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P U B L I C R E L A T I O N S

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PALACE PICTURES PRESENTS

In Association With

ODYSSEY/CINECOM INTERNATIONAL

"MISSISSIPPI MASALA"

A MIRABI FILMS Production

In Association With MOVIEWORKS

Starring

DENZEL WASHINGTON

ROSEAN SETH

SEARMILA TAGORE

SARITA CHOUDHURY

Produced by
MICHAEL NOZIK, MIRA NAIR

Executive Producer
CHERIE RODGERS

Co-Producer
MITCH EPSTEIN

Written by
SOONI TARAPOREVALA

Directed by
MIRA NAIR

PUBLICITY: ROGERS AND COWAN INTERNATIONAL TEL: 071-839-7198

TO BE RELEASED 29th NOVEMBER 1991

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Rogers & Cowan International Ltd

Registered office: 61 Grosvenor Street, London W1X 9DA. Registered in England number 2512205

A Shandwick Company

THE CAST

Demetrius	Denzel Washington
Mina	Sarita Choudhury
Jay	Roshan Seth
Kinnu	Sharmila Tagore
Tyrone	Charles S. Dutton
Williben	Joe Seneca
Anil	Ranjit Chowdhry
Pontiac	Mohan Gokhale
Kanti Napkin	Mohan Agashe
Dexter	Tico Wells
Aunt Rose	Yvonne Hawkins
Jammubhai	Anjan Srivastava
Chanda	Dipri Suthar
Kusumben	Varsha Thaker
Harry Patel	Ashok Lath
Alicia LeShay	Natalie Oliver
Mrs. Morgan	Karen Pinkston
Skillet	Willy Cobbs
Gossip #1	Mira Nair
Gossip #2	Rajika Puri
Tadice	Sharon Williams
D.J.	Cyreio Hughes
Bubba	Stacy Swinford
Piggly Wiggly Checker	Rick Senn
White Truck Driver	Jim Haffey
Police Officer	Dillon Rozell Gross
Joe	Larry Haggard
Grandcraw	E.W. Colvin
Lady at Lusco's	Joyce Murrah
Clarence	Kevin McNeil
Grandaddy	Reverend Fred Matthews
Student	Mahlon Bowdin
Biloxi Cop	Buddy St. Amant
Businessman	James Dale
Bank Manager	Ben Burford
Phinias T. Turnbull	Sam Shemill

Barber	Alix Henry Sanders
James	Jerone Wiggins
Mildre.....	Sadie Carr
White Customer	Richard Crick
Postman	Alix W. Sanders
Chinese Customer	Shung Moo Joe
Kanti Bhai	Jaimini Thaker
Sylvester Artiste III	Hollis Pippin
Evangelist	Dewey Buffington
Rapper #1	Tony McGhee
Rapper #2	J.D. Batten
Rapper #3	Tre'demont Spearman
Rapper #4	Argentina Moore
Shop-at-Home Anchor Person #1	Nora Boland
Shop-at-Home Anchor Person #2	Patsy Garrett
Stunt Coordinator	Bob Minor
Stunt Co-Coordinator	Phil Neilson
Stunts	Suzanne Rampe
	Janet Paparazzo
Stunt Doubles	Dawn Cadena
	Napoleon Moore

UGANDA CAST

Okelo	Konga Mbandu
Young Mina	Sahira Nair
Soldier on Bus	Michael Wawuyo
Young Jay	Phavin Parbario
Young Okelo	Emanuel Mudara
Okelo's Mother	Immaculate Byakatonda
Mrs. Bedi	Amrit Panesar
Bharat	Jimmy Din
Teacher	Bonnie M. Lubega
Taxi Driver	Sammy E.D. Senkumba
Prison Captain	Mayambala Ssekasi
Idi Amin	Joseph Olinz
Soldier at Roadblock	Mutia Wilberforce

