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AUTUMN MOON

Qiu Yue

Hong Kong/Japan 1992

Dir: Clara Law

Scr: Fong Ling Ching

Leading Players: Masatoshi Nagase,
Li Pui Wai, Choi siu Wan

Rt: 108 mins

Macao-born, London-trained, Kowloon-based, Clara Law was the perfect choice to direct this poetic essay on the evanescence of Chinese culture in modern Hong Kong - not to be confused with the Richard Chen film of the same name shown two years ago. Her movie, which scooped the top prize at the Locarno festival, is one of six directed by filmmakers from as many countries under the blanket title *The Asian Beat*. Though planned as a package, their only common denominator is the presence of Japanese actor Masatoshi Nagase, known for his work in Jim Jarmusch's *Mystery Train*. Here he plays a Tokyo tourist vainly seeking authentic Chinese cooking in Hong Kong, who strikes up a friendship with a gauche Chinese teenager waiting to join her émigré parents in Canada. Her granny is a dynamite cook, and bit by bit the film develops into an off-beat romance between a Japanese and a wok. Fresh, funny, moving and sexy, this is a bitter-sweet tribute to a world that may soon be no more.

Alan Stanbrook

LONDON FF 1992

AUTUMN MOON

Qiuyue



CLARA LAW

Born 29 May 1957, in Macao, Clara Law (full name Clara Law Chuck-Yiu) grew up in Hong Kong. After graduating from the University of Hong Kong with a degree in English Literature, she joined Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) in 1978 as an assistant producer. During the next three years, she directed a total of 12 single-episode dramas for RTHK. From 1982 to 1985, she attended the National Film & Television School in England, where she completed a student feature, *They Say the Moon Is Fuller Here*, which won an award at the 1985 Chicago Film Festival. She returned to Hong Kong in 1985, and while continuing to direct fiction and docu-dramas for RTHK, she began to develop her first professional feature screenplay, *The Other Half and the Other Half*. Completed in 1988, it was selected for the Pan-Pacific Film Festival in 1990. *Autumn Moon* is her fourth feature. It won the top prize, the Golden Leopard, at this year's Locarno Film Festival.

FILMOGRAPHY

- 1985 *They Say the Moon Is Fuller Here* (student feature)
- 1988 *The Other Half and the Other Half*
- 1989 *The Reincarnation of Golden Lotus*
- 1990 *Farewell China*
- 1992 *Qiuyue (Autumn Moon)* (+ co-prod)



CREDITS

Dir: Clara Law. Exec. prod: Kohsuke Kuri, Kaizo Hayashi. Prod: Clara Law, Fong Ling Ching. Scr/Ed: Fong Ling Ching. Phot. (colour): Tony Leung. Art dir/Cost. des: Timmy Yip. Mus: Lau Yee-Tat, Tats. Sd: Tat Leung, Wai Wong. Asst. dir: Ma Po Shan, Vincent Hung. Prod. co: Trix Films, 6A Duke St., Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong. Tel: (852) 3382722. Fax: (852) 3381835. / Right Staff Office Co. Ltd., 3/F 2-26-20 Kitazawa Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo 155, Japan. Tel: (81) 3-34852900. Fax: (81) 3-34853641. Export agent: Trix Films (Hong Kong) / Right Staff Office Co. Ltd. (Tokyo). r.t.: 108 mins. Lang: Cantonese Chinese, Japanese, and English.

CAST

Masatoshi Nagase (Tokio), Li Pui Wai (Pui Wai), Choi Siu Wan (Granny), Maki Kiuchi (Miki), Sun Ching Hung (Boyfriend).

Lately, the word "fading" keeps coming back to me. Maybe because I found out mid-autumn lanterns are no longer made of bamboo and paper lit by candles but plastic and light bulbs. Or walking into huge housing complexes I can only see kids holding their video games, playing by themselves and no longer running wild playing hide-and-seek. Buildings keep on being pulled down. I keep on hurrying from place to place. And suddenly I woke up one morning and discovered lately I rarely have dreams. I remembered as a kid I was taught to read Chinese poems and to write calligraphy by my grandfather. Then I was sent to an English school, as in all high schools in Hong Kong. I was not taught any Chinese history after 1911. I never realized what that meant until I went to England to study. In those three years, I was stuck in the middle, neither too Chinese nor very English. I wonder how kids of today will grow up to be. And what will become of the kids in the future? As our culture fades away, what will they remember? Will they be nomadic modernists that wander, with no attachments, no memories, no dreams? *Clara Law.*

Clara Law easily captured the Golden Leopard for her Antonioni-esque tale of alienation in modern Hong Kong. Handsomely photographed and nicely blending humour and nostalgia, [her fourth film] looms as a potential art house favorite.... Law follows two parallel [love] affairs ... but [her] true interest is the face of a city that seems to have obliterated any sense of a past beyond the last 20 to 30 years, a spectacular city of concrete and glass in which McDonalds are already considered symbols of tradition, modern gadgets are obsessively accumulated, and life is something to be observed through the video viewfinder. Typical of this new world is the use of three different languages throughout.... [She also] addresses the 1997 Hong Kong trauma, as the already-evident danger of losing cultural roots threatens to become terminal. —*Dan Fainaru, Variety (24 Aug 1992).*