

60th
Film Festival
Locarno
Piazza Grande



THE DRUMMER

BY
KENNETH
BI

THE MATCH FACTORY

THE DRUMMER



SYNOPSIS THE DRUMMER BY KENNETH BI

*In the East, the drum is the king of all musical instruments.
The intense sound of the drum can penetrate a man's body.
The solemn beat of the drum can open a man's heart.
The powerful vibration of the drum can awaken a man's soul.*

Sid, the rebellious son of Kwan, a controlling and savage triad boss in Hong Kong, has to flee to Taiwan upon enraging his father's adversary, a powerful tycoon and underground business leader. Hiding out in the mountains, Sid encounters a group of Zen drummers whose mesmerizing art, rigorous physical training, and austere way of life pique this hostile urban young man's interest and he requests to join the group. Although Sid despises his father, he is turning out to be a younger version of him: wild and defiant. Immersing in the world of the Zen drummers eventually converts him into a firm and focused young man. Sid's independence from the triad life and his father is profoundly challenged, however, when a twist of fate awaits him back home in Hong Kong and forces him to choose between loyalty to his family and his new found faith in himself ...



KENNETH BI

DIRECTOR AND SCRIPTWRITER

Born in Hong Kong, Kenneth Bi graduated with honours in Theatre/Film from Brock University, Canada, in 1989. He has written, acted, and directed numerous theatre and film productions both in Canada and Hong Kong. Besides being an experienced TV and film writer, Bi also boasts art direction and directing credits for music videos. His feature film debut, *RICE RHAPSODY* (Hainan Chicken Rice, 2004), won several prestigious awards, such as the Platinum Award for Theatrical Feature Film at the 2005 World-fest in Houston, Best New Director Award at the 2006 Hong Kong Film Awards, as well as being named Top Ten Chinese Language Films of 2005 by the Chinese Film Critics Association. *THE DRUMMER* is his second feature film.



CAST

Sid
JAYCEE CHAN
Kwan
TONY LEUNG KA FAI
Hong Dou
LEE SINJE
Ah Chiu
ROY CHEUNG
Sina
JOSIE HO
Stephen Ma
KENNETH TSANG
Chinese Zen Drummers
U THEATRE

TECHNICAL DATA
FORMAT
35 mm / 1:1.85 / Colour /
Dolby SRD
LENGTH
115 mins
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE
Chinese
(Mandarin, Cantonese)
SUBTITLES
English

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

In December of 2000, I saw a performance in Hong Kong by a drumming troupe from Taiwan that changed my view of life completely. Not one word was spoken throughout the entire performance, yet they seemed to have spoken volumes. In the two and half hours of drumming, they exuded a graceful energy of inner calm that was extremely powerful. Merely a few minutes into the performance, the audience realized that they were watching men and women who have truly made sacrifices for their art.

I learned that the troupe of twelve men and women train and practice at the top of a mountain in Taiwan. In the idyllic setting of the mountain, they practice Tai Chi, martial arts, meditation, and drumming. Initially there was no electricity, running water or transportation up the peak, so only those who were absolutely determined and committed had the mental and physical stamina to remain in the group.

Greatly inspired and affected by their performance, I made my journey up the mountain to meet them, interview them and to witness people who were willing to take the long road in today's world of ease and convenience. One of the drummers said, without pretension, "If you drum for one week, you will have one week's worth of skill. If you drum for three years, you will have three years worth of skill. There is no short cut."

In interviewing them, I found them to be sincere, passionate and open-minded. They were a group of people with diverse backgrounds. Most were local Taiwanese and Taiwanese aborigines, a couple hailed from Malaysia, and a few came from Hong Kong. After researching their philosophies and daily routines, I began writing *THE DRUMMER*. My last few scripts had been comedies and in *THE DRUMMER* I found myself preoccupied in a serious subject matter.

I began looking at different aspects of myself and how they collided with one another. The animal in me colliding with my rational self, and the philosophical thrusting against my emotional side. Which one of these aspects defines us and how do we come to terms with all our different facets? Even if we find peace in a peaceful place, it seems that nirvana is elusive and we can never truly be in a state of perfect happiness because the next trial to test us is always around the corner.

THE DRUMMER therefore, is one such journey of self-discovery.





THE PRODUCTION

Filmed on location in Hong Kong and Taiwan, and co-produced by Hong Kong's Kenbiroli Films, Taiwan's Arc Light Films and Twenty Twenty Vision of Germany, **THE DRUMMER** is the first film to combine an engaging character-driven story with the magnificent art of Chinese Zen drumming.

U Theatre was founded in 1988. At their creative headquarters atop Laochuan Shan, surrounded by the bustling metropolis of Taipei, Taiwan, members of U Theatre devote themselves to enriching the spirit and mastering ever more complex percussion skills. Members maintain a strict daily training regimen that includes a full menu of martial arts, meditation, percussion practice, and Tai Chi. The comparative rigors of the U Theatre training gives troupe members levels of stamina, energy, and personal well-being unmatched by other performance groups.

Bringing together exquisite Zen drumming, the search for the meaning of existence, and the integration of art into life in all their performances, U Theatre has become a highly sought after marquee player at numerous international arts events.

U Theatre was not only the inspiration for Kenneth Bi's story, but also a major attraction for the stellar cast:

THE DRUMMER stars some of the most celebrated actors and actresses in Chinese cinema today: Tony Leung Ka Fai (Best Actor, 2006 Hong Kong Film Awards), Jaycee Chan (Best New Actor nominee, 2004 Hong Kong Film Awards), Lee Sinje (Best New Talent Award, 2001 Berlin International Film Festival) and Josie Ho (Best Supporting Actress, 2003 Hong Kong Film Awards).

CREW

DIRECTOR AND SCRIPTWRITER
KENNETH BI

PRODUCERS
**ROSA LI, PEGGY CHIAO,
THANASSIS KARATHANOS**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS
**ALBERT YEUNG,
WILLIAM FU, ROSA LI**

CINEMATOGRAPHER
SAM KOA

EDITORS
**ISABEL MEIER,
KENNETH BI**

ART DIRECTOR
ALEX MOK

MUSIC
ANDRE MATTHIAS

SOUND DESIGN
TU DUU-CHIH

A CO-PRODUCTION OF
**KENBIROLI FILMS LTD,
TWENTY TWENTY VISION
AND ARC LIGHT FILMS LTD**

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