

**OSCAR®-NOMINATED FILMMAKER GUILLERMO DEL TORO
TO DIRECT "THE HOBBIT" AND ITS SEQUEL**

"Hobbit" Executive Producers Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh Tap
"Pan's Labyrinth" Director To Helm Latest Installments of "The Lord of the Rings" Saga

LOS ANGELES, CA (April 24 , 2008) – Guillermo del Toro ("Pan's Labyrinth," "Hellboy," "Blade 2") will direct "The Hobbit" and its sequel, it was jointly announced today by "The Hobbit" Executive Producers Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh, New Line Cinema's President and COO Toby Emmerich, and Mary Parent, Chairperson, Worldwide Motion Picture Group, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc. (MGM).

"Guillermo is a filmmaker of outstanding ability; he is a genuine storyteller who brings a tremendous amount of passion, energy and imagination to his work. A true original, Guillermo is a cinematic magician who has never lost his child-like sense of wonder. He understands that the fantastic must be grounded in the real and that all stories are only ever a reflection of ourselves," say Jackson and Walsh. "We have long admired Guillermo's work and cannot think of a more inspired filmmaker to take the journey back to Middle-earth. We are delighted 'The Hobbit' is in such trustworthy hands."

Del Toro says, "This is a great honor, and I am indeed blessed to become a part of the filmmaking community that Peter, Fran and their extraordinary team of collaborators have created in New Zealand. I want to thank them, Bob Shaye, Michael Lynne, Toby Emmerich and Mark Ordesky for entrusting me with such an incredible project. Contributing to the 'Lord of the Rings' legacy is an absolute dream come true."

Comments Emmerich, "Guillermo has a proven ability to bring fantasy worlds to life in a compelling and emotional way. He is the ideal filmmaker to work with Peter and Fran to bring Tolkien's beloved Middle-earth back to the screen."

Parent adds: "As the international distributors for 'The Hobbit' films, we couldn't agree more with Peter, Fran and our partners at New Line, Guillermo is the perfect choice to direct. Audiences across the globe enjoy his unique cinematic viewpoint, imaginative direction and provocative storytelling talents. His vision, in collaboration with Peter and

Fran, will ensure 'The Hobbit' as a very special film experience for audiences worldwide.”

Del Toro will move to New Zealand for the next four years to work with Jackson and his Wingnut and WETA production teams. He will helm the two films back to back – telling the story of “The Hobbit,” and its sequel, which will deal with the 60-year period between “The Hobbit” and “The Fellowship of the Ring,” the first of the “Lord of the Rings” trilogy.

New Line is overseeing development and will manage the production. “The Hobbit” and its sequel are being co-produced and co-financed by New Line Cinema and MGM, with Warner Brothers distributing domestically and MGM distributing internationally. Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh are executive producing the films.

The Oscar®-winning, critically acclaimed “The Lord of the Rings” trilogy grossed nearly \$3 billion worldwide at the box office. In 2003, “The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King” swept the Academy Awards®, winning all of the 11 categories in which it was nominated, including Best Picture – the first ever Best Picture win for a fantasy film. The trilogy’s production was also unprecedented at the time.

For more information about “The Hobbit” films, please visit www.TheHobbitBlog.com.

Del Toro most recently helmed the critically acclaimed “Pan’s Labyrinth,” which was released through New Line’s Picturehouse label and became the highest grossing Spanish language film in US box office history, and among the top five grossing foreign language films of all time. It won three Academy Awards® (Art Direction, Cinematography, and Makeup) and earned six nominations, including a writing nomination for del Toro for the film’s original screenplay. Del Toro also executive produced another Picturehouse release, the Spanish supernatural thriller “The Orphanage,” which, having scored critical success and broken box office records in Spain, has been critically acclaimed and is currently playing in theaters nationwide. Del Toro also previously co-wrote and directed the critically acclaimed Spanish fantasy thriller “The Devil’s Backbone,” and first worked with New Line in 2002 when he directed “Blade II.” His current feature, which he directs and has adapted from the graphic novel series, “Hellboy II: The Golden Army,” is scheduled for a July 11 release.

About Peter Jackson/Wingnut Films:

Peter Jackson is one of the world's most successful filmmakers. His monumental achievement co-writing, co-producing and directing "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy (with fellow Academy Award® winners and frequent collaborators Fran Walsh and Philippa Boyens) earned a total of 30 Academy Award® nominations and 17 Academy Awards®. Jackson and Walsh received their first Oscar nomination for Best Original Screenplay for their acclaimed film "Heavenly Creatures." Jackson, through his New Zealand-based Wingnut Films banner, also was responsible for the globally successful 2005 remake of "King Kong" which earned over \$500 million worldwide and 3 Academy Awards®. Currently, Jackson is directing an adaptation of "The Lovely Bones," from the acclaimed best-selling novel by Alice Sebold. He is also developing a trilogy of films with Steven Spielberg based on "Tintin," the world renowned comic book series by Herge.

About New Line Cinema:

New Line Cinema remains one of the most successful independent film companies after more than 40 years. Its mission is to produce innovative, popular, profitable entertainment in the best creative environment. A pioneer in franchise filmmaking, New Line produced the Oscar-winning *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which is a landmark in the history of film franchises. New Line Cinema is a division of Warner Bros.

About Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc.:

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Inc., through its operating subsidiaries, is actively engaged in the worldwide production and distribution of motion pictures, television programming, home video, interactive media, music and licensed merchandise. The company owns the world's largest library of modern films, comprising around 4,100 titles. Operating units include Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc., Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Inc., United Artists Films Inc., Ventanazul, MGM Television Entertainment Inc., MGM Networks Inc., MGM Domestic Networks LLC, MGM Distribution Co, MGM International Television Distribution In, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Home Entertainment LLC, MGM ON STAGE, MGM Music, MGM Worldwide Digital Media, MGM Consumer Products and MGM Interactive. In addition, MGM has ownership interests in international TV channels

reaching nearly 120 countries. MGM ownership is as follows: Providence Equity Partners (29%), TPG (21%), Sony Corporation of America (20%), Comcast (20%), DLJ Merchant Banking Partners (7%) and Quadrangle Group (3%). For more information, visit www.mgm.com.

Contact:

New Line Cinema

Robert Pini (NY)
(212) 649-4934

Robert.pini@newline.com

Candice McDonough (LA)
(310) 967-6991

Candice.mcdonough@newline.com

Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc.

Jeff Pryor

(310)449-3446

jpryor@mgm.com