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'THE HOST' TAKES TOP HONORS AT ASIAN FILM AWARDS

South Korean Pic Takes Home 4 of 10 Prizes from Awards Gala

Hong Kong, March 20, 2007 – In a star-studded celebration ceremony officiated by Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Secretary of Commerce, Industry and Technology, Joseph Wong, the first annual Asian Film Awards (AFA's) presented their awards tonight at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, kicking off the Entertainment Expo Hong Kong which runs through April 15th, 2007.

In an event hosting 4,000 guests from around the world and broadcast on TVB (Television Broadcasts Limited) and other regional channels, the AFA's red-carpet gala and award ceremony paid tribute to 33 nominated Asian films in 10 categories and honored three world renowned artists in special tributes. The awards were presented by a mix of celebrities, filmmakers and government dignitaries.

Winning four of the ten prizes, South Korea's ***THE HOST*** was presented the **Best Film** award by Entertainment Expo Ambassador and multiple-award winning actor Tony Leung and HKSAR Chief Secretary Rafael Hui and with other accolades including: **Best Actor** award going to **SONG Kang-ho** and presented by superstar Michelle Yeoh and award winning-director Hirokazu Kore-eda; **Best Cinematographer** going to **KIM Hyung-goo**; and the **Best Visual Effects** award going to commercial production house **The Orphanage**.

Other awards included **Best Director** going to **JIA Zhangke** for China's *STILL LIFE*; **Best Actress** to **Miki NAKATINI** for Japan's *MEMORIES OF MATSUKO*; **Best Screenwriter** to **Mani HAGHIGHI** for Iran's *MEN AT WORK* presented by distinguished director Andrew Lau Wai Keung and Korean actress KIM Hye-soo; **Best Production Designer** to **Tim YIP** for the Hong Kong/Chinese production *THE BANQUET*; and **Best Editor** to **Lee CHATAMETIKOOL** for the Thailand/Austrian/French production of *SYNDROMES AND A CENTURY*. Lastly, **Best Composer** went to **Rahayu SUPANGGAH** for the Indonesian/Austrian film

OPERA JAWA and was presented by Asian pop megastar Rain with action star Maggie Q (*Mission: Impossible III*, *Live Free or Die Hard* starring opposite Bruce Willis).

In addition to the ten award categories, special tributes were also an integral part of the ceremony with Luc Besson presenting legendary Asian actress **Josephine Siao** with the **Asian Film Award for Outstanding Contribution to Asian Cinema**; renowned director Johnnie To honored **David Bordwell** with the **Asian Film Award for Excellence in Scholarship in Asian Cinema**, and Asian actor **Andy Lau** was bestowed the **Nielsen Box Office Star of Asia Award**.

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THE SOCIETY

The Hong Kong International Film Festival Society is a non-profit, non-government organization which develops, promotes and encourages creativity in the art and culture of film through the presentation of the annual Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) and the Hong Kong – Asia Film Financing Forum (HAF). Apart from organizing the flagship event HKIFF each year, the Society is also committed to organize regular programs and other film culture activities throughout the year, in order to promote the art and creative business of cinema, with an international dimension and outlook.

HKIFF (March 20--April 11)

The Hong Kong International Film Festival's first nine days (March 20-28) focus mainly on world film premieres and on planned activities for industry players, the press and guests from around the world. The program for the remainder of the festival (March 29-April 11), will center on selected films meant to appeal more to Hong Kong viewers.

Hong Kong Asia Screenings (HAS), March 20-23, will be a special feature of the 2007 festival. HAS was set up to help young Asian film directors and companies. Some of their entries will be promoted at FILMART/HAF. Thirty Asian films will be screened this year, including some completed HAF films. Among these, some 10 new Chinese productions will be featured in a section called Chinese Renaissance.

AFA (March 20)

The Asian Film Awards will honor the best of Asian cinema over the past year, including filmmakers with outstanding career achievements and emerging artists who demonstrate extraordinary talent in the field of cinema. Awards will recognize films and filmmakers from all over Asia – from Iran to China to India – in ten categories including Best Film, Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Screenwriter, Best Cinematographer, Best Production Designer, Best Composer, Best Editor and Best Visual Effects. A jury of 17 film professionals, whose experiences and expertise in cinema are internationally recognized (filmmakers, key personnel from international film festivals, and industry experts from all over the world) have screened over 700 eligible films produced in the region in 2006. Up to six nominees in each category have been selected. AFA winners will be announced at the Awards Gala on March 20th 2007.

HAF (March 20-22, 2007)

HAF is a film project market that helps promising Asian filmmakers find partners to finance their films. A three-day event, HAF provides a unique opportunity for filmmakers to discuss their projects in private with film financiers, producers, bankers, distributors, buyers and other film-related businesses.

Most HAF projects have been successfully produced. The films resulting from the projects have been shown at festivals around the world, including Cannes, Venice and Toronto.

FILMART (March 20-23, 2007)

FILMART is Asia's largest cross-media entertainment market for film, TV, animation, digital entertainment, film & broadcasting equipment, post-production services and filming locations. FILMART is an ideal platform for industry people to promote themselves, network with others and strike deals.

FILMART 2007 will continue to showcase cross-media products under various themes, including "Animation and Digital Entertainment World", "Equipment & Post-production Services World", the new "TV World" and "Locations World".

A variety of seminars, business matching meetings and networking functions has been arranged for industry players.

ENTERTAINMENT EXPO (March 20-April 15, 2007)

All four events – AFA, HKIFF, HAF and FILMART– will be held under the banner of the third Entertainment Expo, which will showcase film, digital entertainment, music and TV under one roof. Other Expo events include: Hong Kong Film Awards (HKFA), Digital Entertainment Leadership Forum (DELF), Hong Kong Music Fair (HKMF), IFPI Hong Kong Top Sales Music Award, and the Hong Kong Independent Short Film & Video Awards (IFVA).

HKIFF, AFA & HAF CONTACTS - *International Press*

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