



Beijing Bicycle

Wang Xiaoshuai

TAIWAN/FRANCE, 2001

113 minutes ■ Colour/35mm
 Production Company: Arc Light Films/
 Pyramide Productions
 Producer: Peggy Chiao, Fabienne Vonier
 Screenplay: Wang Xiaoshuai, Tang
 Danian, Peggy Chiao, Hsu Hsiao-ming
 Cinematographer: Liu Jie
 Editor: Liao Ching-song
 Production Designer: Cao Anjun
 Sound: Chen Chen
 Music: Weng Feng
 Principal Cast: Cui Lin, Lee Bin, Zhou
 Xun, Gao Yuanyuan, Lee Shuang

Print Source: Seville Pictures,
 511 King Street West, 4th Floor,
 Toronto ON M5V 2Z4 Canada.
 T (416) 480-0543 F (416) 480-0501

Foreign Sales Agent: Flach Pyramide
 International, 5 rue Richepanse,
 75008 Paris, France. T (33-1) 4296-0220
 F (33-1) 4020-0551

Production: Arc Light Films, 4F,
 #19 Lane 2, Wan-li Street, Taipei
 116 Taiwan. T (886-2) 2239-6026
 F (886-2) 2239-6501
 tfc@transcend.com.tw

Wang Xiaoshuai is best known for his tough, unflinching portraits of contemporary China in films like *So Close to Paradise* and *The Days*. So his new film, *Beijing Bicycle*, comes as something of a surprise. A lyrical, good-natured romp through present day Beijing, it is a breezy allegory about how we might rethink our ethical constructs in a changed society. The film shimmers with Xiaoshuai's characteristically beautiful imagery, and follows two intertwined stories of people dependent on that unshakable symbol of transportation in mainland China, the unpretentious bicycle.

At seventeen, Guei has left his provincial town to find fame and fortune in the big city. Ultimately he finds work as a bicycle courier, earning a pittance per trip until the cost of his sleek bicycle is paid off. The work is hard but he doesn't complain, knowing that he will soon own something and be one step closer to owning other things and starting a family. Just as he is about to buy the bike from his boss, he finds that it has gone missing. Guei scours the city in desperation until he spots a young man riding it down the street. After a violent (albeit funny) confrontation, Guei learns that the kid, named Jian, bought it at a flea market. The bike has already become an important part of Jian's life, as he uses it to impress girls and his friends. Both Guei and Jian need the bicycle to fulfill their lives, so they must share it – to comical and touching ends.

Wang Xiaoshuai keeps the pace brisk and inviting, with each development bringing another small but generous insight into the human condition. Lee Bin and Cui Lin form a marvelous counterpoint – the saucy city kid and the country hick – with performances to match. *Beijing Bicycle* is a warmhearted film with a refreshingly upbeat message.

■ Noah Cowan

Wang Xiaoshuai was born in Shanghai in 1966 and studied film at the Beijing Film School until 1988. He began working at Fujian Film Studios and made his first feature film, *The Days*, in 1993. He released his second independent production, *Frozen*, under the pseudonym Wu Ming in 1995. He is regarded as one of the most talented directors of China's "sixth generation." Films include: *Suicides* (94), *So Close to Paradise* (98) and *Beijing Bicycle* (01).

Associated with *European Film Promotion*,
 an initiative supported by the
 European Union's MEDIA Programme.

Sponsored by

THE
 INDEPENDENT
 FILM
 CHANNEL
 CANADA **IFC**