
Hidden
Gems
Film Society
INDIAN AUTEUR SERIES
guru dutt
RETROSPECTIVE
September 26 at 7 p.m.
September 27 & 28 at 2:30 p.m.
Alberta College of Art + Design (ACAD)
1407 14th Avenue NW
hiddengemsfilmfestival.com



INDIAN AUTEUR SERIES: GURU DUTT (1925-1964)

Guru Dutt, in his short career from 1951 to 1964, produced or directed almost every genre of film including crime thrillers (*Baazi, Jaal, C.I D.*), a costume drama (*Baaz*), satirical comedies (*Aar Paar, Mr & Mrs 55)*, social melodrama (*Pyaasa, Kaagaz Ke Phool)*, a lyrical romance (*Chaudvi Ka Chand*) and a period film (*Saheb Bibi Aur Ghulam*).

Guru Dutt was born in Bangalore in 1925 but spent his childhood in culturally rich Calcutta. He later joined Uday Shankar's dance academy (1942-44) and then learned every aspect of filmmaking when he joined the famous *Prabhat Studios* in Pune. He formed a friendship with Dev Anand (a matinee idol). Dev offered to produce a film *Baazi* in 1951, to launch Guru Dutt as a director.

Guru Dutt embraced the Hollywood modernist mode in both comic and tragic films. With the exception of two of his films, all Guru Dutt's film characters are urban and display all the characteristics of westernized Indians in how they think, dress, and behave. His characters often demonstrate conflict between their local heritage and the intrusion of westernized identities.

Moreover, Guru Dutt explored and drew his audience's attention to tangible social and human issues. Through his stylistic direction, melodrama also became a genre through which working class and middle class Indians could reflect upon and critique their evolving nation. In two of the tragic films, *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, the protagonists view their respective careers as poet and filmmaker as giving meaning to their lives and the ability to critique their evolving nation. In *Saheb Bibi Aur Ghulam,* he detaches himself from the starry-eyed and unrealistic melodramas his peers were producing, and subtly questions social norms.

Hidden Gems Film Society is truly privileged to present, on the 50th anniversary of Guru Dutt's passing, this melodramatic trilogy of films as the first in our series honouring great Indian auteurs. **Thank you for joining us at the 2014 Hidden Gems Film Festival!**

PYAASA
THIRSTY

Director: Guru Dutt
Friday, September 26 at 7 p.m.
Hindi, B&W, 146 min, 1957



Pyaasa is Guru Dutt's poetry on celluloid, grafting influences from Hollywood melodramas and Italian neo-realism onto the Indian tradition of musical narrative. From the opening scene, the camera lures viewers in through winding alley-ways into the lives of Gulabo and Vijay. As writer/producer/director/star, Dutt paints a glamorous portrait of an artist's isolation through dappled imagery. Wahida Rehman, in her screen debut, is sultry and radiant.

Guru Dutt is remembered as the brooding, intense romantic who attempted to reflect on India's changing social situation. In *Pyaasa*, his genius for "picturization" seamlessly coordinates music (by legendary S.D.Burman), and lyrics (by Urdu poet Sahir Ludhianvi), with rhythmic editing and fluid camera movement. *Pyaasa* simultaneously works on two levels — as an absorbing story but also as caustic commentary on the materialistic mindset of people in quest of success. While cinefiles will respond to Dutt's philosophy and technical bravura, the layperson will be enamoured by his art of story-telling.

Accolades: In 2004, the soundtrack of *Pyaasa* was chosen as one of "The Best Music in Film" soundtracks by *Sight and Sound,* the British Film Institute magazine. In 2005, *Time* magazine rated it as "one of 100 best films of all time." On Valentine's Day 2011, *Time* declared it as one of the top 10 romantic movies of all time. To date, Pyaasa has acquired cult status in France, Germany, and Italy, as well as in India. V.K. Murthy, Dutt's regular cameraman for his movies, is the only cinematographer to receive the prestigious Dada Saheb Falke Award.



FILM WORKSHOP

DR. DANIEL DOZ
President of ACAD

Saturday, September 27
at 2:30 p.m.

B&W film: its language (mostly about the interplay of dark and bright, black & white, etc.)
Film noir: which in some ways uses and magnifies the language of B&W cinema.

Dr. Doz introduces his workshop as follows:

As the French art historian Elie Faure wrote "A film is not only a story taking place in a setting but, before all, Architecture in movement", I believe that in order to fully grasp the totality of a film, it is essential to comprehend its spatiality, and understanding the spatiality of a film in relation to the narrative (the story) will encompass its true essence.

What fascinates me beyond the narrative of a film and how the actors live the storyline, is how the various components that compose the cinematographic image, when properly orchestrated and layered, elevate the film to a higher level. This can be as simple as the interplay between the dark and the bright areas of the screen, or the point of view from where the camera witnesses (or participates in) the narrative, or even the background music adding another dimensionality to the framed image. All these components, these moments in time are what make the experience of a film successful.



KAGAZ KE PHOOL

PAPER FLOWERS

Director: Guru Dutt
Saturday, September 27
at 7 p.m.
Hindi, B&W, 148 min, 1958

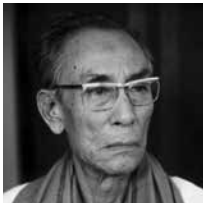
Poetically written, touchingly acted, and shot with gorgeous and evocative black and white cinematography, *Kagaz Ke Phool* is Guru Dutt's melancholic masterpiece! Shanti and Suresh, who seem destined for one another, nevertheless attempt to navigate their lives apart — a complex relationship between mentor and muse. *Kagaz Ke Phool* represents Guru Dutt's oft-expressed cynical view that worldly fame can be like paper flowers — no scent nor any substance.

