



First

INDIAN FILM

FESTIVAL

London

1955

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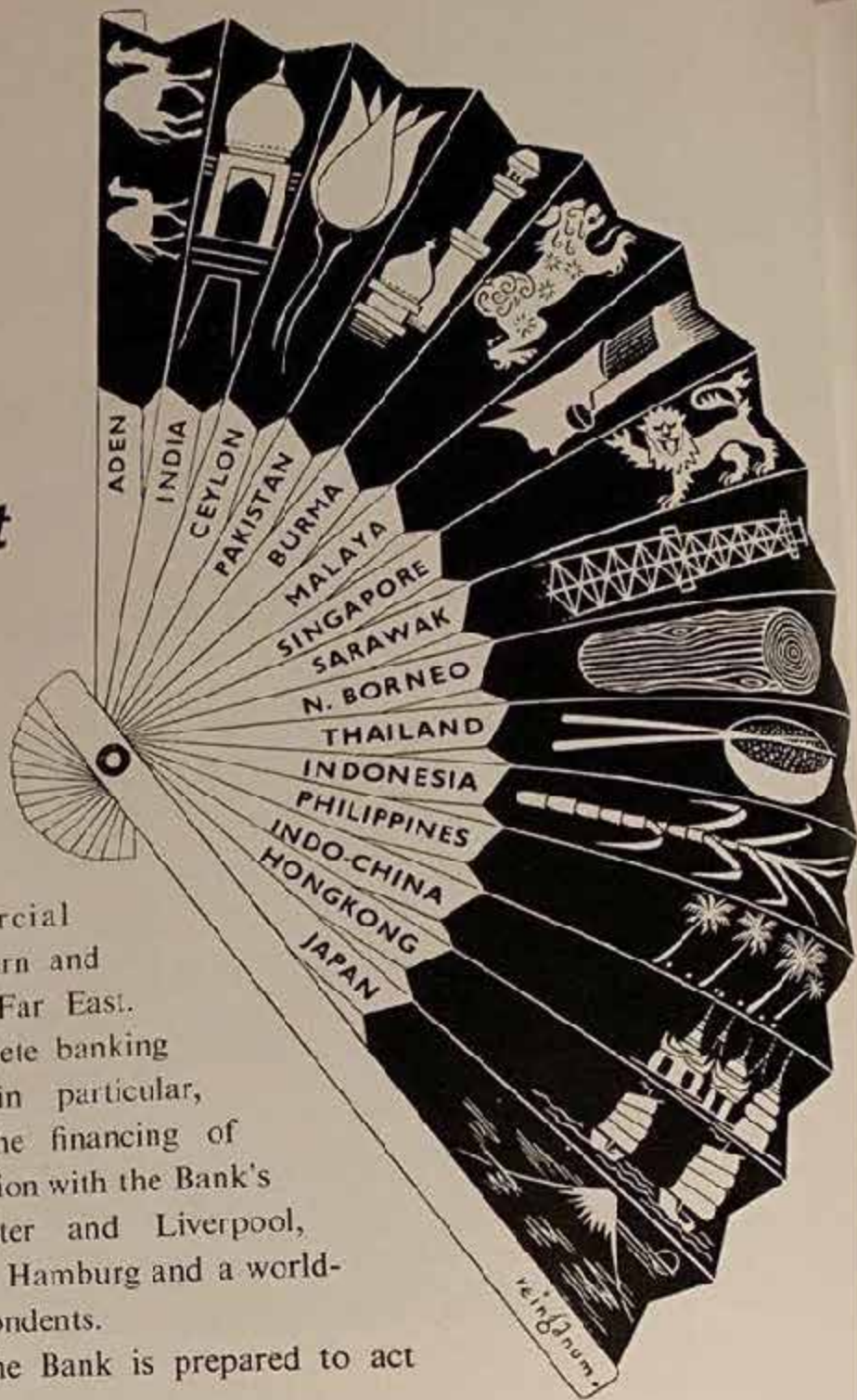
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extend their congratulations and
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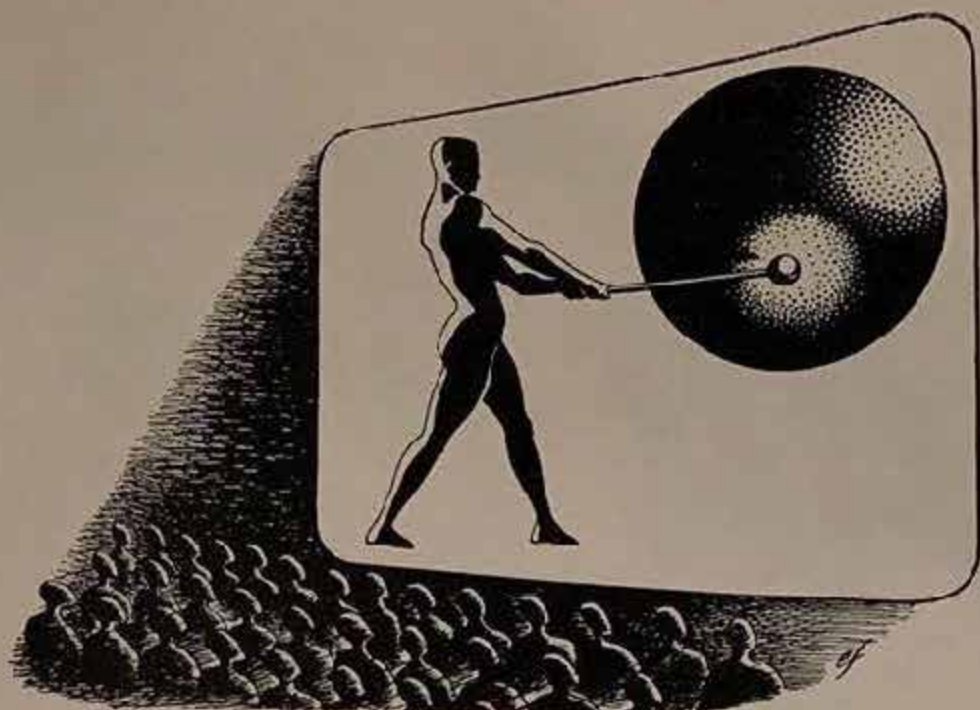
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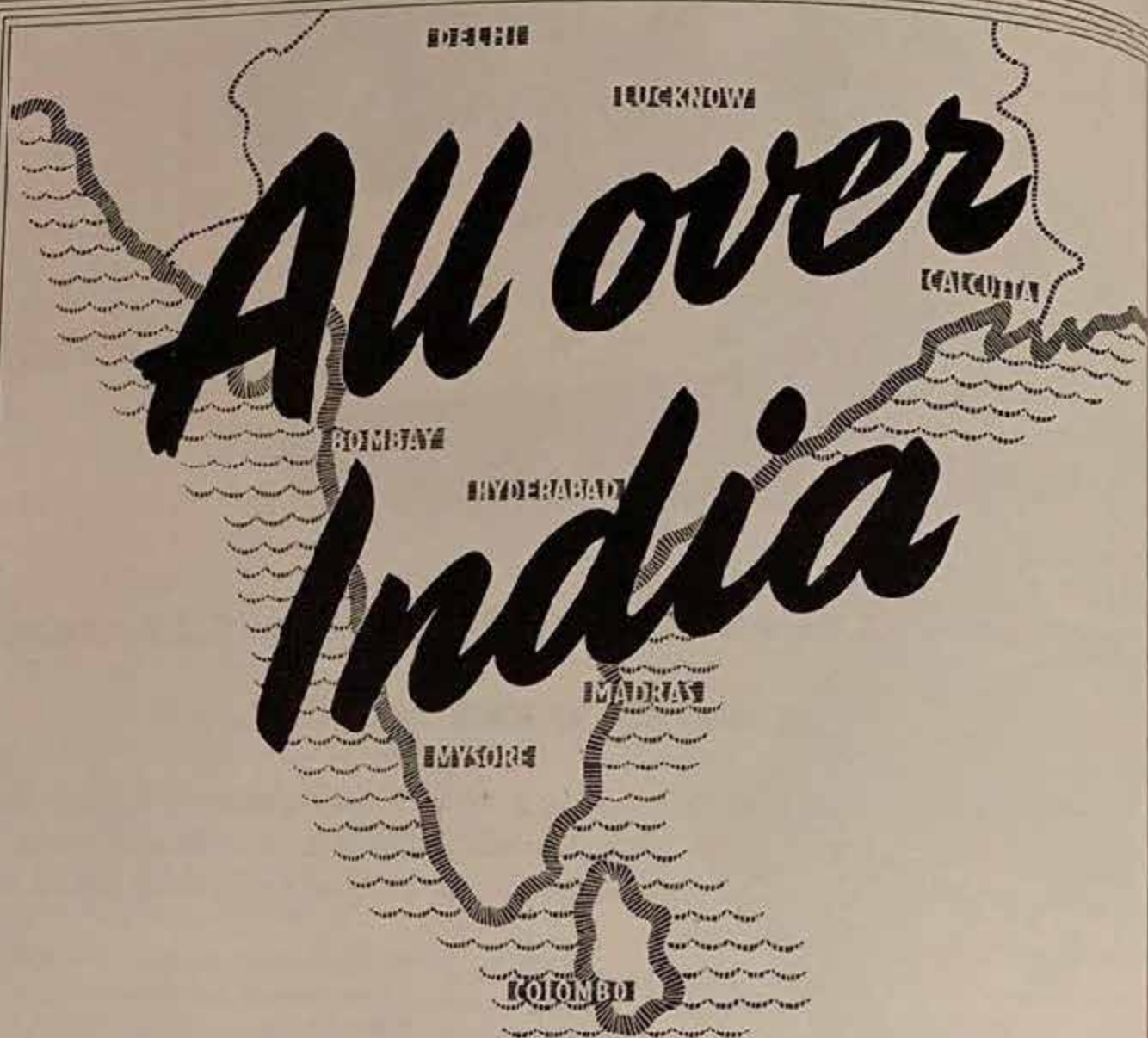
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to produce and distribute each year, through its own offices, a dozen new documentaries together with technical and training films, required for internal staff purposes. These new documentaries will deal with India's major industries, cottage industries, and the life of typical communities in many regions of the country.

