



The Eight Escorts

Hsu Feng, Tan Tao Liang, Wang Chung, Lee Shou Hsien. Directed by H.L. Pao. Produced by Chen Tien Lai, Chin Shu Mei. Released by CAV Distribution for World Video. Hong Kong (English-dubbed). 90 minutes. Not rated.

"The Eight Escorts" might have become yet another forgotten '70s era martial arts flick if not for the magnetic presence of Hsu Feng, one of the first major female action stars to emerge from the '60s, thanks primarily to her appearance in the films of the great King Hu. This is, incidentally, the same Hsu Feng who would later go on to a successful career as a producer of such films as the Cannes Film Festival winner "Farewell My Concubine."

Here she co-stars as a colleague of a great martial artist hired to protect a small town's commerce from a ruthless bandit. There's some spectacular fighting here and considerably more in the way of plot than what is customary for formulaic period martial arts fare. Many such films failed to even go into production with a proper script, although there is clearly considerably more advance planning in this English-dubbed version of the effort.

Also included is the terrific trailer for "Heroes Among Heroes," the fabulous period action epic starring Donnie Yen. **-By Wade Major**

*** (Audio: C-, Video: C-, Features: C+)