THE FILMMAKERS

Directed by	Mira Nair
Produced by	Michael Nozik
	Mira Nair
Written by	Soonni Taraporevala
Executive Producer	Cherie Rodgers
Co-Producer	Mitch Epstein
Director of Photography	Ed Lachman
Production Designer	Mitch Epstein
Editor	Roberto Silvi
Associate Producer	Lydia Dean Pilcher
Music Composed by	L. Subramaniam
Casting/Mississippi	Judy Claman
Casting/New York	Simon/Kumin Casting, C.S.A.
Casting/Uganda	Dinaz Stafford
Casting/London	Susie Figgis
Costume Designers/Mississippi	Ellen Luter
Costume Designers/Uganda	Susan Lyall
Costume Designers/Indian	Kinnari Panikar
Unit Production Manager	Lydia Dean Pilcher
First Assistant Director	Michael Zimbrich
Second Assistant Director	Noga Isackson
Unit Manager	Eve Silvester
2nd Second Assistant Directors	Dinaz Stafford Linda Wilson
Script Supervisor	Nilita Vachani
Art Director	Jefferson Sage
Set Decorator	Jeanette Scott
Production Sound Mixer	Alex Griswold
Boom Operator	Tommy Louie
1st Assistant Camera	Cris Lombardi
2nd Assistant Camera	Kate Butler
Key Grip	Tim Pershing
Gaffer	Daniel Ehrenbard
Property Master	Maureen Farley
Charge Scenic	David Crank

MISSISSIPPI MASALA

Synopsis

Kampala, Uganda, 1972. JAY, a 40-year-old Indian, KINNU, his wife, and MINA, their beautiful young daughter are forced to leave their beloved country. It's not safe for Indians in Uganda anymore. Staying behind is OKELLO, a black Ugandan, Jay's best friend since they were eight. But something's wrong with their good-bye; Jay won't even look at his friend of 30 years...

The bus depot is crowded with Indians leaving their country, taking their possessions with them. On the way to the Entebbe airport the bus is stopped by Ugandan soldiers, who separate a terrified Kinnu from her family and steal her tape recorder before allowing her back on the bus.

Jay was once the "King of Kampala," a lawyer who never lost a case. Now he and his family are bound for a land they have never seen.

18 years later in Greenwood, Mississippi, 10,000 miles from India. Mina has grown into a slim, attractive, dark-skinned Indian woman. She is driving her boss' brand new car when she slams into a car driven by DEMETRIUS, a tall, handsome, 26-year-old black man.

After a white cop asks Demetrius if his name isn't too fancy for a nigger, Mina tells Demetrius how much she likes his name. They exchange names and addresses for their insurance companies and, manage to smile at each other.

Mina drives to the Monte Cristo Motel, where she and her parents live and work for 32-year-old ANIL. It's Anil's wedding day and he is angry because Jay's concern is for his daughter's safety rather than for the \$6,000 worth of damage Mina has done to his new car. It was Anil who asked Jay and his family to come to America. He resolves never to do anyone a favor again.

Anil's friend KANTI NAPKIN is worried that Demetrius might sue Anil for a million dollars for fake injury...and Mina doesn't seem to care.

Kanti Napkin notices from Demetrius' card that he had given Mina that Demetrius' company often cleans the rugs for the Monte Cristo. He assures Anil that he will talk to Demetrius and make sure he does not sue Anil.

The years haven't been kind to Jay, who spends his days suing the government of Uganda for confiscating his property. To Kinnu, her husband is a madman suing a mad country -- after all, his home now is Greenwood, Mississippi, not Uganda. But for Jay there are principles involved.

He remembers his days as the best lawyer in Kampala, earning the wrath of his fellow Indians by defending a black man against an Indian. Jay thought of himself as Ugandan first, Indian second. For Jay, justice applies to all men equally.

Mina's mother is trying to set her up with a rich young Indian, and is thrilled when Mina tells her wedding that Harry has asked her to go out with him after the wedding. Kinnu gladly gives her consent.

Mina and Harry drive to a nightclub frequented by the Greenwood locals. Mina joins a group on the dance floor and spots Demetrius. The two begin talking when the conversation is interrupted by Demetrius' ex-wife's entrance into the nightclub. Demetrius walks over to talk to her and she brushes him off at the same time flaunting her date - a record producer. Demetrius asks Mina to dance with him in an effort to make his ex-wife jealous. But something happens on the dance floor. A magnetism between Demetrius and Mina. Harry notices and angrily approaches the two announcing to Mina that he is leaving. Mina decides to stay. Demetrius drives her home and tells her he will call her sometime.

