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THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT INDIAN STYLE

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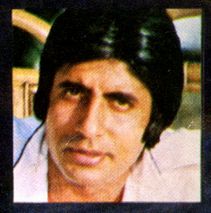
Shahab International Production Associates

Presents

Krishna Shah's

Cinema Cinema



with

Dharmendra

Hema Malini

Amitabh Bachchan

Zeenat Aman

Editor
Amit Bose

Photography
K.K. Mahajan

Music
Vijay Raghav Rao

Hindi Script
Kamleshwar

Executive Producer
Bhupendera Shah

Written and Directed by Krishna Shah

Produced by Shahab Ahmed

The Audience is a docu-drama, a movie within a movie. It's not only entertainment but it's a unique experience that will boggle the senses of movie-goers.

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The Genesis

With an audience of 70 million people a week, 550 feature films made at a cost of a 100 million dollars and a box office of half a billion dollars a year India is today the world's film capital. And in this great big sub-continent, the cinema is the great equalizer. It cuts across all caste and class barriers. The chasms and divisions that separate the rich and the poor, the literate and the illiterate, the orthodox and the unorthodox, the yawning generation gap.....all cease to exist the moment the lights go off in a cimena theatre. The identification with what is happening on the screen is total. For nowhere in the world can you get such a pure, naive and innocent audience as in India. They scream for the villain's blood, grieve over the heroine's plight, throw appreciative coins at the screen when a *'tawaif'* (nautch girl) pirouettes to the strains of a particularly seductive number and rejoice when the hero triumphs over the bad guys. Truly, Indian cinema is archetypal in every dimension; in its stereotypes, its themes, its sympathies and animosities and above all, in its audience participation. If it's an experience to watch an Indian film with all its *malmasala*, it's an even more exciting, intriguing and unpredictable experience to watch the Indian audience react and relate to the silver screen. And this is what 'Cinema Cinema' is about : it is the story of Indian cinema and its adoring masses.

CinemaCinema

Editor: Amit Bose / Photography: K.K. Mahajan / Music: Vijay Raghav Rao / Hindi Script: Kamleshwar / Executive Producer: Bhupender Shah

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The Making of "Cinema Cinema"

'Cinema Cinema' is a unique movie in a class by itself. It is a labour of love that took three years and an inexhaustible supply of dedicated research to complete. Made by two incurable cinema lovers, Shahab Ahmed and Krishna Shah, 'Cinema Cinema' is a movie that no cinema-lover will want to miss.

'Cinema Cinema' brings to the screen eighty years of known and obscure facts about Indian cinema. Out of these eighty years and millions of feet of celluloid, has emerged a docu-drama, a movie within a movie of varied dimensions and multiple levels. It's not only superb entertainment but an exploration of the sociological, political and economic factors that have influenced the evolution of Indian cinema. It delves deep into the mind of the Indian cine-goer and probes the psychological roots of his attachment to films. The results are astonishing. Often he seems to be more alive while watching a film than in real life. And this is where Krishna Shah and Shahab Ahmed break new ground. 'Cinema Cinema' is not just a nostalgic trip down memory lane. It is a lively, exciting experiment where we are both subject and object, the observed and the observer. Of course this is a film about an audience watching a film but we are also the audience watching an audience watching a film. The perspectives that this ingenious device affords us are both novel and striking.

Extensive research for the making of 'Cinema Cinema' was carried out at Eastman Kodak archives in Rochester (U. S. A.). Henri Langloi opened the doors of Cinematheque Francaise, Paris and the National Film Archieves in Poona opened its treasure chest of old films. Eminent scholars like Kamleshwar, B. D. Garga, Chidananda Dasgupta and P. K. Nair, the Curator of the Poona Film Archives gave invaluable help and comments. About 5000 films from the silent era to the present times were screened, out of which excerpts from about 200 films were selected. An audience of 500 people was gathered in an antiquated threatre and hundreds of films were screened for them over a period of two months to film their reactions. Hundreds of producers and distributors were contacted all over India and finally the project was completed after three years of intensive work in studios, editing rooms and laboratories of Bombay.

'Cinema Cinema' is a docu-drama which gives the feel and the flavour of Indian cinema in little less than 2 hours. Audiences all over the world will sit fascinated, recollecting their experiences in cinema houses, witnessing their own sentiments, moods and feelings reflected in the reactions of this movie's audience. The overwhelming fascination cinema holds for the Indian masses is dramatically and effectively portrayed by the audience participation.

