

**CINEMA NOW**

# WONG KAR-WAI

**by Andy Bailey**

The dull ache of stolen moments and passing time weighs heavily on the Hong Kong art-house sensualist Wong Kar-Wai, whose Proust-like evocations of memory and regret have attained the status of fetish objects among his slavish international fan base. Central among these is *In the Mood for Love* (2000), the melancholy swoon starring Maggie Cheung and Tony Leung as thwarted lovers in circa 1962 Hong Kong containing some of the most gorgeous moments on celluloid, including a scene of Cheung ascending a staircase in a cheongsam dress that encapsulates Wong's obsession with unattainable female beauty. *In the Mood for Love* is the second installment of an informal trilogy that stands as Wong's masterpiece, beginning with his second feature, *Days of Being Wild* (1990), and concluding — if such a thing is possible in Wong's work — with *2046* (2004), picking up where its predecessors left off. All three films feature the intoxicating cinematography of Christopher Doyle and a cast of Chinese and Hong Kong icons including Leslie Cheung, Carina Lau, Andy Lau, Faye Wong, Gong Li — and of course Leung and Cheung, Wong's own Bogey and Bacall — each adrift in an ephemeral fog of heartbreak, nostalgia and regret and enslaved by clocks, cigarettes and Nat King Cole. Next up for Wong, notorious for taking his time directing films — the production of *2046* stretched out into five years — is his English-language debut, *My Blueberry Nights* (2007), a road movie starring Jude Law and American jazz chanteuse Norah Jones that was inspired by the Cat Power album *The Greatest*.