



Children of the Silver Screen

Aadhi Haqeeqat Aadha Fasana

Children of the Silver Screen

Dilip Ghosh

INDIA, 1990

88 minutes ■ Colour/35mm (Hindi/
English)

Production Company: **National Film
Development Corporation**

Producer: **Ravi Malik**

Screenplay: **Jill Misquitta**

Cinematography: **K.U. Mohanan**

Print Source: **Directorate of Film
Festivals, 4th Floor, Lok Nayak
Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi
110003, India. Tel: (91-11) 692-849.
Fax: (91-11) 694-920.**

The Clap Trap

Jill Misquitta

INDIA, 1993

52 minutes ■ Colour/16mm (Hindi/
English)

Production Company: **Channel 4**

Executive Producer: **O.P. Kohli**

Producer: **Sorab Irani**

Cinematography: **Navroze Contractor**

Editor: **Deepak Segal**

Print Source/Foreign Sales Agent: **SBI
Impresario (P) Ltd., 31 Bell Building,
Sir PM Road, Fort, Bombay 1, India.
Tel: (91-22) 840-0087.
Fax: (91-22) 841-2019.**

While no national cinema eschews them, child stars abound almost to excess in the Indian cinema. Dilip Ghosh tends to bypass the reasons for this and, instead, concentrates on the emotional realities behind the seemingly glamorous lives of screen children. There are those from the past, those recently grown up (many are still waiting to re-launch their careers as young adults), and those from today. Interviews of brutal frankness, concerning exploitation, broken relationships and all the horrors visited upon children are juxtaposed with clips of performances. Underlying the glamorous life are pain and folly. The film examines a major element of Indian cinema and also probes into the space between illusion and reality.

— *David Overbey*

Bollywood is famous for its vast crowd scenes and huge musical numbers, played out in literally hundreds of movies every year. *The Clap Trap* takes us behind the scenes, introducing us to the extras – or “junior artistes,” to use the union-mandated euphemism – who drive this cinematic engine. Eschewing voice-over narration, this engaging documentary allows the players themselves to tell their stories, often fanciful yarns as melodramatic as the films in which they appear. But there is also a bitter irony to their lives – envied by the cinema-worshipping masses, these extras are subject to slave wages and sexual exploitation.

The deft hand of director Jill Misquitta – who also wrote the script for *Children of the Silver Screen* – unwaveringly uncovers these issues. But she never forgets the magic and levity of the Bombay movie scene, celebrating it in fabulous footage taken on sets of yet-to-be-released films.

— *Noah Cowan*

Dilip Ghosh was born in 1955. He graduated from the Film and Television Institute of India at Pune in 1980. His first film, a graduation project, *In Paradise Man is Born Dead*, opened the Oberhausen Festival in 1981. He has directed many documentaries and short films. *Children of the Silver Screen* is his first full-length film.

Jill Misquitta graduated from the Film and Television Institute at Pune in 1981. Her diploma film, *Joyce*, was widely acclaimed and travelled extensively to international festivals. Since then, she has directed many short films, television commercials and two video documentaries. She has also written several award-winning scripts, including *Children of the Silver Screen* and (in collaboration with Cyrus Mistry) *Percy*. *The Clap Trap* is her first long-form documentary on film.

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Father, Son and the Holy War

Anand Patwardhan

INDIA, 1994

120 minutes ■ Colour/16mm (English/Rajasthani/Gujarati)

Producer: **Anand Patwardhan**

Cinematography: **Anand Patwardhan**

Editor: **Anand Patwardhan**

Sound: **Pervez Merwanji, Sanjiv**

Shah, Narinder Singh, Dilip

Subramaniam, Simantini Dhuru,

Paromita Johra

Music: **Vinay Mahajan, Nav Nirman**

Print Source: **Anand Patwardhan, 2nd F. 27 Lokmanya Tilak Colony, Marg No. 2, Dadar, Bombay 400014, India. Tel: (91-22) 414-3782. Fax: (91-22) 414-5182.**

