



Saviour of the Soul

Yuen Kwai, David Lai

Hong Kong, 1991, 96 minutes
Colour/35mm

Production Company: Team Work Production House Ltd.

Executive Producer: David Lai, Chan Pui Wah

Producer: Jacky Pang

Cinematography: Peter Pau

Editor: Poon Hung, Kai Kit Wai

Art Director: Yee Chung Man

Music: Anthony Lun

Principal Cast: Andy Lau, Anita Mui, Kenny B, Aaron Kwok, Gloria Yip, Carina Lau

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It is an uncertain age. A greying black-clad swordsman slays the palace guards, as he flies through the air towards an unknown purpose. Centuries (or is it days?) later, gun-toting, Armani-clad super-policemen — Hong Kong's Saviours — are devastated by a familiar cloaked assassin. Kinetic medieval fantasy; overstimulated, outgunned urban nightmare. And that's only the first ten minutes. *Saviour of the Soul* is simply one of the most entertaining films in recent memory. A genre-bender in every way, it contains elements from the martial arts, melodrama, cop, zombie and slapstick comedy strains of Hong Kong cinema. But *Saviour of the Soul* is more than just an encyclopedia. A complicated tale of vengeance and undying love, the film centres on the attempts of a star cop (Andy Lau) to avenge the death of one former partner and win the hand of another (Anita Mui). But standing in his way is Silver Fox, master swordsman and keeper of much magic. Adding levity (and somewhat perverse baseball jokes) is the dead partner's little sister, who also distracts the forlorn cop from reuniting with his true love. Ultimately, all come together in a richly textured (and heavily armed) final battle sequence. Rumour has it that Wong Kar Wei (*Days of Being Wild*) wrote the first draught of the script; it might well be true because *Saviour* shares Wong's jaded, MTV nihilism and love of modern mythology. Passionate, enthralling and unbelievably paced, this is a sampling of Hong Kong madness not soon forgotten.

Yuen Kwai was a martial arts director before becoming a film director. His feature films include: *In the Blood* (88), *The Blonde Fury* (88), *She Shoots Straight* (90), *All for the Winner* (co-director)(90), *The Top Bet* (co-director)(91), *Saviour of the Soul* (91).

David Lai was born in 1953. He was raised and educated in Hong Kong. After a short stay in the United States to pursue a pharmacy course, he returned to Hong Kong in 1974 and entered the media industry first as a cameraman, then as director and screenwriter of a TV drama series. In 1981, he joined Johnny Mak's production company as a director. His feature films as a director include: *Lonely Fifteen* (82), *Crimson Street* (82), *The Body Is Willing* (83), *Sworn Brothers* (87), *Midnight Whispers* (88), *Runaway Blues* (89), *Lost Souls* (89), *Saviour of the Soul* (co-director)(91).

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