

Indian Film Festival of **MELBOURNE**

Principal Partner



LOVE SONIA TO OPEN 2018 INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE!

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The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne is thrilled to announce **LOVE SONIA** as the Opening Night film for 2018, and to welcome Director **Tabrez Noorani** and stars **Freida Pinto** (*Slumdog Millionaire*), **Richa Chadha** (*Gangs of Wasseypur* and *Masaan*) and **Mrunal Thakur** (*Kumkum Bhagya*) as special guests. They join IFFM VIP guest, actor **Ali Fazal** who this week was invited by the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Science to be a member.



LOVE SONIA marks the major directorial debut for Tabrez Noorani, inspired by his extraordinary experiences in the world of human trafficking. While line-producing films such as *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Life of Pi* and *Zero Dark Thirty*, Noorani, a passionate fighter for human rights, was also working alongside anti-trafficking organisations to conduct raids on Mumbai brothels.

“This is an extraordinary and important film from a director with enormous insight into the world he’s portraying”, says IFFM Director **Mitu Bhowmick Lange**

LOVE SONIA is the story of Sonia, a young Indian village girl whose life changes irrevocably when she is entrapped in the

global sex trade while trying to save her beloved sister Preeti. Battling with a strength she didn’t know she had, and determined not to become one of the 800,000 women and children who are victims of the international sex trade industry every year, Sonia’s searing journey spans three continents and a lifetime of experiences.

“We are delighted to be able to open the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne, and are honoured to share our film down under, especially in the culturally diverse city of Melbourne”, says Noorani, who collaborated with powerhouse *Life of Pi* producer David Womak for three years to develop the film. “Both Tabrez and I grew up in families with very strong women”, says Womak. “Love Sonia is a film honouring one very strong woman’s challenging journey.”

Noorani, Freida Pinto and Ali Faizal will be taking part in a Q&A discussion at Deakin Edge on August 11, moderated by leading Indian film critic Rajeev Masand, discussing the themes of east meets west, and the cross fertilisation of the Indian and Hollywood film industries.

Tabrez Noorani makes his major directorial debut with *Love Sonia*, a breathtakingly honest look at the global sex trade, set in India, Hong Kong and Los Angeles.. Through his company India Take One Productions, Noorani has been a producer on multiple major films including *Alexander*, *Bride and Prejudice*, *Holy Smoke*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Life of Pi*, *The Hundred-Foot Journey*, *The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *Million Dollar Arm*, *Eat Pray Love* and *Zero Dark Thirty*. Along with this film, Tabrez is developing a TV series about modern day slavery and sex trafficking set in the United States

Frieda Pinto rose to fame with her debut performance in Danny Boyle’s *Slumdog Millionaire*, winning the Breakthrough Performance Award at the Palm Springs International Film Festival and earning a Best Supporting Actress nomination at the BAFTA Awards. Recent credits include *Rise of the Planet of the Apes*, *Trishna* and *Desert Dancer*.

Richa Chadda’s breakthrough performance in *Gangs of Wasseypur* earned her a Filmfare award. Recent credits include *Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela*, an acclaimed performance in *Masaan*, *Trivial Disasters*, and *Sarbjit*, where she played Sukhpreet Kaur, Sarbjit's wife, earning a second Filmfare nomination for Best Supporting Actress. Last year, she starred in the critical and commercial success *Fukrey Returns*.

Newcomer **Mrunal Thakur** is best known for her role as Bulbul in the television series *Kumkum Bhagya*. She was cast as the title role in *Love Sonia* after a year long search.

LOVE SONIA OPENING NIGHT
6:30pm, 10 August at Hoyts Melbourne Central

PANEL DISCUSSION
4:30pm, 11 August at Deakin edge, Federation Square

Tickets are available from www.iffm.com.au

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne was established in 2012 as an initiative of the Victorian Government and has established itself as an important part of State’s cultural calendar. In 2016, the festival was honoured with the Melbourne Award for contribution to Multiculturalism.

2018 Indian Film Festival of Melbourne dates: 10 August – 22 August

For more information regarding this media release please contact

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