Producing such information films for general public interest, we aim to achieve "production values" equal to the best technical standards of the film studios. Documentaries are sometimes regarded as the poor sister of the film business. Yet many of them are true works of art, and in the long run have powerfully conditioned the techniques of feature-film production, notably in the West. Documentaries like "Night Mail", "Song of Ceylon", the "March of Time" series, "The Way Ahead", "Louisiana Story", opened up new avenues and possibilities to the commercial film industry.

"The exciting adventure of building the new India" provides abundant raw material for exciting film stories. The likelihood is that over the next few years not only the film industry, but some of the great commercial organisations as well, will find important and interesting stories of present-day India to put before the public.

Meanwhile, Burmah-Shell has scheduled this year, original documentary films dealing with The Monsoon (colour), Indian Agriculture, Indian Textiles, and the Oil Industry—and others describing local life in Malabar, Punjab, and the Deccan. India's growing library of documentaries will be considerably enriched by these new productions. They will also be a valuable addition to our lending library of over 150 films, which are shown to village audiences by Burmah-Shell Information Vans that tour the countryside.

Burmah-Shell... in India's life and part of it



Douglas Fraser & Sons, Limited of Arbroath,
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friends in India and extend their sincere
good wishes for the success of The Festival
of Indian Films and the associated charitable
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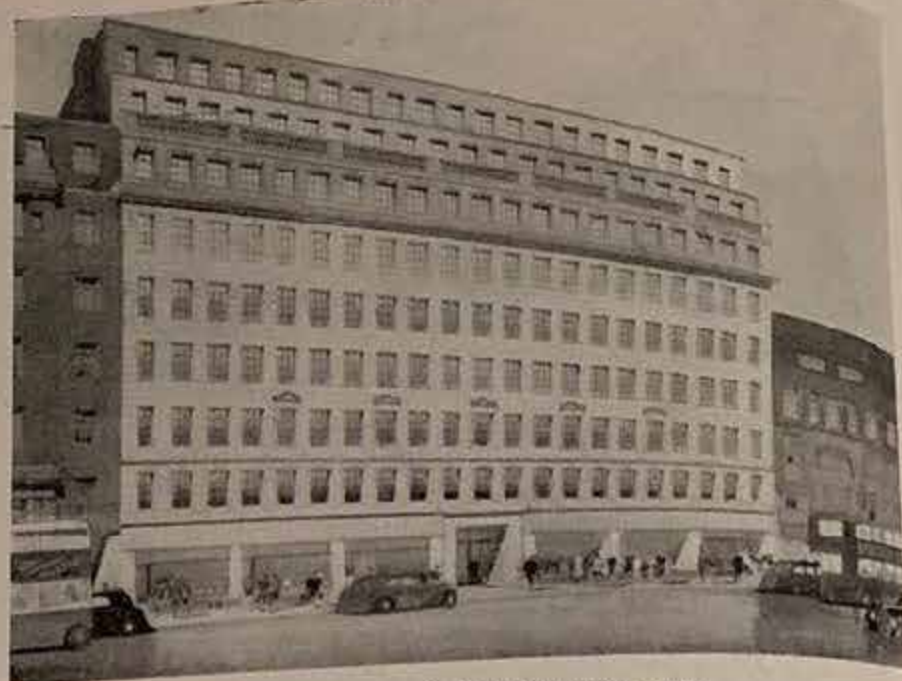
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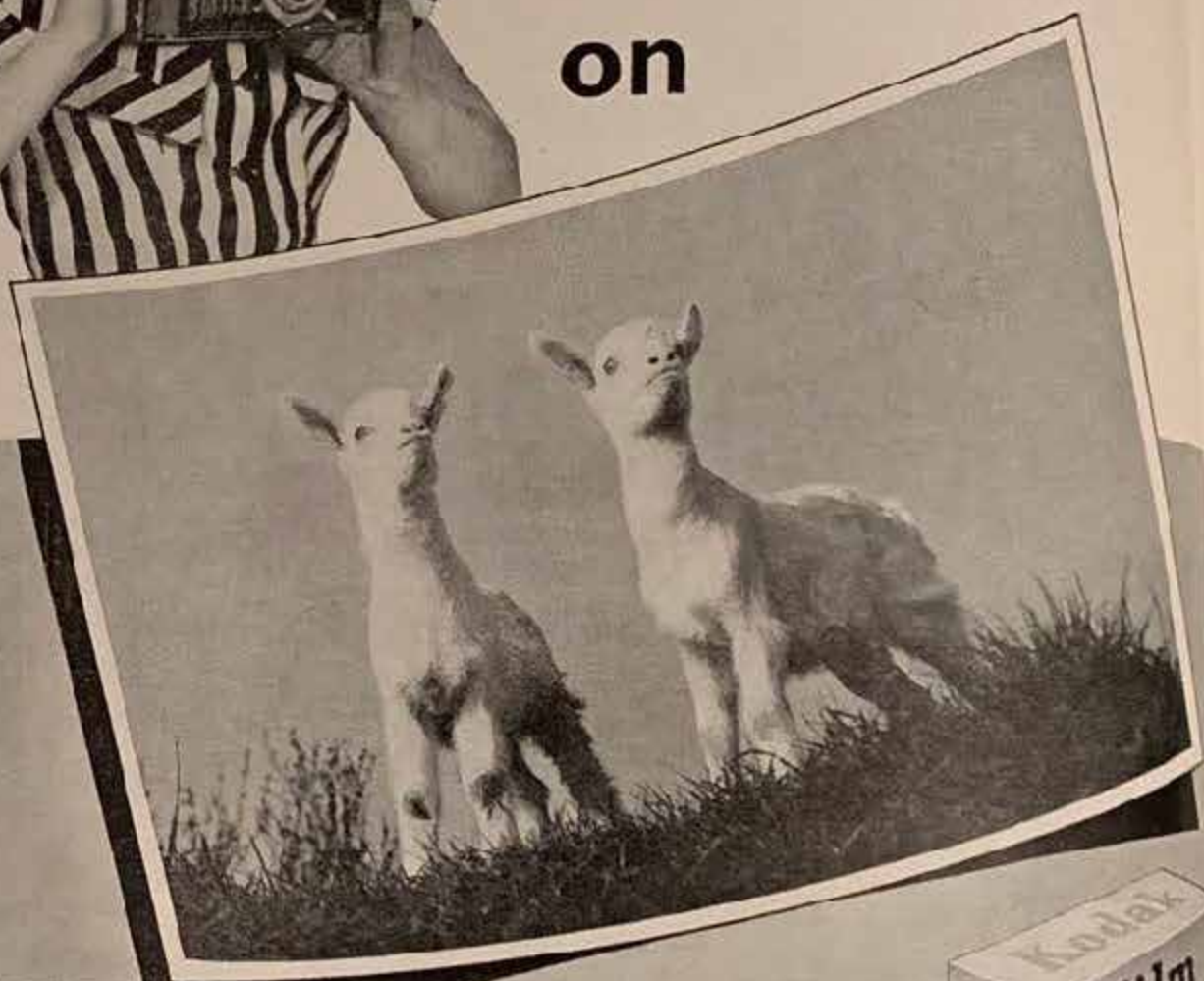
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FIRST INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL

21st—26th JUNE, 1955

SCALA THEATRE, LONDON

...That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace be constructed.

that ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken in to war;

that the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for JUSTICE AND LIBERTY AND PEACE are indispensable to the dignity of men and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern;

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PRESIDENT'S Message

THE RT. HON. HILARY A. MARQUAND, M.A., D.Sc. M.P.

During the past two years the Asian Film Society has been exhibiting at the Scala Theatre, London, films from various Asian countries. To Asian residents in London it must have been a great pleasure to be reminded in this way of the culture and progress of their homelands. I think I express the opinion of all the Europeans (comparatively few in number) who had the good fortune to be invited to these showings, when I say that our understanding of Asia was deepened and broadened by this experience. When a European sees an Asian film he sees Asia for the first time through Asian eyes.

Now the Asian Film Society is making the very bold venture of sponsoring a Festival of Indian films. The Society has had no elaborate administration behind it. On its behalf I ask for forgiveness for all errors and omissions in organisation which may be revealed. So great is the goodwill towards India that exists in Britain that I am sure that forgiveness will be readily granted.

In a country where television is unknown and where illiteracy is widespread, films are one of the main means of mass communication. To a large extent the maker of films has taken the place of the traditional teller of stories. So it is not surprising that already the film industry in India ranks second in terms of capital investment and fifth in terms of workers employed.