Somewhat autobiographical, while Raj Kapoor opted to be a "joker" on screen for his magnum opus, Guru Dutt chose his set to be a film studio-a filmmaker willing to exorcise his demons on so public a platform.

Running through the film like a leitmotif is the song *Bichhde Sabhi Baari Baari* (Lost Everyone, Over and Over), capturing the film's sense of loss. *Waqt Ne Kiya* (Tortures of Time), the film's iconic song, is shot in a fascinating interplay of light and shade and subconscious! Maestro S.D. Burman has a new lyricist in Kaifi Azmi.

V.K. Murthy reaches his stylistic peak with this remarkable use of Cinemascope (first time in Indian Cinema) to emphasize the expansive space of the studio. Unlike *Pyaasa, Kagaz Ke Phool* is all about stylization and framing of expressionist images. But this film is so much more than the sum of its parts.

MUSIC OF guru dutt

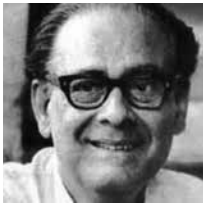


SACHIN DEV BURMAN (1906-75)

Guru Dutt was able to extract the best performances not just from actors but from everyone around him. For him, songs were musical narratives, and with his dance background and musical aptitude he was able to crystallize each song. *Pyaasa* is believed to depict lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi 's failed affair with poet/writer Amrita Pritam. The songs were straight from Sahir Ludhianvi's heart and went into the annals of Indian classic cinema.

Music director S.D. Burman is credited with reducing the emphasis on orchestration in Indian film music, which accentuates the singer's voice. Geeta Dutt was mainly known for melancholy songs and S.D. Burman's music revealed a new facet of Geeta Dutt.

Thus, Pyaasa was chosen as one of "The Best Music in Film" soundtracks by Sight & Sound, the British Film Institute magazine. *Kagaz Ke Phool* launched lyricist Kaifi Azmi's career.



HEMANT MUKHOPADHYAY (1920-89)

When S.D. Burman had a heart attack, he recommended singer, composer and music director Hemant Kumar to Guru Dutt. Initially, Hemant Kumar sang in the tradition of singer Punkaj Mullick. He changed his style when he collaborated briefly but fruitfully with music director Salil Chowdhury (1949-52). He is credited with introducing electronics in Hindi film music in *Nagin*, for which he received the Best Music Director Filmfare award (1956). He scored the hauntingly beautiful numbers of *Sahib, Biwi Aur Ghulam*. His lyricist was Shakeel Badayuni.



SAHEB BIBI AUR GHULAM

KING, QUEEN AND KNAVE

Director: Abrar Alvi
Sunday, September 28
at 2:30 p.m.
Hindi, B&W, 147 min, 1962

A magnificent and sombre film with taut ambiance, rich dialogues, haunting cinematography, exquisite song crystalizations and brilliant performances. The central figure in this is Chhoti Bahu — a woman and Guru Dutt's character, Bhootnath ("Lord of Phantoms," an epitaph especially appropriate here), is less of a conquering "hero" than a mute, helpless witness to her tragedy.

Bhoothnath and we first see her dainty, ultra adorned feet, her resplendent silk sari, a close-up of her luscious lips and finally her evocative eyes... Meena Kumari, semi-lit, surrounded by Caravaggioesque shadows, adds to her character's mystique and layers the meaning to her actions. The shadows also accentuate the atmosphere of neglect, and evoke a sense of foreboding and claustrophobia. She is mesmerizing, ravishing and is the heart and soul of the film. Her estranged marital relationship, the craving to be understood and loved — were elements evident in Meena Kumari's personal life. She shows a dazzling display of revealed and concealed femininity.

Its haunting soundtrack and unforgettable songs are rendered by the irreplaceable Geeta Dutt. Her voice with all its sensuality and pain complements Meena Kumari's performance perfectly. Guru Dutt has a new music director, Hemant Kumar.

Saheb, Bibi aur Ghulam was a major critical and commercial success and was Guru Dutt's last film.

Awards: 1962: President's Silver Medal for Best Film in Hindi
1962: Indian submission for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film
1963: Berlin Film Festival: Golden Bear (Best Motion Picture): nominated
1963: Filmfare Awards (Indian Oscars) 9 nominations, won 4 for Best Movie, Best Director, Best Cinematographer and Best Actress: Meena Kumari

Dear Cinephiles

When Hidden Gems decided on the Indian Auteur Series, Guru Dutt's name was right in the forefront. Then, when we realized that this was the 50th Anniversary of his passing, it clinched it. We were eager to introduce him to our compatriots and to the younger generation.

Since Guru Dutt was ahead of his times, his themes are still relevant today. Yet organizing this series was fraught with its own unique hurdles. As much energy has gone in it as the annual festival! Still, it's a labour of love. We hope you will appreciate Guru Dutt's struggles and artistry as well as how his films shed light on the depth and pathos of Indian iconic songs.

Dr. Doz's workshop will equip you for the appreciation of not just these, but all Black and White films.

Niru Bhatia, Kathleen McWilliams and Mainak Ghosh
Hidden Gems team

Our heartfelt thanks to our volunteers, our true Hidden Gems, without whom we could not pull this off (in alphabetical order):

Neelum Baid
Harshida Joshi
Magda Koper
Kiran Mahajan
Renu Mahajan
Deep Mattu
S. Lal Mattu
Kathleen McWilliams
Geetha Nicodemus
Varsha Patel
Amitava Sarkar
Kiran Sharma
Sheela Shenoy
Ela Thakore

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