Cinema Cinema

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Synopsis

Four superstars, Hema Malini, Amitabh Bachchan, Dharmendra, and Zeenat Aman play the role of narrator-intermediaries in 'Cinema Cinema'. They speak to the audience directly, talk about the beginnings, the trials, travails and triumphs of Indian cinema and show excerpts from various films to illustrate their points vividly. But the camera of 'Cinema Cinema' is doubled-faced. It is as interested in the film as in the goings-on in the auditorium, in the theatre compound and in the projection room.

It is a Sunday afternoon and when the box-office opens, tickets are sold out quickly. The parallel box-office now takes over and the black-marketeers do brisk business. In the meanwhile, the theatreis filling up with a wide cross-section of Indian society. Young lovers and old fogies, a taxi driver and a devout policeman, patient ushers and an irascible projectionist, a middle-class couple toting a babe-in-arms, a pervert and a priest. The beloved 'ship of fools' is full and our great odyssey is about to begin.

A slight snag as the projectionist and his assistant struggle with the reels. Director Krishna Shah appears on the screen. Bombay, he says, is India's Hollywood. It has everything the old Hollywood prized — melodrama, spectacle, musicals, comedies, sex, superstars, gossip columnists and most important, the audience. This, says Krishna Shah, is the story of Indian cinema seen through the eyes of its audience.

Dream-girl Hema Malini takes Krishna Shah's place. The audience is visibly excited. Hema narrates the strange and exciting story of the birth of Indian cinema. It all started with Dadasaheb Phalke, printer by profession, who saw Hollywood's 'Life of Jesus Christ', sold his press, studied film-making in England, returned to India with a second-hand camera and wrote, produced and directed 'Raja Harishchandra', India's first, very own feature film. In those days of nascent nationalism, Hema says, Dadasaheb Phalke's films, based on traditional Hindu mythological themes, were an instant success. Hollywood movies continued to flood the market, but the Keystone Cops and Charlie Chaplin faced stiff box-office competition from mythological films like 'Kaliya Mardan' and 'Bhakta Pralhad'.

The screen turns suddenly violent and bloody with a shoot-out scene from 'Deewar'. Amitabh, tall, taciturn and suave, appears. The audience livens up instantly. The young college girl sighs as Amitabh settles down to describe the evolution of Indian cinema through the thirties and forties. The college girl is more interested in the handsome idol than in either the film or her boyfriend. She smiles adoringly at her hero and her boyfriend sulks as Amitabh speaks of the memorable Indo-German venture, Himansu Rai's 'Light of Asia' based on the life of the 'Buddha' and released in 1926. He then moves on to describe the advent of sound in cinema. Al Jolson sings his famous 'Mammy' number. It is followed inexplicably, by a hit number from the film 'Upkar'. The nervous apprentice in the projection room has mixed up the order of the reels, and the projectionist has decided to broadcast 'Mere desh ki dharti' to fill in the gap. It's evidently a wise move.

The audience, bored by the silent films of yesteryear, breaks into appreciative applause.

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The reels are sorted out. It is now Dharmendra's turn. He introduces 'Alam Ara', an Arabian Nights fantasy, replete with dances and forty songs. It is India's first talkie, and a thundering success. This, continues Dharmendra, was the heyday of the 'song and dance' extravaganza, of singing sensations like K. L. Saigal and K. C. Dey. But it was also a stirring time for India. It was the time of the struggle for independence, of Gandhiji, civil disobedience and satyagraha. Indian film makers responded to the nationalist fervour and patriotic films, like V. Shantaram's 'Dr. Kotnis ki amar kahani' and 'Shaheed' stuck a receptive chord in the hearts of the Indian audience.

The tremendous emotional experience of independence was accompanied by a growing awareness of the massive problems facing the country. A tense and visibly moved audience watches a documentary on the assasination of the father of the nation—Dharmendra describes the appearence of the neo-realist film in India. How movies like 'Humlog', 'Do bigha zamin' and others tried, for the first time, to portray the problems of class hatred, poverty and unemployment. Guru Dutt's 'Pyaasa' was the culmination of the socially-conscious film. The despair and disillusionment of the memorable death scene from 'Kagaaz Ke Phool' combined with memories of Guru Dutt's own suicide, leaves the audience shaken and in tears.

