



## Pattiyude Divasam

### A Dog's Day

Murali Nair

UNITED KINGDOM/INDIA, 2001

74 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Flying Elephant Films, Ltd.**

Executive Producer: **Preeya Nair**

Producer: **Murali Nair**

Screenplay: **Murali Nair, Bharathan Njarakal**

Cinematographer: **M.J. Radhakrishnan**

Editor: **Lalitha Krishna**

Production Designer: **Shambhavi Kaul**

Sound: **Madhu Apsara**

Music: **Kavalam Narayana Pannikar**

Principal Cast: **K. Krishna Kaimal, Thomas V., Vinu Prasad, Lakshmi Raman, Sudhas Thayat**

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Murali Nair, a discovery of the late David Overbey during our India Now! series in 1994, is proving to be one of the most lyrical and accomplished of India's young filmmakers. His previous film, *Throne of Death*, a blackly comic fable about the first man sent to the electric chair in the Indian province of Kerala, won the Camera d'Or for best first film at Cannes last year. In *A Dog's Day*, Nair employs a similarly ironic tone to tell a political story, but this new film has an extraordinarily pleasing musical wrapping. The songs are traditional (women sing them when working in the fields) and they serve to give the film modesty and grace. These qualities are only further emphasized in this impressive filmmaker's simple and beautiful images.

*A Dog's Day* takes place in a raucous rural province, filled with lovely scenery and colourful local dress. At the film's opening, the ruling lord grants democracy to his faithful citizens, an event celebrated in joyous song. At the same ceremony, he gives Apu, the royal dog – an adorable but definitely foreign beast – to his former faithful servant, Koran. Apu is taken home, where he is cared for like a small child by Koran's wife. One day, however, the dog is accused of biting a duck and is then caught gnawing at a boy. Rumour spreads that the lord knowingly sent the rabid Apu amongst the people. As the eager, newly-appointed politicians face their first populist issue, conflict with the incensed lord is inevitable.

Reflecting an India currently beset by political scandal to the detriment of its starving millions, Nair's fiercely intelligent and confrontational fable reminds us that cinema can be an instrument of political discourse – without losing its sense of poetry.

■ **Noah Cowan**

**Murali Nair** was born in Kerala, India. After completing a Master's degree in geology, he changed career paths and began working in the Bombay film industry. He has directed several acclaimed shorts, including *Tragedy of an Indian Farmer* (93) and *A Long Journey* (96). Feature filmography: *Throne of Death* (99) and *A Dog's Day* (01).

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