



PRESS RELEASE

07/35

Indian Cinema Now



Indian Cinema Now is a selection of intriguing and provocative films, produced by an industry where commercial success is the primary focus. In partnership with the Mayor of London's '**India Now**' celebrations, **BFI Southbank** will screen feature films by Indian directors determined to challenge the frivolity and glitz of Bollywood.

A Dog's Day (2001), from award-winning **Murali Nair**, is a political satire about a community steeped in tradition and struggling with newly granted democracy. We will show the epic **Lagaan** (2001), starring **Aamir Khan**, and **After the Night...Dawn** (2005) featuring screen veteran **Soumitra Chatterjee** and directed by **Sandip Ray**, the son of the great **Satyaji Ray**. The film insightfully explores the relationships between a group of family and friends when an earthquake cuts them off from the outside world. **Deepa Mehta's** powerful **Water** (2005), the final part of her **Elemental Trilogy**, was deemed so controversial during production that she was forced to stop filming in India, finally completing it three years later in Sri Lanka. **Mira Nair's** **The Namesake** (2006) is a moving adaptation of the **Jhumpa Lahjri's** novel. An assured, poignant and often very funny look at the trials and tribulations of a Bengali family of émigrés to America.

www.bfi.org.uk/indiancinemanow



MAYOR OF LONDON

Film listings

Lagaan

Ind 2001. Dir **Ashutosh Gowariker**. With **Gracy Singh**. 224min. PG. Hindi with EST

Few will need reminding of the success of this cricketing allegory which attracted audiences all over the world, even those who understand the game as little as the villagers taught to become players to thwart the evil designs of the local British ruler. He has charged them double tax but will rescind his order if the villagers beat his team. An impossible task, he thinks. But with **Aamir Khan's** coaching, the battle on the field of play becomes more even by the minute.

Wed 1 Aug 18:30, Sun 5 Aug 18:20

Tickets £12.50 concs £9.25 (members pay £1 less) ninja

A Dog's Day (Pattiyude Divasam)

Ind 2001. Dir **Murali Nair**. With **K Krishna Kaimal, Lakshmi Raman**. 74min. Malayalam with EST

Murali Nair follows his much-praised *Throne of Death*, prized at **Cannes**, with another political allegory from deep inside the culture of the southern state of Kerala. The longtime ruler of a village cedes power to an elected successor and bequeaths the royal dog to an old couple. The dog proves rabid and all hell breaks loose. Sardonicly, but without patronising his characters, Nair observes the birth pangs of village democracy within a heavily traditional society, and the way people who think they want freedom are often scared of it.

Sat 25 Aug 16:15, Wed 29 Aug 20:30

Shadow Kill (Nizhalkkuthu)

Ind-Fr 2002. Dir **Adoor Gopalakrishnan**. With Oduvil Unnikrishnan, Sukumari. 91min.

Malayalam with EST

This is the story, set in the 40s, of an executioner, about to retire, who tries to avoid his last hanging, especially when he learns that a previous execution was of an innocent man. His job has made him respected in the community. He gets tax-free land from the Maharajah and people come to him for cures, taking away a piece of rope used for hangings. But he's now losing his nerve and drinking. Will he be able to go through with his last task? Gopalakrishnan, one of India's most accomplished and imaginative directors, asks us who is really guilty – judge, jury, society as a whole or executioner? He tacitly tells us to think about it for ourselves.

Sat 4 Aug 20:40, Mon 6 Aug 18:20

After the Night... Dawn (Nishijapon)

Ind 2005. Dir **Sandip Ray**. With **Dipanker De, Rituparna Sengupta**. 103min. Bengali with EST

A patriarch (**Soumitra Chatterjee**) hosts a group of guests, including his two sons, the elder son's wife and her sister in his comfortable home in the foothills of the Himalayas. All is well until an earthquake hits and the house is cut off by a landslide. They can't even travel to the local market to get food, and the family begins to unravel under the strain. **Sandip Ray**, son of the great **Satyajit**, orchestrates his story, which is about love, faith and family ties, with a sure touch. And Chatterjee, veteran of some of his father's best films, presides over the drama with practised ease.