The film breaks for the intermission, and we follow the audience in the foyer, tea stalls and toilets as they discuss, criticise and comment upon the film, film stars and life in general. The college girl and her boyfriend, overwhelmed by the tragedy of 'Pyaasa', make up their trivial quarrel.

Indian film audiences did not respond very kindly to the socially-aware films of the forties, which seemed too close to reality. The second half of 'Cinema Cinema' begins with Zeenat Aman describing how, in the fifties, Indian cinema turned definitely in the direction of simplistic, escapist melodramas, replete with stock plots. They are known as Masala (curry) films since they are filled with songs, dances, music and comic interludes.

Beginning with Raj Kapoor's 'Awara' in 1948, Indian films became more and more extravagant and at the same time technically extremely slick. There were a few exceptions, such as 'Kagaaz ke phool', but the trend was unmistakable and culminated in the super-hit 'Sholay', filmed in 70mm and stereophonic sound. As 'Sholay's villain appears on the screen, a delighted audience anticipates his dialogue word for word.

A montage of the entertainers of the past fifteen years follows : violence, sex, songs in exaggerated imitation of the box-office bonanzas of the West. To kiss or not to kiss—. is the problem that has exercised the Indian director for decades. The audience is now enjoying itself thoroughly. The song and dance sequences are a great success, when the film suddenly breaks down. Irate spectators manhandle each other and the projectionist; the lovers take advantage of the confusion to steal a kiss and the elderly couple escapes fearfully to safety. The film is spliced together. Strains of 'Dum maro dum' fill the air.

The film ends. The auditorium empties, except for the man who has dozed through most of the film.

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The Narrators

Dharmendra : An actor of great versatility, Dharmendra first shone as a serious actor who underplayed roles to superb effect. During a span of 18 years, Dharmendra has acted in over 100 films creating a fantastic fan following all over India. His appearance in 'Cinema Cinema' after completing the internationally awaited 'Shalimar' is a major asset for the film.

Hema Malini : The reigning queen of Indian cinema, Hema Malini is the heart throb of millions of Indians. Launched as a dream girl a decade ago in 'Sapno ka Saudagar', she remains an ideal beauty for millions of dreaming males.

A gifted artist and a superb dancer, Hema is the star of many super hits. Her amazing fan following is reflected in 'Cinema Cinema'.

Amitabh Bachchan : Super star and matinee idol, even in the volatile world of Indian movies, Amitabh is a genuine phenomenon. Within record time he has attained a pinnacle of success, popularity and adulation that has rarely been matched by any other Indian star.

Talented and versatile, he has acted in over 30 films demonstrating tremendous histrionic potential. Considering his superbly modulated voice and box-office capabilities, he was a natural choice as a narrator in 'Cinema Cinema'.

Zeenat Aman : Zeenat Aman is hot stuff by any count. The 'Dum Maro Dum' girl was a model and Miss Asia till Dev Anand cast her in 'Hare Rama Hare Krishna'. Talented and sophisticated, she is India's gift to international cinema. She has recently co-starred with Rex Harrison in 'Shalimar'. A trend-setter for young cinegoers of India, her sensuous magnetism holds the audience spellbound in 'Cinema Cinema'.

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The Crew

Shahab Ahmed (producer) : Tall and soft-spoken, Shahab Ahmed has lived in Paris for the past six years. After five successful years in publishing and radio reporting, he suddenly switched to film production. Armed with determination and enthusiasm, he approached a Hollywood-based Indian director, Krishna Shah, to write and direct 'Cinema Cinema'. 'Cinema Cinema' marks Ahmed's successful entry into the international entertainment industry.

Krishna Shah : (writer & director) : India-born Krishna Shah is the first Asian film director to have lived and won critical acclaim in U. S. A. A graduate of the U.C.L.A. film school, Shah has written and directed several T. V. shows like 'Man from U.N.C.L.E.', 'The Flying Nun' and 'Ironside'. Recognised as a major force in films, Krishna Shah has written screenplays for top American companies : 'Island in Harlem' for M.G.M. and 'April Morning' for Samuel Goldwyn Jr.

His film 'Rivals' released by Avco Embassy and starring Joan Hackett is now considered a classic in its genre. 'The River Niger' established Krishna Shah firmly in the rank of leading directors. Produced by Sydney Beckerman, the film won a gold medal for best direction at the Virgin Island Film Festival in 1977. It also became one of the top box-office grossers of that year.