Foreign Sales Agent: **Anand Patwardhan, 2nd F. 27 Lokmanya Tilak Colony, Marg No. 2, Dadar, Bombay 400014, India. Tel: (91-22) 414-3782. Fax: (91-22) 414-5182.**

Confrontational, disturbing and intense, *Father, Son and the Holy War* is a landmark documentary. Not only concerned with the communal violence which has ravaged India since independence, director Anand Patwardhan asks what lies behind the feror and blood. By examining, sometimes in harrowing, explosive "stolen" footage, the all-too-common signs of modern fascism – mob rules, anti-minority sloganeering, systematic destruction of property and life – he takes us to the very foundations of hate and religion.

Patwardhan spent seven years on this project, culling material from his last two long-form projects, plus material shot between and since. He is no stranger to the subject. *In Memory of Friends* (90), concerning Hindu/Sikh tension following Indira Gandhi's assassination, was a film of hope; *In the Name of God* (92), an indictment of rising Hindu fundamentalism, was a film of anger.

Father, Son and the Holy War draws from both. "Trial By Fire," Part One, refers to the fires – "purifying" rituals, riots, wife-burning – occupying contemporary Indian political and social consciousness. And although angry images like footage from a crematorium that permits ritual "Sati" and the charred bodies following the recent massive Bombay riots, are difficult to watch, Patwardhan balances them with his "firefighters," people committed to end misogynist and bigoted practices within their communities.

"Hero Pharmacy," Part Two, asks what this systemic violence stems from. Patwardhan posits an all-encompassing vision of Indian machismo, which has, as its nucleus, oft-repeated tales of marauding Hindu warriors and Mughal princes who rape and pillage with impunity. He backs up his claims by interviewing a wide range of young people and by examining the types of Western culture that have become popular in India.

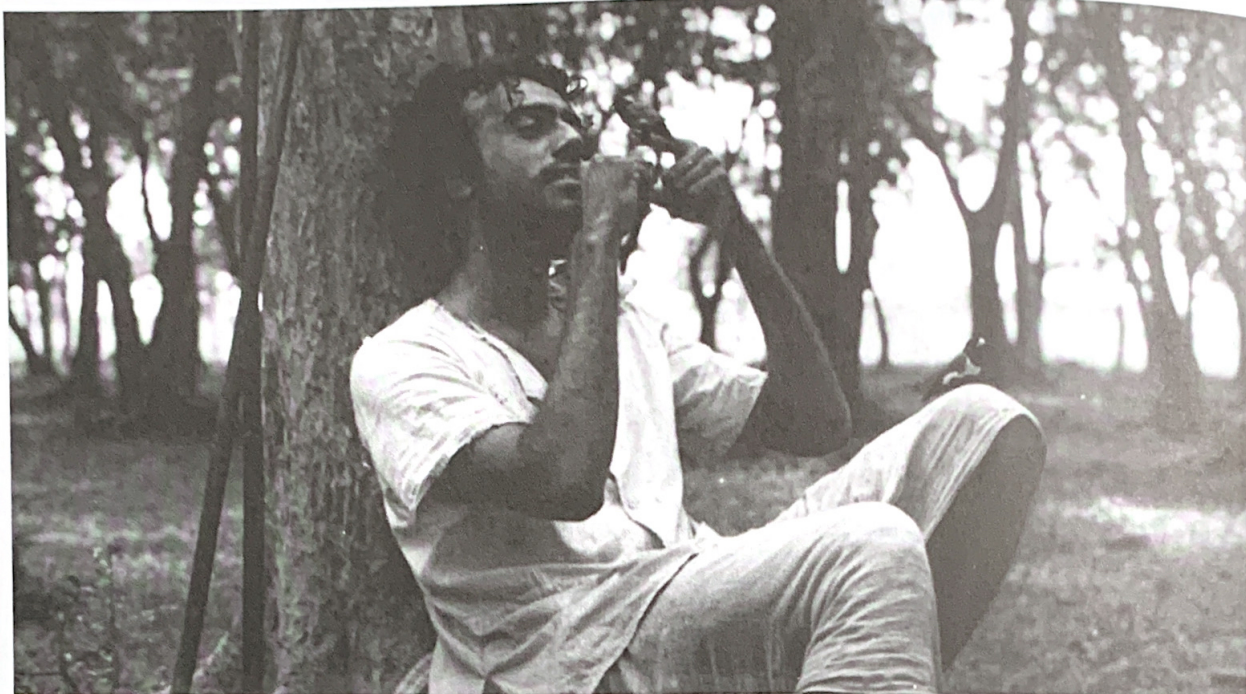
In this more contemplative, even philosophical mood, Anand Patwardhan diagnoses his nation's continuing ills – and reveals a new face of fascism that chillingly parallels political movements closer to home.

