

ASHES OF TIME

REDUX

A Sony Pictures Classics release

A film by

WONG KAR WAI



FESTIVAL DE CANNES
OFFICIAL SELECTION
OUT OF COMPÉTITION

Official Selection: 2008 Toronto International Film Festival

93 minutes; Rating: TBA
35mm 1:1.85 Color; SR-D Dolby
In Cantonese and Mandarin
Year of Production: 2008

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Crew:

Written and Directed by	WONG Kar Wai
Based on the Story by	Louis CHA
Produced by	WONG Kar Wai, Jeff LAU, Jacky PANG Yee Wah
Executive Producers	TSAI Mu Ho, CHAN Ye Cheng
Director of Photography	Christopher DOYLE (H.K.S.C.)
Action Choreographer	Sammo HUNG
Edited by	William CHANG Suk Ping, Patrick TAM
Production Design by	William CHANG Suk Ping
Music by	Frankie CHAN, Roel A. GARCIA
Additional Score and Re-arrangement by	WU Tong
Featured Cello Solos by	Yo-Yo MA

Cast:

Ouyang Feng	...	Leslie CHEUNG
Murong Yin/Murong Yang	...	Brigitte LIN
Blind Swordsman	...	Tony LEUNG Chiu Wai
Peach Blossom	...	Carina LAU
Huang Yaoshi	...	Tony LEUNG Ka Fai
Girl	...	Charlie YOUNG
Hong Qi	...	Jacky CHEUNG
Hong Qi's wife	...	BAI Li
Swordsman	...	Collin CHOU

and with a special appearance by Maggie CHEUNG as The Woman

Director's Notes

In the winter of 1992, someone suggested that I make a film adaptation of Louis Cha's famous martial-arts novel *The Eagle-Shooting Heroes*. I re-read all four volumes of it and finally decided not to do an adaptation but instead to develop a new story about the early years of two of its main characters, Dongxie (Lord of the East) and Xidu (Lord of the West). In the book, both of them appear only in old age. I chose these two because they have exactly opposite personalities; you could think of one as the antithesis of the other.

Martial-arts fiction has a long history in Chinese literature. It has generally been most popular in times of turmoil, such as during the civil war at the turn of the 20th century, or during the Sino-Japanese War, or in Hong Kong during the 1950s. This could be because the world in which the stories are set, the *jianghu*, is imaginary, and it's a world in which values exist only in their absolute forms. It's also a world in which the only law is the law of the sword. And the stories are about heroes.

I tried to depart a little from the traditional martial-arts genre. Instead of treating these characters as heroes, I wanted to see them as ordinary people – at the stage before they became heroes.

There's also one significant difference between *ASHES OF TIME* and my other films. I generally start with the beginning of a story or with certain characters, and then gradually work out where the story is going and where it's going to end as the shoot goes on. In this case, though, I knew where these characters were going to end up and there was nothing I could do to change it. This imbued both me and the film with a sense of fatalism. Now that the film is finished and I try to reflect on the whole experience of making it, I find myself remembering some lines from the Buddhist canon and I've decided to use them to preface the film: "The flag is still. The wind is calm. It's the heart of man that is in turmoil!"

Over the years, I've come to realize that there are several different versions of *ASHES OF TIME* in circulation, some approved by me, some not, as well as the fact that the film was never released in much of the world including the United States. To rectify this situation, we decided to revisit this project and to create the definitive version.

As we launched into the work, we discovered that the original negatives and sound materials were in danger: the laboratory in Hong Kong where they were stored was suddenly shut down, without warning. We retrieved as much as we could, but the negatives were in pieces. As if we were searching for a long-lost family, we began looking for duplicate materials from various distributors and even the storage vaults of overseas Chinatown cinemas. As this went on, we came to realize that there are hundreds of prints locked up in Chinatown warehouses in those cities which used to show Hong Kong movies. Looking through all this material felt like uncovering the saga of the ups and downs of Hong Kong cinema in the last few decades. And this history, of course, included *ASHES OF TIME*.

We founded Jet Tone Films in 1992, and ASHES OF TIME was our first production. I always regretted that the way we had to make ASHES OF TIME back then didn't allow us to achieve the technical standards the film needed. Now, 15 years later, I want to put this right.

Wong Kar Wai (2008)

ABOUT THE CHARACTERS

Ouyang Feng (Leslie Cheung)



Since the woman he loved rejected him, he has lived in the western desert, hiring skilled swordsmen to carry out contract killings. His wounded heart has made him pitiless and cynical, but his encounters with friends and future enemies make him conscious of his solitude. He, too, rises to great prominence in the “jianghu” (the world of martial arts) and later becomes known as the Lord of the West.

Huang Yaoshi (Tony Leung Ka Fai)



In their younger days, Huang and Ouyang were the two best swordsmen of their generation. Huang is a dashing romantic and a roaming adventurer. Like a sworn ritual, he visits Ouyang every year at the same time to tell him tales of his travels of that year. Eventually Huang goes into a hermetic retreat but eventually rises to great prominence in the “jianghu” (world of martial arts) and later becomes known as the Lord of the East.

Maggie Cheung (The Woman)



The woman who jilted Ouyang by marrying his brother. She is ill and alone with her young son and her decision to spurn Ouyang Feng now causes her grief. Huang reveals that his yearly meeting with Ouyang was a pretext for Huang to visit the woman every year, bringing her news of her true love.

Murong Yin/Murong Yang (Brigitte Lin)



Murong Yang commissions the death of Huang Yaoshi (Tony Leung Kai Fai) whose crime is that he jilted Murong's sister Yin (also played by Brigitte Lin); Huang had proposed to marry Yin a year ago but never showed up.