Krishna Shah has recently completed 'Shalimar', an Indo-American co-production. A suspense-caper film, 'Shalimar' has a multi-star cast that includes Rex Harrison, John Saxon, Dharmendra and Zeenat Aman.

'Cinema Cinema' which took two years to complete, is Krishna Shah's daring experiment at depicting the history of cinema through the eyes of its audience.

Kamleshwar (Hindi script-writer) : Kamleshwar, who began life as a teacher is now not only a T. V. celebrity, but a short-story, film-script and dialogue writer. Among his forthcoming films are 'Burning Train' and 'Natwarlal'.

K. K. Mahajan (director of photography) : K. K. Mahajan, product of the F.T.T.I. Poona, won critical acclaim almost from the very start of his career as cameraman. He has shot scores of outstanding films for a variety of directors, including Mrinal Sen and Basu Chatterjee, and has won several national and international awards.

Vijay Raghav Rao (music director) : A renowned exponent of classical Indian music and head of the music department of the Films Division of India, Rao has worked with Ravi Shankar and has composed the music for films like 'Bhuvan Shome'.

Amit Bose (editor) : The editing of a film like 'Cinema Cinema' with footage from old films, cuts to audience scenes followed by cuts to song-and-dance numbers from recent hits, was a formidable task. It is a mark of Bose's talent that he has achieved this feat with consummate skill. He was ably supported by associate editors Ramesh Ahluwalia, Jethu Mandal and six assistant editors.

Ram Mohan (designer) : Ram Mohan, who recently did the animation for Satyajit Ray's 'Shatranj ke Khilari' and B. R. Chopra's 'Pati, Patni, aur Woh' is undoubtedly India's leading animator. As animator and production designer, he was closely associated with every phase of the making of 'Cinema Cinema'.

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Cast

Young Lovers : Kim, Mushtaque Merchant.
Projectionist : Dinyar Contractor
Asstt. Projectionist : Hoshidar Kambhatta
Married Couple : Kanchan Mattu, Sharad Bhagtani
Pervert : Amar Sneh
Angry Clerk : Bishan Khanna
Drunkard : Hriday Lani
Police Constable : Momin Khan
Taxi Driver : Bobby Grewal
Ticket Blackmarketeer : Phonsuk
Ticket Checkers : Dharam Veer, Manmauji
College Boy with Girl : Parvez, Payal
Hijra : Babu
Bhaiya : Shyam Awasthe
Mianji : Dev Sharma
Motu : Nandu
Sleeping Man : Charlie
Interval Group : Rishi Shankar, Shamsuddin, Aquil, Vijay Tandon.

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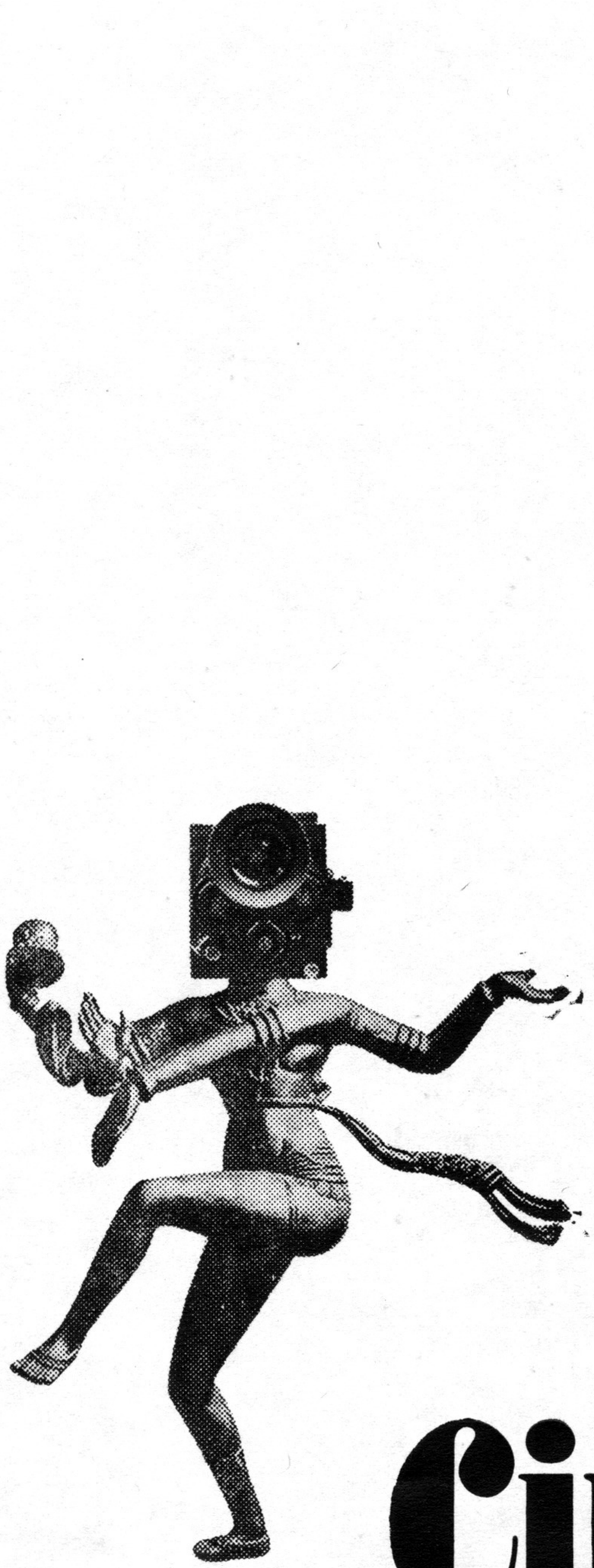
Credits

