

City After Dark

(aka: "Manila By Night")

Philippines : 1980 : dir. Ishmael Bernal : Regal

: ? min

prod: : scr: Ishmael Bernal : dir.ph.:

Charito Solis; Bernardo Bernardo; Cherie Gil; Rio Locsin; Orestes Ojeda; Maya Valdez;
Lorna Tolentino; William Martinez; Alma Moreno; Gina Alajar

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	□	≠	Z	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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International Film Guide 1982 review:

"In terms of quality, 1980 has been the best year for Filipino cinema since 1976. At least seven films reached a level of artistic achievement. Two films were invited to international festivals: **"CITY AFTER DARK"** to Berlin (though the Filipino authorities later forbade its export) and **"BONA"** to Cannes where, having squeaked through the censors, it ended up as a late arrival in the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs.

Ishmael Bernal's **"CITY AFTER DARK"** (formerly **"MANILA BY NIGHT"**) follows the structure of Arthur Schitzler's **"LA RONDE"**,

in which characters connect with other characters in a circular chain of events. The film follows a lesbian drug-pusher in love with a blind masseuse, a prostitute who masquerades as a nurse to her boyfriend, a homosexual couturier who philosophises on the deceptions of life, a girl from the provinces who becomes pregnant by a taxi driver, and a naïve schoolboy involved in drugs and homosexuality. Despite bad camerawork and some awkward editing, the film captures the spirit of Manila's brothels and its night life."

No further information currently available. Even as far back as 1980, the fleshpots of South East Asia were already starting to attract attention from the self-appointed vice squads of charities like Terre des Hommes and western tabloids with circulation worries, so it isn't altogether surprising the Markos regime didn't want a film of this kind exacerbating their PR problems. Without viewing the piece, we must suspend judgement on whether it reflects or merely exploits the seamier side of life in the Filipino capital. Certainly it would be interesting to compare it with more recent titles like the Danish **"SMUKKE DRENG"** (92) or the Czech **"BODY WITHOUT SOUL"** (96), whose accounts of teenage prostitution are perhaps more keen to apportion blame than enhance our understanding.

See those titles, and subject index under **ALCOHOLISM / DRUGS, ASIA, CENSORSHIP / BANNED FILMS** and **SEX & SEXUALITY**.