



Episode 289 – Talking Sammo Hung | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com



Jeremy Lesniak:

Hey there, thanks for tuning in. Welcome, this is whistlekick martial arts radio and today we're going to talk all about the man that I believe is the most underrated martial arts actor of today, possibly of all time, Sammo Hung. If you're new to the show you may not know my voice I'm Jeremy Lesniak, I'm the founder of whistlekick we make apparel and sparring gear and training aids and we produce things like this show. I wanna thank you for stopping by, if you want to check out the show notes for this or any of the other episodes we've done, you can find those over at whistlekickmartialartsradio.com. You find our products at whistlekick.com or on Amazon or maybe if you're one of the lucky ones, at your martial arts school because we do offer wholesale accounts. Thank you to everyone who has supported us through purchases and even if you aren't wearing a whistlekick shirt or something like that right now, thank you for taking the time out of your day to listen to this episode.

As I said, here on today's episode, we're talking about one of the most respected martial arts actor still working today, a man who has been active in the film industry for almost 60 years. None other than Sammo Hung. Also known as Hung Kam Bow I'll admit my pronunciation is not always the best I'm doing what I can. Hung originates from Hong Kong where he is known not only as an actor but also as an action choreographer, producer, and director. He's collaborated with many other famous martial arts actors especially Jackie Chan, most notably Hung served as the action choreographer for some of his most prominent films. Hung was born on January 7th, 1952 in Hong Kong but his ancestral hometown is in Ningbo, Zhejiang. His parents and grandparents were all involved in the film industry in Hong Kong. His grandmother, Qin Xiang was one of the first martial arts actors in Chinese cinema. Hung was enrolled



Episode 289 – Talking Sammo Hung | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

in China drama Academy an opera school because he didn't traditional schooling. This is where he first met Jackie Chan and Yuen Bow as his classmates, two men who later became movie stars just like him. The Opera school is run by master Yu Jim Yuen, in the name Yen Long was given to hung during his stay at the school where is a common practice, the given name of their Sifu their master becomes the family name of the students. Hung is the eldest among the students became the leading member of the seven little fortunes performance troop. The troop traveled to several theaters to showcase their talents and acrobatics and acting not only locally but also to Western audiences. The trip was called seven little fortunes not because there were only seven members, but because only seven members would perform in each act. Though all the students earn money from the racks hung would still share his earnings with the younger opera school brothers which as you might imagine been quite popular. Hung first performed at age 9 and his very first film education of love which was released in 1961, the following year yet another film titled big and little Wong tin bar which also featured Jackie Chan in his first movie appearance. The films followed by the birth of Yue Fei, the Princess and the seven little heroes and Little Dragon girl teases White snake spirit, all in the same year to shabby for someone so young right? Four years later hung worked for the Shaw brother's studio there's a name there's a name that many of us have heard which was Hong Kong's largest film production company. His first major role was as an assistant action director at the age of 14 for the film come drink with me in 1966, it was directed by King Hu a Chinese film director who is best known for his wuxia films in the 60s and 70s. Hung is also an actor in the film Dragon gate in 1967 which was also written and directed by Hu. The film won the Best screenplay award at the six Golden horse awards. At the age of 16 just shortly before leaving school hung suffered an injury which caused him to be bedridden for quite a while, because he couldn't do much training during this time his weight started to creep up. It was after he recovered that he started stunt work, this was also when he got the nickname Sammo from a popular Chinese cartoon character name San Mao which means three hairs. It was near the end of 1970 that he started to work for Raymond Chow, the founder of the Golden harvest company now known as Orange sky Golden harvest. He was assigned as the action choreographer for the company's very first film, the angry river in 1970. Hung's reputation and action choreography grew very quickly. He worked again with King hu as an action choreographer for two films, a touch of Zen 1971, which a couple years later one the technical grand prize award at the 75 Cannes film Festival and the fate of Lee Khan in 1973. He also appeared as a shaolin and fighter in the award-winning film, a movie we talked about quite often on the show, Enter the Dragon 1973 the start of course the legendary Bruce Lee. In 1970 hung studied hapkido in South Korea with Jihan Jay as his master who was a student of Chou Yong Sool, the founder of hapkido. Hung's next major films work shaolin plot and the iron fist ed monk both 1973. The latter was a martial art comedy where he served as the director, writer, action director, and the lead. He also served as the action director for the film the man from Hong Kong 1975, which was the first film produced by both Hong Kong and Australia. The cinematography for the film was done by the esteemed Australian cinematographer, Russell Boyd who worked with looks like Peter Weir, Robert Duvall, and quite a few other big a name star. Yet another well-received action comedy film titled enter the fat Dragon in 1978 where he was the director as well as the lead. The film was a parody of course Bruce Lee's Way of the Dragon 1972. Hung is once again hired as the acting director for the reshoot of the unfinished Bruce Lee