– *Noah Cowan*

Anand Patwardhan was born in 1950. After receiving degrees in English literature from Bombay University and in sociology from Brandeis University, he received an M.A. in communications from McGill University. He has been making political documentary films for over 15 years. Films include: *Prisoners of Conscience* (78), *A Time To Rise* (81), *Bombay Our City* (85), *In Memory of Friends* (90), *In the Name of God* (92), *Father, Son and the Holy War* (94).

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*Shelter of the Wings*

Charachar

Shelter of the Wings

Buddhadeb Dasgupta

INDIA, 1993

83 minutes ■ Colour/35mm (Bengali)
Production Company: **Gope Movies**
Executive Producer: **Dulal Roy**
Producer: **Shankar Gope, Gita Gope**
Screenplay: **Buddhadeb Dasgupta**,
from a short story by **Prafulla Roy**
Cinematography: **Soumendu Roy**
Principal Cast: **Rajit Kapoor, Laboni Sarkar, Sadhu Meher, Shankar Chakraborty, Monoj Mitra, Indrani Halder**

Print Source: **Directorate of Film Festivals, 4th Floor, Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi 110003, India. Tel: (91-11) 469-4920. Fax: (91-11) 462-3430.**

Foreign Sales Agent: **Gope Movies Pvt. Ltd., 132 Lenin Sarani, Calcutta 700013, India. Tel: (91-33) 269-778. Fax: (91-33) 248-6871.**

Tragedy of an Indian Farmer

Murali Nair

INDIA, 1993

6 minutes ■ Colour/16mm
Cinematography: **Radhakrishnan**
Principal Cast: **M.R. Gopakumar, Stella Raja, Sashidharan Nair, Lal, Ajitha**

Print Source: See page 351.

Shelter of the Wings is a simple, gentle and affecting story with wider implications than might be evident on the surface. Lakhinder catches exotic birds in the forest of Bengal (stunningly photographed by Soumendu Roy) to sell in Calcutta markets. However, the day before he dies, his son buries a dead bird to grow a "bird blossom tree," and Lakhinder is so affected that he cannot bear to keep the birds in cages anymore, setting free more than he sells. As his income drops, his wife complains and eventually embarks on an affair. Afraid of losing his wife, he arranges to sell his birds directly to a Calcutta dealer and thus improve his financial state. When the dealer serves him a bird for dinner, however, it is too much and he renounces his livelihood. Still unsure as to where he is headed, he tries to win his wife back. The startling and moving end of the film is impossible to describe. Dasgupta has filmed almost entirely on location, so that we are given a magical sense of place which nourishes this sensitive portrait of an eccentric of great charm.

A similar sensibility is to be found in the first short film by a young filmmaker, Murali Nair. In six minutes, Murali Nair creates the world of an Indian farmer in which we understand the reasons for his misery and the sources of his happiness without a word being spoken. Nair knows how to get maximum results with minimum resources. He also knows how to move a camera with

meaning and grace. It is obvious he will be a major figure in the near future.

