



Everybody Says I'm Fine!

Rahul Bose

INDIA, 2001

100 minutes ■ Colour/35mm
Production Company: **Pinnacle Entertainments Pvt. Ltd.**
Producer: **Viveck Vaswani**
Screenplay: **Rahul Bose**
Cinematographer: **Vikas Shivaraman**
Editor: **Suresh Pai**
Production Designer: **Aradhna Seth**
Sound: **Resul Pookutty**
Music: **Zakhir Hussain**
Principal Cast: **Rehaan Engineer, Koel Purie, Rahul Bose, Pooja Bhatt, Anahita Uberoi**

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This enormously energetic, mostly English-language film represents the latest from the young Bombay film scene, a wild, sexy movement completely liberated from the old strictures of Bollywood and the Satyajit Ray-inspired "parallel cinema" for which India is known around the world. First-time director Rahul Bose is an accomplished actor whose best-known work has seen him starring in other films of this movement – Dev Benegal's *English, August* and *Split Wide Open* and Kaizad Gustad's *Bombay Boys*. His debut is a fine and original addition to the scene, and continues to explore specifically Indian themes of family and dislocation in entirely contemporary and universal contexts.

Everybody Says I'm Fine! primarily takes place within an upscale Bombay hair salon. The owner is the gorgeous, laconic Xen, a man possessed of the secret ability to read his customer's minds by touching their hair. But this power comes at a price – scarred by his parents' early death in a freak accident, Xen has withdrawn from any emotional contact except with the waves of need and desire from his customers' heads. Through Xen's hands, we meet a collection of Bombay personalities. Tanya Ruia, a wealthy socialite, may have had a change in social status she is not revealing. Mr. Mittal is a corporate baron with a sadistic streak. Two college students are more attracted to each other than either can admit. Rage, Xen's good friend, is an actor watching his dreams of stardom wash away. And then there is Nikita,

a rich, sexy socialite from whom Xen can divine no inner life – thus making her magnetically attractive to the hairdresser. As their stories begin to intertwine and reach their climax, Xen finds he can no longer be a silent witness and becomes increasingly involved in their lives: He learns that when everybody says that they are fine, what they desperately want is someone to let them say that, actually, they are not fine after all.

As Xen, Rehaan Engineer is a fascinating enigma, beautifully set off by the uproarious Koel Purie as Nikita. Their interaction serves as the core of the film and, ultimately, its shockingly intense emotional resolution.

■ Noah Cowan

Rahul Bose was born in 1968 and is widely known as one of the premier actors in films in English coming out of India. Roles in Dev Benegal's *English, August* and *Split Wide Open* brought him international recognition. *Everybody Says I'm Fine!* (01), for which he wrote the screenplay and lyrics, is his feature debut.

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