The next day, Napkin hires Demetrius and his partner TYRONE to clean the motel's carpets. While Demetrius and Tyrone are cleaning, Napkin comes into the room and offers them tea. He starts to talk with the two men claiming that "People sue each other all the time in this country, and all us people of color must stick together." Demetrius gets the gist of what Napkin is speaking about and amused, tells Napkin he won't sue Anil for the car accident.

Mina phones Demetrius to thank him for taking her home from the nightclub. At first Demetrius thinks she too is trying to talk him out of suing Anil. When he realizes that she knows nothing about his conversation with Napkin, Demetrius asks Mina to join him at his father's birthday party the following Sunday.

The next morning a letter from Uganda arrives for Jay. It is news from the Ugandan courts that they will hear his case. Jay

does not mention the letter to Kinnu when he goes to pick her up from the liquor store that evening.

On Sunday, Demetrius picks Mina up for the party. As they drive to his father's home, Mina tells Demetrius about herself. She tells him that she's a masala, born in Uganda, grown up in England, coming here three years ago. He thinks she's incredibly beautiful.

They arrive at the party where Demetrius introduces her to his father WILLIBEN, AUNT ROSE, and his brother DEXTER. Mina has already knows Tyrone from the nightclub. While they prepare the food for the picnic in the kitchen, Aunt Rose tells Mina that Demetrius sacrificed his future and education to help Williben after Demetrius' mother died - he's a fine catch for any girl. "We're just friends." Mina tells Aunt Rose.

Demetrius takes Mina to the banks of the Mississippi after the party. He tells Mina of his love for the river, of the place where he grew up. The two kiss.

The next day Demetrius appears at the hotel while Mina is working. He asks her to go to Biloxi Beach. Not wanting to let Napkin know who Demetrius is, Mina pretends he is a customer.

Lying to he parents about where she's going, Mina joins Demetrius for a weekend in Biloxi Beach.

that night one of Anil's friends recognizes Mina and Demetrius as they ride the ferris wheel at the boardwalk, He tells Anil, who doesn't believe it. Mina and Demetrius return to their motel room, where they make love for the first time -- and Mina dreams about the past.

It's 1972 in Uganda. Idi Amin has ordered the expulsion of all

Asians to "liberate" the country. Jay thinks it's just a passing crisis, but his friend Okelo argues that all Ugandans want "foreigners to leave. It doesn't matter where Jay was born, what his passport says, that he defends black clients -- Uganda is no longer his home, and any foreigners who stay behind will be sent to camps and forced to do hard labor."

At last, understanding the seriousness of the situation, Jay tells an English journalist that Idi Amin is pure evil. Immediately, Jay is thrown in jail. Okelo raises an enormous sum to bribe the jailer to free his friend.

Out side, Okelo is angry at Jay, telling him his outspokenness could have gotten his wife and daughter killed. In his anger he says that Jay is simply afraid of leaving Kampala, where he is "King," a big frog in a little pond-- afraid to test himself in a foreign country. "Kampala is my home, " Jay tells him. "Not anymore," Okelo replies without thinking. "Africa is for Africans. Black Africans." At that moment, Jay's love for his friend dies.

When Anil finally sees Demetrius' carpet cleaning van outside a Biloxi hotel, he and his friend burst into Demetrius' and Mina's room, where Anil orders the black man, "Leave our women alone." It takes several policemen to break up the fight -- and Demetrius and Mina are both arrested.

When they're bailed out, Mina returns home, where Kinnu slaps her face for having lied about Demetrius. Mina says her mother would never have accepted the truth. She refuses to be ashamed of loving Demetrius.

Napkin puts the word out to his Indian friends, and Tyrone and

Demetrius find all their contracts cancelled by their clients. Furious, Demetrius reconsiders his earlier comments and decides to launch a lawsuit against Anil for the car accident. "When they need you for something, the Indians act black," he says bitterly. "Otherwise, they act white. 'Brother', my ass."

