

Heat and Dust

Directed by James Ivory
BAFTA-winning screenplay by Ruth Praver Jhabvala,
based on her Booker Prize-winning novel
UK 1983, 130 mins, Cert 15
A BFI release

STUNNING NEW 4K RESTORATION

**With Julie Christie, Shashi Kapoor, Greta Scacchi
Christopher Cazenove, Madhur Jaffrey, Nickolas Grace**



Opening at BFI Southbank and cinemas UK-wide from 8 March 2019

20 February 2019 – Cross-cutting between the 1920s and the 1980s to tell two related stories in parallel, **Merchant Ivory's** high-spirited and romantic epic of self-discovery, starring **Julie Christie**, **Shashi Kapoor**, and **Greta Scacchi** in her breakthrough role, is also a lush evocation of the sensuous beauty of India. Originally released in 1983, **Heat and Dust** returns to the big screen on **8 March 2019**, beautifully restored in 4K by Cohen Media Group, New York and playing at BFI Southbank and selected cinemas UK-wide. Merchant Ivory's **Shakespeare Wallah** (1965), starring **Felicity Kendal** and **Shashi Kapoor** as star-crossed lovers, will play in tandem, in an extended run at BFI Southbank from the same date, in a new restoration.

In 1961, producer **Ismail Merchant** (1936-2005) and writer/director **James Ivory** (b. 1928) visited the German-born novelist **Ruth Praver Jhabvala** (1927-2013), then living in Delhi, with a proposal to make a film of her novel *The Householder*. Jhabvala wrote the screenplay for the film herself and the legendary Merchant-Ivory-Jhabvala partnership was inaugurated, with the film released in 1963. *Shakespeare Wallah*, the trio's second film together, was their first collaboration on an original project.

The screenplay for *Heat and Dust* was an adaptation by Ruth Praver Jhabvala of her own novel, which won the 1975 Booker Prize for Fiction. It interleaves a young Englishwoman's journey of discovery in the present-day India with a scandalous incident of family history back in the 1920s, in the Civil Lines of a backwater Indian state.

Anne (**Julie Christie**), a young historical researcher, inherits letters written by her great aunt Olivia (**Greta Scacchi**), and becomes obsessed with their revelation of an exotic and sensual past. After speaking to Olivia's old friend Harry in London, she travels to Satipur, India, to try to discover more. As events begin to reflect the past, the themes of race, class and sexual hypocrisy are in turn just as relevant today.

Heat and Dust also stars **Shashi Kapoor** as the Nawab (viceroy) of Khatm in the 1920s. The strong supporting cast includes **Madhur Jaffrey** as the Begum – the Nawab's manipulative mother – and **Christopher Cazenove** as Olivia's husband Douglas Rivers. **Nickolas Grace** is Harry, Olivia's confidant, **Charles McCaughan** is the hippy-like would-be holy man Chid, **Patrick Godfrey** is Englishman Dr. Saunders and **Jennifer Kendal** (late sister of actor Felicity Kendal) is his wife.

Visually rich, the grand exteriors, the ornate banquets and the contrasting landscapes in *Heat and Dust* were beautifully filmed by the Oscar-winning cinematographer **Walter Lassally** (1926-2017) (*Zorba the Greek*, *The Bostonians*), with locations including Kashmir and Rajasthan. The superb score, by another longtime Merchant Ivory collaborator, **Richard Robbins**, bridges Indian classical music (utilising Indian master musicians) with period-appropriate songs.

Heat and Dust was Merchant Ivory's biggest commercial success to date; a hit around the world (although less successful in the US due to management changes with its distributor, Universal). It was a timely release, coming out in the middle of much nostalgia for the Raj. On the big screen the previous year was Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (1982) and in the following year came David Lean's *A Passage to India* (1984). 1984 also saw the broadcast of the hugely popular and award-winning Granada TV series *The Jewel in the Crown* and the HBO/Goldcrest TV miniseries *The Far Pavilions*.

Heat and Dust was nominated for seven BAFTAs, with Ruth Praver Jhabvala winning Best Adapted Screenplay. She was awarded the same accolade at the London Critics Circle Film Awards. Director James Ivory was nominated for the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

In her long partnership with Merchant Ivory, Ruth Praver Jhabvala adapted both *A Room with a View* and *Howards End* by E.M. Forster for the big screen, winning Oscars for both, as well as other classic novels such as *The Bostonians* by Henry James and *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro. In November 2018, the collection *At the End of the Century: The Stories of Ruth Praver Jhabvala*, was published in paperback by Abacus.

After *Heat and Dust*, Merchant Ivory Productions went from strength to strength, particular in the 1980s and 1990s with their multi-award-winning literary adaptations *A Room with a View* (1986), *Maurice* (1987), *Howards End* (1992) and *The Remains of the Day* (1993).

The BFI will be releasing *Maurice* on DVD/Blu-ray on 4 March. Following its theatrical release, *Heat and Dust*, along with *Shakespeare Wallah* will be released on DVD/Blu-ray by the BFI in spring 2019.

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