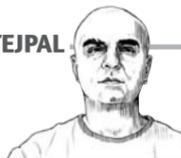


MINTTY TEJPAL



thetake



FILM » **AAP KA SURROOR**
 DIRECTOR » **PRASHANT CHADHA**
 STARRING » **HIMESH RESHAMMIYA, HANSIKA MOTWANI, RAJ BABBAR, MALLIKA SHERAWAT**

UNCOMFORTABLY GLUM

AFTER SPENDING a month away from home, I returned well in time to review *Aap ka Surroor* — *The Moviee*. The Real Luv Story. Damn, just my luck. So I put on my cap and went to see superstar singer Himesh Reshammiya's much-hyped debut as an actor.

Whew, what an experience. Himesh can't emote, act or dance to save his life, though everyone "nose" he is a great singer. So, smartly, first-time director Prashant Chadha gets Himesh to play a superstar singer called HR, or Himesh Reshammiya. The film starts in Germany where the police discover a murdered journalist, Nadia Merchant, who turns out to be Raj Babbar's daughter. A bit later we learn that HR too is in Germany for a series of concerts, organised by Khurana, a rich bald man, and his sexy lawyer, Ruby (Mallika Sherawat). Aha, something's brewing here.

Then HR does his first concert, which showcases his inability to dance on stage. A scene later he meets Riiya, his event manager, and promptly falls in love with her. As Riiya (Hansika Motwani) crosses his path, the film goes into excruciating slow motion, while the Gayatri mantra plays in the background. Yeah, right.

Then we also learn that HR is very shy and glum, unable to express his love for Riiya. Meanwhile, Mallika has her eyes set on HR, who of course rebuffs her come-hither gestures.

Suddenly HR gets arrested for the murder of Nadia, and is thrown into jail, and the film shifts into flashback mode. Before she was killed, Nadia had gone to interview HR, and had done a sting operation on HR, showing him trying to molest her. The sting operation, much like the movie, is garishly shot and badly edited. HR denies being the man in question, though unfortunately that's the same night that teetotaller HR had gotten drunk, so he doesn't quite remember what happened. Hmm. Then the usual Hindi film events happen. Riiya's father (Sachin Khedekar) doesn't want his daughter involved with a singer, who will just use her and leave. His daughter cries, HR mouths loving dialogues, the father looks stern and unrelenting.

Aap ka Surroor has its lot of in-house jokes. HR tells his friend, Shravan, who plays his sidekick joker, "Meri naak mat katwana", to which his friend replies "Arre, naak kat gayee to tu gayega kaise?" Ha ha ha. Fresh find Hansika Motwani just smiles and sobs through her role, using her dimples to good advantage. Mallika looks horsey and displays ample cleavage, though she doesn't manage to rival the cleavage displayed by HR.

The film is entirely shot abroad and packed with songs sung by guess who. As cinema, it's shoddy, with neither drama nor freshness. But as a launch vehicle for Himesh, it's perfect, with his legions of fans who will make it a superhit. As for the rest of you, watch it only at your own peril.

What an experience. Himesh can't emote, act or dance to save his life but, as everyone 'nose', he is a great singer

mastertakes

CULTURE CRITIQUE BY THOSE WHO KNOW

'The Bodhi Art show will be interesting for what the newer lot have to offer'

NAYANAA KANODIA

nayanaa kanodia on art

I'm really looking forward to two exhibitions this weekend. One is the **Osian's** auction preview, which is on July 7 at the Hilton Towers in Mumbai. The auction will be held later in Delhi. It'll be their usual mix of senior artists and the more upcoming ones. I believe they've started experimenting with installations. It's a show one must really see since Osian's events are always very good. The other is the one at **Bodhi Art**, Mumbai, opening on July 6. It's the Bodhi Art Award 2007 Show, where a jury comprising of Baiju Parthan, Ranjit Hoskote and Nancy Adajania will give away the Bodhi art award to ten students from different art colleges. I think it'll be really interesting to see what the newer lot have to offer.

Kanodia is an artist and lives in Delhi



QUIVER: a prize-winning entry by Anu BS at the Bodhi show

tional poems like the ones in this collection are the kind I like best.

Zaidi is a journalist and poet who lives in Delhi

chirodeep chaudhuri on photos

The only photo exhibition that has stood out for me in recent times is **Lucknow: Splendour and Decline**, featuring old photographs of Oudh by masters such as Samuel Bourne (I've always been a big fan of his) and Felice Beato, held at the Piramal Gallery in Mumbai. It was wonderful to see prints of old photographs — so much better than admiring them in a book or a periodical. It also interested me immensely because I old Lucknow simply blows me away. In fact, whether it's Delhi or any small town, old cities have a special fascination for me. The other reason I liked the exhibition is that I'm also a fan of Satyajit Ray and of *Shatranj Ke Khiladi*, which was shot in Lucknow. From a photographic point of view, Lucknow as a city has great visual presence, which newer cities seem to lack. When you see such old photographs, there is a sense of tranquillity, of a time when things were less chaotic. These images tell us of an age when life was just a little more organised. In India, one doesn't get to see work of this nature and I would call this a very important show. Definitely not to be missed..

Chaudhuri is a Mumbai-based photographer

story about mountaineering and centres around four friends — Rocky, Jojo, Priya and Zamiel. It's virtually everything that a theatre piece ought to be — a well-written script, good production and performances. What particularly stood out for me was the interesting way they used space and light. For exam-



ple, one of the actors dangled from a harness in the middle of the show to depict flight. I'm glad to see such work, though it's sad that more people aren't as supportive of young playwrights as they should be.

Tibrewala is a playwright and lives in Mumbai

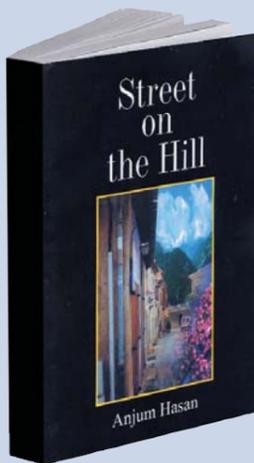
arjun sajnani on food

I can't even mention some of the disastrous expeditions I have had recently in Bangalore, so I will not talk about any of the restaurants here. I will recommend the **Royal China** in Mumbai instead. I have not spent enough time in Mumbai to have tried any of the fancier or better known restaurants. I went to the Royal China quite by accident because it was close to where I was working and it turned out to be a good bet. It is not a very big place but the menu is quite large. The ambience is very nice too. The service is fine. I remember thinking that their dim sum was excellent. So were the noodles with black bean sauce and chicken. The standard of cooking is generally is very high at the Royal China. It's a good lunch place

Sajnani is a Bangalore-based restaurateur and theatre director

annie zaidi on books

I heard **Anjum Hasan** perform a lot of poems from her collection *Street on the Hill*. That added to the pleasure of reading her poems. I like the way her poems and metaphors are rooted in India. I remember one poem about eating greasy Chinese food in Shillong. It was a distinctly Indian image and reminded me of how big an event it was to eat out when we were growing up. There was another poem about shyness which really struck a chord. Being shy was not always seen as a bad thing. I remember my report card in school had a column with two options: shy or modest — there was no option for immodesty, of course. It's a completely bizarre memory and her poem brought it back. Anjum's poems are complex but can be read without having to resort to footnotes. And conversa-



shivani tibrewala on theatre

I saw a play called *Crab* a while ago and thoroughly enjoyed it. It's been directed by **Arghya Lahiri** and written by **Ram Ganesh Kamatham**. It's a