



The Tin Mine • Mahalai Meung Rae

Feature 35mm 110min.

Budget

US\$2,000,000
(HK\$15,600,000)

Producer

Yongyoot THONGKONGTOON

Executive Producer

Mingmongkol SONAKUL

Tentative Cast

Pijiya VACHAJITPAN, Sonthaya CHITMANEE,
Jumpol THONGTAN, Donlaya MUDCHN,
Anthony Howard GOULD, Niran SATTAR

Production Company

GMM TAI HUB Co., Ltd; Dedicate Ltd

HAF Goal

Sales agents, Distribution

■ Introduction ■

Jira Maligool's unique way of capturing the charm and the essence of Thailand's rural life has made him a representative eye of the people. His second film, *The Tin Mine*, is inspired by the real-life story of a prominent Thai novelist. A young man, expelled from engineering school, finds work as a miner in a province in Southern Thailand. Produced by Yongyoot Thongkongtoon, Maligool's partner on some of Thailand's most successful films (*Iron Ladies*, *Mekong Full Moon Party*, *My Girl*), this long awaited period piece set in 1940s Thailand will once again bring to screen a wealth of creative detail and poetic realization.

■ Director ■

Jira MALIGOOOL gained recognition as a director and cinematographer for music videos and television commercials, while still a film student at Chulalongkorn University.

After graduation in 1991, Maligool co-founded Hub Ho Hin Bangkok. Over the past 13 years, Hub Ho Hin Bangkok has become Thailand's top advertising studio, wellknown for its good-hearted humor. The Hub Ho Hin trademark was transferred to Maligool's directorial debut, *Mekong Full Moon Party* (2002), which received the Surasawadee's Best Director Award (Thai equivalent to Oscar) and international recognition.

Maligool has been the screenwriter, cinematographer, and producer for some of Asia's biggest box-office hits such as *Iron Ladies* (2000) and its sequel, *Iron Ladies II* (2003). He also produced and oversaw the screenwriting of *My Girl* (2003). The film's success as Thailand's highest-grossing movie ever, led to the merging of three major entertainment companies as GMM TAI HUB (GTH).

■ Producer ■

Yongyoot THONGKONGTOON's directorial debut was the smash hit comedy *Iron Ladies (Satee-Lek)*. Not only was it Thailand's top grossing film in 2000, it became one of the first movies to help Thai cinema gain high popularity overseas. An inspiring true story of a transsexual volleyball team competing for a national championship, *Iron Ladies* led the way for a wave of new Thai cinema that dealt with the subject of transvestites and homosexuality, subjects that had hitherto never been touched upon before by commercial Thai filmmakers. The film's success also paved the way for the creation of Hub Ho Hin Films.

Even though Hub Ho Hin Films' first three features: *Mekong Full Moon Party* (2000), *Iron Ladies II: The Before and After* (2003) and *My Girl* (2003) have shared unorthodox subject matter, they have reached unprecedented levels of achievement. This proves Thongkongtoon's ability to produce films outside the confines of genre. Continued success, especially that of *My Girl*, has led to the merging of the film's three investors: GMM Grammy Plc, Tai Entertainment and Hub Ho Hin Films. In December 2004, GMM TAI HUB (GTH) released *M.A.I. D (Mission Almost Impossible Done)*, a successful action comedy directed, written and produced by Thongkongtoon.

As producer of *The Tin Mine*, Thongkongtoon can consolidate on his previous successful collaboration with Jira Maligool.

■ Executive Producer ■

Mingmongkol SONAKUL's name became synonymous with the birth of Thai independent cinema, after producing Apichatpong Weerasethakul's debut feature *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2000), the first Thai film to receive the Hubert Bals Fund. Since then she has produced other important works including the 2003 Berlin Forum premiere *One Night Husband*, along with awardwinning short films by Aditya Assarat and other young new directors.

In 2001, she was chosen by the French Embassy to participate in the "Young Producers from Three Continents" training program, held for the first time in Nantes, France. In that same year she also wrote, directed and independently financed and distributed her first feature film *I-San Special*, which was awarded the NETPAC-Fipresci Critics prize at the 2002 Singapore Film Festival. In 2004, she was invited to participate in the Berlin Talent Campus as well as The Sundance Film Festival's independent filmmaker fellowship program. Sonakul's 2005 production included *3 Friends* (also co-directed), *Invisible Waves* (directed by Pen-ek Ratanaruang) and *The Tin Mine*. Mingmongkol Sonakul has also served on the committee of the Thai Film Foundation, the organizing body for independent film in Thailand, since its inception seven years ago (www.thaifilm.com).

