



Xilu Xiang

Little Cheung

Fruit Chan

HONG KONG, CHINA, 1999

107 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Nicetop Independent Ltd.**

Executive Producer: **Carrie Wong**

Producer: **Doris Yang, Makoto Ueda**

Screenplay: **Fruit Chan**

Cinematographer: **Lam Wah Chuen**

Editor: **Tin Sam Fat**

Production Designer: **Chris Wong**

Sound: **Ng Kwong Wah**

Music: **Lam Wah Chuen, Chu Hing**

Cheung

Principal Cast: **Yiu Yuet Ming, Mak Wai Fan, Mak Suet Man, Chu Sun Ya, Gary Lai**

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Hong Kong is a crazy and complex miracle. Its peculiar attractions have made it a central character for all sorts of filmmakers. No one, however, has gone deeper into the city's soul than Fruit Chan. Two of his earlier films, *Made in Hong Kong* and *The Longest Summer*, feel like fact finding missions, exploring specific Hong Kong characters in a documentary-like format. *Little Cheung* is something totally different. It uses an elliptical, cross-hatched narrative to convey the daily struggle to remain a winner in this city of so many losers, while at the same time asking what place Hong Kong now occupies in the world – particularly in terms of its patron, phantom and uneasy friend, Mainland China.

The film is told from the perspective of nine-year-old Little Cheung, a rambunctious, charming little fellow who, when not attending school, delivers take-out orders for his father's restaurant. From brothels to barber shops, Little Cheung comes to know all of his wild Hong Kong neighbourhood and earns big tips at the same time. His disciplinarian father, practical mother and sad, loving grandmother form his home environment. Conflict, however, comes in the form of his brother, a gang member, who is banned from the house.

One day, Little Cheung befriends Fan, a mainland girl illegally living in the city. They have great fun together, peeing in obnoxious customers' teas and other pranks, until they fall into the midst of a gangland

fight. Miraculously saved by a stranger, Cheung returns home only to be brutally punished by his father for getting involved. He runs away from home on the day of his grandma's birthday, just when Fan is about to be deported.

The most amazing feat of Chan's direction is his ability to convey the easily distracted, hyperactive world of a little boy, with big events heightened beyond belief and restless insecurities underlying all his activities. Chan is also a master at detail, bringing such an earthy life to this megalopolis we can practically smell and taste its every corner.

■ **Noah Cowan**

Fruit Chan was born in Canton, China in 1959. He moved to Hong Kong with his family at the age of ten. He graduated from the Hong Kong Film Centre, and has since worked as assistant director and production coordinator for directors such as Kirk Wong, Alfred Cheung, Sammo Hung and Tony Au. Feature filmography: *Finale in Blood* (91), *Made in Hong Kong* (96), *The Longest Summer* (98), *Little Cheung* (99) and *Durian Durian* (00).

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