Tat Ming (張達明), Emotion Cheung (張錦程), Lam Suet (林雪), Lawrence Lau (劉國昌)

Can deep conversations resolve deep conflicts?

In this short film by Tsui Hark, a psychiatrist begins an in-depth dialogue with a patient. They touch on a vast range of subjects, from gender roles to career and from Ann Hui to Maggie Cheung. The conversation turns incoherent and absurd, and the doctor's robe comes off to reveal that both are doctors. The act is an unorthodox treatment intended for the two patients observing from behind a glass wall.

The doctors become patients, and the patients become doctors. Look only at the surface and you will never find the truth. How to be normal when things are abnormal?

“*Conversation in Depth*” takes place in the future, where an experiment is being carried out in a psychiatric hospital. Four “participants” take on the roles of doctors and patients in a study on schizophrenia. They lose themselves in their characters, and can no longer tell who their real selves are. Who are the real doctors? Tsui Hark plays with the idea that we all inhabit multiple roles, and those who get too wrapped up are actually “schizophrenics” themselves. Tsui is himself the best of them, as he imagines different characters in his head every day.

Tsui Hark



film directors in Chinese-language cinema.

The celebrated director behind *Once Upon a Time in China* and *Journey to the West: The Demons Strike Back*, Tsui Hark is a true pioneer for his creative vision and adept use of filmmaking techniques. *The Butterfly Murders*, which propelled Tsui to fame, subverted the martial arts genre, while *Zu: Warriors from the Magic Mountain* showcased his mastery of visual effects. His film series *Detective Dee* and *The Taking of Tiger Mountain* are both major blockbuster hits, and he remains one of the highest-grossing