



PRESS RELEASE

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A Throw of Dice **(Prapancha Pash) (India-Germany-UK 1929)**

A film by **Franz Osten**

With a new score by **Nitin Sawhney**,
performed by **Nitin Sawhney** and the **London Symphony Orchestra**

77 mins / B&W / Cert U

Starring: Seeta Devi (Sunita), **Himansu Rai** (King Sohat), **Charu Roy**
(King Ranjit)

Special Preview: Trafalgar Square, Thursday 30 August 2007, 9pm
General release: Friday 31 August 2007

***“A cross between Chaplin, Cecil B. DeMille and an early
Bollywood movie” – Nitin Sawhney***

The Indian silent classic ***A Throw of Dice***, digitally restored by the BFI National Archive, will be released in cinemas across the UK on Friday 31 August.

On the previous evening, Thursday 30 August, a special free preview of this spectacular melodrama will be shown on a giant screen in Trafalgar Square, forming one of the highlights of the Mayor of London's 'India Now' celebrations. It will be presented with a new orchestral score by award-winning musician, producer and composer Nitin Sawhney whose distinctive compositional style, steeped in both western and South Asian musical traditions, has resulted in an evocative, lyrical accompaniment to this sumptuous film. On this special occasion, Nitin and his band will join the London Symphony Orchestra for a live performance of his score.

The BFI gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the UK Film Council, Film London, and the Mayor of London for this project.

Inspired by an episode from the ancient Hindu legend *Mahabharata*, **A Throw of Dice** is both a passionate love story and a warning tale about the addictive power of gambling. Two neighbouring kings share a passion for the same woman – Sunita, the daughter of a hermit – and for reckless gambling. Following dramatic events during a royal tiger hunt, King Ranjit is nursed back to health by the beautiful Sunita. However, his wicked rival King Sohat persuades him to risk his kingdom and his love in a fateful game of dice.

Described by Sawhney as ‘a cross between Chaplin, Cecil B. DeMille and an early Bollywood movie’, this silent epic was the result of a unique partnership between German director Franz Osten and Indian actor-producer Himansu Rai. Shot on location in Rajasthan, it features over ten thousand extras and an impressive array of horses, elephants and tigers. Its star actors all had major careers in Indian cinema and remain legendary and much-loved figures.

Nitin Sawhney’s shimmering score brilliantly transforms this silent classic into a fresh and engaging artistic experience almost eighty years after its first release.

Following its launch in Trafalgar Square, the BFI’s digital restoration of **A Throw of Dice** (with recorded score by Nitin Sawhney and the LSO) will screen at over 20 cinemas around the country which form part of the UK Film Council’s Digital Screen Network (see www.bfi.org.uk for updated list of participating venues).

A BFI release in association with Fandango srl and Silent Music.



MAYOR OF LONDON



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Notes to Editors:

1. The grandson of the actor Himansu Rai and the great-niece of Charu Roy will be attending the screening in Trafalgar Square. Selected interviews may be available by prior arrangement.

2. Following the Trafalgar Square preview (30 August), **A Throw of Dice** will be screened at the following cinemas (further dates and venues tbc):

30/08/2007 Dukes Lancaster
31/08/2007 Showroom Sheffield
31/08/2007 Derby Quad
01/09/2007 Phoenix East Finchley
01/09/2007 Duke of York's Brighton
02/09/2007 Phoenix Oxford
02/09/2007 Broadway Nottingham
02/09/2007 MacRoberts Art Centre Stirling
02/09/2007 Glasgow Film Theatre
08/09/2007 The Barn Dartington
09/09/2007 Harbour Lights Southampton
09/09/2007 Everyman Hampstead
09/09/2007 Greenwich Picturehouse
11/09/2007 Exeter Picturehouse
15/09/2007 Filmhouse Edinburgh
15/09/2007 Chapter Cardiff
17/09/2007 Tyneside Newcastle
23/09/2007 Ritzy Brixton
23/09/2007 National Media Museum Bradford

3. The BFI is further supporting 'India Now' with a season of contemporary films called **Indian Cinema Now** at BFI Southbank 1 August – 29 August.
www.bfi.org.uk/indiancinemanow
4. **Before Midnight – A Portrait of India 1899 – 1947** is a permanent collection of rare films which will be available for free viewing at the Mediatheque on BFI Southbank from 1 August onwards. www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque
5. 'India Now' is a three-month season backed by the Mayor London celebrating London's strengthening relationship with India and exploring India's culture and its contribution to London life. Over 150 of London's cultural organisations and attractions will be involved in the programme, which features more than 1,500 events, activities and festivals across the capital dedicated to Indian art, film, food, theatre, music, fashion, and business. Cultural institutions and organisations participating in India Now include BFI Southbank, Victoria and Albert Museum, the South Bank and Barbican centres, Watermans, Thames Festival, the Institute of Contemporary Arts and Akademi. Both invited Indian artists and London-based artists will be involved in the season, which will be in

launched in style on Tuesday 17 July. Event information can be found at: www.visitlondon.com/india

6. The BFI cares for the largest and most significant archive of moving image in the world. The collection contains more than 140,000 documentary titles, 60,000 fiction films and 675,000 television programmes, revealing an extraordinary picture of the world as seen by film-makers since 1895.
7. A selection of images for press use can be found at www.image.net under BFI releases.
8. For more information on the BFI visit www.bfi.org.uk
There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archive, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.