



Press Release no. 5

***River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival***

**7-13 December 2007**

**cinema Gambrinus**

**Piazza della Repubblica, Florence, Italy**

## **Bimal Roy, Indian Vittorio De Sica**

*River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival 2007* announces a retrospective on the great director born in Dhaka in 1909, and a rich selection of the most recent films among independent Indian cinema, with a special eye on woman directors.

The **seventh edition** of *River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival*, totally devoted to Indian films and under the direction of **Selvaggia Velo**, will take place in Florence, Italy, from **7<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007**.

On the occasion of the **60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of India's independence**, the Festival this year changes its venue and, in collaboration with the Cultural Department of the City of Florence and the Mediateca Regionale-Toscana Film Commission, will take place at cinema **Gambrinus**, in the framework of the 50 days of international cinema in Florence.

On November 15<sup>th</sup> the **Cyclone Sidr** has devastated some parts of **Bangladesh**, motherland of Bimal Roy, to whom the Festival devotes a retrospective

*River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival* has decided to assign to the victims of the Cyclone Sidr a part of the ticket income, that will be given to Médecins Sans Frontières during the last evening. On this occasion, a representative of MSF will give an update of the situation in the areas that have been more injured by the Cyclone Sidr and on the activities in aid of the victims.

The competition section includes six feature films, eight documentaries and ten short films, with outstanding varied and intense stories, both rural and metropolitan, all highlighting the thousand faces of today's India.

### **FILMS IN COMPETITION**

#### **Feature films**

- **Dharm** is Bhavna Talwar's first feature film. It is set in Benares on the banks of the Ganges, amidst an atmosphere of Hindu-Muslim conflict. A Hindu priest adopts a child, Kartikey, who will put a strain on the priest's deepest beliefs.
- **Dosar** by the prolific Bengali director Rituparno Ghosh, whose films have often been screened at the Festival. A black-and-white film set in a modern Kolkata, telling the story of a couple - Kaushik and Kaberi, whose lives are upset by a car accident.
- **Life in a Metro** by Anurag Basu, in which a chaotic Mumbai is the setting for some complicated metropolitan love stories.
- **Maati Maay** by Chitra Palekar. Nandita Das plays a woman who takes care of a children's cemetery; however, things change as she becomes a mother.
- **Nayu Neralu** by the maestro of Kannada-language films Girish Kasaravalli. In the film, the dead son of a couple seems to reappear many years later in a neighbouring village.

- **The Great Indian Butterfly** by Sarthak DasGupta. The two main characters of the film stressed out by their frantic life, set out in search of happiness, which appears to them in the form of an exotic animal: the Great Indian Butterfly.

#### Short films

- The three animation films, **Horn ok Please** by Joel Simon, **Myths about You** by Nandita Jain, and **That Darn Jesus** by Gary Hardwick.
- Surreal stories and feelings of inadequacy in **Chinese Whispers** by Raka Dutta, **Saving Mum and Dad** by Kartik Singh, and **Viva Sunita** by Lolita Sarkar and Amitabh Sinha.
- Fiction and reality blend into a revisited *dramaticule* by Samuel Beckett in **Antaral (End Note)** by Ashish Avikunthak, Gandhi playing baseball in **Ghandi at the Bat** by Stephanie Argy and Alec Boehm, a story about vanity and beauty in **Guroor** by Ishaan Nair, and finally the secret of Parto and Misti in **Kindle** by Nitin Shingal.

#### Documentaries

- Topical and interesting denunciations: **1000 Days and a Dream** by P. Baburaj and C. Saratchandran, in which the village of Plachimada in southern India has to face the problems caused by the arrival of the Coca Cola factory; and then reports about the revolution in Nepal, in Leonardo Ferri's **Democracy Rocks**, and **Yindabad** by Mariano Agudo and Roi Guitián, about the tragedy of the populations living along the Narmada river.
- Portraits of people, real life experiences and ancient customs: different arranged marriages in **Arranging Love** by Sheila Jayadev and a strange couple's motorbike journey in **Bullets and Butterflies** by Sushmit Ghosh; and then a comeback to one's hometown after 26 years away, in Soumitra Ranade's **Are You Alright Afghanistan?**, the story of Mahadeva who collects corpses for a living in **Mahadeva-Corpse Bearer** in Asil Rais; and lastly **Sotto il cielo di Ahmedabad** by Francesca Lignola and Stefano Rebecchi, portraying the religious feast of the Makar Sankranti, when millions of kites fill the sky of Ahmedabad.

## THE RETROSPECTIVE

Other than the competition section, the Festival will include a retrospective on **Bimal Roy** (1909-1966), one of the greatest Indian film directors of the past, who is often compared to Italian Neorealist filmmakers for his stories and subjects. Thanks to Mr. Roy's family, three of his masterpieces will be screened, in collaboration with the National Film Archive of India and the Directorate of Film Festivals.

The first one, **Do Bigha Zamin** (*Two Acres of Land*) of 1953, remembers De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette*. The second film will be *Devdas* (1955), the remake of which by Sanjay Leela Bhansali was screened at Cannes in 2002. The third masterpiece will be the heart-breaking **Bandini** of 1963.

In order to give a full portrait of Bimal Roy, the Festival will screen in world première the documentary **Remembering Bimal Roy** by the director's son, **Joy Roy**, who will be in Florence to introduce it to the audience.



## THE GUESTS

The Festival's **guests** will include, as well as **Joy Roy**, the directors of the **feature films** **Bhavna Talwar** (*Dharm*), **Chitra Palekar** (*Maati Maay*) and **Sarthak DasGupta** (*The Great Indian Butterfly*).

For the **short films** category, **Ashish Avikunthak** (*Antaral-End Note*), **Ishaan Nair** (*Guroor*), **Nandita Jain** (*Myths about you*) and **Kartik Singh** (*Saving Mum and Dad*).

The **documentaries** will be presented by: **Leonardo Ferri** (*Democracy Rocks*) and **Francesca Lignola** and **Stefano Rebecchi** (*Sotto il cielo di Ahmedabad*).

**River to River. Florence Indian Film Festival** is supported by the Ministry of the Cultural Heritage-Cinema Department, Regione Toscana, Regional Council of Tuscany, Mediateca Regionale Toscana-Film Commission, Cultural Department of the City of Florence, Quartiere 1, Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, Banca Toscana and India Tourism Office of Milan. Precious the patronage of the Indian Embassy in Rome and the sponsorship of Apt Firenze, Hotel Roma, Instyle and Lisa Corti Firenze. Among the media partners, The Florentine, www.1takemedia.com and RDF 102.7.

One film from each category will be voted by the audience to win the **River to River Digichannel Audience Award**, that consists in the free promotion of the film for one week on DigiChannel.net, including web publication, newsletter, homepage screening and being part of the DC worldwide network.

Between one film and the other, in the new Gambrinus Loft space, do not miss the food tastings of the Indian restaurant of Fiesole in collaboration with Gambrinus Lunch by Zoe.

### side events

#### **Gambrinus Loft, Cinema Gambrinus**

- **Thursday 6 December at 7.30 pm**  
opening evening with indian aperitif and bhangra music
- **Friday 7 December at 7.30 pm**  
karma finger food & drinks courtesy of the restaurant India of Fiesole
- **Saturday 8 December at 11.30 pm**  
India after India surprise party

#### For informations:

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