Episode 289 – Talking Sammo Hung | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

film game of death because of course of Bruce Lee's sudden death during the filming. The original film was directed by Bruce Lee himself but that was picked up by Robert Clouse and it was Hung's brilliant fight choreography that help the film compensate for the loss of the star. The first films of Hung that really exemplified the Wing Chun style were Warriors 2 and the prodigal son. Casanova Wong labeled as the human tornado in the Republic of Korea Army also starred in Warriors 2 to where he was best known for the film. Fall near the film knock about was released starting Yuen Biao and directed by Hung. The film was a box office hit that boosted Yuen's career/ in 1978 hung formed Garbo motion picture company under Golden harvest, but was short-lived, it only released two films dirty Tiger, crazy frog and odd couple 78 and 79. The company ended in 1980 when the director Carl Maca left and formed his own company. One of the major contributions of home to the martial arts genre was the way he redefined the concept of martial arts that was usually depicted on screen the audience is in the 70s were used to films with historical and fantastic settings but Hung successfully created fight scenes in modern locations. The fight scenes were more realistic and more engaging especially those long one-on-one fights. Films that displayed this new concept include winners and sinners and wheels on meals. Another big project where hung was involved with the 1983 film project A also known as Jackie Chan's project A where he served as the co-director action director and one of the main stars together course with Jackie Chan and Yuen Biao. It was such a big hit that it earned Hong Kong \$19 million just in Hong Kong and that doesn't include the tremendous earnings from abroad where it was pretty well received. The film of the best action choreography award at the fourth Hong Kong film awards. In 1980 Hung started his own production company Bo Ho film company limited, its first film was encounters of the spooky kind which was also one of the very first kung fu horror comedies in Hong Kong specifically of the Zheng Xi genre. A similar film the unproduced was Mr. Vampire in 1985, it was well received and nominated for 13 awards but only took home one for best original film score. His company produced 40 films up until 1992. Hung was also included in the film series called lucky stars, the first film was winners and sinners which we already mentioned where Hung served as the director and producer, action director, cowriter and costar. It one the best action choreography award at the third Hong Kong film awards. The first film went along to make HK\$21.9 million while the entire series earn more than 100 million. Hung co-founded another production company in 83 called D&B films Company Limited with Dixon Poon and John Shung. They produced 77 films up to 92 including the award-winning film Hong Kong 1941 which they released in 1984, these dates start to mess with me, that started the famous Chow Yun fat. One of the most notable films from home in the 90s with Mr. Nice guy from 1997 where hung and Jackie Chan finally reunited for the first time since project A 14 years ago. Hung serves as the director in this film and he also did a cameo appearance as an unfortunate cyclist. The film won best action choreography at the 34th Golden horse awards. In the same year another film was released under the direction of Hung titled Once upon a time in China and America starring Jet Li. Chan was furious with Hung about this movie because he felt he had discussed the films main idea with Hung during the preproduction for Mr. Nice guy. But Chan of course wasn't involved in that movie anyway. Hung apologized to Chan and as far as I know they're all good now. Hung also to the action choreography for the film ashes of time in 1994. He was nominated at the 14th Hong Kong film awards for best action choreography award but didn't win. Still the film received a total of 11 awards from different organizations. In 1998 we see the first



