

Shyam Benegal

One of the pioneers of the new cinema in India



Born in 1934 in Andhra Pradesh, Shri Shyam Benegal originated what has come to be called "middle cinema". A product of Nizam College, he is considered as one of the pioneers of the new cinema in India. Shri Shyam Benegal has been considered one of the leading filmmakers of the country ever since his first feature film, *Ankur* was released.

The son of a still photographer and one of 10 children, Benegal's love affair with motion pictures began when he made his first home-movie using a hand-cranked camera at age 12. As a young man, he went on to found a film society and get involved in acting while studying at Osmania University where he earned an MA in economics.

His films have been seen and acclaimed widely in India and at International film festivals for the last three decades. The core subjects of his films have been varied in nature but mainly centered around contemporary Indian experience. Problems of development, social and cultural change appear on many levels as a continuing thread in practically all his films. Apart from fiction features, he has made a number of documentaries on different subjects ranging from cultural anthropology and problems of industrialization, to music and so on. His work on television consists of several popular series based on international stories, short stories by well-known Indian writers and a mammoth 53 part series on the history of India based on Jawaharlal Nehru's book *Discovery of India*. He has also made an extra-mural educational series for rural children sponsored by UNICEF.

Shri Shyam Benegal taught mass-communication techniques between 1966 and 1973 and later took an active role in shaping film education as Chairman of the Film Television Institute of India during 1980-83 and 1989-92.

As a person deeply committed to social integration in India, Shri Shyam Benegal was part of the National Integration Council (1986-89) and the National Council of Art. Shri Shyam Benegal has been awarded several awards both nationally & internationally including two of India's most prestigious awards – Padma Shri (1976) and Padma Bhushan which the Government of India has conferred on him. Most recently, he was awarded the Indira Gandhi National Integration Award (2004).

Shri Shyam Benegal's career started with a job as a copywriter in advertising from where he graduated to become the Creative & Accounts Group Head before becoming a full time filmmaker. He has lectured at many institutions in India and abroad as well as participated in seminars on subjects dealing with Cinema, Television, Information Technology and different aspects of social and cultural change.

He has directed over 1000 advertising commercials and 65 documentaries and short films between 1959 and 1965 and directed feature length/documentary films and television serials from 1973 onwards.

He has made 24 fiction features for the Cinema, several documentaries and TV series, notably a 53 hour TV series on the History of India. He was a Homi Bhabha fellow (1970-72) during which time, he studied Children's Television with CTW in New York and worked as Associate Producer with WGBH, Boston.

Practically all his films have won national awards and several of them have been awarded internationally.

Ankur - Three National awards and 43 prizes in India and abroad/ Official Indian entry at the Berlin Film Festival, the Stratford Film Festival and the London Film Festivals 1974/ Entered for Foreign Film Oscar from India 1974.

Nishant - Best film, Best Screenplay and Best Supporting Actress awards from Film World Magazine/ Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay awards from the Bengal Film Journalists' Association, Calcutta/ Invited to Cannes Film Festival, the London Film Festival 1976/ Invited to the Melbourne Film Festival 1977/Invited to the Chicago Film Festival. Awarded Golden Plaque 1977/Best Hindi Film of the Year award at the National Awards 1976.

Contd.

Cultural Calendar for October

- October 4** Celebration to commemorate the 137th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi – Continued relevance of Gandhian thought in today's world – A Lecture by Dr. A.T.Ariyaratne
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
- October 10** Film - The Making of the Mahatma
Language: English
Directed by: Shyam Benegal
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs
- October 13** Film - Zubeidaa (with English subtitles)
Language: Hindi
Directed by: Shyam Benegal
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs
- October 18** Film - Manthan – The churning (with English subtitles)
Language: Hindi
Directed by: Shyam Benegal
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration : 3 hrs
- October 20** "Varna Mela" – A variety of varnam compositions will be presented by the Carnatic vocal music students of the Indian Cultural Centre with a lecture cum demo by Guru Kalasuri Arunthathy Sri Ranganathan
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
- October 27** Bharatha Natyam recital
by Ms. Dharshani Arulanandan student of Kalabhooshanam Thiripurasundari Yoganantham
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.
- October 31** Interaction of India & Sri Lanka in literature – Lecture by Prof. D.C.R.A.Goonethilake – Senior Professor of English, Kelaniya University
Venue & Time: ICC 6.30 p.m.

(Admission to all programmes is free on first come first served basis)

Manthan - Best Hindi Film of the Year and Best Screenplay awards at the National Awards/ Invited to the London Film Festival, the Los Angeles Exposition (FILMEX) 1977, the Sydney & Melbourne Films Festivals 1978 and the Hong Kong Film Festival 1979/Entered for the Foreign Film Oscar from India 1978 /Five major awards from the Bengal Film Journalists' Association, Calcutta.