Now the industry feels mature enough to show its wares abroad. The producers have rich resources of culture, colour, costume and history and acting ability on which to draw. Fascinating though these are, however, the main interest of the films is that they have been made by Indians for Indians. They portray Indian history as Indians think of it, English men and women living in India as they appeared to Indians and not as they may have seemed to themselves. If we view them with interest and sympathy we shall have increased our understanding of India and of the whole of Asia. It is to promote true international understanding and not to serve any commercial interest that this Festival has been promoted.



Mr. Hilary A. Marquand, who was formerly Professor of Industrial Relations at University College, Cardiff, was successively Secretary for Overseas Trade, Paymaster General, Minister of Pensions and Minister of Health between 1945 and 1951. During the Winter of 1952-53 he toured India, Pakistan and Ceylon, lecturing on Industrial Relations and the British Social Services. In 1954 he made a similar tour of the British Caribbean. During these visits and others which he made to East and Central Africa and Turkey, he has studied the problems of the economic development of under-developed countries, upon which he has written and lectured in Britain.

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MESSAGES OF GOOD WISHES

INDIAN MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION, Bombay, INDIA

"I congratulate the Asian Film Society, London for sponsoring an Indian Film Festival in London and for the good work it has been doing to promote the exhibition of Indian films.

I am confident that this Festival will help to bring the East and West nearer. Our country has had close contact with England for many years and our films should help to cement this friendship further. For the film industry in India, this should provide a window to the West."

S. K. PATIL
President
I. M. P. P. A.

FILM PRODUCERS GUILD OF INDIA LTD. Bombay, INDIA

"I am indeed happy to know that the Asian Film Society is sponsoring the "First Indian Film Festival" in London in aid of the National Society for Cancer Relief and the World University Service. The organisers and sponsors of this Festival deserve the sincere gratefulness of the people of India in general and those engaged in the Film Trade in India in particular for this laudable effort.

Film alone can forge an important link in the chain of understanding between the nations of the universe, as cinematic art knows no barriers and speaks to all with the same visual voice. This great potentiality of films is more acknowledged today than ever before. It is only befitting that the First Indian Film Festival is being arranged at such a time, when all the nations of the world are anxious to have closer understanding and ties amongst them, to usher a brilliant dawn of perpetual peace and tranquility in the entire universe.

I am sure the Festival will do a great deal towards this and to this and to the glorious success of the Festival, I send my very sincere good wishes."

V. SHANTARAM
Hon. President

FILM FEDERATION OF INDIA Bombay, INDIA

"May I congratulate the Asian Film Society for organising the First Indian Film Festival in London this year. From the array of distinguished personalities who are associated with it I have no doubt that it will be a grand success and will pave the way for closer contacts between the peoples of India and the United Kingdom. No medium could do this more effectively than the medium of films and I offer you sincere good wishes on behalf of myself and the Film Federation of India on this occasion."