Blind Swordsman (Tony Leung Chiu Wai)



A swordsman from Peach Blossom Village who is fast losing his sight, he wants to go home to see “peach blossoms” one last time while he can. As he needs to raise money for his journey to Peach Blossom Village, Ouyang offers him the job of defending the local villagers from a large gang of horse thieves

Peach Blossom (Carina Lau)



Peach Blossom is the Blind Swordsman’s wife.

Girl (Charlie Young)



A peasant girl who appears outside Ouyang’s shack. She wants to find a swordsman to avenge her brother, but has only a mule and a basket of eggs to offer in payment. Ouyang tells her that he cannot help her without money yet she stays there until she can get help.

Hong Qi (Jacky Cheung)



A disheveled swordsman, Hong Qi, hungry and shoeless, takes up residence by a wall near Ouyang’s shack. He rides a camel and is looking for adventures in the “jianghu” (world of martial arts). Ouyang offers him the job of finishing off the remaining horse thieves, and also helps the peasant girl by avenging her brother.

Hong Qi’s wife (Bai Li)

She is determined to accompany Hong Qi through the “jianghu”, and refuses to take his “no” for an answer. She and her husband, Hong Qi, end up leaving Ouyang and leaves together across the desert.

“The flag is still. The wind is calm. It’s the heart of man that is in turmoil! “
(from the Buddhist cannon)

ASHES OF TIME is inspired by characters from Louis Cha’s martial arts novel *The Eagle-Shooting Heroes*. It centers on a man named Ouyang Feng. Since the woman he loved rejected him, he has lived in the western desert, hiring skilled swordsmen to carry out contract killings. His wounded heart has made him pitiless and cynical, but his encounters with friends, clients and future enemies make him conscious of his solitude...

Synopsis

The film is set in five parts, five seasons that are part of the Chinese almanac. The story takes place in the *jianghu*, the world of the martial arts. Ouyang Feng (Leslie Cheung) has lived in the western desert for some years. He left his home in White Camel Mountain when the woman he loved chose to marry his elder brother rather than him. Instead of seeking glory, he ends up as an agent. When people come to him with a wish to eliminate someone who has wronged them, he puts them in touch with a swordsman who can do the job.

J I N G Z H E

In the Chinese almanac, which divides the year into 24 terms, Jingzhe is the third solar term. It begins when the sun reaches 345 degrees of celestial longitude and ends when it reaches 360 degrees. It refers to a time in spring when the peach blossom flowers begin to bloom and insects come back to life.

Every year, as spring approaches and the almanac predicts warmer breezes from the east, Ouyang Feng receives a visit from his friend Huang Yaoshi (Tony Leung Kai Fai). In their younger days, Huang and Ouyang were the two best swordsmen of their generation. Huang is a dashing romantic and a roaming adventurer. Like a sworn ritual, he visits every year at the same time to tell Ouyang tales of his travels of that year.

This year Huang brings a gift for Ouyang – a magic wine, given to him by a woman, which is said to erase the drinker’s memories. Ouyang declines to drink any. But Huang, having drunken the wine himself, leaves abruptly, leaving Ouyang to wonder who the woman is.

Soon after, Huang meets a swordsman (Tony Leung Chiu Wai) in a tavern, and asks him if they knew each other from before. The swordsman replies in the affirmative, and says that the two of them used to be best friends. Huang had previously gone to Peach Blossom Village to attend the swordsman’s wedding, but Huang flirted with the bride (Carina Lau) on their wedding day. Since then, the swordsman has sworn to kill Huang the next time they meet. But despite his oath, the swordsman does not kill Huang Yaoshi that day, for he is turning blind. Huang instead is later wounded in a duel with the Prince of the Murong Clan, who accuses him of jilting his sister.

Business is slow for Ouyang Feng. He has only one client this spring. That client is Murong Yang (Brigitte Lin), who commissions the death of Huang Yaoshi. Huang's crime is that he jilted Murong's sister Yin; Huang had proposed to marry Yin a year ago but never showed up. Murong wants to administer the deathblow himself, to ensure that Huang dies in excruciating pain. Soon after, Ouyang is confronted by Murong Yin herself. She wants to commission him to organize the murder of her brother Murong Yang. During a hallucinatory night, Ouyang comes to realize that Yin and Yang are two facets of the same troubled soul. The next day, Murong disappears. A rumor later spreads through the *jianghu* of a mysterious swordsman who duels with his own reflection in the water.

X I A Z H I

In the Chinese almanac, Xiazhi is the tenth solar term. It begins when the sun reaches 90 degrees of celestial longitude and ends when it reaches 105 degrees. It refers to a time in summer when the influence of 'yang' begins to wane and 'yin' begins to rise.

A peasant girl (Charlie Young) appears outside Ouyang's shack. She wants to find a swordsman to avenge her brother, but has only a mule and a basket of eggs to offer in payment. Ouyang tells her that he cannot help her without money.

The swordsman from Peach Blossom Village arrives. He is fast losing his sight, and wants to go home to see peach blossoms one last time while he can. But he needs money for the journey. Ouyang offers him the job of defending the local villagers from a large gang of horse thieves. They had been beaten in an earlier clash, and were expected to return soon. On the morning of the bandits' arrival, as the near-blind swordsman goes out to confront them, he impulsively kisses the peasant girl, who is still waiting for a champion to act on her behalf. Handicapped and heavily outnumbered, he goes into battle and is killed.

