



2016 INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE

Thursday 11 August – Sunday 21 August

IFFM Programs • Hurrah • Beyond Bollywood • Subcontinent • Film India World • Master Stroke
Festival Locations • Hoyts Melbourne Central • Hoyts Highpoint • Federation Square • Melbourne Recital Centre
IFFM Opening Night • Thursday 11 August, 7.30pm Hoyts Melbourne Central
IFFM Awards Night and Empowerment Concert • Friday 12 August, 7.30pm Melbourne Recital Centre
Indian Independence Day Raising of the Flag • Saturday 13 August, 11am Federation Square
Telstra Bollywood Dance Competition • Saturday 13 August, 12pm, Federation Square
Bookings and program information • www.iffm.com.au

Monday 20 June The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM), the southern hemisphere's greatest annual celebration of Indian cinema today unveiled details of the 2016 program. Taking place from 11-21 August with "Female Empowerment" as its unifying theme this year's festival explores the richness of contemporary cinema from India and the sub-continent, featuring films spanning Bollywood box-office hits to documentaries and arthouse festival favourites, as well as hosting the third edition of the annual **Indian Film Festival of Melbourne Awards**.

Festival Director Mitu Bhowmick-Lange said, "This year's festival presents a world-class program overflowing with gala events, master classes with India's leading film figures, and over 50 films screenings in 17 languages across multiple Melbourne venues. We invite audiences to join us for an eleven day journey into India and the sub continent's extraordinary worlds."

Minister for Creative Industries Martin Foley said, "IFFM celebrates Victoria's long-standing relationship with India, honours our vibrant local Indian community, and illustrates how the voices of all communities help to build Victoria's reputation as the creative state. Last year, over 35,000 people took part in the festival and this year's program is shaping up to be the best yet. The Victorian Government is proud to support IFFM as part of Creative State, our \$115 million strategy to strengthen Victoria's creative industries and cultural offering."

The festival is delighted to announce a number of India's biggest stars as special guests for 2016. The stellar list features Bollywood legend **Rishi Kapoor**, who over the last forty years has played the romantic lead in over 90 films, from the super-hit Bobby in 1973 to his most recent turn in Kapoor and Sons. Other VIPs include **Leena Yadav**, director of the internationally acclaimed Parched, the IFFM opening night film; Bollywood's new "it girl" **Radhika Apte**; bold Bollywood actress **Richa Chadda**; award-winning director of Autograph and Rajkahini, **Srijit Mukherjee**; National Award-winning actress **Rituparna Sengupta**; **Shakun Batra**, director of Kapoor & Sons; dancer and actress **Malaika Arora Khan**, and IFFM Ambassador **Vidya Balan**.

OPENING AND CLOSING NIGHTS

IFFM kicks off on 11 August with Parched, a contemporary melodrama set in an isolated north Indian village where long upheld customs are slowly evolving. Parched premiered at TIFF and has taken the international film festival circuit by storm, winning the prestigious IMPACT Award at Stockholm, Audience and Best Actress award at The Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles and more. "Parched is my reaction to a misogynistic society that treats women as objects of sex, where their greatest role is to serve men. Giving my women characters a voice that observes, absorbs and reacts was what drove me to write this drama about ordinary women who are driven to extraordinary ends," said director Leena Yadav, who is an IFFM Festival Guest. Lead actress Radhika Apte is also in attendance.

The opening week coincides with the Indian Independence Day celebrations and the Festival is thrilled to commemorate this event through ceremony, dance and the recognition of excellence in India's film culture. Celebrations will include the raising of the Indian flag on Saturday 13 August at Federation Square by Bollywood veteran Rishi Kapoor, followed by the Telstra Bollywood Dance Competition judged by actresses Richa Chadda, Shakun Batra and Malaika Arora Khan.

As its closing film on Aug 21, IFFM is delighted to host the Victorian premiere of Angry Indian Goddesses with key cast in attendance. Directed by Pan Nalin, the film follows a riotous weekend in Goa experienced by a bride-to-be and her best female friends.

