



Loving Leslie: A Leslie Cheung Tribute at USC ~ Sep. 10, 2005

A LESLIE CHEUNG TRIBUTE

In these early years of the new millennium, when Asian film action has become as integral a part of Hollywood as CGI effects and rap music, Hong Kong cinema of the 1980s and early 90s has come to be regarded as something of a golden age by cineastes the world over—and no other actor embodied that golden era more than Leslie Cheung. He was its sly, strutting mascot, a pop icon whose angelic voice was surpassed only by his astonishing range as an actor. Leslie first appeared in the important Hong Kong “New Wave” films of the early 1980s, but it wasn’t until the 1986-7 hits ***A Better Tomorrow*** and ***A Chinese Ghost Story*** that he established himself as Asia’s biggest star—and, coincidentally, led the way for worldwide recognition of Hong Kong’s local cinema. In the 90s, Hong Kong seemed anxious to prove that it could also fill the west’s arthouse theaters, and once again Leslie was at the forefront, starring for director Wong Kar-Wai in ***Days of Being Wild***, ***Ashes of Time*** and ***Happy Together***. In 1993 Leslie seemed to signal some sort of cultural détente when he became one of the first Hong Kong actors to have the lead in a film by a mainland Chinese director, Chen Kaige’s ***Farewell, My Concubine***, which garnered an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Film. As the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to China neared, Leslie took the risky role of a porn film director in 1996’s ***Viva Erotica***, which earned a Category III—or “X”—rating. In the post-handover years, Hong Kong’s Golden Age may have ended, but Leslie’s last few roles seemed to point toward a future of brilliantly-explored characters in more intimate and unusual films. Instead, Leslie chose to put a definitive end to one of the most dazzling eras—and lives—in global cinema history, when he took his own life on April 1, 2003. His era had passed, and in a few interviews given before his death he seemed wistfully aware of the fact.

But what an era it was, the Era of Leslie. Any list of great scenes from Hong Kong’s heyday is virtually a compendium of Leslie scenes: Leslie, in his white underwear, concentrating on perfecting his dance moves before a mirror in ***Days of Being Wild***; Leslie going from smug self-assurance to astonishment to outrage as he watches the two Anitas kiss in ***Who’s the Man, Who’s the Woman***; Leslie receiving an underwater kiss of life from a dead woman in ***A Chinese Ghost Story***; a decadent, heavy-lidded Leslie languidly smoking opium in ***Rouge***; Leslie performing a brilliant slapstick routine with a giant fish in ***A Chinese Feast***; Leslie dying in the back of a car, a single tear rolling down one cheek in ***Shanghai Grand***; Leslie as the drunken warrior carving his way (with staggering grace) through a forest-full of swordsmen in ***The Bride With White Hair***; Leslie engaged in a slow, sad close dance with Tony Leung Chiu-Wai in a tiled kitchen in ***Happy Together***; Leslie pulling back from the lip of a skyscraper and turning to life at the end of his last film, ***Inner Senses***.

In 1995, Leslie was asked why he’d given up singing (in 1989) to focus completely on acting, and he said that acting was “like having more lives during your lifetime.” Here’s hoping he found happiness in at least some of those lives. His audience certainly has.

—Lisa Morton



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OKINAWA RENDEZVOUS (2000, 35mm color, 99 min)

Director/Producer: Gordon Chan Car-Seung; Writer: Chan Hing-Kai; Cinematography: Cheng Siu Keung. Cast: Leslie Cheung Kwok-Wing, Faye Wong, Tony Leung Ka-Fai, Gigi Lai, Vincent Kok Tak-Chiu, Stephanie Che Yuen-Yuen, Asuka Higuchi. In Cantonese, Japanese, English with English subtitles.

Tony Leung Ka-Fai plays a bewildered, frustrated police file clerk yearning for a chance to make a name for himself in the department and to escape his mundane relationship with long-suffering girlfriend (Gigi Lai). He gets his break while vacationing in Okinawa, when he spots an international thief (the suave Leslie Cheung) who has just stolen a yakuza's personal diary and is waiting for his cash to surface. Both men meet up with Faye Wong, a mysterious but hauntingly beautiful barkeep who happens to have a duffel bag full of cash.