S. G. VASAN
President



Photo : JITENDRA ARYA

H. E. MADAME VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT, HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR INDIA

ASIAN FILM SOCIETY



In the post-war period there was a general desire in this country to know more about the people of Asia who were swiftly gaining new status and importance. To meet this growing curiosity there could be no better medium than films to bring the people of Asia nearer to the people of the



Photograph taken at the inaugural function of the Society at the French Institute with Mehtab and Sohrab Modi.



Ingrid Bergmann attending a function of the Society at the Scala Theatre.



Mr. Sohrab Modi, producer, director and H. E. Mr. B. G. Kher at a special showing of "Queen of Jhansi" in London 1953



West. Thus some members of the Asian communities in London came upon the idea of forming a film society.

With the help and willing co-operation of the representatives of various film societies in London an Asian Film Society was formed. The society is recognised by the London County Council as a non-profit making and non-political society.

The objects of the Asian Film Society are :-

- a) to promote cultural understanding with the people of Asia through medium of films.
- b) To encourage interest in the film as a social art and as a medium of information and education by exhibiting films of scientific, educational, cultural and aesthetic character.

In fact, for the objects of the Society, inspiration has been drawn from the constitution of UNESCO.



At a reception held by the Society, H.E. B. G. Kher was guest of honour.

"that ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war".

The Society was inaugurated by the showing of Mr. Shantaram's film "THE STORY OF DR. KOTNIS" in the distinguished presence of Miss Mehtab and Mr. Sohrab Modi, at the French Institute.

Since then the Society has gained in stature and its membership has increased manifold. It now claims membership of people of various nationalities. During the course of its brief existence the Society exhibited feature films and documentaries from Ceylon, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan and other Eastern countries. At its regular exhibitions, the Society has been honoured by the presence of Ambassadors, High Commissioners, diplomatic representatives as well as prominent personalities from the film world and film trade.

Due to good response and encouragement from the members and film-goers, the Society ventured to sponsor this First Indian Film Festival, which is the first organised attempt to present India's culture and way of life in a limited way to the people of this country.

The Society is indeed proud and honoured that its first attempt will

also serve the cause of two worthy charities who are helping it in its endeavour.

The Society believes that if it receives co-operation, help and encouragement from all sections of people in London, it will be able to achieve, in its humble way a positive and worthwhile purpose.

S. N. Gouvisaria

*Chairman,
ASIAN FILM SOCIETY*



Bimal Rai and Prem Nath exchange Indian greetings with Ingrid Bergmann at a function of the Society.



A group photograph of Ambassadors from the Middle and Far East at the exhibition of an Egyptian film.



Photo : Dwarka Morjaria

PROGRAMME FIRST INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL SCALA THEATRE, LONDON

21st JUNE

MINERVA MOVIE TONES

TUESDAY



QUEEN OF JHANSI

(English Sub-Titles)

India's first technicolor picture. "The Queen of Jhansi" is a spectacular production that was 2½ years in the making at a cost of £700,000. The mammoth film will remain a tribute to the genius and initiative of the famous Modi brothers. The story tells of the brave Queen Lakshmibai who raised aloft the banner of freedom and inspired her infant State to challenge the organised might of General Sir Hugh Rose's forces in India. The valiant Queen met her death in the battlefield, but her martyrdom immortalised Jhansi and left a noble example for all who cherish liberty and freedom.

CREDITS

Producers Sokrah, Modi
Director Ernest Haller A.S.C.
Photography Ravi K. Basu
Art Director E. Edwards
Audiography Pandit S. R. Dutt
Story & Research Ganga Hattar
Screenplay Varanasi Dutt
Music P. Bhattacharya
Editing P. Bhattacharya

CAST

Rani Lakshmibai Meeta
Raghu Subrah Mani
Raja Gankadhar Rao Mubashir
Ghulam Ghaus Khan Usha
Sadashiv Rao Ramnath
Gen. Sir Hugh Rose Suresh
Mantu Baby Shashi
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22nd JUNE

SUNNY ART PRODUCTIONS

WEDNESDAY



THE FLYING BEDSTEAD

(URAN KHATOLA)
(English Sub-Titles)

"Uran Khatola" is a musical fantasy produced on a lavish scale, full of spectacular sets with idyllic backdrops and packed with emotion. It relates the strange experiences of the sole survivor of an air crash in the uncharted island of Shanga. It has fully justified the present trend towards classical music by incorporating the finest tunes of Yore. The film stars two of India's most popular artistes, Nimmi and Dilip Kumar. Nimmi lives a great role as Soni and Dilip Kumar gives a simple, polished and restrained performance.

CREDITS

Producer and music director Naushad Ali
Director S. U. Sunny
Story, dialogue Azim Baridpur
Photography Jai Mani
Lyrics Shakeel Badayuni
Dances Surya Kumar
Art V. Jadhav Rao

CAST

Dilip Kumar, Nimmi, Suryakumar,
Jeevan, Roopmala, Amar, Agha,
Tun Tun, Syed Jan and Nawab

★

PROGRAMME
FIRST INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL
SCALA THEATRE, LONDON

THURSDAY

23rd JUNE

NAYA SANSAR'S



MUNNA (THE LOST CHILD)
 (English Sub-Titles)

Munna is the first Indian film without songs. It is directed by Khawja Ahmad Abbas, who long before his active entry into film-production was well-known as a gifted screen-writer and journalist. Munna is the story of a foundling, who sets out to seek his mother in the big wide world, a world he finds both cruel and kind. Mr. Neeru has this to say about Munna: "I wish more films like Munna were made in India. I liked this film and consider it good from many points of view".

CREDITS

Screenplay K. A. Abbas
 Dialogues Anil Biswas
 Music Ram Chandra
 Photography K. Nayyar
 Art Direction Mohan Rathod
 Editor C. Modak
 Sound K. A. Abbas
 Direction K. A. Abbas

CAST

Solochana Chatterjee
 Shammi
 Jai Raj
 Om Prakash
 David
 and
 Romi as Munna.

★

24th JUNE

FRIDAY

ASHOK KUMAR PRODUCTION'S



PARINEETA
 (English Sub-Titles)

Directed by Bimal Roy (of Two Acres of Land) Parineeta is an adaptation of a moving love story by India's great writer Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. Love is a theme near to the heart of the Indian people, particularly love that is chaste and enduring and tender. But even in love a young Indian has to be guided by his culture and his ancient traditions. The office of the Registrar for marriage may exist, but not for one who has been brought up to believe that marriage vows are sacred, and dictates of elders also influence the choice of a man's life-partner. Parineeta tells of the conflict and eventual bliss that befell a young couple in love.

CREDITS

Producers Ashok Kumar Productions
 Story Sarat Chandra Chatterjee
 Dialogue Navendu Ghosh
 Scenario Bimal Roy
 Lyrics Pt. Bharat Vyas
 Music Azim Kumar Musharji
 Photography Kamal Bose
 Sound Sherali Pabani & J. M. Barot

Directed By :

BIMAL ROY

CAST

Ashok Kumar, Meena Kumari,
 Ashit Baran, Badri Prasad etc.

