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Leslie Cheung Film Tribute at USC

LOS ANGELES, CA—Asian Film Foundation and USC Cinema & Television (Critical Studies), in association with Miramax Films, Maggi Taste of Asia, and Tai Seng Entertainment are proud to present Loving Leslie: A Tribute to Leslie Cheung, featuring the films of one of Hong Kong's most beloved icons.

Join us on Saturday, September 10 at USC Norris Theatre, to celebrate the work of this gifted young man and enjoy two of his best films, the smart and sexy *Okinawa Rendezvous* directed by Gordan Chan (*Fist of Legend, Beast Cops*) and Chen Kaige's masterful epic, *Farewell My Concubine*.

This charity event will feature Leslie memorabilia for sale including DVDs, posters and other collector's items, some signed by directors John Woo and Chen Kaige, especially for this event. Proceeds will directly benefit one of Leslie's favorite charities, End Child Sexual Abuse Foundation (ECSAF).

Handsome and sexually ambiguous with a consummate cool, Leslie Cheung quietly challenged conventional mores and titillated film and music fans worldwide. His uncompromising work ethic, 56 films in 20 years, record-holding 100 concerts held at the Hong Kong Coliseum, built legions of devoted supporters who will never get over the shock of his untimely loss in 2003. His place is eternally cemented in the cinematic and cultural landscape of his time. Leslie is the stuff of many legends. A soul that will never die.

Saturday, September 10, 2005

Okinawa Rendezvous (sponsored by Tai Seng Entertainment) - 12:00 pm
(2000, 35mm color, 99 min) In Cantonese, Japanese and English with English subtitles

Intermission and Charity Function - 2:00 pm

Farewell My Concubine (A Miramax Film) - 3:00 pm
(1993, 35mm color, 172 min) In Mandarin with English subtitles

Special thanks to USC Cinema & Television (Critical Studies), Miramax Films, Maggi Taste of Asia, Tai Seng Entertainment, Five Star Laser, Leslie Legacy Association (HK), DrunkenMaster.tv, Anita Chan, David Chute, Hong Kong Vintage Pop Radio, HKEntReview.com, Andy Klein, Jhemon Lee, Lisa Morton, LoveHKFilm.com, Parcca Music, Inc., and our community supporters Asian Professional Exchange (APEX), Click2Asia, LAFun.org, Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA-GLA), Project by Project Southern California and Young Generation Asian Professionals (YGAP).

Venue: USC University Park Campus, Eileen Norris Theatre, 3507 Trousdale Parkway, Los Angeles. Gate Entry 5, Park Lot P (\$7.00)/Jefferson Blvd Entrance at McClintock Avenue.) General admission \$10; Students/Seniors \$8 (all tickets include both films). More info at www.asianfilm.org.

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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 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)



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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