

Bodyguard from Beijing

from the www.sitwisc.edu website

This is vintage Jet Li and then some. Jet does his usual butt-kicking scenes. However, this film also pitches in a good plot. It even includes romance that is rarely seen in his films. The humor is also very funny, but could be lost in the translation to English.

Grade: A+

from Alex's Asian movie review website.

Rating: * * *

This shameless rip-off of "The Bodyguard" was Jet Li's first role outside of a kung fu period piece, and the first film to feature him with a full head of hair. He plays the totally cool and stoic bodyguard that Kevin Costner could only dream about being. His presence is intense and unflinching, and he looks great with a gun and a suit. Christy Chung is his bratty and annoying client who eventually falls for him, and the sexual tension between them is classic. The awesome Ngai Sing is the psychotic vengeance-bent killer who's after Jet for killing his brother, and the two of them finally get to beat each other up at the end of the film with a combination of stellar, and silly, kung fu. **Fun and mindless entertainment.**

from cinema archives.

Filmed in Hong Kong in 1994, *Bodyguard from Beijing* is similar in story line (and title!) to *The Bodyguard* (1992) starring Kevin Costner and Whitney Houston, and to a recently released production starring Robin Padilla and Vina Morales (*Eto na Naman Ako*). In *Beijing*, Allan Hui Ching-yeung (Jet Li), a bodyguard from Mainland China, is assigned to protect Michelle Yeung (Christy Chung) in Hong Kong whose life is in danger after witnessing a murder. Michelle slowly gets attracted to Allan who, until the end, performed his duty responsibly.

Hong Kong martial arts superstar Jet Li is a more believable bodyguard than Costner. The well-choreographed action scenes are director Corey Yuen's trademark. Although the film gets slow in some parts, the action scenes are fast paced and well crafted.

This is no ordinary action flick. It presents the Asian (Confucian) values of benevolence or perfect virtue. The bodyguard Allan is a gentleman of integrity and discipline who sees beyond personal safety and profit, and has a profound moral sense. He can handle a young boy's confusion and guilt, be generous with his money to those in need, and at the same time not succumb to the seductions of the woman to whom he is attracted. He shows utmost heroism in the performance of his duty and for the woman he has learned to love. "Greater love than this no man has, that he lays down his life for his friend." It's a pity there is so much killing in the film. The underlying Asian themes (which are also gospel values) are sidetracked by the intense violence.

Allan's sidekick, Charlie, adds not only comic relief but also a confusing value system. He is eager for a bribe, for honor and pleasure but at the same time is able to accept his inadequacy to be a good husband. He is a dedicated father who desires the best for his child. He also exhibits valor and dedication to duty although reluctantly. Isn't he the picture of everyman? Eager to be good and virtuous but is bedeviled by his own inadequacies, failures and weakness. Allan's sacrifice gives a new lease in life not only to Michelle but to him as well.

Outstanding Features: Action scenes

Hogg from the austin chronicle

Hong Kong martial arts superstar Jet Li Lien-jie leaves his pigtail, swords, and spears behind for this entertaining modern-day action picture, opting instead for a full head of hair and a seemingly never-ending arsenal of handguns. Li plays a stoic bodyguard from Mainland China who is sent to Hong Kong in order to protect the spoiled young wife (*Love on Delivery's* Chueng Lai Tai) of a wealthy businessman who, after witnessing a brutal murder by Triad gangsters, is constantly in danger from their vicious hitmen. As the film progresses, the initially rigid Lai Tai slowly starts to fall for Li, who has himself become the target of a personal vendetta when he makes the mistake of killing an unhinged ex-soldier's brother in the line of duty. Although the plot and title bear resemblance to a certain American Kevin Costner vehicle, Li makes an infinitely more convincing bodyguard, the romantic subplot between Jet and Lai Tai moves in unexpected directions, and director Corey (*Fong Sai Yuk*) Yuen Kwai keeps the pace fast (*unlike* the ridiculously overlong Costner picture) and provides a bravura action climax to boot. It ends up on a cleverly ambiguous note, leaving Li's character's fate more or less up to the audience. There is some

unwanted comic relief with Li's two bumbling cop sidekicks, as well as some goofy sitcom-esque transition shots, but for the most part, *Bodyguard From Beijing* is lively, unpretentious fun.

2.5 stars (J.O.)

Black Mask (from Variety)

A visually impressive, big-budget attempt to create a new action-hero franchise for Hong Kong-based Jet Li, "Black Mask" will appeal to genre buffs and should prove a smart video item in the West. But wider breakout looks unlikely because, as with so much of Li's work, the thesp's cool personality militates against much emotional involvement. **Though the fight sequences (handled by veteran Yuen Woo-ping) are up to snuff, the pic is less successful overall than other recent Li vehicles, especially Cory Yuen's superb 1994 actioner "The Bodyguard From Beijing," which put his icy qualities to positive (and often very funny) dramatic use.** Though Li is in active discussions with several companies Stateside, his potential as an English-language action figure looks problematic.