

EXPRESSIONS UNLIMITED
RAY'S CINEMA



Akira Kurosawa, the celebrated Japanese film Director, once commented, 'Not to have seen the cinema of Satyajit Ray means existing in the world without seeing the sun or the moon'. Indeed, Ray has left a unique heritage, an own-style of 'gharana', a deep cinematic insight and sensibilities with a wide-spread outlook. Abjuring cheap melodrama, he perfectly blended intellect with emotion, romance with life and down-to-earth reality, all under the universal canopy of cosmopolitan humanism.

Ray belonged to a progressive, highly cultured family of Calcutta, of creative artistes and social reformers. His cinematic experience was deeply inspired by the famous French film director, Jean Renoir, when he came to the city in 1949 while filming 'The River'. Later, visiting Europe for his advertising jobs, he chanced to see Vittorio De Sica's 'Bicycle Thief' along with other films of Italian neo-realism, which evoked his urges for making movies, which he thought, was the best possible passion to him.

In 1955, overcoming severe financial hazards and other hardships, Ray finished his epoch-making film 'Pather Panchali' (Song of the little road) based on the famous novel by Bibhuti Bhusah Bandyopadhyay, the noted Bengali novelist. Pather Panchali by Satyajit Ray is one of the most important films in the last 50 years; firstly, because it was the first fully accomplished film in Indian cinema; secondly, Pather Panchali marked the beginning of the 'new' Indian cinema in that it inaugurated the first part of Ray's legendary Apu Trilogy. The film went on to win a special prize at Cannes for 'Best Human Document' in 1956 and for Best Film, Vancouver, 1958. To quote Lindsay Anderson: "*Satyajit Ray has worked with humility and complete dedication; he has gone down on his knees in the dust. And his film has the quality of intimate, unforgettable experience.*" It was a memorable narration on Apu, a highly imaginative, sensitive, wonderstruck boy, with never-ending yearning for search of Beauty, amid the grinding poverty of a poor Bengali family, struggling for sheer survival. In the words of Ray himself in his book, 'Our Films, Their Films', - "I chose 'Pather Panchali' for the qualities that made it a great book; its humanism; its lyricism; and its ring of truth... The script had to retain some of the rambling quality of the novel because that in itself contained a clue to the feel of authenticity; life in a poor Bengali village does ramble".

The other two films of the Apu trilogy that followed were 'Aparajito' (1957) and 'Apu Sansar' (1959). Ray's Apu symbolizes the eternal child, whose lust for Life is never satiated, whose cup for knowledge never crosses the brims. Even as beauteous Nature unfolds her majesty of countless beauties before his wide-eyes, open with holy curiosity, he must wait and watch, with eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation, for newer mysteries yet to be known!



Apu Sansar, 1959

Ray's other films, coming in quick, regular succession, are equally distinctive for the wonderful artistry, versatility and intellectual fecundity of a complete, accomplished artist. 'Devi' (The Goddess) highlights the frustrated elderly man's realization that his young daughter-in-law is no-extraordinary Goddess, but an ordinary woman in flesh and blood. 'Jalsaghar' (The Music Room) portrays the tragedy of a decadent feudal lord in dotage, feeble, but ruminating over

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Cultural Calendar for September 2008

September 9

Film: Temples of Learning - Part I & II
(A documentary in English)
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m (Duration 1 hr)

September 11

Hindi Day Celebrations
Venue & Time: ICC 5.00 p.m.

September 19

Hindustani Vocal Music Recital by Ms. Gayani Rupasinghe, Bachelor of Performing Arts, Bhatkhande Music University, Lucknow, India
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m.

September 23

Film: Sufi Traditions of India - Part I & II
(A documentary in English)
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m (Duration 1 hr)

September 26

Kathakali & Manipuri Dance Recital by Ms. Chandani Kasturiarachchi, M.A., Vishva Bharati University, Shantiniketan, India
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m

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

the vanity of olden times. 'Kanchenjunga', Ray's first technicolor film, with his own story, depicts conflicts of members of a rich, male dominated Bengali family. 'Abhijan' (The Expedition) and 'Mahanagar' (The Big City) feature respectively, the contrasting lifestyles of an ordinary taxi-driver and a modern, sophisticated urban couple. His political commitments could be found in some of the following films like Ashani Sanket, Aranyer Dinratri, Pratidwandi, Jana Aranya and Seemabaddha. These feature films fully reflect Ray's skill and artistry in dealing with varied types of human character in sharply opposite situational contexts.



Aparajito 1956

Ray's dexterity and originality are visible in handling Tagore's stories like 'Charulata' and 'Teen Kanya' (Three daughters). A documentary on Rabindranath Tagore was his glowing tribute to the great Poet in 1961, which was the Tagore Centenary year. They reveal how artistically a magnificent personality like Tagore is visualized and assessed by Ray, another master artist. Such interaction of two artists is definitely meaningful, as Ray received his education in Fine Arts from the Kala Bhavan, Tagore's famous Visva Bharati, in Shantiniketan. Ray himself ranks 'Charulata' as his favourite, remarking 'It's the one with fewest flaws'. In 1987, Ray made a documentary on his father, Sukumar Ray, the pioneering Bengali writer of nonsense rhymes.

