

NEWS RELEASE



**AFI FEST 2008 PRESENTED BY AUDI
ANNOUNCES TWO CENTERPIECE GALAS**

**DARREN ARONOFSKY'S "THE WRESTLER"
AND
STEVEN SODERBERGH'S "CHE"**

FOUR ADDITIONAL SPECIAL SCREENINGS ANNOUNCED

Los Angeles, CA, October 2, 2008—AFI FEST 2008 presented by Audi: AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival announces that Darren Aronofsky's *THE WRESTLER* and Steven Soderbergh's *CHE* have been selected as the Festival's Centerpiece Screening presentations. *CHE* will have its West Coast Premiere in a screening sponsored by Farmer's Insurance Group at the Festival on Saturday, November 1, 2008 at the Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood and *THE WRESTLER* will have its West Coast Premiere on Thursday, November 6 at the Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Hollywood.

Directed by Aronofsky, *THE WRESTLER* presents a powerful portrait of a battered dreamer, 'Randy "The Ram" Robinson' (played by Mickey Rourke), a former headlining professional wrestler who, twenty years later, ekes out a living performing for handfuls of diehard wrestling fans in high school gyms and community centers around New Jersey. Despite himself and the odds stacked against him, he lives to be a hero once again in the only place he considers home – inside the ring. The film also stars Marisa Tomei and Evan Rachel Wood. The Fox Searchlight release is due in theaters December 19.

In 1994, Aronofsky received an M.F.A. in Directing from the American Film Institute. Aronofsky made his feature film directorial debut with the acclaimed independent feature *π*, which he also wrote. The film brought him several honors, including the Director's Award at the 1998 Sundance Film Festival and an Independent Spirit Award for Best First Screenplay. His second film, the critically acclaimed *REQUIEM FOR A DREAM* premiered at the 1999 Cannes Film Festival and captivated both critics and audiences. The film was nominated for many awards, including Best Director and Best Picture at the Independent Spirit Awards, as well as an Oscar nomination for Ellen Burstyn.

This will mark Aronofsky's second appearance at AFI FEST, having premiered *THE FOUNTAIN* (following its debut at Venice), prior to the film's opening in

2006.

Directed by Soderbergh and produced by Laura Bickford and Benicio del Toro, CHE tells the epic story of the iconographic revolutionary in intimate terms. Starring del Toro as Ernesto 'Che' Guevara (for which he won the Best Actor Award at the Cannes Film festival), the film is divided into two parts, mirroring two phases of Che's life: the first half covers the years from 1955 to 1962, the second from 1966 until Che's death in 1967. The first half of the film deals with the struggle against the Cuban dictator Batista, portraying in considerable detail the grueling battle that Fidel Castro and Che fought in the Cuban countryside before successfully entering Havana.

The second half is set entirely in Bolivia, leapfrogging Che's period of power in Cuba and his African adventure in the Congo. Che faces similar challenges, galvanizing poor peasants into a military force that can take on trained professionals. The cast includes Demián Bichir, Santiago Cabrera, Vladimir Cruz, Julia Ormond, Jorge Perugorría, Edgar Ramírez, Victor Rasuk, Catalina Sandino Moreno, Rodrigo Santoro Unax Ugalde, Yul Vázquez, Lou Diamond Phillips, Franka Potente and Armando Riesco.

CHE will be screened in its entirety with a 30 minute intermission. IFC Films will open the roadshow version of CHE for one week on December 12th in New York and Los Angeles at the Landmark Theater. The film will reopen nationwide in January in theaters and on demand.

"AFI FEST is honored to present THE WRESTLER and CHE. These are both major artistic achievements by two of America's most consistently provocative filmmakers. We want to celebrate and support filmmakers like Darren Aronofsky and Steven Soderbergh, who continue to explore and to challenge our notion of what films and filmmaking can be," said AFI FEST Artistic Director, Rose Kuo.

AFI FEST also announced four additional special screenings to the 2008 schedule. Those screening include:

THE BROTHERS BLOOM (USA)

Director: Rian Johnson

In Rian Johnson's much anticipated follow up to the stylish indie hit, BRICK, THE BROTHERS BLOOM follows the exploits of two brothers who enjoy their reputation as the best con men in the world, swindling millionaires with complex scenarios of lust and intrigue. However, when one brother decides to retire, they embark on a final con – during which, they will show a beautiful and eccentric heiress the time of her life with a staged romantic and tragic adventure. The film stars Mark Ruffalo, Adrien Brody and Rachel Weisz.

SUGAR (USA)

Directors: Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck

The sophomore effort from the directors of the indie drama, HALF NELSON. Boden and Fleck's film follows the experiences of a Dominican baseball star who is recruited to play ball in the minor league system in the States

TOKYO! (Japan/France)

Directors: Joon-ho Bong, Leos Carax, Michel Gondry

Film is a triptych featuring three thirty minute short films shot by Bong, Carax and Gondry featuring Tokyo and Japan as both subjects and setting.

TWO LOVERS (USA)

Director: James Gray

A romantic drama set in Brooklyn, the film follows the conflict between a bachelor torn between the family friend his parents want him to marry and his beautiful but volatile new neighbor. The cast includes Joaquin Phoenix, Gwyneth Paltrow, Vinessa Shaw, Elias Koteas and Isabella Rossellini.

AFI FEST 2008 will run October 30-November 9, 2008. Passes are on sale now and individual film and event tickets go on sale to the public on October 10. To order passes and tickets and to get more information, visit www.AFI.com or call 1.866.AFI.FEST.

About AFI FEST

AFI is a national institute providing leadership in screen education and the recognition and celebration of excellence in the art of film, television and digital media. Celebrating its 22nd year as a program of the American Film Institute, AFI FEST 2008 presented by Audi will take place October 30-November 9. Kicking off the awards season each year, AFI FEST offers a crucial avenue of exposure to the entertainment community, while providing appreciative audiences with a festive atmosphere and the very best of world film, right in the center of the film capital of the world.

AFI FEST 2008 presented by Audi is supported in part by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors through the Los Angeles County Arts Commission, the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles and the Hollywood Sign Trust. AFI FEST is made possible in part by a grant from the Academy Foundation of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. AFI FEST is proud to continue its collaborative partnership with the Skirball Cultural Center.

AFI FEST 2008 presented by Audi is sponsored in part by American Airlines, ArcLight Hollywood, RR Donnelley, Farmers Insurance, Samsung, Absolut Vodka, Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel, LA.com, and Stella Artois. [The Los Angeles Times](#) is the Festival's Presenting Media Partner.

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Audi Q7 performance SUV; the new all-aluminum Audi A8 and A8L; the new S8 with V10 power; the all-new 2008 TT Coupe and Roadster models; and the all-new, all-aluminum R8, one of the most exclusive mid-engine sports cars in the world. Upcoming Audi vehicle launches in the USA include the updated A3 with quattro all-wheel drive (Sept. 2008), all-new A4 sedan/Avant (Sept. 2008), TTS coupe and Roadster (end 2008), Audi Q7 3.0 TDI (Q1 2009), and Audi Q5 (Q1 2009). For more information, please visit www.audiusa.com <<http://www.audiusa.com/>> or media.audiusa.com.

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