Mina confronts her father about his opposition to her love for Demetrius. He tells her that when all is said and done, people stick to their own kind, and he simply wants to spare his daughter pain. But Mina sees things in a different light.

Anil, angry at the lawsuit, orders Jay and his family to leave the motel. Jay decides the time has come to move the family back to Uganda. They're not wanted here anymore by Anil, and he wants to get Mina away from Demetrius. Mina runs away.

She meets up with Demetrius and asks him to come with her. There's a whole world for them to see together. Demetrius agrees laughing, in love with life and with Mina.

Mina phones Kinnu and Jay to tell them she is going with Demetrius. Kinnu tells Jay that he must go to Uganda and she must stay in Mississippi to wait for Mina's return.

Without Kinnu, without Mina, Jay returns to Uganda. There he discovers that his friend Okelo died years before. Finally realizing the futility of his fight, finally at peace with himself and the past, he lays down the sword and comes home. His heart is with Kinnu, with his daughter in America.

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MIRA NAIR
(DIRECTOR)

Mira Nair was born in a small town in Orissa, India in 1957, where she lived for 15 years. Upon graduating from an Irish Catholic Missionary school in Simla, she attended Delhi University, ostensibly to study Indian sociology but actually to immerse herself in theater. She worked for three years as an actress in an amateur theater company in the city, directed by Barry John (who later worked with Nair when he directed the children's workshop preceding the shooting of Nair's first feature, "Salaam Bombay!"). John, a disciple of Peter Brook, was one of Nair's early influences along with Joseph Chaikin of The Open Theater in New York.

Nair came to America in 1976 to pursue her undergraduate work at Harvard University. It was there that she discovered filmmaking. Nair's four documentaries and fiction feature debut, "Salaam Bombay!" were all based on India.

"If I were to find a common thread in my work," Nair explains, "I would have to admit that I have always been drawn to stories of people who live on the margins of society -- on the edge, or outside, learning the language of being in-between, always dealing with the question: what, and where, is home? These concerns are,

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of course, inextricably linked with my personal history as well, since I have spent most of the past 12 years living between two worlds."

Mira Nair's films have screened at such prestigious festivals as Cannes, New York, Tokyo, India, Montreal and Cinema du Reel in France, and have been shown on television internationally. Her first film, "Jama Masjid Street Journal" (1979) was made as a student thesis at Harvard. It is a personal, visual exploration of the streets of a traditional Muslim community in Old Delhi, told from the point of view of a woman carrying a camera instead of wearing the Burkha or veil, belonging there by birth and language, yet separated from it by education and exposure.

"So Far From India" (1982) is the story of ASHOK, an Indian subway newsstand worker in Manhattan, and HANSA, his pregnant wife who awaits his return in India. He returns to his ancestral home in India to see his newborn son, and we witness the silent estrangement between the couple, both of them indelibly affected by their experience of living worlds apart.

"India Cabaret" (1985) is a portrait of women strippers in a Bombay nightclub, an examination of the contradictions of living in a patriarchal society that uses these "polluted women" even as they are ostracized by it. In an unsentimental and questioning way, the film expresses some of the tensions, hopes and dreams of women whose lives fall outside the boundaries of acceptability

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established by their society's stringent moral codes. "India Cabaret" was a controversial success in India and abroad, winning Best Documentary prizes at the American Film Festival and New York's Global Village Film Festival.

"Children of a Desired Sex" (1987) explores the dilemma pregnant women confront in India when amniocentesis reveals that the child that they are carrying is female. They usually abort, or face oppression for bearing daughters in a society that puts a premium on being male.

"Salaam Bombay!" (1988) had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, where it won both the Camera d'Or and the Prix du Publique (awarded by the public of Cannes for the most popular film in the festival). It was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film, and at the 1988 Montreal Film Festival it won a Jury Prize, The Special Ecumenical Jury Prize and The Air Canada Prize for the most popular film of the festival.

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