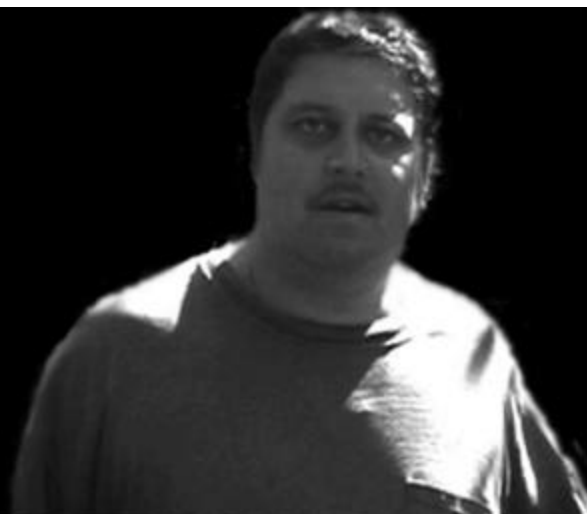


DING DONG



Press Kit
November 2004



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a film written & directed by Tony Lam

Film Synopsis

Ding Dong is a comic parody of *Beauty and the Beast*. A big tough guy with a voracious appetite for Hostess ding donuts encounters a vision of beauty in the park and is hopelessly struck by Cupid's arrow. The ill-fated meeting precipitates a desperate chase, which is comically intercut with scenes from the 1933 classic film, King Kong.

Ding Dong is a man who prides himself in his masculinity. He bristles at any hint of "effeminate behavior," like watching a black-and-white movie. He is cynical about love and thumbs his nose at the idea of beauty, until he unexpectedly comes across a beautiful young woman doing yoga in the park. Suddenly, his entire tough guy façade and romantic cynicism melt away in the face of this Botticelli Venus, in the same way that King Kong falls under the immediate spell of Fay Wray's beauty.

As in King Kong, the young woman's natural instinct is not to be charmed by her beastly new admirer, but to take horrified flight from him. In the ensuing chase, the story of Ding Dong becomes seamlessly intertwined with the story of King Kong.

Director's Statement

Ding Dong is a comic take on the age-old theme of “Beauty and the Beast.” It is an amusing tale about love at first sight, Cupid’s arrow, what the French call “the thunderbolt.” While Beauty may be harmless and delicate in appearance, there is scarcely anything more overpowering and disarming in human experience.

King Kong was the king of all beasts, even besting the king of the dinosaurs, Tyrannosaurus Rex. Yet for all his mighty prowess, he was rendered helpless by the beautiful Ann Darrow (as played by Fay Wray). Similarly, Ding Dong considers himself at the top of the male food chain. Indeed, the film opens with Ding Dong devouring a pastry in symbolic fashion. On the coffee table in front of him, a stack of yet-to-be-eaten Hostess ding dongs is piled high in a replica of the Empire State Building. Yet, as in King Kong, it is Beauty that is the ultimate devourer.

In this film, I also wanted to experiment with Sergei Eisenstein’s theory of montage, whereby two dissimilar shots intercut together create a new meaning. King Kong is a horror film, and the chase in Ding Dong plays out dramatically. However, by intercutting between King Kong and Ding Dong, the film achieves a third effect -- comedy.

Finally, I wanted to pay homage to two films that have influenced my desire to become a filmmaker. The first one is obvious – King Kong, a favorite film in my childhood. The second one is more subtle – Citizen Kane, a favorite film in my adulthood. The chase in the park is bracketed by two scenes of the entrance gate, with the camera panning across to focus portentously on the word “Run” in “Runyon Canyon Park.” Visually, I meant for these two sequences to be reminiscent of the forbidding Xanadu gates in the opening and closing shots of Citizen Kane.

Moreover, the gated entrance also suggests the giant wall on Skull Island, which initially separates the realm of Beast from the realm of Man in King Kong, until Beauty forces those two worlds to come together and collide disastrously. Beauty has a way of doing that!

Director's Biography



Tony Lam is a filmmaker and screenwriter, who lives in Los Angeles, California. To date, he has written, directed, and produced two short films, DING DONG and Birthday Party. Birthday Party was an official selection at the VC FilmFest 2005: The Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival and received a Festival Staff Favorites Recommendation. He has completed one feature-length screenplay and three short screenplays, one of which won a Finalist Award at the 2005 Moondance International Film Festival, one of the top screenwriting festivals in the world.

Tony studied literature and history at Georgetown University, East Asian studies at Yale University, and Asian history at the University of Michigan, and has received over a dozen merit scholarships and awards. He has traveled to many countries around the world, including a three year residence in Hong Kong as a Fulbright Scholar.

In 1997, his life became the subject of a documentary called “Moving Population,” produced by Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), filmed in three countries, and broadcast primetime in Southern China and Hong Kong. Tony is also an entrepreneur, starting his own business in 2001.

As a child, Tony’s parents could not afford him the luxury of many toys, so Tony amused himself by writing short stories and plays, making comic books, and building elaborate, character-driven fantasy worlds with his brother that existed only in their shared imagination. So though he grew up in a family of modest means, Tony never felt deprived, because his restless imagination kept him richly entertained. Moreover, his parents gave him gifts worth far more than toys. From his parents, Tony inherited a narrative universe.

Often at the evening dinner table, amidst steaming bowls of rice, Tony would listen to his father recite classical Chinese poems from memory or tell riveting stories that lasted past dessert. His father depicted episodes from *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* so vividly Tony could see the heroic battles raging. At other times, his father recounted his own “Indiana Jones” adventures through the turbulent, war-torn decades of twentieth century China, such as the time when coastal pirates attacked the steamer he was on, and he stuffed his valuables into a banana to prevent them from being taken.

Tony’s mother had her own stories to tell. She would recollect her coming of age during the first Communist decade in China—the initial excitement, the endless campaigns, and the pain of watching her father forced to sweep the streets. This environment of constant storytelling formed the webwork of Tony’s life and fueled his imagination.

Tony hopes to bring all these diverse life experiences to bear on his work as a filmmaker.

Film Credits

Cast

Avi K. Garg Ding Dong

Sylvia Sun Limm Beauty

Marcos La Porte The Friend

Robert Kuhar The Roommate

Tony Lam Bystander in the Park

Crew

Tony Lam Director, Producer, Screenwriter, Editor, and Director of Photography

Still Photos



“Beast”



“Beauty”