B A I L U

In the Chinese almanac, Bailu is the fifteenth solar term. It begins when the sun reaches 165 degrees of celestial longitude and ends when it reaches 180 degrees. It refers to that time in autumn when the northern birds begin to migrate southwards.

A disheveled swordsman, Hong Qi (Jacky Cheung), hungry and shoeless, takes up residence by a wall near Ouyang's shack. He rides a camel and is looking for adventures in the *jianghu*. Despite misgivings, Ouyang feeds him and offers him the job of finishing off the remaining horse thieves. Hong Qi accomplishes this with little trouble, and goes on to help the peasant girl by avenging her brother; she 'pays' him with one of her eggs. Hong Qi loses a finger in the second swordfight, and falls sick. Ouyang refuses to send for a doctor, and so the peasant girl nurses him back to health herself before leaving.

Hong Qi's wife (Bai Li) appears, determined to accompany him through the *jianghu*, and refuses to take his "no" for an answer. On a day that the almanac notes is "extremely favorable for the North", he leaves with her across the desert. Seeing Hong Qi and his wife depart stirs Ouyang's memories of his romantic failure in White Camel Mountain.

LICHUN

In the Chinese almanac, Lichun is the first solar term. It begins when the sun reaches 315 degrees of celestial longitude and ends when it reaches 330 degrees. It refers to the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

Ouyang visits Peach Blossom Village and encounters the blind swordsman's widow (Carina Lau). He immediately realizes that there are no peach blossoms to be seen; Peach Blossom is the woman's name.

Meanwhile, Huang is recalling his last meeting with the woman (Maggie Cheung) who jilted Ouyang. She was ill and alone with a young son; her husband has died. Her decision to spurn Ouyang Feng now causes her grief. It was she who gave Huang the bottle of magic wine for Ouyang. She dies soon after. Huang then reveals that his yearly meeting with Ouyang was a pretext for Huang to visit this woman every year, bringing her news of her true love.

Not long after, Huang goes into a hermetic retreat but eventually rises to great prominence in the *jianghu*. He later becomes known as the Lord of the East.

JINGZHE

This year, Huang does not come to visit Ouyang in the desert. Ouyang receives a message from White Camel Mountain, informing him that the woman he loves had passed away in the winter two years ago. He contemplates the reasons for his solitude. As predicted in his horoscope, he was orphaned young and has never married. He reflects upon his realization that he has avoided rejection by rejecting others first.

On a day that the almanac notes is "auspicious for moving West", he sets his shack ablaze and sets off for White Camel Mountain. He, too, rises to great prominence in the *jianghu*. He later becomes known as the Lord of the West.

Into the "Jianghu"

The *Jianghu* – literally, "Rivers and Lakes" – is the parallel universe in which martial arts fiction is set. It is a universe that often intersects with our own: real historical figures sometimes appear in it, and it often incorporates real places and events. The sprawling casts of characters in martial-arts novels mirror the complications of real-life extended families in the Confucian tradition, just as the feuds and rivalries between factions mirror the skirmishes and wars between clans which have occurred throughout China's history.

But there are also crucial differences between the *jianghu* and the world we know. Many aspects of social organization are absent, and individuals – both heroic and otherwise – define their own morality. The characters are generally larger (or smaller) than life, capable of superhuman feats in controlling their own *qi* (vital energy), and gender is

somewhat more fluid than it is in the workaday world. Exotic martial skills are elaborated fantastically, and those who have mastered them take equally exotic and fantastical *noms de guerre*, such as “Malignant Lord of the East” or “Malicious Lord of the West”. Supernatural forces can come into play. Most striking of all, the conventional laws of physics can be suspended: when the need arises, these people can fly.

The literary genre dates back at least to the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 AD), when various orally transmitted tales about the heroes of a rebellious uprising against the government of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1126 AD) were formalized into the prose romance translated as *The Water Margin* or *Outlaws of the Marsh*. (Louis Cha explicitly situates his own martial-arts novels in a tradition dating back to the oral storytelling of the Song Dynasty.) *Jianghu* romances became massively popular in the late Qing Dynasty and in early republican China (the late 19th and early 20th centuries in the western calendar), and by the late 1920s many had been adapted for the movies. In fact *wuxia pian* – “martial chivalry films” – were the most popular indigenous Chinese genre produced by the Shanghai film industry in its early years, and some stories were spun out to twenty or more feature-length episodes. The genre was banned by Chiang Kai Shek’s KMT government in 1931; it was seen to risk promoting sedition and lawlessness.

The communist government which came to power in China in 1949 was no more friendly towards the genre than the KMT had been, but *jianghu* novels and films made a spirited comeback in the Hong Kong of the 1950s – an example soon followed by Taiwan. Jin Yong (Louis Cha) began serializing *jianghu* novels in 1955, achieving great popularity and gradually emerging as the greatest writer the genre had even produced. A little lower in the pantheon sits the Taiwanese *jianghu* novelist Gu Long, best known in the west for the long series of films made from his books by Chu Yuan at Shaw Brothers in the 1970s and 1980s. And while these new novels were appearing, many classics from the 1930s and earlier were reprinted, creating a new generation of fans and genre historians.

