A CHINESE GHOST STORY
Directed by Ching-choi Fung
Written by Yeung Kai-chi
Starring Leslie Cheung, Wong Tso-yin, and Wu Ma
At the Museum of Fine Arts
September 23

A BETTER TOMORROW
Directed and written by John Woo
Starring Chow Yun-fat, Ti Lung, and Leslie Cheung
At the Museum of Fine Arts
September 16, 17
Both films are presented as part of the film festival Cinema of Blazing Passion: Hong Kong
Films in the Eighties

By Danny So

A Chinese Ghost Story is by far the best movie dirved by this director. Tsui Hark has ever made. Even those disappointed by
Hark’s other films will be thrilled with this one after seeing it. Leslie Cheung stars as a poor student who falls in love with a
deflicted spirit, played by Wong Tso-yin, who can not reincarnate because of an improper burial. With the help of a Tao sor-
caster (Wu Ma), they rampage through hell to save Wong from eternal damnation. Cheung’s performance is splendid. His
charming and clever acting fully brings his character to life. On the other hand, in a role
requiring little in terms of liveliness, Wong looks stilted. With her long hair and
white dress, she was the prettiest ghost ever filmed. Unfortunately, she has only one expression throughout the movie, a melancholic look that
means to stem the audience’s pity but can not be classified as gifted acting. Wu is more than adequate as he brings
a good deal of humor to the film through a number of witty comments. If you are looking for special
effects, you will be delighted by A Chinese Ghost Story. The simple plot is definitely aided by the film’s techni-
cal wizardry. Although the visuals are not as spectacular as the more budgeted American films, they still have the
potential to dazzle.

Unlike most other gangster films made in Hong Kong which are filled with action instead of plot, A Better Tomorrow is a
distinctly action-packed movie which manages to clearly explain its rich emotions. When it was released in 1986, it set a trend for
all other Hong Kong films of the genre. Mark, played by Chow Yun-fat, is the hit man who is second-in-command for
the largest organized crime ring in Hong Kong. He is a courageous and self-assured man

The best sequence of the movie occurs late, as Mark and Ho reunite in a park-
ing lot. He has become a taxi driver attempting to erase his past, and Mark has become a lonely janitor for the
group. Their meeting sets off hidden emotions and brings out the best of the two actors.

Although the movie is packed with action, particularly in the final scene when Mark is allowed to show all of his
force, it has much more to offer. He’s confrontation with his cop brother shows clearly the inner struggle that Ho
must go through in an effort to become a law-abiding citizen. Cheung, a famous Asian actor but a relatively
inexperienced actor before this film, is brilliant. Still, his performance is over-
shadowed by those of Chow and Ti.

As in most other Hong Kong films, John Woo’s A Better Tomorrow uses women merel-
ly as objects. Leslie Cheung’s wife, the only significant female lead in the movie, is given
ly as objects. Leslie Cheung’s wife, the only

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THE ARTS

Ghost Story, Better Tomorrow highlight MFA festival

Chow Yun-fat as hit man Mark in director John Woo's A
Better Tomorrow.

Therefore, I am God.”

Although Mark’s confidence and killer instincts are his best traits, they eventually
come into question as he is crippled in a
shooting. He’s fall from power is brought about by
an entirely different set of events. He
begins to question his life when his broth-
er Leslie Cheung), who is unaware of Ho’s
involvement in organized crime, becomes a
cop. He lacks the toughness and cruelty need to
be a powerful leader, and he is eventually
betrayed by a member of his own gang and
sent behind bars.

“A Better Tomorrow” is directed by John Woo.

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