— *David Overbey*

Buddhadeb Dasgupta was born in 1944. He studied at the University of Calcutta, then taught at a college in Calcutta from 1968 to 1976. He began directing documentaries in 1968, and made his first feature film in 1978. He is also a renowned Bengali poet, having published six volumes of verse. Feature films: *Dooratwa* (78), *Neem Annapurna* (79), *Grihajuddha* (81), *Andhi Gali* (84), *Phera* (86), *Bagh Bahadur* (89), *Tahader Katha* (92), *Shelter of the Wings* (93).

Murali Nair is 27 and has a degree in geology from Kamarajar University, Madurai, but films captured his attention and he completed a second degree in filmmaking at St. Xavier's Institute of Communications, Bombay. He has worked as an assistant to various directors of documentaries. *Tragedy of an Indian Farmer* (93) is his first film.

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Fearless – The Hunterwali Story

Kamlabai

Reena Mohan

INDIA, 1992

46 minutes ■ Colour/16mm (Marathi/Hindi)

Production Company: **Daguerrotype**
 Producer: **Reena Mohan**
 Cinematography: **Ranjan Palit**
 Editor: **Reena Mohan, Smriti Nevatia**
 Sound: **Suresh Rajamani**
 Principal Cast: **Kamlabai Gokhale**

Print Source: **Directorate of Film Festivals, 4th Floor, Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi 110003, India. Tel: (91-11) 692-849. Fax: (91-11) 694-920.**

Foreign Sales Agent: **Daguerrotype, 250 RPS Flats, Sheikh Sarai Phase I, New Delhi 110017, India.**

Fearless – The Hunterwali Story

Riyad Vinci Wadia

INDIA, 1993

62 minutes ■ Colour/Black and White/35mm (Hindi)

Production Company: **Wadia Movietone Pvt. Ltd.**
 Producer: **Riyad Vinci Wadia**
 Cinematography: **R.M. Rao, Anil Mehta, Faroukh Mistry**
 Editor: **Arunabha Mukherjee**

Print Source/Foreign Sales Agent: **Wadia Movietone Pvt. Ltd., Ballard House (First Floor), Adi Marzban Path, Ballard Estate, Bombay 400 003, India. Tel: (91-22) 262-6429. Fax: (91-22) 262-6430.**

Indian commercial cinema has been a star-driven affair from its inception. To this day, these larger-than-life performers are living gods to millions of movie fans across the country. The films paired here go back to the root of this love affair, profiling two very different but equally appealing actresses of the past.

Kamlabai Gokhale, now 92 years old, was one of this century's great Marathi stage and screen actresses. Interviews with her, in tandem with beautiful period stills and judicious re-enactments, not only conjure up nostalgia for a lost cinematic past but also tell a powerful tale of a woman's struggle against the social current of her time. Kamlabai's legendary wit and candour are captured exquisitely by first-time director Reena Mohan.

Bold, brash and brazen, transplanted Australian Mary Evans splashed onto Indian screens in 1935's *Hunterwali*, a madcap sock-'em-up action flick that spawned a legion of imitators. Rechristened "Fearless Nadia," the blue-eyed, blonde stunt queen became one of the era's leading stars, cracking her whip and belting goons in the gut in dozens of quickly-made features. Says she: "There was no question of a double. I'd do all the daredevilry myself. I was seldom afraid, and the thrill I derived from all this maro-pheko-todo-peeto business knew no bounds. It was all such great fun."

Director Riyad Vinci Wadia deftly interweaves archival footage from these films

with anecdotal reminiscences from the still-living legend. While the film is deliciously camp and never less than entertaining, Wadia also provides much valuable information about how and why the Bombay film scene has changed over the years.

– *Noah Cowan*

Reena Mohan graduated from the Film and Television Institute of India at Pune in 1982. Since then she has been working as a freelance film editor in Bombay and New Delhi. *Kamlabai* (92) is her first long film as a director.

Riyad Vinci Wadia was born in 1967 in Bombay, India. In 1990, he graduated from Charles Stuart University in Australia where he directed the well-received short film, *Whatever Happened to Mommie Dearest?* He returned to Bombay in 1990 to inherit Wadia Movietone – a 60-year-old feature film production company started by his grandfather, J.B.H. Wadia. Since then, he has been heavily involved in television both as a producer of television commercials and as a director of shows such as "Trip the Light Fantastic," a six-part documentary on the Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance Company. *Fearless – The Hunterwali Story* (93) is his first long documentary.

