



SHRIKANT MOHTA & MAHENDRA SONI PRESENT
A SHREE VENKATESH FILMS PRODUCTION
A FILM BY RITUPARNO GHOSH
BASED ON RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S NOVEL 'CHOKHER BALI'

A P A S S I O N P L A Y

CHOKHER
BĀLI



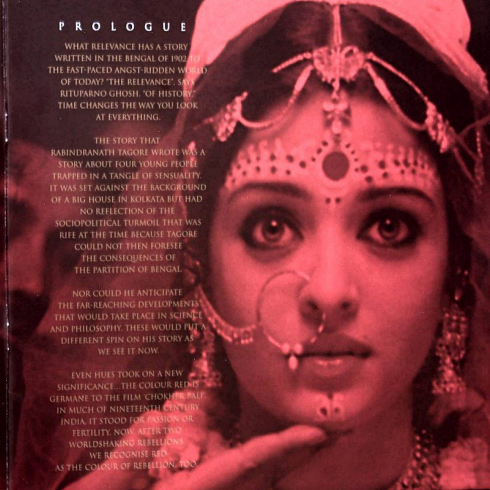
PROLOGUE

WHAT RELEVANCE HAS A STORY WRITTEN IN THE BENGAL OF 1902 FOR THE FAST-PACED ANGST-RIDDEN WORLD OF TODAY? 'THE RELEVANCE', SAYS RITUPARNO GHOSH, 'OF HISTORY.' TIME CHANGES THE WAY YOU LOOK AT EVERYTHING.

THE STORY THAT RABINDRANATH TAGORE WROTE WAS A STORY ABOUT FOUR YOUNG PEOPLE TRAPPED IN A TANGLE OF SENSUALITY. IT WAS SET AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF A BIG HOUSE IN KOLKATA BUT HAD NO REFLECTION OF THE SOCIOPOLITICAL TURMOIL THAT WAS RIFE AT THE TIME BECAUSE TAGORE COULD NOT THEN FORESEE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE PARTITION OF BENGAL.

NOR COULD HE ANTICIPATE THE FAR-REACHING DEVELOPMENTS THAT WOULD TAKE PLACE IN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY. THESE WOULD PUT A DIFFERENT SPIN ON HIS STORY AS WE SEE IT NOW.

EVEN HUES TOOK ON A NEW SIGNIFICANCE... THE COLOUR RED IS GERMANE TO THE FILM 'CHOKHUR BALI'. IN MUCH OF NINETEENTH CENTURY INDIA, IT STOOD FOR PASSION OR FERTILITY. NOW, AFTER TWO WORLD-SHAKING REBELLIONS, WE RECOGNISE RED AS THE COLOUR OF REBELLION, TOO.



BINODINI'S PARTIALITY TO RED MIGHT SIGNIFY A DEDICATION TO DESIRE. ON CLOSER EXAMINATION, HER PASSION IS, IN REALITY, THE PASSION OF RAGE.

IN RITUPARNO'S FILM, A HOUSEHOLD IN DISARRAY IS SET AGAINST A STATE IN TURMOIL. THE BREAKING UP OF A HOME IS LINKED WITH THE DESTRUCTION OF A NATION'S PRIDE, A WIDOW'S STRIVING FOR FREEDOM IS EQUATED WITH A COUNTRY'S STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE.

THE ISSUE OF WIDOWS AND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY IS ANOTHER OF RITUPARNO'S CONTEXTS...THE STRUGGLE OF MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD TO COME INTO THE MAINSTREAM, WIDOWS WERE MARGINALISED IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY AND BINODINI'S STRUGGLE FOR RECOGNITION IS STILL IMMEDIATE FOR THE MODERN VIEWER.

"WOMEN ARE IMPORTANT TO ME," RITUPARNO SAYS. "BECAUSE OF THEIR COMBINATION OF VULNERABILITY AND STRENGTH." BINODINI, THE WOMAN AROUND WHOM 'CHOKHER BALI' CENTRES, IS THE IDEAL WOMAN IN THIS CONTEXT, VULNERABLE BECAUSE OF HER REDUCED STATUS,

YET, BECAUSE OF HER PERSONA, BEAUTY AND EDUCATION, POWERFUL.

