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Erzi De Da Wanou
(The Sandwich Man)
(TAIWANESE-COLOR)

A Sunny Overseas Corp. production. Produced by Ming Chi. Directed by Hou Shao-Shen, Jen Wan, Jong Cheung-Tsang. Screenplay, Wu Nien-Chun, from stories by Hwan Tzen-Ming; production supervisor, Wu Chung Ling. No further credits supplied. Reviewed at Berlin Film Festival (market), Feb. 22, 1986. Running time: **102 MINS.**

With: Chen Bo Jeng, Yang Li-Ying, Jo Shen-Li, Chiang Sha, King Ding, Chan Chi.

Berlin — Now that international interest in Taiwanese cinema has been aroused by such films as Edward Yang's "Taipei Story" and Hou Shao-Shen's "Time To Live And Time To Die" (unspooled in the Berlin Forum), some of the earlier films of this new wave are being unveiled including the 1983 three-part pic "The Sandwich Man." Hou Shao-Shen directed the first part only, but this apprentice work already shows a confident talent.

His episode is "Son's Big Doll" and is set in 1962. Long out of work, a man manages to get a job dressed as a clown promoting the films at the local cinema. His peculiar get-up makes him a laughing stock and shames some of his relatives. Worse, his baby son only recognizes his father when he's in clown makeup. To the child, he's a "big doll." It's a touching, beautifully handled featurette.

Part 2, "Vicky's Hat," directed by Jen Wan, takes place in 1964 and deals with two friends selling Japanese-made pressure cookers in small towns. One is strangely attracted to a schoolgirl who always wears a hat to hide a disfiguring scar, while the other, married with a pregnant wife, dies when a pressure cooker explodes during an outdoor demonstration. It's a grim, but effective, centerpiece.

"A Taste Of Apples," directed by Jong Cheung-Tsang, and set in 1969, has a cyclist on his way to work hit by a car driven by an American officer. Ironically his misfortune brings to his family more money and food than they ever had before including, for the first time, apples.

All three stories deal with the plight of poor people trying to get by and, to a degree, with foreign influences on Taiwanese society. In the first story, the hero gets the idea for the clown makeup from a Japanese magazine, and the outside influences on stories two and three are obvious.

Mandarin-track pic would be an integral part of any future programming by archives or fests on Taiwanese cinema, but tv exposure is also indicated in certain countries.

—Strat.

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