Episode 289 – Talking Sammo Hung | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

appearance of Hung that a lot of you are going to recall and that's the TV series martial law that aired on CBS in the US up until the year 2000. He was the lead character but he had very few lines, mainly because he wasn't fluent in English. Surprisingly it became a hit in the US but was canceled after just two seasons because of the high production costs over 2 million per hour long episode. Another TV series where Hung starred was in 2003's Dragon laws which was in China and he played a police officer named Lung. Sam was also the original action choreographer for the movie kung fu hustle in 2004 but quit after just two months for some vague personal reasons. He was replaced by Yen Wu Ping also renowned action choreographer and you may recognize that name from the show as we talked about him on crouching Tiger, hidden Dragon and he also served on the matrix. In 2005 he played a villain in the film SPL, sha po lang directed by Wilson Yip. This was the first film that Hung, Donnie Yen and Wu Ching worked on together where Yen was the action choreographer. Yen and Wu were also directors just like Hung in addition to being martial artists. But you knew that about Donny, right? Hung worked again with Wu in the films twin mission in 2007 and fatal move in 2008. Hung also starred in the film will show in 2008 directed by Anthony Zeto and produced by there's an in the keep coming up Jackie Chan. It was unveiled at the 2008 Cannes film Festival, in the same year Hung worked again with Wilson Yip and Donnie Yen for the film Ip Man where he served as the martial arts choreographer together with veteran stunt chlorinator Tony Long Xi Hung. The film was critically acclaimed I'm gonna guess most of you have seen it and it won 13 awards, three of which were received by Hung and Lung for best action choreography. Hung once again worked with Yip and Yen for the admin sequel, Ip Man 2 in 2010 as the action choreographer as well as one of the main characters. Hung suffered multiple injuries as he performed his own stunts despite his age. During the production phase hung underwent cardiac surgery but kept plugging along. On top of that, hung was struck in the face and one seen by the British boxer Darren Shahlavi but he endured the bleeding for five hours just to complete the shoot before going to the hospital for attention. He received four stitches for that one strong punch alone. Here we are in 2018 and Hung still has upcoming films including Duo by Daniel Lee, V for vampire by Vincent Kok, he who would be king by Ju Loong and war monkeys by Kevin Monroe. Hung also announced a new sequel to the lucky stars franchise titled the return of the lucky stars which is already started shooting. Another of Hung's long-awaited films is a still unnamed Wuxia comedy film with Stephen Chow. All in all, hung is worked on at least 272 films in which he directed or codirected, 41 of them not including the upcoming ones. He's worked 11 television series. Man, this guy works. On the personal side hung is happily married to model and actress Joyce Godenzi and has been for 23 years. She was the winner of the 1984 Ms. Hong Kong pageant and the two of them have three sons and one daughter. Now if you know Sammo hung, if you've seen him on screen you know why I think so highly of him. For someone to perform at that level for that long. To turn out so many wonderful movies and earned the respect of people in multiple countries, continents. For the work that he has done, as an actor as a director, as a tremendous amount about not only his work ethic but his skill and his ability to grow and adapt to the times. I would like to challenge all of you to go back and listen to one of these many, many movies. Not listen, watch. I want to watch them they are all over the place of course you can find the show notes whistlekickmartialartsradio.com or you can grab the names some of which I stumbled over and my apologies I'm getting better. I want to know your favorite Sammo Hung movie or TV show, series,



Episode 289 – Talking Sammo Hung | whistlekickMartialArtsRadio.com

whatever. Come on in the show notes whistlekickmartialartsradio.com or maybe on youtube on social media we're @whistlekick find is all over the place or if you're not a public person's go ahead and email me Jeremy@whistlekick.com, love hearing from all of you. That's all i've got for now until next time train hard smile and have a great day.