

## **Biography of the Honorary Doctorate**

### **Dr Chan Shuk-leung, GBS**

Dr Chan Shuk-leung, better known by her stage name, Pak Suet-sin, is a renowned Cantonese opera star, who has devoted her career to preserving, reviving and transforming this precious part of our cultural heritage.

Born into a Cantonese opera family, Dr Chan fell in love with the art form since early childhood, and began her apprenticeship under Mr Sit Gok-sin at the age of 13. Her determination and exceptional talent earned her the role of principal actress at the age of 14. She nevertheless remained humble despite her early success, constantly seeking to improve and perfect her performance skills and techniques.

In the 1940s, Dr Chan began to work with a new stage partner, Ms Yam Kim-fai, who would go on to have a profound impact on her career and this new tie-in also marked the beginning of the legendary “Yam-Pak partnership”. Working closely with master playwright Mr Tong Tik-sang, the pair successfully transformed a traditional art form from a leisurely entertainment for the masses to a sophisticated aesthetic performance, by borrowing from Peking opera and Kunqu opera, and also in vastly improving stage setting designs and the production of theatrical effects.

In 1963, together with Ms Yam, Dr Chan established the Chor Fung Ming Opera Troupe, offering performance opportunities for a new generation of Cantonese opera stars. Between 2004 and 2019 and through Yam Pak Charitable Foundation, Dr Chan, in the capacity of artistic director, staged a series of performances by Ms Lung Kim-sang and Ms Chan Po-chu and in partnership with Ms Mui Suet-si, revitalising many classics familiar to the audience.

In recognition of her many contributions in the preservation and innovation of Cantonese opera, Dr Chan was awarded the Gold Bauhinia Star by the Hong Kong SAR Government in 2013. She was named Honorary Fellow of The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in 1996, and was conferred Honorary Doctoral degrees by The University of Hong Kong in 2004, Hong Kong Shue Yan University in 2014, and The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2017.