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When Hamlet Went to Mizoram

Tales from the Planet Kolkota

Ruchir Joshi

INDIA, 1993

37 minutes ■ Colour/16mm
(English/Bengali)

Production Company: **Hit Films**

Producer: **Ruchir Joshi**

Screenplay: **Ruchir Joshi, Tony Cokes**

Cinematography: **Ranjan Palit**

Editor: **Reena Mohan**

Sound: **Suresh Rajamani**

Music: **D. Wood, Vikram Joglekar**

Print Source: **Hit Films, 4B Darshan Apartments, 2B Lansdowne Road, Calcutta 700 020, India.**

Tel: (91-33) 475-2832.

Fax: (91-33) 247-0913.

The absolutely dreadful and self-serving book "City of Joy" and the yet more dreadful and self-serving film derived from it are not the first perversions of the reality of Calcutta. There have been other dreams of the city, equally false and potentially as harmful. Ruchir Joshi guides us through a gallery of images of his city, taken from Hollywood, European and Indian films, and links them to a more general exploitation that leads to further cultural and economic misery. *Tales from the Planet Kolkota* is a personal film, in which Joshi's examination of illusionary Calcutta merges with memories of a friend, Deepak Majumdar, who died during production. This juxtaposition throws further light on the reality of a city of dreams and nightmares.

– *David Overbey*

Presumably introduced by missionaries decades ago, the play has attracted a cult that extends to best-selling audio cassettes and at least one annual theatrical production that draws vast crowds. Butalia investigates the significance of the text for these people, opening their still-closed world for us a crack. Sensitive to the ethnographic traps inherent in the project, he skirts them with a deft sense of humour and an unfailingly precise eye.

– *Noah Cowan*

Ruchir Joshi was born in 1960. He graduated in Visual Arts and Cinema from Goddard College, USA. From 1982 to 1988 he worked as a freelance photographer and writer, based mainly in Calcutta. Currently he is at work on a feature film, *Baal*. His films include: *Bargain* (85), *Eleven Miles* (90), *Memories of a Milk City* (93), *Tales from the Planet Kolkota* (93).

When Hamlet Went to Mizoram

Pankaj Butalia

INDIA, 1990

52 minutes ■ Colour/16mm (Mizo)

Production Company: **Vital Films**

Executive Producer: **Pankaj Butalia**

Cinematography: **Ranjan Palit**

Editor: **Sameera Jain**

Sound: **Suresh Rajamani, Pankaj Butalia**

Print Source: **Vital Films, B-26 Gulmohar Park, New Delhi 110049, India.** Tel: (91-11) 685-4839.

Fax: (91-11) 686-6720.

Documentary filmmaker Pankaj Butalia's *Moksha* was a sumptuous addition to last year's Asian Horizons programme. *When Hamlet Went to Mizoram*, his first significant film, confirmed him earlier as an important talent.

Mizoram is a sliver of a state in the far eastern reaches of India, where people are ethnically similar to the Burmese across the border and have been engaged in a civil war with the Indian government since independence. In his travels, Butalia discovered one town where cultural concerns and social mores, after years of war, attrition and melodramatic temperaments, congealed into reverence for one basic text: Shakespeare's "Hamlet."

Pankaj Butalia was born in India in 1950. He taught economics at Delhi University for 20 years before he took to documentary filmmaking. *When Hamlet Went to Mizoram* (90) was his first documentary. His second film, *Moksha* (93), screened at this Festival last year.

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India Now!