■ Production Companies ■

GMM TAI HUB Co., Ltd is a proud new venture by Thailand's three major entertainment firms – GMM Grammy Plc, Tai Entertainment and Hub Ho Hin Films. Launched in May, 2004 after the unprecedented success of their first collaboration: 2003's

top grossing film *My Girl (Fan Chan)*, the merging of GMM TAI HUB (GTH) combines GMM's powerful media influence, Tai Entertainment's innovative marketing skills, and Hub Ho Hin Bangkok's fresh creativity and quality production. It is the first completed film studio established in Thailand during the past 30 years.

Combining a showcase of new strengths with unwavering commitment to the production of quality films, GTH aims to fulfill the needs of modern Thai and Asian audiences. To serve this goal, GTH has equipped itself with cutting-edge technology and youthful energy harnessed within the strong hands of teamwork and experience. GTH provides an excellent and fair working atmosphere for filmmakers from all walks of life. GTH's business style opens its doors to many forms of co-production and partnership. From conception to development, financing to production, post-production to marketing and distribution, GTH brings its audience the true wonder of entertaining quality films.

Shutter (2004), GTH's first international release has also proved a continuous success as the top grossing film in Thailand for 2004 and an Asian smash-hit.

Dedicate Ltd is a new production company based in Bangkok, established by the independent film producer Mingmongkol Sonakul. The philosophy of the company is based on her principles to uphold the artistic integrity of the filmmaker while simultaneously finding a system of financing, production, and distribution tailored to fit each individual project. She brings a wealth of experience to the company having produced many of the most important Thai independent films including Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Mysterious Object at Noon* (2000), Pimpaka Towira's *One Night Husband!* (2003), Aditya Assarat's short films *Motorcycle* and *Waiting*, as well as her own directorial debut, *I-san Special*. Dedicate's 2004-2005 slate of films include *3 Friends* (co-director), *Invisible Waves* directed by Pen-ek Ratanaruang, *Hi-So* directed by Aditya Assarat, and Jira Maligool's *The Tin Mine*.

■ Synopsis ■

Following the end of World War II, Thailand in the late 1940s was going through a state of economic depression. For those not born to wealth or nobility, higher education was the only way to elevate one's position in society.

Ajin Panjapan, a 22-year-old engineering student, is expelled from Bangkok's most distinguished university, and thus his hopes for a bright, promising future have been crushed. Ajin's father punishes him by sending Ajin to work at a tin mine in Phang-Nga, a province in southern Thailand.

Stuck between the rainforest and the Andaman seacoast, the baby-skinned Ajin finds himself in a rough and uncivilized world. The possessions he brings - a certificate proving that he'd attended a prestigious faculty and his girlfriend's souvenir - are the only remembrances of his previous polished life. Daily chores in the mine revolve around myths and the Southern monsoon weather that can never be predicted. Ajin works side by side with locals who speak a dialect that he can

barely understand.

Ajin's journey of self-discovery deals with the challenge of assignments given by Farang Boss ('Farang' is a Thai slang for 'foreigner'), involving how to give and gain respect. The bonds, developed between Ajin, his co-workers and the locals, including the beautiful-eyed La-ia, mend his broken heart. However, as minerals and money are running out, conflicts rise up. Eventually the mine is shut down.

After the mine is closed down, Ajin walks out a grown man. He has earned experience that no school could possibly give. He has discovered the gulf between social status and true human dignity. Out of this change in outlook, young Ajin becomes one of Thailand's most renowned contemporary novelists.

In contrast to the current unrest in Thailand's southern provinces, this film portrays the essence of multicultural livelihood in days past. The nostalgia for a peaceful South is something that all Thai people yearn to bring back.

The Tin Mine not only recreates the epic pathos of southern Thailand's mining era, it also brings to the screen a beautiful, touching tale of loss, love and respect.

■ Director's Statement ■

Although I was born ten years after the boom period of the mining industry, reading the colorful stories by Ajin Panjapan has inspired my imagination since I was young.

Thanks to my career in advertising that deals with recreating beauty in every form (from washing machines to gorgeous models), it took all our effort and creativity to construct a rusty and dirt-sunk mine as it was in 1940s. There is no tin mine left in operation in Thailand. We did a lot of research to build our dredger and 'mine' from scratch.

The next challenge is to portray the 'beauty' of the story that is always there, the essentials of life in the mine. It is the life of real human struggling, not about maintaining social status.

With the story and the set, I am proud to say that this film will present the most 'beautiful' mine ever created."

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