The coming-of-age of the *wuxia* film genre is usually located in the mid-1960s, when King Hu made COME DRINK WITH ME (1965) and Zhang Xinyan & Fu Qi made THE JADE BOW (1966). King Hu went on to take the tradition to new heights in Taiwan with DRAGON GATE INN (1966) and A TOUCH OF ZEN (1969); meanwhile Zhang Che and other directors at Shaw Brothers pushed into a more macho and bloody direction, paving the way for the unarmed combat *kung-fu* films of the 1970s which made Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan world famous. The old genre traditions were brought back by the ‘new wave’ director Tsui Hark, whose debut film was the *jianghu* classic THE BUTTERFLY MURDERS (1979) and whose first big-budget special-effects extravaganza ZU: WARRIORS FROM THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN (1983) was inspired by a martial-arts novel by Li Shanji first published in 1930.

In recent years, thanks to Wong Kar Wai, Ang Lee and Zhang Yimou, a much larger western audience has found its way into the *jianghu*. ASHES OF TIME (1994) and CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON (2000) are films that pay their dues to their ancestors in the genre while inflecting the *jianghu* with modern ideas about psychology, sexuality and existential loneliness. Zhang Yimou’s HERO (2002) and HOUSE OF

FLYING DAGGERS (2004) owe less to the genre's history and more to an imaginative re-reading of China's history, but they are none the less rooted in the *jianghu*. Either way, the *jianghu* rules.

About Jianghu novelist Louis Cha (author of *Eagle Shooting Heroes*, from which ASHES OF TIME REDUX is adapted).

Louis Cha published twelve martial-arts novels between 1955 and 1972 under the pen-name Jin Yong. The novels first appeared as serials in newspapers and were later published as books, in some cases running to five volumes. Unlike some other writers in the genre, Cha always anchors his fictions in specified historical periods. His novels have been adapted many, many times – as films, as TV serials, as comic-strip graphic novels, and latterly as computer games. The third of them was *The Eagle Shooting Heroes* (1957-59), collected in four volumes, which contains the characters Dongxie (Malignant Lord of the East) and Xidu (Malicious Lord of the West). In ASHES OF TIME, Wong Kar Wai has extrapolated these two characters from Cha's narrative – with one or two others, such as Hong Qi – and has imagined what they might have been like as younger men.

Louis Cha was born in 1924 in Zhejiang Province, China. He came to prominence in Hong Kong after the war as the founder and publisher of the Chinese-language newspaper Ming Pao Daily News – still the territory's most respected and authoritative independent broadsheet. He later also founded and published the Shin Ming Daily News in Singapore. Aside from his fiction under the name Jin Yong, he has written political commentaries, journalism and historical essays; he has also served on various public bodies and played an active role in Hong Kong's intellectual life. He retired from his publishing empire shortly before Hong Kong reverted to China's sovereignty.

An exceptionally cultured man, steeped in Chinese history, he is also a scholar of Buddhism. He is Wynflete Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and an Honorary Fellow of St. Antony's College, Oxford. He holds an honorary degree as Doctor of Social Sciences at the University of Hong Kong, and an honorary degree as Doctor of Literature at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Queen Elizabeth II conferred on him the O.B.E. and France has made him a Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur.

Despite these many honors, his fiction still goes unmentioned in most western synoptic accounts of Asian literature. This is partly because English translations have begun to appear only since 1993, and partly, no doubt, because of snobbish prejudices against genre literature. But the 'Jin Yong' novels, revered in Chinese communities throughout the world, develop a very ancient Chinese oral and literary tradition. Beyond their value as entertainment, they are refined and sophisticated commentaries on the philosophical traditions of Buddhism and Taoism, and analyses of the on-going struggle for a mature Chinese cultural identity.

ABOUT THE CAST

Leslie CHEUNG (as Ouyang Feng)



The late Leslie Cheung (Cheung Kwok Wing) was born in Hong Kong in 1956 and educated in England. He entered Hong Kong show business as a singer in 1980. After joining a training course for actors at a TV station he began acting in TV dramas and films; his appearance as a mother-fixated golden boy in Patrick Tam's *NOMAD* (1982) established him as a serious actor and marked the start of a decade of super-stardom in which he shuttled between hit albums, stadium-sized concerts and films. Three film roles in particular brought him to international attention: as a cop in John Woo's *A BETTER TOMORROW* (1986), as a 1930s opium addict in Stanley Kwan's *ROUGE* (1986) and as a 1960s playboy who seduces and abandons a string of women in Wong Kar Wai's *DAYS OF BEING WILD* (1990). In the early 1990s he announced his formal retirement as a singer and moved for a while to Vancouver. But he took on ever more ambitious roles in such films as Chen Kaige's *FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE* (1993), Wong Kar Wai's *ASHES OF TIME* (1994), Chen Kaige's *TEMPTRESS MOON* (1996) and Wong Kar Wai's *HAPPY TOGETHER* (1997). Winner of countless awards for his performances and his music, he ended his own life in Hong Kong on 1 April 2003.

Brigitte LIN (as Murong Yin / Murong Yang)



Brigitte Lin (Lin Ching Hsia, also spelt Lin Qingxia) was born in Taiwan and made her screen debut while she was still in high school, appearing as a schoolgirl in love with her teacher in Song Cunshou's *OUTSIDE THE WINDOW* (1971). She very soon became the most sought-after actress in Taiwan cinema, with many credits to her name. In 1982, while studying in California, she starred in Patrick Tam's *LOVE MASSACRE* – a film which gave her subsequent career a new direction and impetus. She resumed acting in Hong Kong, giving notable performances for 'new wave' directors Ann Hui (in *STARRY IS THE NIGHT*, 1988) and Yim Ho (in *RED DUST*, 1990, for which she won

the Golden Horse Best Actress award) amongst others. She won many international fans for her role as Asia the Invincible in Ching Siu Tung's SWORDSMAN II (1991) and its sequel SWORDSMAN III: THE EAST IS RED (1993). After starring in ASHES OF TIME (1994) and CHUNGKING EXPRESS (1994) for Wong Kar Wai, she married and retired from the screen.