Sun 12 Aug 18:10, Wed 15 Aug 18:10

The Rising: Ballad of Mangal Pandey

Ind 2005. Dir **Ketan Mehta**. 150min. 12A. Hindi, Urdu, English

Mehta researched this luxurious historical epic for several years before telling the story of Mangal Pandey, the Sepoy who led a successful mutiny against the British in 1857. The mutiny was initially caused by the introduction of new gun cartridges greased with animal fat which offended both Hindu and Muslim soldiers alike. **Aamir Khan** is fine as Pandey and Toby Stephens is the British officer who was his friend before the mutiny. The film, a lavishly-produced and eloquently shot crossover project, includes songs and dances integrated into the story but deals with history as accurately as possible throughout.

Mon 13 Aug 20:10, Sun 19 Aug 14:50

Water

Ind-Can-USA 2005. Dir **Deepa Mehta**. With **Lisa Ray, Seema Biswas, John Abraham**. 117min. 12A. Hindi with EST

This final part of **Deepa Mehta's** *Elemental Trilogy* after *Fire* and *Earth* examines the plight of a group of widows forced into poverty and living in a Varanasi temple. They had three options. To throw themselves on their husband's pyre, to marry his brother if possible, or to live virtually forgotten lives. So controversial did the story prove that Mehta was forced

to shut down filming in India and complete it three years later in Sri Lanka. One of the women falls for a high caste Hindu, others are forced into prostitution by the head of the ashram.

Fri 24 Aug 20:40, Mon 27 Aug 20:40, Tue 28 Aug 18:10, Wed 29 Aug 18:10

Omkara

Ind 2006. Dir **Vishal Bhardwaj**. 150min. 12A. Hindi with EST

Set among a band of outlaws in a lawless Uttarpradesh, **Bhardwaj's** colourful version of Othello follows his Maqbool, taken from Macbeth, in adapting Shakespeare not slavishly but with great respect. **Ajay Devgan** is an effective halfcaste chieftain, **Saif Ali Khan** an outstanding Iago figure and **Kareena Kapoor** makes much of the part of the tragic Desdemona. The songs are confined largely to the soundtrack, but what is most impressive about the film is Devgan's sense of the dramatic, and the film's power and energy, backed up by luxurious production values.

Sat 18 Aug 14:50, Mon 20 Aug 20:10

The Namesake

Ind-USA-Jap 2006. Dir **Mira Nair**. 122min. 12A. English

Mira Nair's adaptation of the famous **Jhumpa Lahiri** novel about the trials and tribulations of a Bengali family, who emigrate to America and find their children uncertain where they belong, is one of her most mature and satisfying films. Two Bollywood stars, **Irfan Khan** and **Tabu**, play the parents, who have an arranged marriage in Calcutta and then move into what for the woman is a totally alien culture. They give the performances of their careers, while **Kal Penn** as their son is a revelation when you compare his performances in Hollywood films. Set in the 80s, this is the story of the Indian diaspora writ large. And it has seldom been more compassionately handled.

Thu 2 Aug 18:00, Sat 4 Aug 17:40, Mon 6 Aug 20:30

- Ends -

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. A Throw of Dice

Nitin Sawhney with the London Symphony Orchestra

A special FREE preview of the Indian silent classic **A Throw of Dice** (1929) will be screening at Trafalgar Square on Thursday 30 August. Presented with a new orchestral score composed by award-winning musician Nitin Sawhney, performed live by Nitin and the LSO on this special occasion.

Thu 30 Aug, 21:00, Trafalgar Square

2. A Throw of Dice, with Nitin Sawhney's score performed by the LSO, will be released in cinemas across the UK on Friday 31 August.

3. Before Midnight – A Portrait of India 1899 – 1947 is a permanent collection of rare films which will be available for free viewing at the Mediatheque on BFI Southbank from 1 August onwards. www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque

Please note our venue is now known as BFI Southbank. Please direct all listings information to the new venue's name.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

Booking information

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £8.60, concs. £6.25. Members pay £1 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

***** PICTURE DESK ALERT *****

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at www.image.net under

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If further images are required contact BFI Stills, Posters & Designs.

For information and prices e-mail stills.films@bfi.org.uk or phone 020 7957 4797