★

PROGRAMME
FIRST INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL
SCALA THEATRE, LONDON

25th JUNE

NEV KETAN'S

SATURDAY



THE CRUEL WIND

(AANDHIYAN)
 (English Sub-Titles)

Based on a true incident which happened in Amritsar, East Punjab "Aandhiyan" chose the real India and it depicts childlike naivete of the Indian; the melodramatic outlook of all the classes which go to make India's heterogeneous millions—rich or poor, high caste or lowborn. It depicts faithfully the habits and methods of business and domesticity; their eastern outlook on love and marriage and their picturesque ceremonies. Providing a unique background to all this, is Indian music played by Ustad Ali Akbar Khan greatest composer and exponent of Indian music.

CREDITS

Produced and
 Directed by Chetan Anand

CAST

Nimmi, Dev Anand, K. N. Singh
 Durga Khote, Kalpana Kulkarni

★

26th JUNE

RAJKAMAL KALAMANDIR'S

SUNDAY



IMMORTAL SONG

(AMAR BHOOPALI)
 (English Sub-Titles)

Directed by V. Shantaram, one of India's truly great Directors "Immortal Song" is the intensely gripping tale of Honaji, the great Maratha poet. While Honaji's admirers and his people awaited their gifted poet to give the country a new lead through his poems, Honaji whiled away his talents in the arms of a harlot. But when the country itself was threatened by an aggressor, Honaji renounced his desires and with his poems aroused his people to a new awakening, thus fulfilling his mission.

CREDITS

Story V. Mankar
 Screenplay V. Vaidyan
 Music V. Datta
 Sound A. K. Panna
 Art Direction C. Khatri
 Photography G. Bhatia Krishna
 Producer V. Shantaram
 Director V. Shantaram

CAST

Nagarkar Renu
 Sandhya Ganga
 Y. Minna Jyoti
 Lalita Yashoda

★



SITARA "THE KATHAK QUEEN" OF INDIA

has come to London with a mission. This is her first appearance outside India and she has prepared special dance numbers, and costumes for the Indian Film Festival. She is a leading Indian film star, choreographer and dancer.



H. H. the Maharao of Kutch and The Rt. Hon. Hilary A. Marquand discussing the Festival programme at a cocktail party where His Highness was the host.

Photo by SABRA

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



The Chairman and Committee wish to express their sincere and grateful thanks to:



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The advertisers who, through their support, have enabled us to produce this record Souvenir Brochure.



Messrs. F. & L. Zeffman of the Ranelagh Press, for the care taken in the supervision and production of this brochure.



The Management and staff of this Theatre for their helpful co-operation.



Messrs. Kamal Roy and Syed Yaverali, B. I. Malhotra, N. K. Shetty for their most valuable service in Bombay to make this Festival a success.



And to all the guests, who by their liberal and generous patronage have made this first Indian Film Festival socially, culturally and financially successful.

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FILM INDUSTRY

... a record of

Akhtar J. Kardar

The cinema came to India in 1912. Its growth in the last 43 years has been phenomenal. Today, with its prolific output of almost 300 full-length pictures, 50 documentaries and 52 news reels a year, India ranks as the second largest film producing country in the world.

In terms of output alone, therefore, the progress made has been remarkable, but in order to appreciate how remarkable, we need to look at the overwhelming odds which the Indian producer has had to face.

Lack of Cinemas

To begin with, although ranking second in output, India has hardly 3,000 cinema halls, i.e. 8½ cinemas only per unit of one million population.

How inadequate this number is may be judged from the fact that the United Kingdom which produces less than one-third the number of pictures which India does, has 125 cinemas per unit of one million population. For a start, therefore, the Indian producer is handicapped by inadequate exhibition facilities. To add to this, the Indian picture has as yet hardly any foreign markets. What such a situation means may be judged from the calamity that would befall the film industry of any of the five big film producing countries (America, Britain, Italy, France and Japan) if suddenly they were deprived of foreign markets and their pictures were confined to inadequate exhibition in home cinemas.

Production Cost

It is sometimes argued that production costs in India are considerably

less than in, for instance, Britain, and this compensates the Indian producer for lack of markets abroad. But this is far from true. The standard of wages which the Association of Cine Technicians has secured for the British film worker does not boast too high a scale in comparison with their Indian counterparts. The truth of the matter is that far from having a smaller expense ratio, the Indian producer has to meet items of expenditure unknown to the film producer here, e.g. expenses incurred by way of freight, insurance and duty, in importing raw stock, equipment, etc., not to speak of the working profits of the many middle-men who automatically become involved in such a situation.

Taxes and Levies

Government taxes and levies which amount to such a heavy charge on the producer's income in this country are just as highly assessed in India. As against the Entertainment Tax of 31% levied in Britain, the Indian producer has to pay 33.13%. In India moreover, there is no counterpart to the British Producers' Fund which is made up in Britain by a charge of 3% on box office takings and which is meant to supplement the revenues of producers here.

It might come as a surprise to many in this country that the Indian producer over and above the Entertainment Tax is required to pay Income Tax in advance, worked out on the basis of hypothetical profits yet to accrue!

No Subsidies

The most outstanding feature of the Indian film industry is that of all major film producing countries (ex-

cluding America) India alone is a country where film production is not subsidised by the Government. In Britain, without the National Film Finance Corporation Fund, film production would practically come to a standstill. In 1954 alone, the N.F.F.C. Fund advanced almost £8½ million to subsidise film production. To a lesser or greater extent the same is true of Italy, France and Japan. But the Indian film producer has no means of obtaining any financial help from the Government; even banking facilities for advances and loans hardly exist.

No Protections

Again few film producers in Britain would survive if suddenly the protection granted to the industry by way of (1) compulsory release of British films in home cinemas and (2) deducting part of earnings of foreign films for co-production, were to be removed. These two factors, which are essential features of the film industry in this country, have been considered absolutely necessary for the survival of British film production. The Indian producer has no such protections. He has no fixed playing periods laid down by legislation. To date, not one Indian picture has benefited by the colossal earnings of the many foreign films that flood Indian cinemas. The Indian producer thus has to rely upon one and one count only—the merit of his own film in his own cinemas to bring back his investment!

Language Problem

A great many people in this country, in Italy and America have

IN INDIA achievement

explained the remarkable phenomena of the survival of the Indian film industry in face of such overwhelming odds by saying that foreign films do not offer any real competition to Indian pictures in India because, due to the language, foreign films have only a limited audience. But this is far from true, for in a country where more than twelve languages each completely different from the other, are commonly spoken, English is as foreign in some parts as, for example, Bengali or Hindi.

And so it is not only foreign films which have a limited audience because of their language, but Indian pictures themselves are faced with the same handicap . . . because there is no one language in India which is universally understood throughout the country's length and breadth.

All these are some, although not all, of the many problems the Indian producer has to face. It is indeed a remarkable triumph for the industry that it has managed to achieve what it has in face of so many odds.

Quality

And what of the quality? For indeed it is not the number of bad pictures turned out but the good ones produced which really determine the progress of a country's cinema. And it is here more than anywhere else that the Indian film industry deserves all praise. The Indian technician has had no other system of learning than that of trial and error, and yet many top foreign technicians who have

visited Indian studios have marvelled at what is being done with so little. Some of India's pictures today, in finish and technique, can undoubtedly stand with the best produced in any country in the world.