Produced by : Shahab Ahmed
Written & Directed by : Krishna Shah
Hindi Script : Kamleshwar
Director of Photography : K. K. Mahajan
Executive Producer : Bhupendra Shah
Original Music : Vijay Raghav Rao
Sound : Minoo Tampal
Re-recording Mixer : Raj Trehan
Production Designer : Ram Mohan
Chief Editor : Amit Bose
Research Consultants : B. D. Garga, P. K. Nair,
Chidananda Das Gupta.
Documentation : Mani Mistri
2nd Unit Photography : K. Ramanlal, Promod Mittal
Production Co-ordinator : Nitin Desai
Production Controller : Ashok Punjabi
Casting Director : Sudhir Wahi
Animation : Ram Mohan, S. G. Naiksatam,
M. R. Parulekar
Optical & Special Effects : Suresh Naik
(Prasad Productions)
Assistants : Dilshad Panday, Shankar
Direction : Jethu Mandal, Javed Khan,
Editing : Bhagwan Das, Salil Malik,
S. M. Islam, Munna
Photography : Ajay Prabhakar, F R. Khan,
Munish Sarkar, Nadeem Khan
Associate Editors : Ramesh Ahluwalia,
Jethu Mandal
Dress & Make up : Prabhakar
Still Photography : Tyab Badshah
Gaffer : Rohinton Behramshaw
Titles : Praful
Sub Titles : General Screen Services, London.
Typography : Shankar Khandagale
Processing : Film Center, Bombay
Technicolor, London.
Colour Consultant : Achyut Gupte.



