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Fengkuei-lai-te-jen

(The Boys From Fengkuei)
(TAIWANESE-COLOR)

VARIETY 11/23/84
London, Nov. 23.)

An Evergreen Production. Produced by Jung-Feng Lin, Hua-k'un Chang. Executive producer Kun-hou Ch'en. Directed by Hsiaohsien Hou. Features entire cast. Screenplay, T'ien-wen Chu; camera (color), K'un-hou Ch'en; editor, Ch'ing-sung Liao; sound, Chian-sheng Hsin; associate producers, Sheng-chung Liu, Shu-chen Hsu. Reviewed at London Film Festival, Nov. 22, 1984. Running time: 98 MINS.

Ah-ch'ing.....Ch'eng-tse Niu
Hsiao-hsing.....Hsiu-ling Lin
Ah-ho.....Tsong-hua T'o
Ah-jung.....Shih Chang
Kuo-tzu.....P'eng-chu Chao

A far cry from the action or broad comedy pics so prevalent in Hong Kong and Taiwanese cinema, "The Boys Of Fengkuei" (also known as "All The Youthful Days") is a naturalistic tale of three bored youths who leave the village of Fengkuei, on a small island off Taiwan, to look for work and adventure in the city of Kaohsiung in the south of the main island.

First part of the film establishes life in the sticks, with the youths bored and restless as they lark about and try fitfully to occupy their time. One of the trio has a father unable to work after being disabled in a sporting accident. These provincial scenes use the Hokkien language authentic to the location.

Once on the main island (where the language is Mandarin), the youths meet up with the older sister of one of them, who helps find them factory work and somewhere to live. Their neighbors are an unmarried couple living together, and when the man is forced to flee from the police, the girl begins to develop a relationship with one of the young men.

Short on plot but long on atmosphere and an authentic feel for these characters and their lives, the film is low-profiled but engaging. Quality of direction and acting is good, indicating a genuine attempt to tell a truthful contemporary story.

Only drawback is an unfortunate soundtrack of classical music (Vivaldi and Bach) which is very jarring and which was apparently added to the export version of the film in place of the original track of local music and songs. —Strat.