Ekti Jiban

Portrait of a Life

Raja Mitra

INDIA, 1987

130 minutes ■ Colour/35mm (Bengali)
 Production Company: **Chalchitra**
 Executive Producer: **Dilip Ghosh**
 Screenplay: **Raja Mitra, from a story by Buddhadev Basu**
 Cinematography: **Kamal Nayek**
 Music: **Raja Mitra**

Principal Cast: **Soumitra Chatterjee, Madhavi Chakrabarti, Averi Dutta, Munna Chakrabarty, Gyanesh Mukherjee**

Print Source: **Directorate of Film Festivals, 4th Floor, Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi 110003, India. Tel: (91-11) 469-4920. Fax: (91-11) 462-3430.**

Raja Mitra graduated from the University of Calcutta in 1967. He worked for various literary and cinema magazines in Bengal. In 1974 and 1975 he was assistant director to Gautam Ghosh. Between 1975 and 1987, he made numerous short and medium length documentaries for the cinema division of the government of West Bengal. *Portrait of a Life* (87) is his first feature film.

Raja Mitra's incandescent *Portrait of a Life* takes an almost impossible subject – the thirst for knowledge and the joy of words – and manages to make it both vital and moving. If one allows the film a quarter hour to set up its rhythm and mood, it becomes obsessively watchable, as fascinating as a good detective story.

Gurudas is a teacher of Sanskrit in a humble village school in 1930. When he suddenly realizes that Bengali has separated itself almost entirely from its Sanskrit origins and that there is no dictionary of this modern language, he sets out to create one. Taking to the streets, he searches through all walks of life for vocabulary and definitions.

Gurudas's decades-long odyssey brings misery to his family, but it also inspires devotion and love. There is nothing flashy or easy here, but there is true humanity, true reverence for the life of the mind and the spirit. The core of the film is lit by that tiny lamp which illuminates everything worthwhile: the lamp of thought.

– *David Overbey*

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Dharavi

Sudhir Mishra

INDIA, 1992

120 minutes ■ Colour/35mm (Hindi)
Production Company: **National Film Development Corporation/Doordarshan**

Producer: **Ravi Malik**

Screenplay: **Sudhir Mishra**

Cinematography: **Rajesh Joshi**

Editor: **Renu Saluja**

Art Director: **Subhash Sinha Roy**

Sound: **Madhu Apsara, Hitendra Ghosh**

Music: **Rajat Dholakia**

Principal Cast: **Om Puri, Shabana Azmi, Raghuvir Yadav, Virendra Saxena, Pramod Bala, Madhuri Dixit**

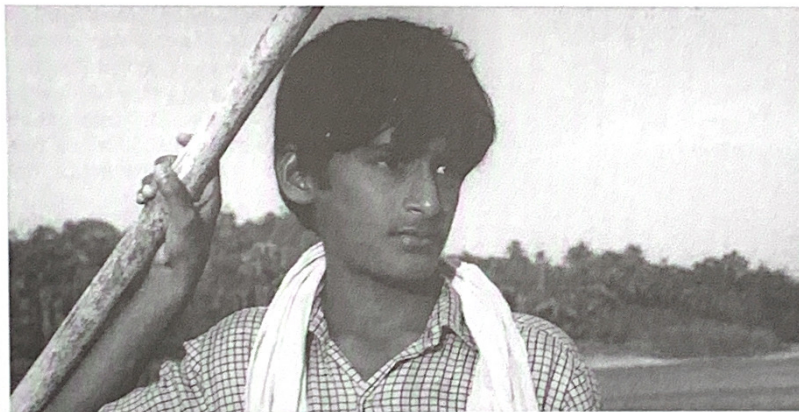
Print Source: **Directorate of Film Festivals, 4th Floor, Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi 110003, India. Tel: (91-11) 469-4920. Fax: (91-11) 462-3430.**

Sudhir Mishra was born in 1957. Originally involved in the theatre, he moved to Bombay in 1980. His first film, *Yeh Woh Manzilen to Nahin* (87), won the President's Gold Medal for Best First Film. He is currently in pre-production on his new film, *Mehrujissa*. Feature films include: *Yeh Woh Manzilen to Nahin* (87), *Main Zinda Hoon* (88), *Dharavi* (92).