The Indian Cinema

A word about the Indian cinema itself. Forty years ago when the silent cinema came to India, it gave to the people a medium of expressing all their hopes and aspirations. The first Indian films took to mythology as their theme. In the lives of their ancient gods and goddesses the people found an outlet for expressing all their yearnings. The historicals that followed brought legend down to more recent history. The historicals gave way to the social films that depicted the life and love of the common man; and today the social film itself is gradually giving place to films that mirror the contemporary social reality that exists in India. As indeed, the cinema of every country must in the last resort be a cinema truly of the people, the Indian film too, has slowly but surely affiliated itself with the lives of the people and the reality with which they contend.

And what of the future? An industry which has the record of the Indian Cinema has, need have no fears. Second today in terms of output, the day is not far off when the Indian film will be as universally seen as are some of the great pictures from the U.S.A., Italy, France, Japan and Britain.



Mr. Akhtar J. Kardar was born in Lahore, Pakistan, on the 25th November, 1927. His early years were spent as a cadet and later an apprentice in the Merchant Marine. During the war he served as a Commissioned Officer in the Royal Indian Navy.

In 1946, Mr. Kardar resigned his Commission to join his brother, the well known Mr. A. R. Kardar—a pioneer of the Indian film industry and one of India's most successful film producer, Director, Studio owner and Distributor.

Mr. Kardar has had a very varied career; he has been a professional journalist, a play-wright and a very successful publicity consultant. One of the biggest Railway systems in the Indo-Park sub-continent briefed him as an Advisor to their Public Relations Department and the Ministry of Transport of a Provincial Government appointed him as their sole publicity consultant.

Mr. Kardar has travelled extensively to places as far apart as the South Sea Islands . . . Alaska and Tibet.

He is due shortly to leave U.K. in order to direct a film . . . his first.

PRODUCERS' RESPONSIBILITY TO SOCIETY

By V. SHANTARAM



The Motion Picture is both an art and industry.

It is an altogether new form of art which registers a great advance over the stage.

The appeal of stage is limited to an audience of a few thousand people, the motion picture can be seen by millions of people on the same day throughout the country.

The film is a democratic art; it is not an individual expression of any one person, it is the collective contribution of many people that makes a work of film art possible.

And it is the job of the director and the producer to blend the diverse talents harmoniously in producing a balanced motion picture; it is also the task of the producer to raise money to make this venture possible and then market it.

The film producer is thus in a most unenviable position of an artiste, as well as a businessman and this dual role that he has to play, puts a very heavy burden on his shoulders.

As an artiste, his creative work is open to criticism for its aesthetic shortcomings and hence it is his duty to produce a picture worthy of the motion picture art.

As a businessman, his paramount consideration is to ensure popularity of the picture so that the monies invested are realised and he is in a position to make more pictures.

So naturally, his primary responsibility is to recover the cost; and to fulfil that responsibility, he has to make a picture which will please his customers—the picturegoers.

He cannot afford to displease them. But what is the primary need of his customer?

The picturegoer goes to see a motion picture for recreation, entertainment; that is his main objective.

To please the audience is not an easy task as it is composed of diverse sections of society with varying tastes and aptitudes.

The problem for the producer is whether he should exploit the weakness of the audience by giving cheap, vulgar and even obscene entertainment or should try to elevate its taste by appealing to its finer aesthetic sense of beauty and truth.

If the producer has any pretensions to being a creative artiste, then the choice for him is obvious.

But even if he were purely a businessman, he has certain social obligations and responsibilities.

Even a businessman is called upon to take precautions in not selling such goods which are injurious or harmful to the society.

The process of pre-censorship thus acts as a preventive force and this compels the film producer to remember his social responsibility.

But Censorship at best is a negative precaution, for censorship, however rigidly it may be enforced cannot guarantee that a picture which has passed its test will be in keeping with cultural and social responsibilities of a producer.

For a picture which has nothing objectionable from the point of view of the censor's code may still exert a baneful influence on the public.

So, unless the producer himself is conscious of his cultural and social obligations, he may not be able to fulfil them.

This realisation of the responsibility by a film producer depends on his realisation of the power he wields. A

producer who makes a film must be aware of the reaction it produces amongst those who see it.

A producer must be conscious of the efficacy of the medium in which he is dealing.

The motion picture wields a very strong influence on the people, and though it is true that the majority of them come to see pictures purely for entertainment, they cannot help being influenced by what they see.

Hence the producer has a great cultural responsibility as well.

Since films, whether by design or by accident do exert an influence on the spectator; whether a film is made with a purpose to enlighten the audience or not, the film is bound to produce certain reactions on the audience.

In this connection, I recall that two decades ago, an important social picture was made in which the frustration in love was glorified.

The lover failing to get his beloved starts drinking and visiting a prostitute and ultimately dies.

As a result hundreds of college Romeos whenever they got jilted in love resorted to drinking.

The failure in love just became an excuse to cultivate habit of drinking.

This was obviously not the effect desired either by the author or the producer; but strangely enough this was the reaction of it, and it was so strong that I myself felt the necessity of making a picture debunking the glorification of the frustration in love, and trying to stress the fact that love—

(Continued on page 32)



The Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru, leaving a special showing of *MUNNA*, with Producer-director Mr. K. A. Abbas and Roni, the child star of the film.



"Yes Munna, this scar is a reminder of the same gang in whose clutches you are now"—A scene from *MUNNA*.

INDIA THROUGH INDIAN FILMS

BY K. A. ABBAS

Years ago, Indian films were exhibited only in India and to small communities of Indian settlers in South and East Africa and the Far East. But slowly, almost imperceptibly, the Indian film is casting its magic shadow on the world screen. Pictures like "*Do Bigha Zamin*" (Two Acres Of Land), "*Awaraz*" (The Vagabond), "*Rahi*" (The Wayfarer), "*Aandhian*" (Cruel Winds), and "*Boot Polish*", have made a mark at different film festivals—in Cannes, in Czechoslovakia and in the Soviet Union. Some of them, with the addition of *Aan* (Savage Princess) and *Jhansi Ki Rani*, have been or are being commercially exhibited in foreign countries. And so, at last, the cinegoers in many countries of the world, for the first time, are seeing the life of the Indian people through Indian eyes—i.e. as depicted and portrayed by Indian writers, artistes and technicians.

This is a significant development, for in the past, Indian themes and Indian atmosphere were either completely unknown to cinegoers outside India or, if at all they were known, it was only an exotic impression of India seen through the eyes of a Western tourist. The Indians were scandalized by some of these foreign productions and sometimes felt that they were being deliberately misrepresented as quaint,

'picturesque', backward people. Very few writers, directors or artistes have that special imagination or perception necessary for them to faithfully portray the life of a foreign people. And while an exceptional genius like Flaherty or Eisenstein might have succeeded in recapturing the beauty and colour of a foreign land, on the whole one can say that in films, as in any other art, it requires indigenous talent to do justice to a theme concerning the life of its own people. Only a British director could have given us "*Brief Encounter*" or "*Great Expectations*", only an Italian could have created "*Open City*" or "*Forbidden Christ*", only a Russian could have made "*Alexander Nevsky*", only a Japanese artist could have used colour so sensitively as it has been done in "*Gates Of Hell*", and only an Indian could have given to the world the unforgettable portrait of the long-suffering Indian peasant in "*Two Acres Of Land*". Neither sympathy with, nor academic knowledge of, a foreign people can be a substitute for that understanding which springs, as it were, from the very soil of one's birth.

