



Spring in a Small Town A film by Fei Mu

Regarded as the finest work from the first great era of Chinese filmmaking, Fei Mu's quiet, piercingly poignant study of adulterous desire and guilt-ridden despair is a remarkable rediscovery, often compared to David Lean's *Brief Encounter*. Following its theatrical release last year as part of the BFI's major season *A Century of Chinese Cinema*, *Spring in a Small Town* will be released on DVD by the BFI on 23 February 2014.

After eight years of marriage to Liyan – once rich but now a shadow of his former self following a long, ruinous war – Yuwen does little except deliver his daily medication. A surprise visit from Liyan's friend Zhang re-energises the household, but also stirs up dangerously suppressed longings and resentments.

Focusing on people rather than politics, director Fei Mu's greatest achievement perfectly captures the dilemma of desire raging against loyalty, and sits alongside both the tender family dramas of Japan's Yasujiro Ozu and the wonderful post-war humanist realist cinema of René Clément, Satyajit Ray and Vittorio De Sica. It has been acknowledged as a formative influence by Zhang Yimou (*House of Flying Daggers*), Chen Kaige (*Farewell My Concubine*), Jia Zhangke (*Still Life*), and Wong Kar-wai (*In the Mood for Love*).

Fei Mu's deft use of locations, dissolves and camera movements makes for a fraught, febrile mood of hesitant passion, entrapment and ennui. Cinematically and psychologically sophisticated, *Spring in a Small Town* has been restored by the China Film Archive as part of the Digital Restoration Project. It is accompanied here by two rare and fascinating films from the BFI National Archive.

Special features

- BFI re-release trailer
- *A Small Town in China* (1933, 9 mins): an intimate portrait of community life in an unidentified Chinese town
- *This is China* (1946, 9 mins): a fascinating compilation of scenes showing diversity and disparity in 1940s China
- Illustrated booklet with film notes and credits

Product details

RRP: £19.99 / cat. no. BFIV2014 / Cert U / 94 mins
China / 1948 / black and white / Mandarin with optional English subtitles / DVD9 / Original aspect ratio 1.33:1 / Dolby Digital 1.0 mono audio

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BFI DVDs are available from all good DVD retailers or by mail order from the BFI Shop Tel: 020 7815 1350 or online at www.bfi.org.uk/shop
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