



**WORLD OF WONG KAR WAI**

# **In the Mood for Love**

## **(Fa yeung nin wa)**

### **Wong Kar-Wai on 'In the Mood for Love'**

*Do you know why it took so long for this film to coalesce into its final form?*

The project had a very complicated evolution. It goes back to 1997, when we had the idea of making two films back-to-back, one before the handover of Hong Kong, the other after. The first of these was supposed to be *Summer in Beijing*, starring Maggie Cheung and Tony Leung, but we couldn't reach an agreement about filming in Beijing with the China Film Bureau and so we had to give up. But the actors were still onside, and I didn't want to let the project die. My first idea was to go ahead with *Summer in Beijing* – with 'Beijing' now being a restaurant in Macau. That led to the thought of making a film about food and we came up with three strands of story, one about a chef, one about a writer in the 60s and one about a delicatessen owner. At that time Maggie was supposed to be doing *Memoirs of a Geisha* for Steven Spielberg, so we thought we had only a short time to get it done. We planned the story about the delicatessen owner and then moved on to the one about the writer – at which point I realised that the one about the writer was the only one I really wanted to make.

It evolved as it went along. At first we thought it should be set only in 1962, and then it expanded to end in 1972, spanning a decade in the lives of two people. But after 14 months of filming we realised it was impossible for us to make a film on that scale. So we forgot about the 70s and decided to end the story in 1966. It took me a long time to decide what the end should be. Is it basically a love story about these two characters? Finally I think it's more than that. It's about the end of a period. 1966 marks a turning point in Hong Kong's history. The Cultural Revolution in the mainland had lots of knock-on effects, and forced Hong Kong people to think hard about their future. Many of them had come from China in the late 40s, they'd had nearly 20 years of relative tranquillity, they'd built themselves new lives – and suddenly they began to feel they'd have to move on again. So 1966 is the end of something and the beginning of something else.

*Why did you go to Cambodia for the coda?*

It was partly an accident. We needed something to make a visual contrast with the rest of the film. It's a bit like scoring chamber music; we needed some counterbalance, something about nature, something about history. We were shooting in Bangkok at the time and so we looked at all the city's temples or wats, but we couldn't find anything that was strong enough for our purposes. Our Thai production manager was the one who suggested Angkor Wat. I thought he was crazy, but he assured us it wasn't as difficult as we imagined. We could spare only five days because we were due back in Hong Kong for post-production and Cannes was looming. Thanks to our production manager's connections, we got permission to shoot from the Cambodian government within 48 hours. We shot over the Cambodian new year. We were supposed to film for only one day, but we ended up spending three days there. And when I found out that de Gaulle had visited Cambodia that

year, I wanted that in the film too. De Gaulle is part of the colonial history that's about to fade away.

*You make it clear that many of the supporting characters are having illicit sexual relationships, but the central couple do everything possible to repress their feelings for each other. You've even cut the one scene in which they have sex; instead, you show them holding hands in a taxi, implying they'll spend the night together. Is there some link between their repression and the period?*

I cut the sex scene at the last moment. I suddenly felt I didn't want to see them having sex. And when I told William Chang [Wong's production designer, editor and closest collaborator], he said he felt the same but hadn't wanted to tell me! You know, what kept me working on this film for such a long time was that I became addicted to it – specifically, to the mood it conjured up. I most of all wanted to capture that period, which was a much more subtle time than our own. From the very beginning I knew I didn't want to make a film about an affair. That would be too boring, too predictable, and it would have only two possible endings: either they go away together or they give each other up and go back to their own lives. What interested me was the way people behave and relate to each other in the circumstances shown in this story, the way they keep secrets and share secrets.

*Why didn't you show his wife and her husband?*

Mostly because the central characters were going to enact what they thought their spouses were doing and saying. In other words, we were going to see both relationships – the adulterous affair and the repressed friendship – in the one couple. It's a technique I learned from Julio Cortázar, who always has this kind of structure. It's like a circle, the head and tail of a snake meeting.

*And that relates to the patterns of repetition and variation in the film?*

I'm trying to show the process of change. Daily life is always routine – the same corridor, the same staircase, the same office, even the same background music – but we can see these two people change against this unchanging background. The repetitions help us to see the changes.

*You've tackled the 60s once before, in Days of Being Wild, and you've suggested in your Director's Note that this film might answer the question 'Whatever happened to Days of Being Wild, Part II?' How do you see the relationship between the two films?*

*Days of Being Wild* was for me a very personal reinvention of the 60s. Here, though, we consciously tried to recreate the actuality. I wanted to say something about daily life then, about domestic conditions, neighbours, everything. I even worked out a menu for the period of the shoot, with distinctive dishes for different seasons, and found a Shanghainese lady to cook them so that the cast would be eating them as we shot. I wanted the film to contain all those flavours that are so familiar to me. The audience probably won't notice a thing, but it meant a lot to me emotionally. When we started filming the 1962 scenes, William Chang asked me if we were finally making *Days of Being Wild, Part II*. I'll never make Part II as originally envisaged because that story doesn't mean the same to me any more. But this is in some sense Part II as I might conceive it now.