Bhumika - Best Screenplay and Best Actress awards at the National Awards/ Filmfare awards for the Best Film 1978 / Invited to Carthage Film Festival 1978 / Invited to Chicago Film Festival. Awarded Golden Plaque 1978/ Invited to Festival of Images, Algeria 1986.

Kondura - Invited to the London Film Festival and the Montreal Film Festival 1978/ Invited to the Los Angeles Exposition (FILMEX) and VIENNALE 1979/ Participated in the Seventh International Film Festival, New Delhi 1979 /Participated in the Indian Panorama at the Berlin Film Festival 1979.

Junoon - Invited to inaugurate the Seventh International Film Festival, New Delhi 1979/ Official Indian entry at the XI International Film Festival, Moscow 1979/ Invited to the Montreal Film Festival 1979, the Cairo Film Festival 1979, the Sydney & Melbourne Film Festivals 1980 / Best Hindi Film, Best Sound, Best Photography awards at the National Awards 1979 / Best Film, Best Director and Best supporting Actress awards given by Filmfare 1980.

Contd.



ICC

October 2006



Dance Pose-Raja Ravi Varma

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In Retrospect

10th August

**An evening of Sitar Recital
by Dr. Nirmala Kumari Rodrigo**



Dr. Nirmala Kumari Rodrigo, eminent musician and one of the senior lecturer's at the university of Visual & performing Arts presented a Sitar recital at the Centre on 10th August which captivated the audience gathered at the Centre. She commenced her recital with raag "Pooryakalyaan"-Alaap & Jod and continued with "Gat" set to Vilambit laya, Madhya laya & Thrutha laya theentaal. The evening was very well enjoyed by the audience gathered at the Centre.

11th August

Visit of President ICCR, Dr. Karan Singh



Dr. Karan Singh, President of ICCR along with Director General ICCR, Mr. Pawan Varma paid a visit to the Centre on August 11th. Dr. Karan Singh visited Sri Lanka to deliver the first Lakshman Kadirgamar Memorial lecture on 10th August at the Bandaranaike Centre for International Studies. They were briefed about the programmes and activities of the Indian Cultural Centre by Smt. Nagma Mallick, Director of the Centre and were taken on a tour of the Centre. Dr. Karan Singh also delivered a talk at the Centre for the students & the faculty members of the Centre which was followed by a small reception.

15th – 18th
August

**In celebration of the 60th Independence Day
of India, a musical evening by Neil
Nongkynrih and the Shillong Chamber Choir**



Neil Nongkynrih and the Shillong Chamber Choir from India captivated the Sri Lankan audience with their performances. Their visit to Sri Lanka included performances in Colombo at the Lionel Wendt Theatre on 15th August, Anglican Cathedral on 16th August & the University of Visual & Performing Arts on 17th August and in Kandy at the Trinity College Auditorium on 18th August. Neil Nongkynrih and the Shillong Chamber Choir's visit was sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi and jointly organized by the High Commission of India and the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo. The choir presented Western classical music, jazz, folk and lighter pieces. The troupe's performances received rave reviews at all places.



30th August

**Kathakar - One day workshop on Kathak
dance by Ms. Moksha Samarsooriya**

A one day workshop on Kathak dance entitled Kathakar was conducted by the Centre on 30th August 2006. Ms. Moksha Samarsooriya, well known Kathak dancer and one of the faculty members of the Centre conducted the workshop. The work shop included a lecture demonstration replete with extensive film clips and video clips of great Kathak dancers of India. Various elements of Kathak dance were explained and demonstrated. Young dancers and layperson participated in the workshop in large numbers.

31st August

**Swara Rangana - Kathak dance &
Hindustani vocal music recital by
Ms. Rupashika Ranatunga, Sadhana
Ranatunga and their students**



Visharada Rupashika Ranatunga & her students along with Visharada Sadhana Ranatunga presented an evening of dance & voal music. The programme commenced with a creative dance item namely "Pooja". The dance was followed by vocal music recital in which they sang raag "Kalawathi" and continued with a newly composed "Sargam" in raag Yaman, "Thiruvat" in raag "Bhupali", "Chota Kheyal" in raag Bhairavi,



LIBRARY Recent Library Acquisitions

**The Baburnama : Memoirs of Babur
Prince and Emperor**
New York : Modern Library,2002,554p.
002541
891.54

**Enabling Traditions
Dissanayake, Wimal**
Boralesgamuwa :Visidunu,2005,159p.
002542
306.493 DIS

**The Horseshoe Table : an inside view
of The UN Security Council**
Gharekhan, Chinmaya R.
New Delhi : Dorling Kindersley,2006,328p
002543
341.23 GHA

