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# New Film by Hindu Director Is Harmonious Song of India

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There is extraordinary music in the films of Satyajit Ray—and I do not mean simply the music that his wonderful sound tracks convey. I mean the rhythmic combinations of pictorial tones and harmonies that stimulate the senses and cause strong reverberations in the mind.

To be sure, this rather precious commendation might be given to other directors' films, since cinema and music are peculiarly similar arts. They both work upon the senses with fluid, connective images—the images of cinema being in pictures, the images of music being in sounds. But I can think of no other director whose style is so fully characterized by a sort of musical feeling, an orchestration of emotions and moods.

This style of the young Hindu director, whose creative talents emerged in the successive films of his classic "Apu" trilogy like a garden of flowers coming to bloom, is beautifully, softly manifested in his most recent film to open here, the two-part treasure, "Two Daughters," now at Cinema II.

## Anguish of a Child

It is hard to describe this picture so it doesn't begin to sound like a concert program of dirges or folk songs expressing misery. For the first of the stories it offers is a simple, very tender lament for the anguish of disillusion suffered by a child. And the second, which has a happier ending, is a basically poignant little tale of the psychic upset of two young people making the transition to the married state.

Yes, it is close to tragic—or, at least, it is wistfully resigned to the wisdom that life is laced with heartaches—as are all of Mr. Ray's films. But there is such appreciation of the miracle of life amid so much monotony and muddle that tend to depress the spirit of man, that it develops a strangely satisfying, even proud and defiant tone of triumph. One can come away from this picture feeling that there is some moving harmony in life.

This is not, as I say, in the rhythm, in the style of Mr. Ray, which is most apparent and effective in the first vignette or episode. In this episode (both of them are from stories by Rabindranath Tagore), we see a young Calcutta civil ser-

vant come to take over the job of postmaster in a village where his closest companion is his small housekeeper, a 10-year-old orphan girl.

Placidly, gently, we go with him as he gets acquainted with the child, discovers the vagaries of the village (it has a madman and a gaggle of old men who fancy themselves music-lovers because one of their number pretends to sing); and we follow his casual pastime of teaching the child to read and write and grind with him through a bout of malaria, in which he is lovingly tended by the child.

This is all rhythmic exposition, pictorial poetry, colored and made melodic by the myriad details that Mr. Ray puts in. What we are not prepared for and what comes as a deep emotional shock is the terrific, silent sadness of the youngster when the timid postmaster prepares to go away, to depart from what is clearly her first attachment, without finishing teaching her to read and write.

Playing this sensitive youngster is a marvelous mite, Chandan Bannerjee, who has quite as much poetry in her as little Patricia Gozzi in "Sundays and Cybele." And playing the weak postmaster is Anil Chatterjee. The scene of their final parting is expressive and touching beyond words. It says almost all that can be managed about the loneliness of the human heart.

The second episode is more elaborate, more concerned with the prevalence and play of social conventions and follies in determining the courses of mankind. A young student, home in his village from Calcutta, decides to take as wife a carefree girl who is the tomboy of the village. She's just a maid who doesn't want to grow up. And the whole story is of the adjustment of the two after they have been wed according to the ancient customs. It is amusing, but it is also sad.

Here again the young husband, played by Soumitra Chatterjee (the title play in "The World of Apu"), is timid, mother-ridden, sensitive, yet strangely obtuse toward women. This seems a male trait in the films of Mr. Ray. But it does not detract from their validity as true pictures of mankind. Beautifully tuned to the pace of their people, these films from India are virtually songs.