"Marvelous location, guileless performances...a breezy, summer comedy with no pretensions."
—Kozo, LoveHKFilm.com

"[Okinawa] is a nonchalant gangster noir that goes out of its way to avoid the slam-bang cliches of the Hong Kong movie, the gunfire barrages and fight choreography."
—Bob Graham, San Francisco Chronicle

FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE (1993, 35mm color, 172 min)

Director: Chen Kaige; Writer: Lilian Lee and Lu Wei; Cast: Leslie Cheung Kwok-Wing, Zhang Fengyi, Gong Li; Print: Miramax Films. In Mandarin with English subtitles.

Spanning fifty-three years, this is the story of boyhood friends whose lives at a Peking opera theatre unfold against the historical backdrop of a country in upheaval. A sumptuous epic that cuts to the heart of an old-fashioned love triangle: a man and a woman both in love with the same man.

"A vastly entertaining movie. Sink into it with pleasure and count it a cultural achievement."
—Vincent Canby, The New York Times



"Visual splendor...emotionally comprehensible. This is one of the year's best films."
—Roger Ebert, Chicago-Sun Times

"A thrilling love story, a political epic and an intimate character study rolled into one stunning package. If you've never seen a non-English language film before, find this one. It's just that good."
—Scott Renshaw, Stanford University

Awards:

*Won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival - 1993.

*Won Golden Globe Awards for the Best Foreign Language Film - 1993

*Won the BAFTA [British Academy Award]: Best Foreign Language Film – 1993

*Nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film – 1993

*Won the Japanese Critic Society Best Actor Award (Foreign Movie): Leslie Cheung 1994



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LESLIE CHEUNG BIOGRAPHY

Leslie Cheung Kwok-Wing was born in Hong Kong on September 12, 1956; the youngest of ten children, his father was a successful tailor—and a largely unsuccessful father, as Leslie later recalled being a lonely and emotionally-neglected child. After receiving his education in both Hong Kong and Britain, Leslie went on to major in textiles at Leeds University, but was called back to Hong Kong only a year later when his father became ill. Although his father hoped the young Leslie would take over the family business, Leslie's destiny was changed forever when his performance of Don McLean's "American Pie" earned him second place in the 1977 RTV Asian Song Contest. A year later the photogenic Leslie starred in his first movie—*Erotic Dream of Red Chamber*—and for the next four years he honed his acting skills in RTV television series.

He returned to the big screen in 1982, appearing in films for both the venerable Shaw Brothers and Hong Kong's "New Wave" filmmakers; his performance in Patrick Tam's *Nomad* as a drifting, uncertain young man earned him his first of eight nominations for Best Actor in the Hong Kong Film Awards. After releasing four CD's, his 1984 song "Monica" (from the CD of the same name) won nearly every major Hong Kong music award, and his 1985 series of concerts established him as Asia's biggest pop star.

Leslie followed that success with his performance in 1986's *A Better Tomorrow* (directed by John Woo and produced by Tsui Hark), which not only became Hong Kong's biggest film of the year, but also marked the Hong Kong film industry's emergence into global cinema. A year later Leslie received his second Best Actor nomination for *A Better Tomorrow 2*, and also starred for producer Tsui Hark in *A Chinese Ghost Story*, which became a worldwide hit. After again winning all of the major music awards in 1987 for his song "No Mood to Sleep", Leslie starred in Stanley Kwan's 1988 arthouse hit *Rouge*, and also became the first Asian star signed to represent Pepsi Cola.