Dharavi, sprawling across the foot of Bombay, is Asia's largest slum, a home for the thousands of migrants absorbed by the metropolis every year. Rajkaran Yadav (Om Puri) is a Dharavi taxi driver hoping for a better life. He plans to buy a factory with friends and become a rich businessman. Perhaps then he might snag the film starlet who inhabits his dreams. But Yadav's values are questioned by his social activist brother-in-law and, in a more emotional way, by his wife (played by the incomparable Shabana Azmi, in a subtle, powerful performance). Finally, his obsession with success alienates everyone – Yadav is penniless and alone. Rejecting the stereotypical "ghetto film" for a more fanciful approach, director Sudhir Mishra uses theatrical sets and riffs on characters' fantasies. He is ably assisted in this lyrical, performance-driven style by some of India's finest actors: Puri and Azmi especially make the screen light up with the grace and power of their work.

– *Noah Cowan*

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Kadavu

The Ferry

M.T. Vasudevan Nair

INDIA, 1991

104 minutes ■ Colour/35mm (Malayalam)

Production Company: **Novel Films**

Screenplay: **M.T. Vasudevan Nair, based on a story by S.K. Pottekkat**

Cinematography: **Venu**

Editor: **B. Lenin**

Art Director: **Bhasan**

Sound: **Sampath**

Music: **Rajiv Taranath**

Principal Cast: **Santhosh Antony, Balan K. Nair, Thilakan, Ravi Vallathol, Murali, Ummer**

Print Source: **Directorate of Film Festivals, 4th Floor, Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market, New Delhi 110003, India. Tel: (91-11) 692-849. Fax: (91-11) 694-920.**

M.T. Vasudevan Nair started his career as a short story writer and has published over 30 books. He began his association with the Kerala film scene in 1966 as a screenwriter and has won prizes for his work many times. He directed his first film in 1973. Films include: *Nirmalyam* (73), *Thazhvaram* (91), *The Ferry* (92).

The tiny state of Kerala has consistently produced quietly masterful art films, often based on the traditions of the local Malayalam literature.

The Ferry is an almost perfect example of how fruitful this collaboration can be. It follows a runaway in his late teens, who is taken on as an apprentice by a rural boatman, even though the river runs dry most of the year. Living simply with his kind mentor, the boy learns much about the village. He breaks the gentle monotony of his existence – exquisitely captured by cinematography that celebrates Kerala's natural beauty – when a girl he likes loses her necklace. Discovering that she has moved to the city, he follows her into its noise and bustle and learns, in the process, the true nature of kindness.

The Ferry has a certain poetry to it, not so much because of the script, even though director M.T. Vasudevan Nair is a well-respected writer, but because of the subtle cinematography and skillful acting. Both manage to convey meaning through small gestures and contemplative moments.

– *Noah Cowan*

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Marattam

Masquerade

Govindan Aravindan

INDIA, 1988

90 minutes ■ Colour/35mm (Malayalam)
Production Company: Doordarshan India

Screenplay: Govindan Aravindan, based on the play by Kavalam Narayana Panicker

Cinematography: Shaji
Editor: Bose

Sound: Devadas

Principal Cast: Urmila Unni, Sadanam Krishnan Kutty, Kalamandalam Kesavan, The Thiruvarangam Ensemble

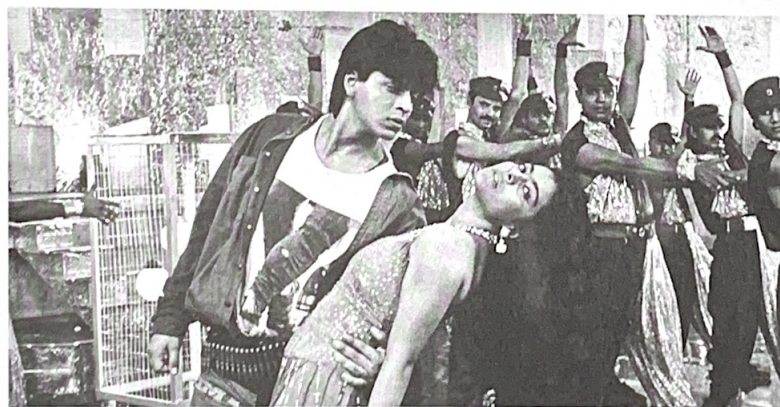
Print Source: Doordarshan India, Doordarshan Bhawan, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi 110001, India. Tel: (91-11) 438-1939. Fax: (91-11) 438-6507.