And so I believe that for the growth of international understanding through cultural media, it is important that the people of one country see the films of another country—even as they should read the best books, and see the best

paintings, of other lands—and the film, after all, is the one medium of communication which can reach the maximum number of the common people. But, it might be asked, what kind of films need (or deserve) to be shown abroad to foreign audiences? Naturally, one can say that only the best product of a country has a right to be represented on the world screen. Any film, be it Indian or Chinese or Indonesian or Egyptian, will have to conform to a high artistic and technical level if it expects to gain international recognition. It also goes without saying that the more faithfully a film depicts the life and culture of its people the greater attention it will get abroad. For, even if it sounds like a paradox, only that art which is truly national deserves to achieve inter-national renown.

Applied to India, one can say that given the basic requirements of audience interest and production values of international standard, those Indian films should be seen outside India which truly reflect the life, the culture, the ideals and aspirations—in short, the whole psychosis—of the Indian people.

But—and it is a significant but—the Indians themselves are to be the judges of this "Indian-ness", not some pseudo-Orientalists or admirers of 'the mystic East' and the 'exotic Ind'.



KHWAJA AHMAD ABBAS, born June 7, 1914, great-grandson of the famous Urdu poet HALLI, is a journalist-cum-novelist turned film writer-producer-director. Besides over two dozen books (some of which have been translated into German, Russian and Czech, besides

a dozen Indian languages), he has written scripts for some of the most successful Indian films. For the Indian People's Theatre Association, he wrote, produced and directed "Children Of The Earth" (1944), the first realistic feature-documentary (on the theme of the Bengal famine) ever to be produced in India. "Children Of The Earth", the first Indian film to get a general release in the U.S.S.R., was widely hailed abroad as a master-piece of realism several years before the Italians made neo-realism fashionable and popular. For his own concern which is called *Naya Sansar* (The New World) he has so far produced three films, each of which has received critical acclaim—*Aahonee* (The Impossible) for its sensitive rendering of conflict of character with its roots in social reality; *Rahi* (The Wayfarer), the first modern Indian talkie with English dialogue, for its depiction of the picturesque scenery of the tea-plantations and the grim life of the plantation workers in the years before 1947, and *Munna* for the universal appeal of its central child character. *Munna*, indeed, is more than the story of an individual child. It becomes, as it were, a cross-section of the entire Indian society, with all its gay and grim aspects, as seen through the innocent eyes of a 'lost child'. Abbas has twice travelled round the world, and was the leader of the Indian film delegation to the U.S.S.R. last year.

(continued from overleaf)

who would like to see India only in terms of snakes and tigers and be jewelled maharajas and half-naked mystic fakirs perched on the ice-bound peaks of the Himalayas. For too long have we been imagined and portrayed as such, with the result that the average Western Cine-goer imagines an Indian only as a fabulous Maharaja or a cringing coolie.

India, eight years after her independence, is changing, and changing very fast. Peasants who, for thousands of years had been using the ancient wooden ploughs, are now driving tractors. Tens of thousands of women, discarding the traditional veil, are working shoulder to shoulder with men—as nurses, doctors, teachers, clerks, stenographers, lawyers, administrators, even as legislators and Ministers in the Government. A net-work of airlines now criss-crosses the Indian skies, and elephants are seen only in zoos and circuses or doing plebian odd jobs like carrying logs of wood for community projects. It is this changing India, with the accom-

panying crisis of faith, psychological tensions and social conflicts, which is being depicted in the more significant of the contemporary Indian films.

A famous American director, when he came to India, went to see a very popular Indian film and came away disappointed because the hero was shown wearing a bush-shirt and the heroine, in one particular scene, was wearing American style slacks. "I want to see Indian characters wearing Indian clothes in an Indian film", he complained. "These people looked like imitations of Hollywood". But as it happens, imitation of Hollywood is also one aspect of social reality in India — and hence, inevitably, gets reflected on the screen. As India gets industrialized, more and more people—even among ordinary mill-workers and farmers are taking to 'westernish', if not outright western clothes.

In a forthcoming film which my friend Raj Kapoor is directing from a script written by me, called "*Shree 420*" (which may be roughly translated as

"The Honourable Mister Fraud" there is a song sung by the hero—
Meera joota hia Japani
Yeh pailoon Inglistani
Sar pe laal topi Rossi
Phir bhi dil hai Hindustani!
 (My shoes—they are made in Japan, These trousers are pure British, On my head a red Russian cap, Yet my heart remains Indian to the last.)

This sums up not only the sartorial 'co-existence' to be observed in India, but also points up the deeper truth that, despite large-scale 'borrowings' of material things and ideas from other countries, the heart of India still remains purely Indian.

This is no less true of Indian films. They may have been influenced, on the one hand, by the box-office formulae of Hollywood musicals and, on the other, by the purposeful 'socialist realism' of Russia and the neo-realism of Italian film-makers, yet essentially they have a distinctive quality of their own—an Indian flavour, an Indian tempo, an Indian idiom of expression.

MUSIC IN INDIAN FILMS

By L. K. MALLOTRA (B.B.C. Indian Section)

If there is anything which strikes a western cinema audience as the most inevitable content in Indian films, it is music. During the last twenty-five years, since sound was introduced into Indian films, there has been hardly one film which has not had a soundtrack of music.

Incidental music is of a different category but when I refer to music in Indian films, songs are the form I have in mind. In Bombay and other film centres it has become commonplace talk to refer to the project of a successful film as one that has the most debonaire swash-buckling hero and the prettiest star who is able to sing twelve to fourteen "hit" songs! There are others who will go still further and remark that the hero and heroine do not matter so much—a few excellent songs would do the trick and make success. And so if there are no songs the film is sure to run short of its circuit and land the producer and director and all concerned into a financial crisis.

But how did it all begin and what are the implications of music in Indian films? In India our richest heritage of culture is perhaps our music. Classical music dates back to thousands of years and folk music is of even earlier origin. And it is these two forms of music which have predominated Indian films. I remember the first Indian film that I saw. It was in 1930 when Bombay Talkies under the able direction and guidance of Himansu

Rai first produced "Karma" and Devika Rani, the then first lady of the Indian screen, played the lead in it. The dialogue of that particular version were in English and the musical melodies had a touch of Western crooning in them. Even to my then untrained ears it sounded somewhat ridiculous and alien. But gradually with the lapse of time as films improved in technique, music also in Indian films assumed a different form. The well-

Pioneering days when the names of K. L. Saigal, Kanan Bala, Umma Debi, K. C. Dey and Pahari Sanyal were household words. Of these Kanan Bala and Umma Debi soon went into the background and the plain simple melodies that came from the studios in Calcutta gave place to a new form—that of light classical music. The emphasis in film music shifted from Calcutta to Bombay and the dancing girls and professional artists from the Punjab, Delhi and Lucknow sought new careers. They brought with them the *Thumri* and *Dadra* style of light songs and *Radharani* and K. L. Saigal from Calcutta and Noor-Jehan from Bombay thrilled cinema audiences for over a decade with their melodious voices.