In 1989, Leslie was voted number one in Commercial Radio's "Top Ten Most Beautiful People in Hong Kong," and he shocked his fans when he revealed that he wanted to retire from music to concentrate on acting. His decision seemed to pay off, since in 1990 he won Best Actor for his performance as the sensual womanizer Yuddy in Wong Kar-Wai's *Days of Being Wild*, and in 1993 he starred in Chen Kaige's universally-acclaimed *Farewell My Concubine*, which earned an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Film and set a new standard for gay-themed films. As if to boldly demonstrate his diversity, that same year Leslie played a swaggering swordsman and lover to Brigitte Lin's title character in Ronny Yu's exquisite period fantasy *The Bride With White Hair*, and received a Hong Kong Film Awards Best Original Song nomination for "Hung Ngaan Baak Faat" ("Red Face White Hair"), which he not only performed but also wrote the music for. In 1994 Leslie was named Best Actor by the Hong Kong Film Critics Society, for his performances in Wong Kar-wai's *Ashes of Time*, as well as *He's a Woman, She's a Man, It's a Wonderful Life* and *Long and Winding Road*. 1995 and '96 saw Leslie give two of his funniest performances, first in Tsui Hark's *The Chinese Feast* and then in Derek Yee's *Viva Erotica*; 1995 also saw Leslie's return to music, as



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he released four CD's that year alone. As Hong Kong was being handed over from Britain to China in 1997, Leslie played a petulant gay lover adrift in Buenos Aires in Wong Kar-Wai's *Happy Together*, garnering Best Actor nominations from both the Hong Kong Film Awards and Taiwan's Golden Horse Awards, and in 2000 he cemented his status as Hong Kong's preeminent gay icon when he dedicated a song during one of his concerts to his longtime partner Daffy Tong.

As the Hong Kong film industry experienced a slump in the early 2000's, Leslie seemed to focus more on music, although his performances as a gun-obsessed psychotic in *Double Tap* and a troubled psychiatrist in *Inner Senses* garnered him more Best Actor nominations. On April 1, 2003, Leslie shocked his legions of fans by leaping from a 24th-floor balcony of a luxury hotel in downtown Hong Kong, leaving only a note that cited "depression." His funeral services were attended by roughly 10,000 fans, and his passing was mourned by virtually every member of Hong Kong's entertainment community (where he was known simply as "Gor-gor," or older brother). As director Chen Kaige wrote in memorium, "Leslie was a rare flower in Hong Kong's entertainment world, which only blossoms once in a century."

SELECTED FILMOGRAPHY

Erotic Dream of Red Chamber (1978)
Teenage Dreamers (1982)
Nomad (1982)
Behind the Yellow Line (1984)
A Better Tomorrow (1986)
A Chinese Ghost Story (1987)
A Better Tomorrow 2 (1987)
Rouge (1988)
A Chinese Ghost Story 2 (1990)
Days of Being Wild (1990)
Once a Thief (1991)
The Bride With White Hair (1993)
Farewell, My Concubine (1993)
He's a Woman, She's a Man (1994)
Ashes of Time (1994)
The Chinese Feast (1995)
The Phantom Lover (1995)
Temptress Moon (1996)
Viva Erotica (1996)
Happy Together (1997)
The Kid (1999)
Okinawa Rendezvous (2000)
Double Tap (2000)
Inner Senses (2002)

EVENT CALENDAR

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Fat Rules (2000)

Two-weekend screening of the films of Hong Kong darling, Chow Yun-Fat at the Laemmle's Santa Monica. Featuring the acclaimed romantic comedy, Mabel Cheung's *An Autumn's Tale*, and the comedy classic that spawned dozens of remakes, *God of Gamblers*.



Go! Johnnie To (2001)

The films of Johnnie To fill your senses with beautiful cinematography, blistering action choreography and at times more plot twists than dialogue. Featuring the premiere of 4 films by Hong Kong director Johnnie To and two other audience-favorites, this event was co-produced with the UCLA Film and Television Archive.



Seoul Cinema (2002)

UCLA Film and Television Archive and Korean Cultural Center, Los Angeles, present a 6-film series highlighting some of the most popular South Korean films of the last decade. The Los Angeles premiere of Heng Sang-Soo's *Turning Gate*, will feature an in-person appearance by the director which we are proud to sponsor.



midnight@sunset™ (2002)

Join the explosive world of hip Asian films at midnight when AFF and Laemmle Sunset spotlight a rare mix of current, high-profile Asian films, some never-before-seen, but all much coveted. Included are films from Hong Kong, Japan and Korea to be screened on weekends at midnight throughout the summer.