INSIGHT INTO WOMEN'S MINDS IS NOT EXCLUSIVE TO RITUPARNO. SATYAJIT RAY, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS SHOWN HIS UNDERSTANDING OF WOMEN BY CHOOSING TO MAKE FILMS LIKE 'CHARULATA' (THE LONELY WIFE), 'TEEN KANYA' (TWO DAUGHTERS) AND 'GHAREY BAIREY' (HOME AND THE WORLD)...ALL THREE BASED ON TAGORE STORIES, AND RAY'S TREATMENT OF THEIR SENSIBILITIES IS STILL OUTSTANDING AMONG FILMMAKERS

TRADITIONALLY IN ART AND LITERATURE THERE HAS BEEN A TENDENCY TO TREAT WOMEN AS PROPS, OR AS WEDGES BETWEEN MEN, RATHER THAN AS DISTINCT, INDEPENDENT ENTITIES.

A FEW ARTISTS HAVE, HOWEVER, ATTEMPTED TO PUT A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE ON THIS AND RITUPARNO IS FORTUNATE TO COUNT HIMSELF AS ONE OF THEM. HIS 'CHOKHER BALI' IS ABOUT THE BOND BETWEEN TWO WOMEN.

A BOND THAT GOES BEYOND THE PRESENCE OF MEN OR THE EXISTENCE OF SOCIETY. RITUPARNO HAS MADE FILMS ON THIS SUBJECT IN THE PAST AND PLANS TO DO SO AGAIN.

LABELS ARE ODJIOUS. BUT IF YOU HAD TO LABEL RITUPARNO, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO CALL HIM A 'WOMANIST' RATHER THAN A 'FEMINIST'. "WOMANISM IMPLIES A KIND OF GRACE UNDER PRESSURE... IT IS GENTLER, STRONGER, MORE ALL-ENCOMPASSING..." RITUPARNO BELIEVES.

OUTLINE

'CHOKHER BALI', A PASSION PLAY, IS SET BETWEEN 1902 AND 1905. THE BRITISH VICEROY LORD CURZON IS PLANNING TO HACK BENGAL IN TWO FOR THE PURPOSES OF POLICY, SENDING WAVES OF PROTEST THROUGH INDIA ALONG WITH A DEMAND FOR INDEPENDENCE. AGAINST THIS IS SET THE STORY OF A WOMAN STRUGGLING TO FREE HERSELF FROM A DIFFERENT KIND OF OPPRESSION... THE OPPRESSION OF WIDOWHOOD.

BINODINI IS BEAUTIFUL, EDUCATED, A GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY, TWO YOUNG MEN FROM KOLKATA, INSEPARABLE CHILDHOOD FRIENDS, NOW BOTH STUDYING MEDICINE, ARE OFFERED HER HAND IN MARRIAGE. MAHENDRA AND BEHARI REFUSE HER. BINODINI MARRIES ANOTHER MAN ONLY TO BE WIDOWED WITHIN A YEAR.

A LITTLE LATER, ONE OF THE FRIENDS, BEHARI, IS ENGAGED TO ASHALATA. MAHENDRA MEETS ASHA, IS ATTRACTED TO HER, AND MARRIES HER IN PLACE OF BEHARI.

TIME PASSES. BINODINI COMES TO KOLKATA, TO MAHENDRA'S HOME. AS THE COMPANION OF MAHENDRA'S MOTHER RAJLAKSHMI, THERE SHE MEETS MAHENDRA, MAHENDRA'S NEW WIFE ASHA, AND MAHENDRA'S FRIEND BEHARI WHO IS IN AND OUT OF THE HOUSE.

AMONG THESE FOUR YOUNG PEOPLE THERE DEVELOPS A FORBIDDEN ATTRACTION...A MESMERISING WEB OF DESTINY AND DESIRE.

BINODINI SEES THE HUSBAND, THE HOME AND THE DOMESTIC BLISS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN HERS IN THE POSSESSION OF THE NAIVE, UNEDUCATED ASHALATA. INSIDIIOUSLY THE DEPRIVATION AND YEARNINGS OF WIDOWHOOD REAR THEIR UGLY HEAD, THROUGH THE INNOCENT MEDIUM OF ASHA, BINODINI SEDUCES MAHENDRA.