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The time is now

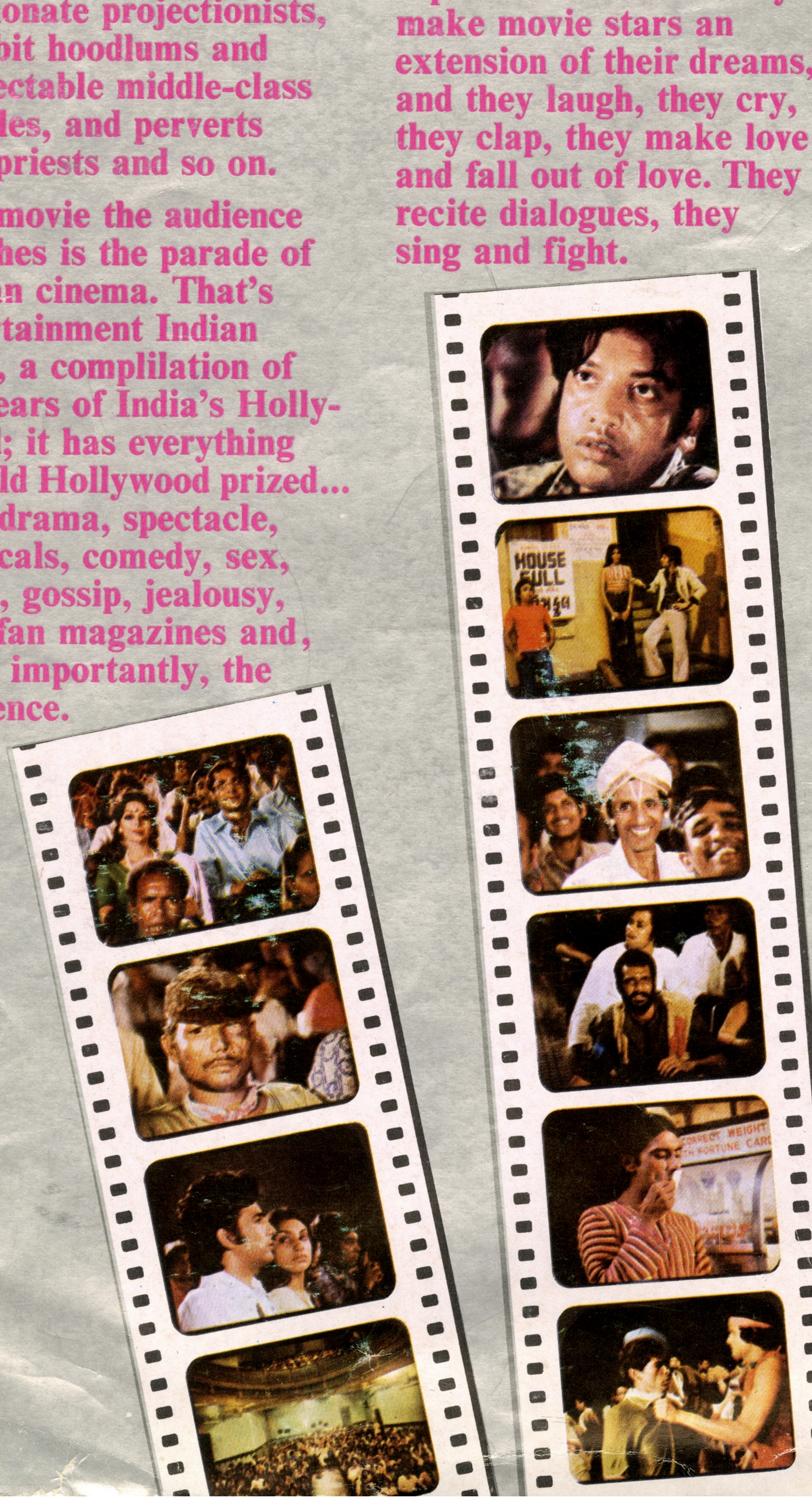
#58567
12p

The place is a dilapidated movie house in Bombay and the cast is of thousands. Yes, thousands, who would do anything to see the movie—from buying blackmarket tickets to selling a pint of blood. Among them are young lovers and old fogies, romantic taxi-drivers and religious policemen, compassionate ushers and not so compassionate projectionists, two-bit hoodlums and respectable middle-class couples, and perverts and priests and so on.

The movie the audience watches is the parade of Indian cinema. That's entertainment Indian style, a complilation of 80 years of India's Hollywood; it has everything the old Hollywood prized... melodrama, spectacle, musicals, comedy, sex, stars, gossip, jealousy, 300 fan magazines and, most importantly, the audience.

The audience of 70 million a week makes India the largest film-maker in the world, churning out over 550 features at the cost of 100 million dollars with a box office gross of half a billion dollars.

Within the darkness of the theatre, the audience finds an outlet for its heroic aspirations, its suppressed desires and repressed voilence. They make movie stars an extension of their dreams, and they laugh, they cry, they clap, they make love and fall out of love. They recite dialogues, they sing and fight.



Two young expatriates, SHAHAB AHMED and KRISHNA SHAH, although living abroad for many years, have evoked this nostalgia for Indian cinema.

SHAHAB AHMED (Producer), a young, volatile journalist and publisher, based in Paris, is known for his photo-features and radio reporting. When he decided to make this film three years ago, he approached a Hollywood based Indian director KRISHNA SHAH (Writer-Director), a graduate of UCLA film school, who has written and directed several T.V. Shows and 3 feature film.

RIVALS, starring Joan Hackett, was released by Avco Embassy, and is now considered a classic among movies dealing in psychiatry.

THE RIVER NIGER, starring Cicely Tyson and James Earl Jones, was one of the top box office grosses in the United States in 1976. SHAH has just finished a suspense caper film SHALIMAR, starring Rex Harrison, John Saxon and two Indian stars, Dharmendra and Zeenat Aman.

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