Sammo@The-Egyptian (2002)

Special screening of the 1989 Sammo Hung classic *Pedicab Driver* at the landmark Egyptian Theatre, an event which honored the talents of one of the world's premiere filmmakers today. Co-produced with Just Cause Productions and featuring a Q&A with Sammo Hung and Andy Klein, this near-capacity event was catered by Nestlé and featured a Who's Who of the Asian film community and press corps.



Taisho Trilogy at the JACCC (2002)

For the first time in sequence on the big screen, Seijun Suzuki's Taisho Trilogy -- *Zigeunerweizen*, *Mirage Theatre* and *Yumeji*. A triple-threat descent into mystery, betrayal and madness. Featuring a Suzuki-style fashion show and silent auction sponsored by AFF and Kimono-Ya. The series also included a film panel attended by film critic David Chute, Tokyo Scope's Patrick Macias and AFF's Alan Lawrence.



Korean Classics (2003)

Two weekend screenings of festival award winner, Bae Chang-Ho's *My Heart*, tells the deeply moving and epic tale of one woman's discovery of her Korean identity. Plus a special screening of Park Chan-Wook's insidiously brilliant *Joint Security Area*, a mystery drama about a shooting at the North and South Korea border town of Panmunjom.



midnight@sunset™ II (2003)

AFF's summer festival is back with a vengeance in *Ichi The Killer* and sharing the love in *Visitor Q*. Both are Takashi Miike classics. Controversial and despicable, Miike films will always elicit high, often nervous, reactions. Bring your vomit bags and catch them at midnight this summer.



Suzuki Junichi's Chanoma Festival (2003)

Critically acclaimed both in the US and in Japan, these films represent director Suzuki's lifelong efforts to restore heartwarming family values back into today's movies.



6th Wave Chinese Cinema at the Pacific Asia Museum (2003)

Fruit Chan's *Hollywood Hong Kong*, Zhang Yi-Bai's *Spring Subway*, Meng Jing-Hui's *Chicken Poets*, and Shi Runjiu's *A Beautiful New World*. Four incredible films, two evenings, one exquisite museum and a rare look at today's uncensored Chinese filmmakers. Satire, black chickens, magic poetry and life in the big city of Shanghai. This ain't your momma's pigs' feet.



Finally! Johnnie To (2003)

UCLA Film and Television Archive and AFF co-host the U.S. premiere of *PTU* with an in-person appearance by director Johnnie To.



Leslie Cheung Tribute (2003)

Leslie Cheung, the Golden Boy of Hong Kong Cinema, may not be with us anymore but his art lives on. Charismatic, sexually ambiguous and provocative, he quietly challenged conventional mores and titillated film and music fans worldwide. Come celebrate the life and work of one of Hong Kong's most colorful, enigmatic and treasured icons. Marathon run of films, concerts and guest speakers. A legend deserves no less.

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Chaos [Kaosu] (2003)

A kidnapper gets caught in the middle of a dangerous role-playing game when he finds his captive murdered. From the director of *Ringu*, *Chaos* has also been optioned as a remake to star Robert DeNiro and Benicio Del Toro. Co-promoted with Laemmle Theatres.



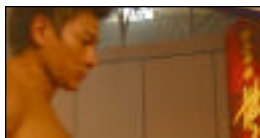
Zatoichi@ArcLight (2004)

Advance screening of Takeshi Kitano's blind swordsman, produced with Film Radar and Miramax Films. A sword fight demonstration choreographed by the stunt team at Just Cause precede the screening. Plus, a film panel discussion with critics David Chute and Andy Klein, with noted screenwriter Joey O'Brien.