Ray's last films, after his recovery from serious illness, followed his own distinctive style. These were 'Ganashatru' based on Isben's drama (An Enemy of the People), 'Shakha Prashakha' (Branches of the Tree) and 'Agantuk' (The Stranger). They continued to display the versatility of his creative pursuits. His films on 'Feluda, the agile and super-intelligent detective, and to the infinite variety of his colourful creativity. 'Sonar Kella' (The Golden Fortress) and 'Joy Baba Felunath' (The Mystery of the Elephant God) appealed to both, the adolescents and the young adults. Children still enjoy his remarkable creations like 'Goopi Gyne Bagha Byne' and 'Hirak Rajar Deshe', which satirically represented the

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SANDESH

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September 2008

Lady with Svarbat

Past Events

9th July

Hindustani Vocal Music Recital by Ms. Manjula Seneviratne



Sangeet Nipun Manjula Seneviratne presented a brilliant vocal music recital which captivated all gathered at the Centre. She commenced her performance with raag Bihag and continued with Tarana based on raag jinjoti. She along with her students presented chota lheya in raag Basant which was followed by a film song based on same raag Basant, and concluded the recital with a bhajan. The evening was very well enjoyed by the audience.

18th July

Lecture on "Indo- Lanka relation in the Gam- Madu rituals of Pattini Amma" by Mr. Sri Lal Perera



Mr. Sri Lal Perera, a past pupil of Chitrasena Kalayathanaya, gave a talk on "Indo- Lanka relation in the Gam- Madu rituals of Pattini Amma". He spoke about the 7 incarnations of Pattini with emphasis on Indo-Lanka relations as preserved in the oral tradition of Panthis Khol Mura Kavi- sacred poems the 35 verses, sung at the overnight, dance ritual for Pattini Amma in Sri Lanka. The lecture was followed by an interactive session.

15th July

Lecture on Yoga as alternative therapy for various ailments by Mr. Amarendra Narayan Lal and Mr. Roy Biswas Rajiv



Mr. Amarendra Narayan Lal & Mr. Roy Biswas Rajiv from the Vivekananda Kendra, Yoga University, Bangalore presented an

interesting and informative lecture-cum-demonstration on Yoga as an alternative therapy for various ailments at the Centre. The Lecture was jointly organized by the Indian Cultural Centre & the Indo Lanka Forum. In their lecture they explained how a person can keep certain ailments under control by doing certain Yoga exercises and also how a person with a certain ailments should avoid practising certain yoga exercises. The lecture was followed by an interactive discussion with the audience and was very well attended.

22nd July

An evening of Carnatic Vocal Music Recital by Mr. Nishanka Abeyarathne



Mr. Nishanka Abeyarathne, an ICCR scholar and also a student of the Indian Cultural Centre presented a scintillating Carnatic vocal music performance on 22nd July at the Centre and captivated the audience.

LIBRARY

Recent Library Accessions

Indian Languages and Texts through the ages
Ed. Casaba Dezso
New Delhi, Manohar Publishers,2007,pp.385

To be or Not to be
Amitabh Bachchan
By Khalid Mohamed
Mumbai, Saraswati Creations,2004,pp.424

The Sundarbans Inheritance
By Bittu Sahgal
Mumbai, Sanctuary Asia,2007,pp.160

The Yoga Tradition
[Its History,Literature,Philosophy and Practice]
By Georg Feuerstein
New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers,2002,682p.

In the shadow of the Himalayas
Tibet,Bhutan,Nepal,Sikkim
[A Photographic Record by John Claude White 1883-1908]
By Kurt Meyer
Ahmedabad, Mapin Publishing,2005,189p.

The Last Mughal
[The fall of a Dynasty,Delhi,1857]
By William Dalrymple
New Delhi, Penguin Group,2006,pp.578

Hashta Prayogaah
Vocabulary of Hand Gestures
By Jayalakshmi Eshwar
New Delhi, The Author,2006,pp.253

COURSES

BHARATHA NATYAM

Course commenced : 1st June 2008
Class days : Tuesday & Friday / Wednesday & Saturday
Age limit : Over 6 years
Course fee : Registration fee Rs.250/=
Monthly fee Rs.500/=

Registration : Commenced from 1st May 2008

KATHAK

Course commenced : 1st June 2008
Class days : Monday & Thursday
Age limit : Over 6 years
Course fee : Registration fee Rs.250/=
Monthly fee Rs.500/=

Registration : Commenced from 1st May 2008

Vacancies Exist

Films in September



Temples of Learning Sufi Traditions of India

Documentaries in English produced by The Ministry of External Affairs, Public Diplomacy Division, Government of India.

RAY'S CINEMA... *Contd*

limits of capricious kingship. His tribute to Munshi Premchand led him to create two masterpieces like the 'Shatranj Ke Khilari' (The Chess Player) and 'Sadgati', which bear the eloquent stamp of a multi-splendoured artist.

Ray in totality could not be yardsticked with limitations. He was not only a filmmaker, he was a music composer, a lyricist, an artist and designer, a versatile writer and above all - a creative genius. Not only that Satyajit Ray himself designed two typefaces named Ray Roman and Ray Bizarre. Ray Roman won an international competition in 1970. Numerous awards were bestowed on Ray throughout his lifetime.

When Ray was awarded honorary doctorate by Oxford University, he was the second film personality to be so honoured after Chaplin. He was awarded the Legion of Honour by the President of France in 1987 and the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 1985. The Government of India awarded him the highest civilian honour "Bharat Ratna" shortly before his death. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded Ray an honorary Oscar in 1992 for Lifetime Achievement.

Critics have often compared Ray to artists in the cinema and other media, such as Renoir or De Sica, Chekov or Mozart. It is generally acknowledged, even by those who were not impressed by the aesthetics of Ray's films, that he was virtually peerless in that his films encompass a whole cultural milieu with all its nuances, a sentiment expressed in Ray's obituary after his death in 1992 in The Independent, which exclaimed, 'Who else can compete?'