Tony LEUNG Chiu Wai (as the Blind Swordsman)



Tony Leung (Leung Chiu Wai) has made a smooth transition from Hong Kong genre movies to leading roles for several of the most notable directors in world cinema. He was awarded the Best Actor prize at the Cannes Film Festival in 2000 for *In the Mood for Love* and has won many other awards for his performances, including Best Actor at the 2008 Asian Film Awards for *Lust, Caution* (2007). His films include *The Lunatics* (1986) and *People's Hero* (1987) for Derek Yee, *Love Unto Waste* (1986) for Stanley Kwan, *A City of Sadness* (1989) and *Flowers of Shanghai* (1998) for Hou Hsiao Hsien, *Bullet in the Head* (1990) and *Hard-Boiled* (1992) for John Woo, *Cyclo* (1995) for Tran Anh Hung, *Hero* (2002) for Zhang Yimou, *Infernal Affairs* (2002) and *Infernal Affairs III* (2003) for Andrew Lau and Alan Mak, and *Lust, Caution* for Ang Lee. His long association with Wong Kar Wai began with a brief guest appearance in *Days of Being Wild* (1990) and went on to include *Ashes of Time* (1994), *Chungking Express* (1994), *Happy Together* (1997), *In the Mood for Love* (2000) and *2046* (2004). He will next be seen in John Woo's historical epic *Red Cliff*. Tony received an Independent Spirits Award nomination for Best Actor for his role in Ang Lee's *LUST, CAUTION*.

Carina LAU (as Peach Blossom)



Carina Lau (Lau Ka Ling) was born in Suzhou, China, and raised in Hong Kong. She made her acting debut in a TVB drama serial and was immediately invited to appear in films. She earned her first Best Actress nomination in Tony Au's *I AM SORRY* (1989), and her first international prize (at the Festival des 3 Continents in Nantes, France) for Wong Kar Kai's *DAYS OF BEING WILD* (1990). Her subsequent films have included

ASHES OF TIME (1994) and 2046 (2004) for Wong Kar Wai, WHO'S THE WOMAN, WHO'S THE MAN? (1996) for Peter Chan, FLOWERS OF SHANGHAI (1998) for Hou Hsiao Hsien, INFERNAL AFFAIRS II (2003) for Andrew Lau and Alan Mak and INTIMATES (1997) for Jacob Cheung. Her role in Zhang Yibai's thriller CURIOSITY KILLS THE CAT (2006) won her top awards from both the industry and the audience in China.

Tony LEUNG Ka Fai (as Huang Yaoshi)



Tony Leung (Leung Ka Fai) won Best Actor prize in the Hong Kong Film Awards for his screen debut as the young emperor Pu Yi in Li Hanxiang's THE BURNING OF THE IMPERIAL PALACE (1983). Spotted and nurtured by Li Hanxiang, he went on to a prolific career in high-profile Hong Kong movies, including Ringo Lam's PRISON ON FIRE (1987), Kirk Wong's GUNMEN (1989), Tsui Hark's A BETTER TOMORROW III: LOVE AND DEATH IN SAIGON (1990), Wong Jing's GOD OF GAMBLERS' RETURN (1994) and Wong Kar Wai's ASHES OF TIME (1994). He won an international following for his starring role in Jean-Jacques Annaud's THE LOVER (1991), based on the novel by Marguerite Duras. In 1999 he produced and starred in LOVE WILL TEAR US APART, the debut feature by Yu Lik Wai, which was invited into competition in Cannes. He has since appeared in Chen Guofu's thriller DOUBLE VISION (2002), Stanley Tong's THE MYTH (2005), Johnnie To's ELECTION (2005) and Li Yu's controversial LOST IN BEIJING (2007), amongst many other films.

Charlie YOUNG (as the Girl)



Born in Hong Kong, Charlie Young entered show business as a singer, releasing her debut album in 1992. She began acting in films almost immediately, and established

herself as a serious film talent in Wong Kar Wai's *ASHES OF TIME* (1994), which also marks her feature film debut, and Tsui Hark's *THE LOVERS* (1994). To the surprise and dismay of her many fans, she retired from the industry after co-starring with Carina Lau in Jacob Cheung's *INTIMATES* (1997) and moved to Malaysia to work in other fields. But she returned to Hong Kong cinema in 2004 with a starring role alongside Jackie Chan in Benny Chan's *NEW POLICE STORY*, and has gone on to appear in Tsui Hark's *SEVEN SWORDS* (2005), and to co-star with Andy Lau in *ALL ABOUT LOVE* (2005) and with Aaron Kwok in Patrick Tam's *AFTER THIS, OUR EXILE* (2006). She will next be seen opposite Nicolas Cage in the Pang Brothers' *BANGKOK DANGEROUS* (2008).

