



# Goodbye, Taipei

## 再見台北

*Yongxin Film Company*

(永新影業公司)

*Producers: Dai Chuanli*

(戴傳李) & Shen

Ruiming (沈瑞銘)

*Director: Xu Fengzhong*

(許峰鐘)

*Screenplay: Wen Xia (文*

夏)

*Music: Wen Xia (文夏)*

*Cast:*

Wen Xia (文夏)

Xiao Wang (小王)

Wen Xiang (文香)

Kang Ding (康丁)

Tuo Xian (脫線)

Qiu Wangshe (邱罔舍)

The Wen Xia Sisters (文夏

四姊妹)

1969

Black and White

90 min (including a short  
film of 11 min)



### *Synopsis*

When a dying millionaire (Kang Ding) offers a huge financial reward to find his missing granddaughter, the news catches attention of several people: a wandering guitarist A-Wen (Wen Xia) and his sidekick Xiao Wang, as well as two street performers (Tuo Xian and Qiu Wangshe). A-Wen and Xiao Wang rescue a shoeshine boy (Wen Xiang) and then encounter a flower girl (Wen Xiang) by chance. They believe that the flower girl is the rich man's missing granddaughter. On their way to the millionaire's mansion, the flower girl is kidnaped by the street performers and their gangs. A-Wen seeks help from his friends in Taipei – four young girls in a music band (The Wen Xia Sisters). During the chase, although A-Wen and friends overcome the street gang through a mud fight, the two leaders of the gang slip away and deliver the flower girl to the millionaire. A-Wen later discovers that the shoeshine boy is in fact a young lady, who, like the flower girl, also resembles the millionaire's granddaughter. Can they prove which one is the real deal?

### *Commentary*

*Goodbye, Taipei* offers viewers a fascinating glimpse of what the Taiwanese-language pop music industry looked and sounded like in the 1960s. Starring, written by, and with songs performed by Wen Xia, arguably the most prominent *Taiyu* pop icon at the time, the film is the final and only surviving episode of in the A-Wen series.

There were altogether ten A-Wen movies. At the beginning of *Goodbye, Taipei*, Wen Xia speaks directly to the camera and introduces each of the previous movies. The footage included in this short film of 11 minutes becomes the most precious audio-visual record of what

we know about the lost nine episodes today. It appears that the A-Wen movies might be an early prototype of the “package film” in Taiwan. With almost identical casting, narrative structure, and audio-visual style, they served as a star vehicle for the lead singer-actor.

Wen Xia was born in Tainan during the Japanese colonial period. He studied in Tokyo for several years at a young age, and immersed himself in learning singing and playing musical instruments outside classrooms during his time in Japan. Upon his return to Taiwan, Wen Xia made his debut movie in 1962, *One Night in Taipei* (*Taipei zhi ye*, directed by Guo Nanhong), in which he composed and sang many *Taiyu* pop songs.

It is interesting to note that the first television station was established in Taiwan in 1961. However, official policies dictated that television could only broadcast two Taiwanese-language songs each day. Hence during the screening period of *One Night in Taipei*, Wen Xia toured the island with the film and performed the film soundtrack songs live with his students, The Wen Xia Sisters, at the movie theatres. The promotional tactics made both his films and songs extremely popular. After that, the A-Wen movies became an annual event with a different episode and a new set of soundtrack songs every year for the following 11 years.

When Mandarin cinema dominated the film industry in Taiwan in the 1970s, a standard practice in romantic melodrama was to establish symbiotic cross-media cooperation between the recording and the film industry. Taiwanese auteur filmmaker Hou Hsiao-Hsien also attracted much box office attention in the early 1980s when he employed pop idols, comic gags and popular songs in his early commercial movies. When we watch *Goodbye, Taipei* today, we finally obtain a sense of “connected history” between Mandarin cinema and Taiwanese-language cinema, as well as Taiwanese-language pop songs and wider cultural influences, including Japan, Europe and the US.