**Interview with Wong Kar-Wai by Tony Rayns, *Sight and Sound*, August 2000**

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE (FA YEUNG NIN WA)

Director/Producer/Screenplay: Wong Kar-Wai  
©/Presented by: Block 2 Pictures  
Production Company: Jet Tone Production  
Presented by: Paradis Films  
Executive Producer: Chan Ye-Chen  
Assistant Producer: Chan Wai-Si  
Associate Producer: Jacky Pang Yee-Wah  
Production Supervisor: Wong Lai-Tak  
Production Managers: Law Kam-Chuen, Choi Suk-Yin  
Thai Crew Production Manager: Parichart Khumrod  
Thai Crew Assistant Production Manager: Rattana Pulsawan  
Thai Crew Assistant Location Manager: Satt Thepsawad  
Assistant Directors: Siu Wai-Keung, Kong Yeuk-Sing  
Continuity: Yu Haw-Yan  
Incorporating quotations from the writings of: Liu Yi-Chang  
Directors of Photography: Christopher Doyle, Mark Li Pingbin  
Additional Photography: Kwan Pun-Leung, Yu Lik-Wai, Lai Yiu-Fai, Chan Kwong-Hung  
Camera Assistant: Lai Yiu-Fai  
Lighting: Wong Chi-Ming  
Assistant Lighting: Kwan Wing-Cheung  
Camera Crew: Ho Kin-Kwong, Ho Ka-Fai, Lau Tin-Wah  
Gaffers: Chan Hon-Sung, Kwan Wing-Kin  
Video Documentation: Kwan Pun-Leung, Amos Lee  
Stills Photographer: Wing Shya  
Supervising Editor: William Chang Suk-Ping  
Editor: Chan Kei-Hap

Production Designer: William Chang Suk-Ping  
Visual Consultant: Carmen Lui Lai-Wah  
Art Directors: Man Lim-Chung, Alfred Yau Wai-Ming  
Assistant Art Director: Lui Fung-Saan  
Property Master: Wong Chi-On  
Prop Men: Tang Nau-Wah, Chan Ching-Nau, Siu Ping-Lam  
Thai Crew Props Master: Narong Osaypan  
Make-up: Kwan Kei-Noh  
Hair Design: Wong Kwok-Hung  
Hairdresser: Luk Ha-Fong  
Original Music: Michael Galasso  
Spanish songs sung by: Nat King Cole  
Sound Recordists: Kuo Li-Chi, Tang Shiang-Chu, Liang Chih-Da

Cast

Maggie Cheung Man-Yuk (Mrs Chan, née Su Lizhen)  
Tony Leung Chiu-Wai (Chow Mo-Wan)  
Rebecca Pan (Mrs Suen)  
Lui Chun (Mr Ho)  
Siu Ping-Lam (Ah Ping)  
Chin Chi-Ang (The Amah)  
Chan Man-Lui  
Koo Kam-Wah  
Yu Hsien  
Chow Po-Chun

Hong Kong/France 2000©  
99 mins

This 4K digital restoration was undertaken from the 35mm original camera negative by the Criterion Collection in collaboration with Jet Tone Films, L'Imagine Ritrovata, One Cool, and Robert Mackenzie Sound. Supervised and approved by Wong Kar Wai.

WORLD OF WONG KAR WAI

Happy Together (Chun gwong cha sit)  
Sun 11 Jul 15:40; Fri 16 Jul 14:30; Fri 23 Jul 18:10  
Days of Being Wild (Ah Fei jing juen)  
Thu Mon 12 Jul 14:30; Mon 19 Jul 18:00  
Chungking Express (Chung Hing sam lam)  
Mon 12 Jul 20:50; Tue 20 Jul 20:45; Thu 29 Jul 14:30  
Fallen Angels (Do lok tin si)  
Wed 14 Jul 14:30; Sun 25 Jul 18:30  
In the Mood for Love (Fa yeung nin wah)  
Wed 14 Jul 20:45; Sat 17 Jul 13:30; Wed 21 Jul 14:30; Thu 29 Jul 20:45  
2046  
Thu 15 Jul 20:20; Sat 17 Jul 16:10; Sat 31 Jul 14:30

As Tears Go By (Wong Gok ka moon)  
Sat 17 Jul 20:30; Mon 19 Jul 20:45  
The Grandmaster (Yi dai zong shi)  
Tue 20 Jul 18:00; Thu 22 Jul 20:50;  
Mon 26 Jul 20:50  
Ashes of Time Redux (Dung che sai duk)  
Wed 21 Jul 20:45; Fri 30 Jul 20:45  
The Hand (Extended Cut)  
Thu 22 Jul 18:30; Fri 30 Jul 18:20  
My Blueberry Nights  
Fri 23 Jul 20:50; Wed 28 Jul 20:40

Presented in partnership with Janus Films and the ICA

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