Govindan Aravindan, known as Aravindan professionally, was born in 1935 in Kottayam, India. A painter, musician, cartoonist, writer and film director, he died in 1991. He made many short films, as well as eleven features: *Uttarayanam* (74), *Kanchanasita* (77), *Thampu* (78), *Kummatty* (79), *Esthappan* (79), *Pokkuvayil* (81), *Chidambaram* (85), *Oridathu* (86), *Masquerade* (88), *Unni* (89), *Vastuhara* (90).

Director Aravindan, a kind, wise and witty man, inspired an entire generation of filmmakers because he ignored commercialism and current trends, producing a totally personal and independent form of cinema. *Masquerade*, one of his best films, is both a remembrance of and an homage to the man and the director. Aravindan made his films from what interested him: Indian art, music and social problems. As an accomplished musician, he was fascinated by music and dance, particularly when combined with poetry. *Masquerade*, which uses the last sequences of a Kathakali play, tells the story – in dance and music – of a murder. Using narrative poetry, three different versions of the killing are enacted, the episodes set to the rhythm of three different styles of traditional folk singing. *Masquerade* is based on the concept of transformation of an actor into a character and the basic concept of maya, or illusion. Those who like dance films will be stunned by *Masquerade's* originality and energy; those who generally don't may well discover that they are intrigued and excitingly entertained.

– David Overbey

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Baazigar

Abbas-Mustan

INDIA, 1993

90 minutes ■ Colour/35mm (Hindi)
Production Company: United Seven

Producer: Ganesh Jain
Screenplay: Robin Bhatt, Javed Siddique, Akash Khurana

Cinematography: Thomas A. Xavier
Editor: Hussain A. Burmawala
Art Director: R. Verman
Sound: Narendra Shinde
Music: Anu Malik

Principal Cast: Shah Rukh Khan, Kajol, Shilpa Shetty, Siddharth

Print Source: Mr. Narendra Saini, Asian Video Movies and Electronics, 685 Lansdowne Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6H 3Y9, Canada. Tel: (416) 530-0517. Fax: (416) 530-4312.

Foreign Sales Agent: United Seven Creations, G-1, A & B, "Blue Diamond," Juhu Tara Road, Santacruz, Bombay 400054, India. Tel: (91-22) 548-484.

Abbas-Mustan is the truncated name for two brothers who co-direct feature films in India: Mustan Alibhai Burmawalla, born in 1950, and Abbas Alibhai Burmawalla, born in 1947. Films include: *Sajan Tara Sambharna* (85), *Moti Veerana Chowk* (87), *Agneekal* (89), *Khiladi* (92), *Baazigar* (93).

Part violent thriller, part romantic comedy and full of great songs, *Baazigar* stands head-and-shoulders above most recent Bombay Masala movies. This mega-box-office success established handsome, boyish Shah Rukh Khan as India's biggest star in a role that spawned an entirely new genre: the anti-hero musical.

Loosely based on *A Kiss Before Dying*, *Baazigar* divides neatly into two halves. Part one sees two sisters, Seema and Priya, strike up a secret romance with the same man (Khan). Sweet sentimental moments are punctuated by over-the-top dance numbers, but then tragedy strikes and Seema lies dead. Part two is the manhunt and the mystery that follows, ending in fierce melodrama and an exquisitely choreographed bloody showdown.

Co-directors Abbas and Mustan manage to wring every nuance out of their talented stars, and show they can handle any genre with ease. The music – a traditional film score, plus Brazilian and flamenco rhythms – is also an absolute delight. If you have never seen a proper Masala, *Baazigar* is an excellent place to start.

– Noah Cowan

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