WESTPAC IFFM AWARDS & NOMINEES

IFFM is proud to once again host the Westpac Indian Film Festival of Melbourne Awards (IFFM Awards), the first Indian cinema awards of their kind in Australia. A jury panel of leading Indian and Australian film industry figures including director

Paul Ireland, producer **Sue Maslin**, screenwriter **Andrew Anastasios**, editor **Jill Bilcock**, and Indian critic **Rajeev Masand**, and the timeless "lady in white", **Simi Garewal**, will honour winners in five categories: Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director, Best Film, and Best Independent Film.

The winners will be announced at a red carpet gala event on 12 August at the Melbourne Recital Centre with a host of Indian stars and industry leaders in attendance. The awards will feature the **Empowerment Concert**, a performance of song and dance featuring renowned Pakistani singer-songwriter **Sara Haider**, award-winning Indian singer **Shalmali Kholgade**, the multi-talented **Anushka Manchanda** and other notable local performers in an unforgettable night of glamour, song and dance.

FEMALE EMPOWERMENT

With a special focus on this year's theme of "Female Empowerment", IFFM presents new and classic films from India and the subcontinent, with a special selection of films, panels and roundtable discussions based around the theme. Festival director Mitu Bhowmick Lange said, "This theme was an obvious choice for us with so many of this year's films portraying strong and vibrant female characters, while female directors turn the focus on inequality and liberation. We are delighted to have some really inspiring pioneers including Vidya Balan and Leena Yadav as special guests.'

The "Female Empowerment" theme is explored in a number of critically lauded features and documentaries across six program streams, including the opening and closing night films *Parched* and *Angry Indian Goddesses*, as well as a roundtable discussion with critic Rajeev Masand exploring 'Wild Women in Cinema' (Sat 13 Aug), and two 'In Conversation' events: Richa Chadda on 'Bollywood and Body Positivity' (Sat 13 Aug) and Rajeev Masand In Conversation With Rishi Kapoor' (Sun 14 Aug).

Academy Award-winning Pakistani director **Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy's** films are honoured with a special Festival focus in the Masterstroke section. The Festival will present a full retrospective of her documentaries, including the Victorian premiere of *A Journey of a Thousand Miles: Peacekeepers*, which follows 160 predominantly Muslim Bangladeshi policewomen on a difficult mission overseas, and her Oscar-winning short films about issues facing Pakistani women: *A Girl In The River: The Price Of Forgiveness*, exploring contemporary honour killings, and *Saving Face*, about the horrendous practice of acid attacks.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Further program highlights include the Australian premiere of Ashutosh Gowariker's epic adventure-romance *Mohenjo Daro* starring Hrithik Roshan and Pooja Hedge in the lead roles, set in the ancient city of Mohenjo-daro in the era of the Indus Valley civilisation; and the Australian premiere of Anu Menon's comedy drama *Waiting*, about the relationship between two people from very different walks of life who befriend one another in hospital.

The 'Hurrah Bollywood' program features the best mainstream Hindi cinema from the last twelve months including IFFM Award Best Film nominees, *Neerja* by Ram Madhvani, and *Kapoor and Sons* starring Rishi Kapoor; 'Beyond Bollywood' presents art house and cinema in regional Indian languages, with programme highlights including the Pakistani biographical drama *Manto*, about the life of Indo-Pakistani writer Saadat Hasan Manto; and the box office and critical hit *Aligarh*, directed by Hansel Mehta and described by the BFI as "Probably the best film yet on the Indian gay male experience," inspired by the life of Dr Shrinivas Ramchandra Siras. 'The Subcontinent' features films from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal, including the banned Bangladeshi feature *Under Construction*, which revolves around a woman's struggle to reclaim her identity and sexuality; Pakistani drama *Moor* written and directed by Jami, about a troubled station master, and *Among the Believers*, a documentary that examines the increasing political and religious turmoil in Pakistan since the War on Terror. 'Film India World' presents Amrita Dasgupta's award-winning *The New Girl in Class*, which looks at the possibility of mainstream education for Indian children with autism; while the IFFM Documentary stream features *For The Love of A Man*, exploring the madness of South Indian fandom as a former bus driver becomes a living legend. 'Master Stroke' showcases some of the greatest classics from India's rich cinematic history. IFFM is an 11 day feast for the eyes, ears and mind.

The Indian Film Festival of Melbourne was established in 2012 as an initiative of the Victorian Government.

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