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Monsoon Wedding

Mira Nair

INDIA, 2001

119 minutes ■ Colour/35mm

Production Company: **Mirabai Films/ IFC Productions/Key Films/Pandora Films/Paradis Films**

Executive Producer: **Jonathan Sehring, Caroline Kaplan**

Producer: **Caroline Baron**

Screenplay: **Sabrina Dhawan**

Cinematographer: **Declan Quinn**

Editor: **Allyson C. Johnson**

Production Designer: **Stephanie Carroll**

Sound: **Henri Morelle**

Music: **Mychael Danna**

Principal Cast: **Naseeruddin Shah, Lillete Dubey, Shefali Shetty, Vijay Raaz, Tilotama Shome**

Print Source: **Odeon Films Inc., an Alliance Atlantis Company, 121 Bloor Street East, Suite 1500, Toronto ON M4W 3M5 Canada. T (416) 967-1141 F (416) 934-6999**

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Production: **Mirabai Films, 27 West 24th Street, Suite 403 New York NY 10010 USA. T (646) 486-4386 F (646) 486-4387 mira@mirabaifilms.com**

Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* drops the audience into the vibrant currents of a Punjabi wedding. A big family celebration can bring out a lot of secrets, however, and monsoon rains are looming on the horizon. Aditi is the daughter of Lalit and Pimmi. Disenchanted after a relationship with her boss, Vikram (who is almost twice her age), she has hastily agreed to marry Hemant, an engineer who lives in Houston, Texas. As the flurry of preparations swells and more family members arrive, Aditi's conviction wavers and she returns to see Vikram, sending the arranged marriage into jeopardy.

Meanwhile, there are several other family intrigues: Ria, a twenty-eight-year-old cousin of Aditi, arrives and reveals a long-buried secret that sends everyone for a spin; Ayesha, another cousin, is a seventeen-year-old with a precocious attitude toward sexuality; Rahul, a stunned university student, is her intended quarry. And then there is P.K. Dubey, the tent and catering contractor, a slick, upwardly mobile deal-maker who suddenly finds himself smitten when he sees Alice, Aditi's maid, for the first time.

The exceptional balance of drama and frenetic comedy in *Monsoon Wedding* is a testament to Nair's range as a filmmaker. The film revels in the pageantry of a Punjabi ceremony, then raises the ante with infusions of Bollywood-style musical numbers. The combined music-scape for the film, orchestrated by Mychael Danna, is dense and involving, with more traditional songs mixed with contemporary pop, folk and

jazz. Visually, it benefits from the use of an intimate handheld camera, which quickly draws us into the lives of its characters and holds us there.

While the film is charmingly chaotic – five distinct subplots spin out from the central wedding story – it ultimately brings about the reconciliation of a number of polar opposites: tradition and modernization, innocence and sexuality, joy and resentment. Even with its huge ensemble cast, visual splendour and frequent plot twists, *Monsoon Wedding* feels sincere throughout. The film is a scenic and appealing tribute to love and family, and to the sparkling moments when we turn from tradition and revel in the new.



Mira Nair was born in India in 1957 and attended Delhi University and then Harvard University. She directed several award-winning documentaries before making her feature debut *Salaam Bombay!* (88). She has recently completed the drama "My Own Country" (98) for

Showtime and the documentary *The Laughing Club of India* (99). Filmography: *Salaam Bombay!* (88), *Mississippi Masala* (91), *The Perez Family* (95), *Kama Sutra: A Tale of Love* (96) and *Monsoon Wedding* (01).

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