Jacky CHEUNG (as Hong Qi)



Jacky Cheung (Cheung Hok Yau), born in Hong Kong, seemed set for a career in the airline industry until he won a singing competition in 1984 and began his spectacular trajectory as a singer and actor. He made his screen debut in Lau Koon Wai's *WHERE'S OFFICER TUBA?* (1986) and went on to win the Best Supporting Actor prize in the Hong Kong Film Awards for his role as the volatile Fly in Wong Kar Wai's debut feature *AS TEARS GO BY* (1988). He acted again for Wong Kar Wai in *DAYS OF BEING WILD* (1990) and *ASHES OF TIME* (1994). In the early 1990s, he became one of the busiest and most popular actors in Hong Kong cinema with starring roles in such films as Ching Siu Tung's *A CHINESE GHOST STORY II* (1990) and its sequel *A CHINESE GHOST STORY III* (1991), David Lai and Tsui Hark's *WICKED CITY* (1992), Jeff Lau's *EAGLES SHOOTING HEROES* (1993), Wong Jing and Andrew Lau's *TO LIVE AND DIE IN TSIMSHATSUI* (1994) and Eddie Fong's *THE PRIVATE EYE BLUES* (1994). During this period he rose to become one of the four "kings" of Cantonese pop music, and in the late 1990s opted to concentrate more on music than films. He returned to star in Ann Hui's *JULY RHAPSODY* (2002), and has recently appeared as himself in Daniel Wu's mockumentary *THE HEAVENLY KINGS* (2006), making outspoken comments on the Hong Kong music business.

Maggie CHEUNG (special appearance as The Woman)



Born in Hong Kong and raised in England, Maggie Cheung (Cheung Man Yuk) entered Hong Kong show business as a TV actress but very quickly made the transition to movies. She broke through to leading roles in important films when she co-starred in Jackie Chan's *POLICE STORY* (1985), and has never looked back since. Her many films have included Jeff Lau's *EAGLES SHOOTING HEROES* (1993), Peter Chan's *COMRADES, ALMOST A LOVE STORY* (1996), Cheung Yuen Ting's *THE SOONG SISTERS* (1997), Ann Hui's autobiographical *SONG OF THE EXILE* (1990), Stanley Kwan's *CENTRE STAGE* (1992, playing the legendary 1930s actress Ruan Lingyu and winning the Silver Bear for Best Actress at Berlin Film Festival), Tsui Hark's *GREEN SNAKE* (1993) and Olivier Assayas' *IRMA VEP* (1996). She now divides her time between Europe and Hong Kong, appearing in such films as Anne Fontaine's *AUGUSTIN, ROI DU KUNG-FU* (1999), Zhang Yimou's *HERO* (2002) and Olivier Assayas' *CLEAN* (2004), for which she won Best Actress at Cannes Film Festival. Wong Kar Wai cast her in his debut feature *AS TEARS GO BY* (1988), and she has since starred in his *DAYS OF BEING WILD* (1990) and *IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE* (2000) as well as making special guest appearances in *2046* (2004) and *ASHES OF TIME REDUX* (2008).

ABOUT THE CREW

WONG Kar Wai (Director, Producer & Screenplay)

Wong Kar Wai was born in Shanghai and moved to Hong Kong with his parents when he was five. He entered the film industry as a scriptwriter and began directing his own scripts in 1988. His debut feature *AS TEARS GO BY* (1988) was invited to the Critics' Week in the Cannes Film Festival. His second feature *DAYS OF BEING WILD* (1990) won five Hong Kong Film Awards, including Best Director and Best Film. He founded his own company Jet Tone in 1992 and spent the next two years working on *ASHES OF TIME* (1994), shooting mostly on remote locations in China. *CHUNGKING EXPRESS* (1994), made very quickly during a break in the post-production of *ASHES OF TIME*, became his first global success; he followed it with the related 'diptych' movie *FALLEN ANGELS* (1995). Shot mostly in Argentina, *HAPPY TOGETHER* premiered at the 1997 Cannes Film Festival and won the Best Director prize. All of his subsequent features have premiered in Cannes: *IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE* in 2000 (winning the Best Actor prize for Tony Leung Chiu Wai), *2046* in 2004 and his English-language debut *MY BLUEBERRY NIGHTS* in 2007. He served as President of the Jury at Cannes in 2006. In addition to his features, he has made a number of short films, including *IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE 2001* (starring Tony Leung Chiu Wai and Maggie Cheung), *SIX DAYS* (2002, for the musician DJ Shadow), *THE FOLLOW* (2003, starring Clive Owen, for the BMW on-line series *THE HIRE*), and *THERE'S ONLY ONE SUN* (2007, starring Amelie Daure, for Philips). In 2004, he contributed the episode *THE HAND* to the portmanteau feature *EROS*, alongside episodes from Michelangelo Antonioni and Steven Soderbergh. In 2007, he made the short *I TRAVELED 9000 KM TO GIVE IT TO YOU* for Gilles Jacob's project *CHACUN SON CINÉMA (TO EACH HIS OWN CINÉMA)*, which premiered in Cannes.

Filmography (features):

1988: **Wangjiao Kamen (AS TEARS GO BY)**

1990: **A-Fei Zhengzhuan (DAYS OF BEING WILD)**

1994: **Chongqing Senlin (CHUNGKING EXPRESS)**

Dongxie Xidu (ASHES OF TIME)

1995: **Duoluo Tianshi (FALLEN ANGELS)**

1997: **Chunguang Zhaxie (HAPPY TOGETHER)**

2000: **Hua Yang Nian Hua (IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE)**

New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Foreign Language Film

New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Cinematography (Chris Doyle and Ping Bing Lee)

National Society of Film Critics Award for Best Foreign Language Film

National Society of Film Critics Award for Best Cinematography (Chris Doyle and Ping Bing Lee)

2004: **2 0 4 6**

New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Foreign Language Film

New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Cinematography (Chris Doyle)

Los Angeles Film Critics Association Award for Best Production Design

2004 **EROS** (Segment: *THE HAND*)

2007: **MY BLUEBERRY NIGHTS**

Christopher DOYLE (Director of Photography)