Hero (2004)

Advance screening of the 2002 epic tale of love, loyalty, jealousy and intrigue from Academy Award Nominee Zhang Yimou. Megastars Tony Leung, Maggie Cheung, Donnie Yen, Jet Li and Zhang Ziyi head the cast as lone assassins during China's tumultuous Warring States period. Screening prizes awarded for AFF members.



midnight@sunset™ III (2004)

Our 3rd Annual Midnight@Sunset (MAS) comes with a twist. We're casting aside our brain-bludgeoning ways to salute one of our favorite actors, Andy Lau Tak-Wah (House of Flying Daggers, Infernal Affairs), in the L.A. premiere of the award-winning film, *Running On Karma*, directed by—of course—Johnnie To.



Infernal Affairs (2004)

Critically-acclaimed action thriller *Infernal Affairs* from director Andrew Lau Alan Mak (Siu Fai-Mak) and headlined by superstars Andy Lau and Tony Leung. Stylish, thoughtful and well-crafted, this is the first and still the best out of the IA trilogy. Co-presented by Miramax Films, *Infernal Affairs* will open nationwide in September and is the basis for a remake by Martin Scorsese starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Matt Damon and produced by Brad Grey, Jennifer Aniston and Brad Pitt's Plan B production company.



2004 Chanoma Festival (2004)

Features touching films about life, love and family from acclaimed director Junichi Suzuki. Includes some surprise gems by Akira Kurosawa.



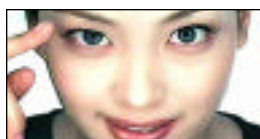
House of Flying Daggers (2004)

Official Cannes Film Festival Selection, *House of Flying Daggers*, is set in the year 859 AD as China's once flourishing Tang Dynasty is in decline. Two star-crossed lovers (Takeshi Kaneshiro and Ziyi Zhang) will reveal if their hearts hold true love or evil. Stars Andy Lau!



Kung Fu Hustle (2005)

Sony Pictures Classics' hilarious and action-packed film, *Kung Fu Hustle*, is about a hapless wannabe gangster in the 1940s. Huge hit across Asia and now making its debut in the U.S. Directed by superstar funny man Stephen Chow. Co-presented with Talk Cinema



VCFILMFEST (2005)

AFF is a community supporter for the 35th Annual Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival presented by AZN. Co-presented films from the Netherlands (*Paradise Girls*), South Korea (*Good For Her*), Singapore (*Perth*), and the U.S. (*Unleashed* starring Jet Li). Shown at the DGA, ArcLight and David Henry Hwang Theatre.

Loving Leslie: A Tribute to Leslie Cheung (2005)



Inspired by never-ending worldwide affection for the life and work of this legend, Asian Film Foundation and USC Cinema & Television, in association with Miramax Films, Maggi Taste of Asia, and Tai Seng Entertainment, featuring the films of one of Hong Kong's most beloved icons. Charity fundraiser will benefit the End Child Sexual Abuse Foundation. Sale of Leslie memorabilia signed by John Woo and Chen Kaige especially for this event.

CORPORATE

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Eiren Chong:

Eiren is the owner of Video Addicts, a video store specializing in Japanese and Hong Kong films. As a young Hong Kong filmmaker, he is currently working on multiple film projects in Los Angeles and also chaired the '92 Big Muddy Film Festival.

Shelley Hermes:

Shelley is a native Californian with a B.A. and post-grad work in Education. She works as an educator and administrator for a prestigious private school in Ojai, CA. Her experience in creating and managing core curriculum and fundraising programs earned her the Secretary's seat with AFF.

Reuben Langdon:

Reuben is an Actor/ Stuntman recently turned producer based in L.A. and works extensively throughout Asia. Credits include Toei's B-Fighter Kabuto, Japanese commercials, Jackie Chan's My Stunts, the internationally acclaimed Slow Fade, Benny Chan's Gen-Y Cops/Metal Mayhem, Jackie Chan's fantasy adventure Highbinders plus guest appearances and stunt performances on Disney's Mighty Morphin Power Rangers and CBS's Martial Law, starring Sammo Hung. Reuben is currently working as Associate Producer on Sammo Hung's (US\$50 million budgeted) American directorial debut movie Soul Calibur (www.sammohung.com), which is set to star Jackie Chan amongst others.

