

## Film News: Chicago's Asian Pop-Up Cinema Screens 'Walking Past the Future,' Oct. 24th, 2018

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on October 23, 2018 - 11:19am

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CHICAGO – After a short break, Season Seven of Chicago's Asian Pop-Up Cinema (APUC) continues on Wednesday, October 24th, 2018, with a film from China, "Walking Past the Future. Director Lee Rui-jun will make an appearance at the screening at the AMC River East Theatre. For details and tickets, [click here](#). [28]



APUC Presents 'Walking Past the Future' on October 24th, 2018  
Photo credit: [AsianPopUpCinema.org](#)

The family of Yang Yao-ting (Yang Zi-shan) returns to their village in Gansu after both of her parents are laid off from their jobs in Shenzhen, only to find that life has drastically changed in the village they left 25 years earlier. Hoping to provide her family with a home in the city, Yao-ting returns to Shenzhen to take part in high-risk medical tests, facilitated by a street hustler named Li Xinmin (Yin Fang). "Walking Past

the Future" is the only Chinese film screened in the Un Certain Regard section at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival.

Season Seven of APUC – curated by founder and veteran film programmer Sophia Wong Boccio – runs through November 14th, 2018, and will highlight films from South Korea, the Philippines, China, Thailand, India, Hong Kong, Japan, Tibet, Vietnam and Taiwan. The main feature film presentations will occur at the AMC River East 21 in downtown Chicago, with other various locations for special events, in addition to a number of free screenings.

**Go to PAGE TWO for an interview with the filmmakers of "Concerto of the Bully" – which screened on October 2nd – as part of APUC's Season Seven "Centerpiece Hong Kong" presentation.**

Before the break, APUC screened "Concerto of the Bully," which involved an internet singer named Chow (Cherry Ngan) with a unique retentive memory for everything she has ever heard. When she is kidnapped and held on a fishing raft, she must wait for her pop singer boyfriend to pay a ransom, so she comes up with a plan to provide music therapy for her captor (Ronald Cheng).

HollywoodChicago.com interviewed director Fung Chih-chiang and the film's art director, Chet Can, through an interpreter. Chih-chiang – for the first time – told a story about his music composer Peter Kam, and a demo that sounded like he'd discovered a new female singer.



'Concerto of the Bully,' Directed by Fung Chih-chiang, with Art Direction by Chet Can

Photo credit: AsianPopUpCinema.org

**HollywoodChicago.com:** The theme of the film that you were communicating as writer/director is that music has the power to heal our souls. When did music first affect your life, and how do you think it healed you?

**Fung Chih-chiang:** Even as a child, starting around eight years old, I was already a music lover. I was a big fan of Cantonese pop star Sam Hui and his songs, and as I got older I always had music on in the background. It inspires me emotionally and it changes my moods.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Chet, there were many different moods that you had to create in art directing the film. What was your favorite in creating the atmosphere?

**Chet Can:** I personally loved creating the gentle and romantic atmosphere of the 'fish raft,' because in Hong Kong it's difficult to find a place like that. Hong Kong is always so busy and hectic, I got to create a whole world for the lead actor and actress. That world was for them.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** As director, what qualities were you looking for when casting the lead actor – in a tricky role as a criminal who learns to sing – and how did Ronald Cheng fulfill those qualities in the finished film?

