

14TH BRISBANE INTERNATIONAL

27 JUL - 8 AUG 2005 WWW.BIFF.COM.AU

film
festival
presented by VISION

For immediate release
Wednesday 6 July 2005

**MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE
50 Years of Malayalam Cinema**

You would be hard pressed to mine a richer culture than that of India. In 2005 Brisbane International Film Festival's Artistic Director, Anne Démy-Geroe has put together a remarkable retrospective that focuses on *50 years of Malayalam Cinema*.

BIFF's retrospectives are an important part of the annual program, and give audiences the opportunity to discover new film cultures.

"Delving into 50 Years of Malayalam Cinema is a sure-fire way to 'immerse yourself' at BIFF," said Ms Démy-Geroe.

"We love to introduce the unfamiliar to our audiences - to invite them to discover new film culture and inspire an enthusiasm and passion for world cinema. We want our audiences to get an insight into the diversity of cinema and in the process, reward and challenge them."

Malayalam Cinema, from Kerala in southern India reflects the area's very specific regional culture. While Ms Démy-Geroe acknowledged the current popularity of Bollywood Cinema, it was after visiting the Kerala International Film Festival and discovering their passion for cinema that she was beguiled by its rich cultural charms.

"We may know the films of Gopalakrishnan and Murali Nair from previous screenings at BIFF, but few others - this is a unique opportunity to see some long-overlooked work."

Presented in association with the Kerala State Chalachitra Academy, the screenings will be presented by V.C. Harris, a published author, translator and film and literary critic who teaches at Mahatma Ghandi University in Kottayam, India.

In Kerala, film and politics are the abiding passions, and their cinema reflects this. In the 1940s and 1950s, cinematic stories reflected the important issues of the time: caste inequality, class, consciousness, nationalism and progress.

The people were both enthusiastic and optimistic - all of which can be seen in the earliest film in the BIFF Malayalam retrospective, the landmark *Neelakkuyil* (1954) an important musical about the age-old caste barrier in a conservative society.

Other films to screen as part of 50 Years of Malayalam Cinema area:

- *Akale* (2004). The most recent film to come out Kerala, *Akale* is inspired by Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. Set in the 1970s, this dream-like study of human fragility focuses on family, memory and loss.
- *Amma Ariyan* (1986). A true 'people's film', made with money given by the ordinary people of Kerala. Told in documentary form, the film is about a young man's quest for identity.
- *Chemmeen* (1965). A tragic romance, adapted from a much-beloved Indian novel.
- *Kadavu* (1991). An award winning drama from renowned author and director M.T. Vasudenvan Nair, considered one of the greats of Malayalam cinema.
- *Lesson One: A Wail* (2003). A politically contentious film directed by T.V. Chandran that sparked protests on its release in India, this moving story deals with the plight of young women in a minority community where teenagers are sold to older men as wives.
- *Olavum Theeravum* (1969). The story of a young Muslim woman whose search for love is derailed by her mother's materialistic ambitions.
- *Oridathoru Phayalvan* (1981). P. Padmarajan's stories of ordinary events in ordinary lives re-popularised Malayalam cinema.
- *Swayamvaram* (1972). Dispensing with all classic conventions of Indian film, this is a pioneering film of Malayalam New Wave Cinema.
- *Thampu* (1978). A beautiful, lyrical film chronicling the delight of a visit of a circus to a small village in Kerala.
- *Vaanaprastham* (1999). An exploration of the impact of the caste system.

BIFF is pleased to announce that V.C. Harris, and directors T.V. Chandran and M.T. Vasudenvan Nair will all be attending the festival.

Tickets for the 14th Brisbane International Film Festival go on sale on Wednesday 6 July and are available from www.biff.com.au or by phone on (07) 3007 3007 between 9am and 4pm daily from 6 July to 26 July, then from one hour before the first screening of the day until late during the festival.

Tickets are also available from the BIFF ticket box at the Hoyts Regent Cinema (Queen St Mall) or South Bank Cinemas (167 Grey St, South Bank) between 9am and 4pm daily from 6 July to 26 July, then from one hour before the first screening of the day until late during the festival.

For information on ticket prices, parking, meal deals and film classification, please refer to www.biff.com.au or the BIFF booking guide.

Film lovers are encouraged to subscribe to the Festival newsletter via the website www.biff.com.au for up-to-the-minute information on guests and programming.

The 14th Brisbane International Film Festival is organised by Pacific Film and Television Commission.

BIFF 2005

27 July - 8 August

www.biff.com.au

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