**Origin growth and suppression of the
Pindaris**
Roy, M.P.
New Delhi, Sterling Publishers,1973, 355p.
002494
954 ROY

Films in October

The Making of the Mahatma

Language: English
Directed by: Shyam Benegal
Starring : Rajit Kapoor, Pallavi Joshi & Keith Stevenson

Zubeidaa(with English subtitles)

Language: Hindi
Directed by: Shyam Benegal
Starring : Manoj Bhaj Pai, Raji Kapoor, Amrishi Puri, Karishma Kapoor & Rekha

Manthan – The churning (with English subtitles)

Language: Hindi
Directed by: Shyam Benegal
Starring : Girish Karnad, Smita Patil, Naseerudin Shah & Sadhu Meher



Shyam Benegal Contd.

Kalyug - Invited for competition at the Moscow International Film Festival 1981 / Lions' Film award for Best Film 1981 / Best Hindi Film award at the National Awards 1981.

Arohan - Best Hindi Film of the Year, Best Actor and Best Editing awards at the National Awards 1982 / Main prize, Karlovy Vary Film Festival 1982 / Invited to the Melbourne & Sydney Films Festivals and the Chicago Film Festival 1983 / Invited to the International Film Festival, New Delhi 1983.

Mandi - Invited to the London Film Festival 1983 / Best Art Direction award at the National Awards 1983 / Invited to the Los Angeles Exposition (FILMEX) and the Hong Kong International Film Festival 1984 / Selected for the Indian Panorama at Filmotsav, Bombay 1984.

Nehru - Invited to the London Film Festival 1984/ Best Historical Reconstruction award at the National Awards 1984/ State Prize of the U.S.S.R 1985.

Satyajit Ray - Invited to the Pesaro Film Festival 1985 / Invited to New York for "Festivals of India" 1985 / Invited to France for "Festivals of India" 1985 / Best Biographical Documentary award at the National Awards 1985.

Trikaal - Best Direction and Best Costume award at the National Awards 1985 / Invited to the London Film Festival 1986 / Selected for the Indian Panorama at Filmotsav, 1986 / Selected for the Indian film Retrospective, Lisbon 1986.

Susman - Selected for the Indian Panorama at Filmotsav, 1987/ Invited to the London Film Festival, the Chicago Film Festival, the Vancouver International Film Festival, the Sydney & Melbourne Film Festivals 1987/Best Hindi Film of the year at the National Awards 1987.

Suraj Ka Satvan Ghoda – Best Film , Best Director and Best Photography awards, Madhya Pradesh Film Vikas Nigam 1993/ Best Hindi Film of the year at the National Awards 1993 / Best Actor award, Singapore International Film Festival 1994 / Invited to the London Film Festival, the Chicago Film Festival, the Vancouver International Film Festival, the Cairo Film Festival, the Washington Film Festival, the Cleveland Film Festival, the San Francisco Film Festival and the Los Angeles Film Festival 1993-94.

Mammo - Best Supporting Actress award at the National Awards 1995 / Best Hindi Film of the year at the National Awards 1995 / Best Actress award given by the Film Critics at Filmfare Awards 1995.

The Making of the Mahatma – Best English Film of the year at the National Awards 1996 / Best Actor award at the National Awards 1996 / Special Jury award at the National Awards 1996 / Invited to the Montreal Film Festival, the Toronto Film Festival, the Vancouver Film Festival, the Tunis Film Festival, the Bradford Film Festival and the Cairo Film Festival 1996.

Sardari Begum - Best Supporting Actress award at the National Awards 1997 / Special Jury award for the Lead Actress at the National Awards 1997 / Best Urdu Film of the Year award at the National Awards 1997 / Invited to the Tashkent Film Festival, the Moscow International Film Festival, and the Munich Film Festival / Special award for music at the Tashkent Film Festival 1997.

Samar - Best Film of 1998 at the National Awards / Invited to the London Film Festival 1999 / Invited to Rotterdam International Film Festival 2000 / Invited to Jerusalem International Film Festival 2000 / Invited to South Film Festival, Holland 2000.

Hari Bhari - Best Film on Family Welfare at the National Awards 1999.

Zubeida - Best Film in Hindi at the National Awards 2000.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose – The Forgotten Hero - Best film on National Integration at the National awards 2004 / Best production Design at the National awards 2004

Shyam Benegal runs a film production company in Mumbai called Shyam Benegal Sahyadri Films.

Source: Website

The Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo will be screening three of Shri Shyam Benegal's movies Zubeida, Manthan & The Making of the Mahatma in the month of October 2006