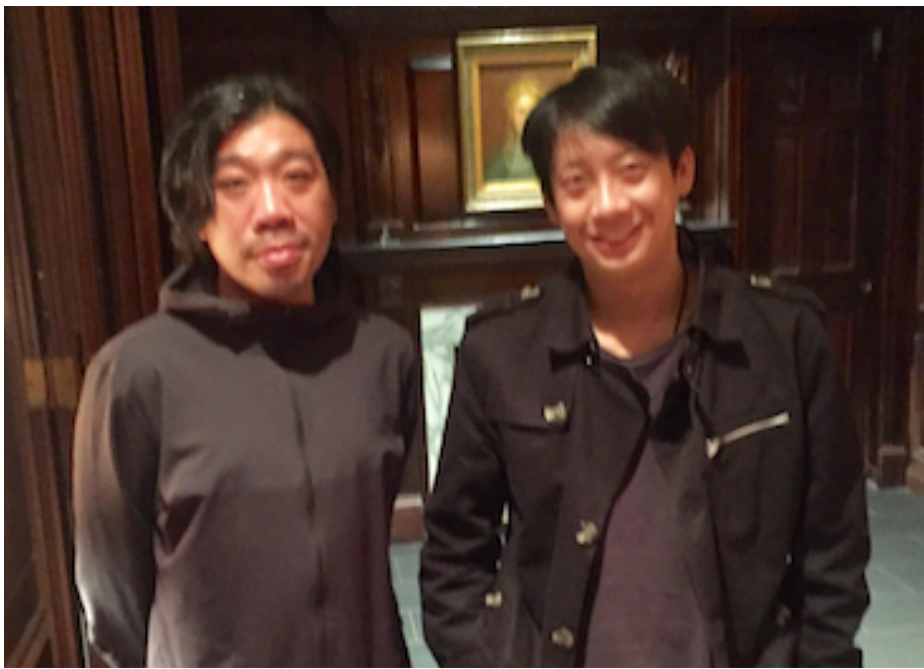
**Chih-chiang:** I was looking for the male actor to be able both to sing and act, but also to have a personality that was a little bit 'off' and quirky... he was a criminal, as you said. Ronald Cheng was a very popular singer, who took some time off from singing to concentrate on being an comic actor. He was so successful that people forgot he started as a singer. So it fulfilled both qualities.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** There is a centerpiece song in the film, that starts as notes in the head of the character who is kidnapped, and becomes a full song by the end. What was the process of finding that perfect song, and when did you know you had it?

**Chih-chiang:** As I was writing the script, I was thinking of my favorite songs in the process. I approached Peter Kam, the number one composer in China, who had already won eight Hong Kong Oscars for composing film scores. I told him the story, and he took a year to finish the song. But when I gave it to lead actor Ronald Cheng, he thought it sounded too 'sophisticated,' and didn't sound simple enough for the



two characters to compose.



Chet Can & Fung Chih-chiang in Chicago  
Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

So Peter Kam went back to the drawing board for two more years. After he was done, he gave me a demo, which just had a female voice humming the melody. While we were filming, the crew fell in love with that female voice doing the demo. We all thought maybe Kam had made a major new vocalist discovery. But it turned out it was actually Kam's son... he used a digital effect to make the voice sound female. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Chet, when you approach a new film to art direct, do you stay with your impressions on the initial reading of the script or do you allow it to evolved as you pre-produce and actually start building the set?

**Can:** With this script, the story already created many pictures of what the film was to look like. But much of the look comes from working with director Chih-chiang, and starting from square one to actually building the sets. Between that starting point and the goal, there are many ways to do it. It's my job to pick best way to get to the goal, and give the director the freedom to work the story.

The film is about music, so within the fish raft we built in triangle elements, with the metaphor being the look and line of a grand piano. And since the lead actor is a money-starved failed gangster, I made sure all the material he brought back to the raft for the music composition was cheap stuff I could get in Hong Kong.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** One of my favorite scenes in the movie was the auto 'chop-shop' and the fantasy dance sequence involving classical music. What style of dance were you trying to achieve, since it was all men and they were tough guys?

**Chih-chiang:** Well, as you recall it's a combination of disassembling a car and dancing, so we combined elements of Kung Fu and choreography. So we had both an action director and a choreographer to create the dance. The choreographer produced steps based on Kung Fu, and the action director created Kung Fu based on dance. It needed to be more fast paced.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Finally, for both of you. What is your favorite song, and what is in that song that has the power to save you when you listen to it?

**Can:** I love the 'Chariots of Fire' theme, by Vangelis. I feel like the whole song is just alive. It's both uptempo and inspiring.

**Chih-chiang:** There are too many for me to pick one. But definitely not the song in the film. [laughs] Unless there is a sequel.

*Season Seven of the Asian Pop-Up Cinema continues with "Walking Pat the Future"... the October 24th, 2018, screening is at 7pm at the AMC River East 21, 322 East Illinois Street, Chicago. Director Lee Rui-jun will make an appearance on behalf of the film. For a complete overview Chicago's Asian Pop-Up Cinema, [click here](#). [29]*



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**Source URL (retrieved on Apr 23 2024 - 9:37am):**

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/28947/film-news-chicago-s-asian-pop-up-cinema-screens-walking-past-the-future-oct-24th-2018>

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