Born in 1952 in the suburbs of Sydney, Christopher Doyle joined the merchant marine at the age of 18 and traveled the world, picking up a diploma in Art History along the way. He fetched up in Taiwan in the late 1970s, working with a theater group, and found himself learning to operate a video camera. This led to work on a TV documentary series – and to an invitation from Edward Yang to shoot his debut feature *THAT DAY, ON THE BEACH* (1982). Widely acknowledged as an outstanding and idiosyncratic cinematographer, he has shot such films as *SOUL* (1985) for Shu Kei, *NOIR ET BLANC* (1986, winner of the Cannes Caméra d'or) for Claire Devers, *RED ROSE, WHITE ROSE* (1992) for Stanley Kwan, *TEMPTRESS MOON* (1997) for Chen Kaige, *PSYCHO* (1998) and *PARANOID PARK* (2007) for Gus van Sant, *LIBERTY HEIGHTS* (1999) for Barry Levinson, *RABBIT-PROOF FENCE* (2002) and *THE QUIET AMERICAN* (2002) for Phil Noyce, *HERO* (2002) for Zhang Yimou, for which he won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for Best Cinematography, *THE WHITE COUNTESS* (2005) for James Ivory and *LADY IN THE WATER* (2006) for M. Night Shyamalan. In

addition, he has directed and photographed his own feature *AWAY WITH WORDS* (1998) and the short *PORTE DE CHOISY* (2006) for the omnibus feature *PARIS, JE T'AIME* (2006). He is also an occasional actor, collage-maker and essayist, and has held several exhibitions of his photographs. His latest feature as a director is *WARSAW DARK*. He is currently shooting the new Jim Jarmusch film, *THE LIMITS OF CONTROL*.

His long and intensely creative association with Wong Kar Wai stretched from *DAYS OF BEING WILD* (1990) to *2046* (2004).

From an interview with Christopher Doyle:

“I couldn’t have done *RABBIT-PROOF FENCE* if I hadn’t done *ASHES OF TIME*, and I couldn’t have done *HERO* if I hadn’t done *ASHES OF TIME* and *RABBIT-PROOF FENCE*. The exigencies of shooting in the desert – the possibilities of the open space, the quality of light and the way it engages your eyes, the patience you need, the decisions you have to make in such environments – all inform much of what’s happened when I’ve shot other films.”

Sammo HUNG (Action Choreographer)

Sammo Hung (Hung Kam Bo) was indentured in a Peking Opera academy in Hong Kong in 1961, at the age of nine. He became the leader of a troupe of classmates (including Jackie Chan and Yuen Biao) which performed under the name Seven Little Fortunes. He entered the film industry as a stuntman, and took many small acting roles before graduating to the role of action choreographer for such directors as King Hu and John Woo – and, of course, Wong Kar Wai. His career took off during the boom for kung-fu films in the 1970s, and he directed his own first film in 1977; he also became a producer. He has nearly 30 films as director to his credit. He moved to Canada in the late 1990s and starred in the American TV series *MARTIAL LAW* (1998-2000). Now back in Hong Kong, he continues to star in such films as Tsui Hark’s *THE LEGEND OF ZU* (2001), Wilson Yip’s *SPL* (2005) and Daniel Lee’s *THREE KINGDOMS: RESURRECTION OF THE DRAGON* (2008).

From an interview with Sammo Hung:

“Actually, I worked on the action scenes for *ASHES OF TIME* for about three months. It was hard working in such a remote place: no water, no electricity, but plenty of bugs. It wasn’t really painful, though. I enjoyed it. I don’t get the chance to work with so-called ‘artistic’ directors like Wong Kar Wai too often. He invited me to work with him and I was happy to accept. We chatted a lot while I was there, exchanging ideas. Basically, he gave me a free hand: ‘I don’t mind what you do or how you do it, you go ahead!’ Of course I had to work with stars who weren’t trained in martial arts. Jacky Cheung was quite open in his style, Tony Leung Ka Fai was more ‘yin’...and Tony Leung Chiu Wai caught the essence of a man suffering an inner defeat.”

William CHANG Suk Ping (Production Designer & Co-Editor)

Born to a Shanghainese family in Hong Kong, William Chang (Chang Suk Ping) studied film in Canada. He was assistant director to Tang Shu Shuen on her seminal independent films *THE ARCH* (1969) and *CHINA BEHIND* (1974). His work almost single-handedly persuaded the Hong Kong film and music industries of the importance of design, and he has won numerous prizes. Since he worked on the editing of Wong Kar Wai's films *ASHES OF TIME* (1994) and *CHUNGKING EXPRESS* (1994), he is also an in-demand editor. He has worked with both established directors (Stanley Kwan, Yim Ho, Tsui Hark, Ching Siu Tung) and newcomers (Jan Lamb, Eric Kot), but he is probably best known for his daring and innovative work with Wong Kar Wai. He has been closely involved in the making of all of Wong Kar Wai's films.

From an interview with William Chang:

"During my time with *ASHES OF TIME REDUX*, I had the opportunity to work with tools and resources that weren't available to me when I first became involved with the original film. This gave me the freedom and space to bring fresh ideas and a fresh outlook to take this period film and give it a more contemporary flavor."

