

Document Citation

Title	Two stage sisters
Author(s)	Steve Horowitz
Source	<i>AFI International Film Festival</i>
Date	1981 Oct 16
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	29
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Wutai jiemei (Two stage sisters), Xie Jin,, 1964

TWO STAGE SISTERS

Fri, Oct 16, 6:30 pm

Mon, Oct 19, 6:30 pm

Wed, Oct 21, 8:30 pm

Directed by Xie Jin. Written by Lin Gu, Xu Jin, and Xie Jin. Produced by Tianma Film Studio, Shanghai. With: Xie Fang, Cao Yindi, Feng Ji, Gao Yuansheng and Li Wei. 1964, color, 114 minutes.

"*Two Stage Sisters* was a resounding critical success when it was screened last October at the National Film Theatre in England and was voted best film to premiere there for 1980. The rise of two women from ragtag itinerant players to Shaoxing Opera stars in 1940s Shanghai and the separate paths they take there before being reunited in the end is told against the backdrop of a turbulent fifteen year period (1935-1950) in Chinese history. The film displays a remarkably mature visual style and meticulous period detail all the more noteworthy since this was one of the last films made in the Shanghai studios before the Cultural Revolution halted all production.

Director Xie Jin claims that two-thirds of the way through filming he sensed the changing political climate and sharpened the film's revolutionary thrust. Nevertheless, the film came under attack in early 1966, especially for its portrayal of Yuehong, the "bad" sister, as a character

deserving of some sympathy and understanding, rather than as a one-dimensional "negative type." Apparently, the picturesque riverside stage seen in the opening and closing scenes was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution because of its association with the film.

Director Xie Jin, one of the outstanding talents in the Chinese cinema, gained acclaim when his *Red Detachment of Women* (not the Revolutionary ballet version known to the West) won the first 100 Flowers Award (China's Oscar) for Best Picture of 1961. He is directing once again and his recently completed *Legend of Tianyun Mountain* has been highly acclaimed by the Chinese press."—Stephen Horowitz, San Francisco International Film Festival