

# **Ms Sylvia Chang Ai-chia**

**Doctor of Humanities** *honoris causa*

## **Citation**

Born in Taiwan, Ms Sylvia Chang moved to Hong Kong as a primary five student, but after a year at New Method College, she went to school in New York until she was 15, when she moved back to Taiwan and studied at Sacred Heart Girls High School and graduated from Taipei American School. Aged 17, she went into television and then the film industry, becoming one of the few performing arts stars in both Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Since the 1970s, Ms Chang has made a lot of best-selling music albums, appeared in over a hundred films and a number of television and stage dramas, and won many awards. She has finished her first script in 1972. She directed her first film in 1981, and has now directed 16 films and written over 20 scripts. Her passion in creativity and performing arts, and courage to venture make her becoming one of the most versatile, prolific and creative performing artists in the Chinese-speaking world.

A transit from front to backstage is never simple or easy, but Ms Chang, who describes herself as someone who perseveres untiringly, and always rolls with the punches, was determined to make the move. When challenged, she used to calm herself down first and then listen to her inner voice, sure that everything was predetermined. She firmly believes that with patience, an accommodating attitude and flexibility, we can get through the tough times.

Ms Chang's creative career and life are closely connected to her charity work, which has greatly influenced her. When she was at the Sacred Heart Girls High School in Taipei, she and her classmates joined the "Loving Club", run by Mexican nuns, which visited handicapped children every weekend. The sisters told her that body contact would build up mutual trust, and she used to help a blind boy who avoided most people cut his nails. After a while, the little boy started to smile whenever she was there. In 1993, she accepted an invitation from the World Vision to help with "30-Hour Famine" fundraising activities. She visited war-torn countries in Africa in order to better understand their needs and then gave the World Vision her ideas on how to support victims after a disaster. Now, she still works with the World Vision, and has visited to South Asia, the Middle East and Central and South America, saying "these voluntary activities have shown me that our world is so big that we should treasure and also to share what we have now." Ms Chang believes that everyone is responsible for taking

care of others, and she sees films as a way for her to share her care, which is how warmth and mutual respect have become her specific creative style. When she directs a film, she looks after every actor, is actively involved in every detail, and mixes with her whole team. This not only reflects her true moral values, but also shows her qualities as an outstanding leader.

Mr Chairman, in recognition of Ms Chang's outstanding achievements in the film industry and performing arts, and her significant contributions to charity in Hong Kong and throughout the world, may I present Ms Sylvia Chang for conferment of the degree of Doctor of Humanities *honoris causa*.

*Citation written and delivered by Professor Emilie Yeh*