



Press release no. 3

**River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival
8-14 December 2006, Florence, Italy**

The **sixth River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival**, under the direction of Selvaggia Velo, will take place in Florence, Italy, from **December 8th to 14th 2006**. Screenings will be at cinema Spazio Uno in Via del Sole n.10.

The Festival is sponsored by the Cinema Department of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture of Rome, the Regional Council of Tuscany, Provincia di Firenze, Quartiere 1, Banca Toscana, Apt, Hotel Roma, Instyle, India Tourism Office of Milan, Kuoni Tour Operator, Eurofly, Coop Firenze, The Florentine as the media partner, under the patronage of the Indian Embassy in Rome.

In addition, the Festival is now cooperating with Mediateca Regionale Toscana, the regional media library, where the best films and documentaries of each year's festival will be stored.

Cuts to public funding for culture in 2006 have been so high that this sixth edition has a much smaller budget than before, but the organisers decided to still continue it, even if with such low resources.

River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival is the first festival in the world completely focussed on Indian cinema and films about India; to offer the viewers a wider picture of India, the Festival also hosts films from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The calendar of **River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival** includes feature films, short films, documentaries and a retrospective, in the cinema hall, and as usual, a high number of directors and actors will be present to meet the audience and the press.

The feature films

This year's feature films include four European premieres:

The ironic gangster story **Dubai Return** by Aditya Bhattacharya, in which the protagonist Aftab Angrez is an ex gangster who wants to regain his lost glory in the colourful lowlife of Mumbai.

Infinite Justice, a UK-Pakistan co-production by the independent Pakistani director of French origin **Jamil Dehlavi**, in which an American Jewish journalist, taken prisoner by Islamic fundamentalists in Karachi, is then bartered with the prisoners of Guantanamo Bay.

The literary **Herbert** by Suman Mukhopadhyay, in which the protagonist's life is confronted with pain, first loves, the fight against communism and an interest in spiritualism.

Maine Gandhi Ko Nahin Mara (I did not kill Gandhi) by the Assamese Jhnu Barua, greatly acclaimed in Indian festivals, which brings together two very different events: the contemporary story of an Indian middle-class family struggling with the head of the family, Uttam Chaudhary, a retired professor of Hindi suffering from a form of dementia, and the murder of the father of the nation, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.



And then ***Being Cyrus*** by Homi Adajania: the story - also a tribute to classic noir films - of a Parsi family whose very colourful members move at a pace with the film, easily passing from dramatic psychologism to quirky comedy.

Finally, ***Dombivli Fast*** by Nishikant Kamat, winner of many awards at Indian festivals, which tells of the excesses of an extremely repetitive life that rebels against daily abuse to poor people.

The shorts

An overall number of eight, ranging across a wide variety of stories and topics.

The meaningful ***Detail*** by Kanwal Sethi, the imaginary ***Dog*** by Daniel Lang, the ancient Indian fairy tale ***Flower Girl*** by Rajan Khosa, the Chaplin-inspired ***Kalakaar*** by Tejas Deoskar; and again the dramatic ***Madsong*** by Natasha Mendonca, the absurd ***The Cherry on Top*** by Ayesha Sood and Nitya Mehra, the cartoon ***Ud Jayega (Empty Train)*** by Kunal Sen and the funny ***Where's Sandra?*** by Paromita Vohra.

The docu zone

Documentaries include the realistic and painful ***Ayla, the tsunamigirl*** by Wilma Ligthart and ***Waiting...*** by Atul Gupta and Shabnam Ara: one is an interview with a little girl who escaped the terrible tsunami of 26th December 2004, the other is a tale of men taken away from their families by the armed forces in Kashmir.

A large group of films by Italian directors: ***Kalagam*** by Anna Pitscheider, who tells with gentle and realistic tones the condition of Indian women working in self-run groups; ***Le nozze di Mongla*** by Pietro Silvestri, showing the wedding rite in the Santali tribe in Bengal in the different symbolic stages that have remained unchanged to this day; ***Varanasi Bang*** by Filippo Papini, seven minutes' short scenes of daily life in Varanasi; and finally ***Cricket Cup*** by Massimiliano Pacifico and Diego Liguori, about the Sri Lankan community of Naples and their passion for cricket, with a final match at the Parco delle Cascine in Florence.

And again ***Ayurveda - The Wisdom of Life*** by Nicole Maria Krieger about the centuries-old healing techniques of Ayurveda, and the moving ***I for India*** by Sandhya Suri, which featured at the Sundance Film Festival.

The guests

This year's guests for feature films will include directors **Aditya Bhattacharya** with *Dubai Return* and **Jamil Dehlavi** with *Infinite Justice*.

For documentaries, directors **Pietro Silvestri** with *Le nozze di Mongla*, **Anna Pitscheider** with *Kalagam*, **Nicole Maria Krieger** with *Ayurveda-The Wisdom of Life*, **Filippo Papini** with *Varanasi Bang* and **Massimiliano Pacifico** and **Diego Liguori** with *Cricket Cup*.



The retrospective

The **retrospective** is focussed on a woman of today's Indian movie industry, whose latest feature film, *The Namesake*, has just come out in Italy: **Mira Nair**.

Nair's films that will be shown include the poignant but beautiful ***Salaam Bombay!*** (1988) and the Venice Gold Lion winner ***Monsoon Wedding*** (2001).

Special screening

Notturmo Indiano (1989) by Alain Corneau, from a short novel (1984) by Antonio Tabucchi, will be screened on the last day of the festival. A nameless traveller arrives in Mumbai in search of a friend, then continues his southbound journey. The upsetting charm of the film comes from the contrast between the matter-of-factness of reality and the traveller's engrossed, perplexed look, sometimes anguished, sometimes run through by flashes of madness. Schubert's music (*Quintet for strings in C major D.956*) sounds mysteriously in tune with this multifaceted film.

Florence Indian Film Festival Digichannel Audience Award

The film of each category (features, shorts and documentaries) that will be voted by the audience will win the **Florence Indian Film Festival Digichannel Audience Award**: an extract from the film up to 15 minutes long can be viewed in streaming mode throughout 2007 on the website www.digichannel.net

During 2006, ***River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival*** has started collaborating with other festivals: in August, the package of short films from the 2005 Festival was hosted by the Open Cinema festival in Saint Petersburg, Russia, and in November the same package 2005 of shorts has been screened at the Visionaria Festival in Siena.

From 19 to 21 January 2007 a package of films from the 2007 edition will be screened at Cinema Gnomo in Milan, in collaboration with the Cinema Department of the city of Milan.

Between one film and the next, do not miss the food tastings offered by Ristorante India, the Maharajas' food heaven in Fiesole and Pisa.

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