Cindy Li:

Born in Canton (Guangzhou), China, has a BA in economics at NanKai University, China and a MBA at Oklahoma State University. Currently she works as a Financial Analyst in a Healthcare Insurance Company in LA. She speaks Cantonese and Mandarin fluently and is our resident translator. She is good at Chinese water color painting and writing Chinese traditional poems.

Alex Lin:

Native of Singapore, Alex has a Masters degree in Architecture and 9 years graphic design experience. Dabbles in film shorts including opening ceremony of "1992 Armour Officer's Evening," local rock and accapella music bands, and freelances for MOCA. Currently Alex is the assistant architect at Jerde Partnerships architectural firm

Susanna Modjallal:

Susanna has seven years experience with a multi-national food and beverage conglomerate and over ten years as a freelance Hong Kong film critic/reporter. Co-produced and DJed a syndicated radio program from 1987-1990, during which time she reviewed concerts and interviewed members of international bands (INXS, Crowded House).

Romita Stutts:

Studied Mandarin at the University of Beijing, China and now at UCLA Extension. Volunteered as an English instructor to non-native speakers. Attended Loyola Marymount University - Communication Arts/Audio Engineer. Air Talent for KXLU's Jazz Nite Flite where she also for a time held the position Director of Jazz Programming.

Eriko Takano:

Eriko was working as department manager and graphic designer for Soldam Corporation in Japan between 1999 and 2001. She has been freelancing as a graphic designer since 1998. She is now doing DTP and graphic design for L'ovest magazine, a Japanese language magazine base in LA. Eriko is also training to become a yoga therapist.

Akiko Tetsuya:

Akiko continues to write freelance reviews of Hollywood films for the Asian media, contributes as an AFF member with reviews of Asian cinema, with a primary focus on films from Hong Kong/China. Ms. Tetsuya has covered the HKIFF for over 9 years, but this will be her first as a representative of AFF. She has just completed her first book on Brigitte Lin.

Andrew Thomson:

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Andrew has a degree in Audio/Video Engineering. He does freelance video editing, DVD authoring, recording, and graphic design. In his spare time he also contributes film reviews for various online websites.

Helen Yu:

Born in Hong Kong, Helen has a B.A. from New York University and a B.S. from Cal-State Northridge. She has over 16 years experience in publishing, advertising and marketing and is currently the marketing director for IRONMAN magazine.

ABOUT

ASIAN FILM FOUNDATION

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The Asian Film Foundation's primary purpose is to promote the cultures of Asia through the presentation of the region's rich cinematic traditions. One of our primary goals is to foster an awareness for the importance of film preservation for these films. Film screenings and festivals will be held throughout the year. Lectures by filmmakers will be held either in conjunction with screenings or separately. About 75% of the group's time will be spent on preparing and executing various festivals. Foundation members will be active in researching, writing, editing and producing a web site to disseminate information about films and Asian culture, constituting the remaining 25% of the Foundation officers' time. Fundraising events shall consist of film screenings and related activities. Solicitations for financial support will include canvassing corporate entities and applying for Local, State and Federal grants.

The Asian Film Foundation was established in 1999 as a nonprofit 501(c) 3 corporation to raise awareness of and appreciation for Asian culture through film in the U.S. We are a small but committed group of volunteers whose passion for Asian films and fascination for their cultures have brought us together. It is our goal to encourage cultural diversity by creating opportunities for interaction among varied ethnicities.

Our focus is on the exploration and promulgation of that unique social phenomenon called Asian pop culture where the edgy meets art, where Asians and non-Asians can find common ground, where the young embrace their heritage and the old can say, "I told you so." That place where the human condition cannot resist itself and is thus revealed in us all. That is where we want to go and where we want to take you.

FOCUS

- Produce a variety of accessible non-competitive Asian and Asian-themed film events
- Establish a strong online presence for Asian pop culture.
- Build relationships among Asian arts and cultural communities.
- Raise the profiles of Asian films and filmmakers.
- Support film preservation and conservation.
- Provide resources for additional research.

Volunteers please email your resume to: volunteerme@asianfilm.org