

# CinéClub

High Commission of India  
Islamabad

The HCI CinéClub is back with a new season and a selection of 5 beautiful films from three extraordinary directors. The first is Satyajit Ray - a legend in the world of cinema. He is arguably the most celebrated film-maker India has ever produced. The other two are Rituparno Ghosh and Sanjay Leela Bhansali both contemporary directors who have also received world-wide acclaim for their films. Through these five films you will be able to appreciate their diverse styles of film-making. While the films are different, a common thread among them is that they are either adapted or inspired from literary works. Two films are adapted from novels of Rabindranath Tagore and one from Munshi Premchand's book. The other two films are inspired from the story of Helen Keller and O'Henry's 'Gift of Magi'.

## Invitation

**PROGRAMME**  
August - October  
2008

### Black

30 August, 2008

### Ghare Baire

13 September, 2008

### Raincoat

27 September, 2008

### Shatranj Ke Khilari

11 October, 2008

### Chokher Bali

25 October, 2008

### Satyajit Ray

He has been called one of the greatest filmmakers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He brought Indian cinema to world recognition with his best known film *Pather Panchali* (1955, *The Song of the Road*). He is noted for his humanism, versatility and detailed control over his medium. In 1978, when Satyajit Ray released his new film *Shatranj ke Khilari* (*The Chess Players*) at the Berlin Film Festival, its organizing committee ranked him as one of the three all-time best directors. In 1992 he was given an Oscar for lifetime achievement. From portraying the socio-economic situation of the impoverished urban middle-class to the precise expression of the finer shades of feeling and thought, the genius of Ray flows like a poignant poetry on celluloid. We present two of his latter day classics:

**Ghare Baire** (1984, *Home and the World*) is adapted from the novel of the same name by Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. The novel is based on Tagore's own experiences as a *Swadeshi* leader. The time is 1905, winter, Bengal, India during the British rule. Following the 'divide-and-rule' policy, Lord Curzon has decided to partition Bengal - one for



Hindus and another for Muslims. The people launch a nationalist movement - *Swadeshi*, appealing for a boycott of foreign-made goods. With this as the backdrop, the story revolves around a triangular relationship between Bimala, her husband Nikhil who is a landlord-king and Nikhil's radical friend Sandip. The film explores the changing character of Bimala who moves from a life of total seclusion with her husband to falling for his friend and then her transformation as a bold, reckless woman. Ray explores the emergence of the modern woman by moving away from the traditional expectations.

### **Shatranj Ke Khilari** (1977, *The Chess Players*)

The film is adapted from the novel of Munshi Premchand, one the most prolific Hindi writers of our times. The backdrop is the British rule and the Mutiny of 1857. The main characters are Wajid Ali Shah, the weak and indifferent ruler of Avadh who has signed the friendship treaty with the British, Mirza Sajjad Ali and Mir Roshan Ali, the two landlords in Lucknow who live off their ancestral wealth and taxes collected from their land. Their addiction to the game of chess overshadows everything else in their lives. While Wajid Ali is neglecting his state and politics over music and dance, Mirza and Mir are forever playing chess and oblivious of everything else around them. They are also oblivious of the British who are strengthening their grip over the country and playing a bigger game of

chess. Ray was attracted to the story by the parallel that Munshi Premchand draws between chess games of Mir and Mirza and the crafty moves by the British to capture the king. The film stars some of the best actors of Indian and British cinema like Sanjeev Kumar, Shabana Azmi, Saeed Jaffrey, Amjad Khan, Victor Bannerjee and Sir Richard Attenborough, all of whom give sterling performances under the baton of this master filmmaker.

### **Rituparno Ghosh**

*He cut his directorial teeth in advertising in 1992 and went on to make a Bengali feature film Unishe April (19<sup>th</sup> April) which won him the 1995 National Award in India for best film. He has since given a series of critical hits, two of which, Chokher Bali and Raincoat will be screened during this season. Rituparno cites Ingmar Bergman, Quentin Tarantino, Mohsen Makhmalbaf and Pedro Almodovar as his directorial influences. He has emerged as a serious director to watch out for and is currently directing a remake of the 1962 classic Sahib, Biwi aur Ghulam.*

### **Chokher Bali** (2003, *Sand in the Eye*)

Set in Bengal in the early 1900's, the film (based on Rabindarnath Tagore's novel) draws an analogy between the British colonization of India and the subjugation of women. An educated and beautiful woman, Binodini becomes a widow within a year of her marriage, but she does not accept the constraints imposed on her as a widow by her

society. The film has a beautiful look to it and Aishwarya Rai as Binodini portrays a strong character with its subtle combination of idealism and deviousness. It is a melancholy, stirring tale of deceit and distress that arise from dissatisfaction and sorrow. Tagore has said about the novel, "I have always regretted the ending".