In 1943 a new phase entered into film music when music directors from Panjab introduced a new spirit in melody and rhythm. The famous "Dholak-Geets" from the villages of the Panjab were becoming popular with radio artistes and the lift of their music so appealed to music-

Directors of films that they persuaded producers to make films based on ballad singers. This new wave of film music trends travelled to Bombay and suggested a new treasure to musicians in Calcutta as well.

India is a country full of temples and villages and both have yielded rich harvests of music. While the former produced classical forms the

(Cont. on page 32)



known New Theatres of Calcutta launched a series of new films whose music director was Rai Chand Boral and the singing stars were Kanan Bala and Umma Debi. Boral was also the pioneer of orchestration in incidental music for Indian films and is to this day considered the creator of modern film music in India. But the whole conception of Indian film music has changed since those "Golden and

Music In Indian Films (Continued)

latter provided an unending strain of folk music with its simplicity of song, melody, rhythm and colour. The latter form is the one which has proved the more successful for the discerning and untrained ear alike. Music directors like Anil Biswas, Vasant Desai, Sachin Deb Burman and Pankaj Mullick have explored this field very successfully and have been particularly fortunate in having voices like those of Lata Mangeshkar, Utpala Sen, Geeta Roy, Talat Mahmood and Hemanta Mukerji to render them. Of these singers perhaps no other singer, save Saigal has attained the popularity and appreciation which Lata Mangeshkar commands today in Indian film music.

Meanwhile with the spread of folk music in Indian films a new element—this time from Europe—entered this domain. Jazz music, with its quality of improvisation, seemed to be the medium which would not only suit Indian instruments but also provide rhythms of the samba, rumba and tango to the plain and simple melodies of Indian light music. Some of our songs are set to these rhythms and have developed a new taste among lovers of film-music.

But the discerning critics of Indian films were not satisfied. They felt that the rich heritage of Indian classical music could be the basis of the best Indian film music. Adventurers and more enlightened film directors and producers like Chetan Anand engaged outstanding classical instrumentalists like Ali Akbar Khan and Ravi Shankar to use their talent to this effect. The result was the music and songs of "Aandhiyan" and "Neecha Nagar" incidental music in "The River". These experiments were well received and have opened up fresh avenues and possibilities of furthering the rich treasure of classical Indian music.

Music of Indian films has a great future, it has passed through many and difficult stages and will perhaps pass through many more... which is a good indication. No doubt it plays such an important role in the making of a film. There has been extreme criticism of the use of Western rhythm and cheap tunes but it should not be forgotten that all these are experiments which provide new hopes, a new future and a rich culture not only for audiences in India but abroad also.

Acknowledgment

Film festivals are normally widely publicised and highly organised functions entailing a considerable amount of outlay in terms both of money and organisation.

The First Indian Film Festival, however, has been sponsored by a very humble body—The Asian Film Society—whose primary object is that of bringing the people of the East nearer to the people of the West through the medium of films. As such, the First Indian Film Festival will remain a very humble function in comparison with other international festivals. But there is, however, one feature about it of which the Asian Film Society can feel reasonably proud, viz. : this is perhaps the first time that an unsubsidised film festival is being held in aid of two very worthy charities (National Society for Cancer Relief and World University Service).

To all who feel that the First Indian Film Festival does not compare in stature with other film festivals, I seek their indulgence by invoking the humbleness of the Asian Film Society; and to all who, with their kind support, good wishes and assistance have helped the Working Committee of the Festival, I, on behalf of the President and the Committee, express my most sincere gratitude.

E. A. POCHEE

Hon. Secretary, Asian Film Society

The Producer's Responsibility to Society (Continued)

a woman's love is not everything in life.

And I had the satisfaction that I had fulfilled my responsibility when I got a letter from one of the picture-goers that after seeing ADMI, he decided not to end his life as a result of disappointment in love.

Indeed, this letter which credited me with having saved one life gave me far more satisfaction than anything else.

I have quoted this letter not just to pat myself, but indicate the nature of influence that the motion picture wields on the life of common people.

And once this is realised, the task of the film producer becomes even more difficult and important than that of an educationist, or a teacher,

For, while the teacher's job is just to teach, the job of the producer is primarily to entertain, with the additional responsibility of educating him, or rather influencing him to lead the right kind of life.

A film producer should be proud of this job. He has every legitimate reason to feel important once he realises the magnitude of his task in shaping the thoughts and the tastes of the people.

That the producer has a great role to play in the cultural and social life of the nation is no longer a matter of theoretical discussion.

It is the manner in which he plays his role and fulfills his obligations that will determine not only the progress of the film art in India but the progress of the world cinema.



The Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Nehru with Mr. Sohrab and his brother Mr. Keki Modi at the premiere of **QUEEN OF JHANSI** in New Delhi.



Mehtab as the Queen of Jhansi, refuses to accept the 'Surrender Order' served on her by Lt. Dowker, her childhood friend, now an Emissary of the East India Company.

CO-PRODUCTION IN INDIA

By KEKI MODI

Although technically the Indian film compares very favourably with pictures from other advanced film producing countries, practically no Indian film has yet been exploited on a commercial level in foreign markets, especially in the United Kingdom and in the United States.

The difficulties in the way of exploiting Indian pictures in foreign markets are many. The average Indian film, moreover, takes for themes subjects that have no appeal for foreign audiences. Unless Indian pictures are specifically produced to cater for foreign audiences, their exploitation on a commercial level would not be an easy task. No compulsory exhibition on a quota basis, in my opinion, can establish a permanent foreign market for the Indian film.

In my opinion, the Indian producer will eventually begin thinking in terms of foreign tastes and will attempt to produce pictures keeping such tastes in view. The services of foreign technicians and playwrights should go a long way to producing the kind of Indian picture that could be appreciated in foreign lands. The answer lies in co-production.

India is a vast country with a wealth of scenery, history and culture. An Indian film, therefore, if produced with an eye to foreign audiences, should cer-



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The company's activities also extend to the field of production, and one of the biggest studios in India is controlled by it.

The Modi brothers were the first to bring technicolor to India and their mammoth production "Jhansi Ki Rani" paved the way for attempts by other producers.

tainly stand a very good chance of succeeding at the world box office.

Foreign producers, when co-producing in association with their Indian counterparts, would be in a position to know the basic requirements of Western audiences, and pictures produced under these arrangements should definitely pull their weight anywhere.

A joint production venture has, therefore, several advantages which are usually not available under any other scheme.

One measure that could give co-production a definite impetus would be for India to insist that a certain part of the earnings of foreign pictures should be retained and made available for joint production ventures. Such a step would be most fair on all parties concerned, and as is well known, the practice already exists in many countries which exchange films with each other.

The first steps in co-production have already started. The future of such ventures is extremely rich and promising, and I for one, look forward to the day when enterprising producers and technicians from other lands will come to India on joint production schemes and conversely our technicians and artists will go abroad—so that together, we all do our best to enrich the world cinema.

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