Patrick TAM (Co-Editor)

Born in Hong Kong, Patrick Tam (Tam Kar Ming) began writing film criticism as a student and joined the TV station TVB in 1967 as an increasingly innovative director and producer. His work included a homage to Godard's *WEEKEND*, broadcast in primetime. He began directing feature films in 1980, and excited considerable controversy with his 1981 film *LOVE MASSACRE*, shot in California, and his 1982 film *NOMAD*, which had to be partly reshot to pacify the Hong Kong censor. His 1987 film *FINAL VICTORY* was scripted by Wong Kar Wai, and he became a kind of mentor to Wong in the early 1990s, working on the editing of *DAYS OF BEING WILD* (1990) and *ASHES OF TIME* (1994). After making *MY HEART IS THAT ETERNAL ROSE* (1989), he left Hong Kong for Malaysia to take up a teaching post. But he has returned to active film-making with the award-winning *AFTER THIS, OUR EXILE* (2006).

Frankie CHAN (Original Music)

Not only a composer, Frankie Chan works in the Hong Kong film industry as a director, producer, actor and action choreographer. Kung-fu fans know him for playing the lead villain in Sammo Hung's *PRODIGAL SON* (1981). His many film scores include *ASHES OF TIME* (1994) and *FALLEN ANGELS* (1995) for Wong Kar Wai.

Roel A. GARCIA (Original Music)

Born in the Philippines, Roel A. Garcia began working as a professional musician at the age of 16, when he became the pianist in a jazz trio. Long based in Hong Kong, he has played with virtually all the leading Canto-pop stars over the years, and will be Lowell Lo's music director for a concert at the Hong Kong Coliseum in May 2008. He has contributed to the scores of many Hong Kong movies, often in collaboration with Frankie Chan. For Wong Kar Wai, he has worked on music for *ASHES OF TIME* (1994), *CHUNGKING EXPRESS* (1994), *FALLEN ANGELS* (1995) and the Jeff Lau film *CHINESE ODYSSEY 2002* (2002), which was produced by Wong.

WU Tong (Additional Score and Re-arrangement)

Born into a musical family in Beijing in 1971, Wu Tong was a child prodigy on wind instruments who entered the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music's pre-college program at the age of 11. Graduating eight years later, he became the youngest soloist with the China Central Traditional Music and Dance Company. In 1991 he and four classmates from the Conservatory founded the rock band Lunhui (Again), which merges Asian and western traditions and has enjoyed spectacular success in China and beyond. In 1999 he was invited to join the Silk Road Project Workshop at Tanglewood Music Festival, and since then has regularly performed with Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble, live and on disc. He has also been a soloist with the New York Philharmonic, the London Sinfonietta and Singapore Symphony Orchestra. He will make his debut as an operatic singer and on-stage instrumentalist in Amy Tan and Stewart Wallace's *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, which will premiere at the San Francisco Opera in September 2008. His work on the score of *ASHES OF TIME REDUX* marks his first collaboration with Wong Kar Wai.

From an interview with Wu Tong:

“When I started working on the music, I realized that the original music was actually perfectly matched to the film. The way the score related to the images really elevated the story to an even higher level. In this new version, what I wanted to do was to have new, different kinds of sound. Apart from preserving the music's original base composition, we wanted to try out new elements such as real instruments as opposed to electronic MIDI, as well as other new ways to express the themes.”

Yo-Yo MA (Featured Cello Solos)

Born in 1955 to Chinese parents living in Paris, Yo-Yo Ma began learning to play the cello at the age of four. His family moved to New York soon after, and he got his formal training at the Julliard School of Music. He went on to take an academic degree at

Harvard, graduating in 1976. In addition to performing as a soloist with orchestras throughout the world, he established the Silk Road Project in 1998 to promote the study of the cultural, artistic and intellectual traditions that flowed along the ancient trade route that stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Pacific Ocean. He is also strongly committed to educational programs that foster young people's interest in and involvement with music. In 2006, the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan named him a UN Peace Ambassador. He and his wife have two children. He plays two instruments, a 1733 Montagnana and the 1712 Davidoff Stradivarius.

From an interview with Yo-Yo Ma:

“I love to hear an author's own words – their own voice – describing their own work and how they perceive it. Musicians deal with time; directors also deal with time, but the way [director Wong Kar Wai] deals with time, it's as if every nano-second has a purpose, and a very specific purpose. And of course it is character-driven, going deeply into the character and the psycho-social profile of what our hero is thinking about. And, of course, it's always about love.”

Jacky PANG Yee Wah (Producer)

Jacky Pang Yee Wah began her career in commercials. A founding member of Jet Tone Films, she has worked on Wong Kar Wai's films for many years – including CHUNGKING EXPRESS (1994)(as associate producer), IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE (2000)(co-producer), EROS (Segment: THE HAND)(2004)(producer) and MY BLUEBERRY NIGHTS (2007)(producer). She has also produced films by other directors under the Jet Tone banner, including Jeff Lau's CHINESE ODYSSEY 2002 (2002), Joe Ma's SOUND OF COLORS (2003) and the forthcoming Taiwanese production MIAO MIAO.

Jeff LAU (Producer)

Jeff Lau (Lau Chun Wai) studied Fine Arts in England and worked in the advertising industry before becoming a writer/producer/director in the Hong Kong film industry. He is famous for his comedies. His films as writer/director include 92 THE LEGENDARY LA ROSE NOIRE (1992, with Tony Leung Ka Fai), EAGLES SHOOTING HEROES (1993, with Leslie Cheung, Tony Leung Ka Fai, Tony Leung Chiu Wai, Brigitte Lin and Maggie Cheung), TREASURE HUNT (1994, with Chow Yun Fat and Wu Chien Lien) and CHINESE ODYSSEY 2002 (2002, with Tony Leung Chiu Wai, Faye Wong, Zhao Wei and Chang Chen). His many producer credits include KUNG FU HUSTLE (2004) for Stephen Chow, among others.