### **Raincoat** (2004)

It tells the story of two lovers, separated by destiny, who meet again one day. This encounter allows each to realize the truth about the lives they are living. Manoj's (*Ajay Devgan*) trying journey to Calcutta effortlessly sets the tone of the film; the discerning viewer will immediately become clued in to the fact that a masterful filmmaker is at work. Rituparno's focus on the incessant rain, *Devgan's* melancholy expression, and *Debojyoti Mishra's* hauntingly evocative score effectively conjures the underlying atmosphere and subtext in the first few shots of the film than most films are able to invoke in their entire running time. All of this is accomplished without dialogue. As with all great filmmakers, Ghosh excels in his ability to show rather than tell. The opening shots gently acclimate audiences so that they may attend to the right details as this gem of a film unfolds; we're being told to savor the subtext of each shot - to read between the lines, as we will soon be forced to decipher truths by carefully examining lie after lie. The storyline scores on originality and

inspiration. It may start with an afternoon encounter between two estranged lovers and the synopsis may appear simple, but what unfolds is a complex film masterfully crafted by Rituparno Ghosh.

### Sanjay Leela Bhansali

Bhansali is an out and out Bollywood director in the true sense of the genre. He makes mainstream cinema and yet is different from the mainstream directors. There is a theatrical appeal to his films which are often made with big budget and elaborately crafted sets like in **Devdaas** which received a world premiere at **the Cannes Film Festival** and **Saawariya** which failed commercially but was praised for its feel and mood.

Then there are his other films like **Khamoshi** and **Black** which establish his credentials as a great director. Sanjay Bhansali has the rare distinction of having been invited to Paris by the Theatre Du Chatelet and later to Spoleto, Italy to direct the 1923 opera ballet 'Padmavati' written by Albert Rousselan.

### **Black** (2005)

Time Magazine (Europe) selected the film as one of the 10 Best Movies of the Year 2005 from across the globe. The film was screened at the Casablanca Film Festival and the International Film Festival of India. It won almost every major film award in India in 2006.

The story of Black is based on

the true life story of Helen Keller. One dimension tells the story of a once well-regarded teacher who has come to the end of his financial, if not his existential rope, a man whose talents are neither fully recognized nor completely appreciated. At this difficult time in his life he receives a letter asking for help from the parents of a young deaf and blind girl. The story is told as much with emotionally poignant visuals as it is with emotionally gripping dialogue. This is a film not to watch but to experience for it succeeds in allowing us to recognize the value of caring for one another.

#### DETAILED PROGRAMME

(All days are Saturdays - all shows start at 5 pm sharp)

| SNo. | Movie                      | Date                | Running time | Original soundtrack* | Censor rating | Actors   |
|------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------|--|
| 1.   | <b>Black</b>               | <b>30 August</b>    | 122 min.     | Hindi/Urdu           | U             | Amitabh Bachchan, Rani Mukherjee, Shernaz Patel  |
| 2.   | <b>Ghare Baire</b>         | <b>13 September</b> | 140 min.     | Bengali              | U             | Soumitra Chatterjee, Victor Banerjee, Swatilekha Chatterjee                                    |
| 3.   | <b>Raincoat</b>            | <b>27 September</b> | 120 min.     | Hindi/Urdu           | PG            | Ajay Devgan, Aishwarya Rai   |
| 4.   | <b>Shatranj Ke Khilari</b> | <b>11 October</b>   | 129 min.     | Hindi/Urdu/English   | U             | Sanjeev Kumar, Saeed Jaffrey, Sir Richard Attenborough, Amjad Khan, Shabana Azmi, Farida Jalal |
| 5.   | <b>Chokher Bali</b>        | <b>25 October</b>   | 167 min.     | Hindi/Urdu           | PG            | Aishwarya Rai, Prasenjit Chatterjee, Raima Sen, Lily Chakravarty                               |

\*All films will be screened with English subtitles

**Venue: Auditorium, High Commission of India, G-5 – Diplomatic Enclave, Islamabad**

Entry: from Main Gate - Parking: in the enclosed grounds opposite Main Gate of the High Commission

## How to Confirm Attendance

Please send us the following information by email at [cineclub.hci@gmail.com](mailto:cineclub.hci@gmail.com)

before **5:00 pm** on the **Friday** preceding the respective show.

1. **Names** of all persons attending (*pl. mention organization, if any*)
2. **NIC card / Dipl. ID card** number of persons attending (*as appropriate*)
3. **Registration number of vehicle/s** (*including CD or X reg. plates also*)
4. **Name of film/date** you wish to see.