YET, ASHA AND BINODINI HAVE BY THEN BECOME INSEPARABLE...SO CLOSE THAT THEY HAVE AN AFFECTIONATE PET NAME FOR EACH OTHER, THEY CALL EACH OTHER 'CHOKHER BALI', LITERALLY 'SAND IN THE EYE'.

KEY CHARACTERS

BINODINI

THE BRIDE WHO BECOMES A WIDOW. A BEAUTIFUL, INTELLIGENT WOMAN SPURNED BY TWO YOUNG MEN OF LEISURE WHO DISCOVERS A CHANCE TO COME INTO HER OWN. IMPULSIVE, INTELLIGENT AND PASSIONATE, BINODINI IS THE BEATING HEART OF 'CHOKHER BALI', THE MOST DANGEROUS OF THE CHARACTERS BECAUSE SHE IS THE ONE WHO HAS NOTHING TO LOSE. A WIDOW WHO REFUSES TO ACCEPT THE DEPRIVATION OF HER WIDOWHOOD. WHO REFUSES TO BELIEVE THAT THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND COULD TRANSFORM HER INTO A SEXLESS BEING.

ASHALATA

NAIVE, PASSIONATE, BLINDLY IN LOVE WITH HER NEW HUSBAND BECAUSE SHE KNOWS NO OTHER WAY TO BE. SHE GIVES HER HEART TO BINODINI BECAUSE, IN A HOUSE OF AGED WIDOWS AND MEN, SHE HAS NO OTHER WOMAN FRIEND TO CONFIDE IN. THE RESULT OF HER CONFIDENCE IS A DOUBLE BETRAYAL BY THOSE SHE LOVES MOST.

MAHENDRA

THE WOULD-BE DOCTOR WHO IS AN ACTIVE HEDONIST. HE DOES THINGS ON IMPULSE KNOWING THAT HIS WEALTH AND BACKGROUND WILL LET HIM GET AWAY WITH ANYTHING. HE CHOOSES A BRIDE SIMPLY BECAUSE HIS BEST FRIEND IS INTERESTED IN HER. MAHENDRA TREATS HER LIKE A TOY UNTIL HE DISCOVERS BINODINI AND REDISCOVERS LIFE.

BEHARI

ANOTHER WOULD-BE DOCTOR, BUT A MORE SERIOUS ONE. HE HAS A BYSTANDER'S ADVANTAGE. HE CAN STAND BACK AND WATCH THE HOUSEHOLD UNINVOLVED WHILE HIS HEART IS GIVEN TO HIS IDEALISM AND HIS NATIONALIST FERVOUR. HE CAN CONSOLE AND HE CAN STEP IN TO RESCUE AND HE CAN PROPOSE MARRIAGE IN AN ACT OF SELFLESSNESS.



DIRECTION

RITUPARNO GHOSH

MADE HIS FIRST FILM AT THE AGE OF 23. SINCE THEN, THERE HAS BEEN NO LOOKING BACK.

EVEN THOUGH HE HAS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN ECONOMICS, HIS FIRST LOVE HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE STORY. THE TELLING OF A TALE, WHETHER IN CELLULOID OR IN CHASTE BENGALI PROSE. CELLULOID WON. THE INFLUENCE, POSSIBLY OF HIS FATHER WHO WAS A DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER.

ADVERTISING FILMMAKING AND BENGALI COPYWRITING GAVE HIM PRECISION AND DISCIPLINE. HIS OWN INCLINATIONS DID THE REST. HE IS NOW IN THE HAPPY POSITION OF NOT ONLY MAKING HIS OWN KIND OF FILMS BUT ALSO FINDING LEADING PRODUCERS WILLING TO BACK HIM.

HIS FILMS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WOMAN-CENTRED BECAUSE HE EMPATHISES WITH THE GENDER. IN FACT, HIS PORTRAYAL IS HIS ABILITY TO READ AND PORTRAY THE UNWRITTEN NUANCES OF DIFFICULT RELATIONSHIPS AND HIGHLIGHT THE UNIQUE

COMBINATION OF STRENGTH AND VULNERABILITY THAT WOMEN ARE. 'CHOKHER BALI IS A NEW KIND OF CHALLENGE EVEN FOR RITUPARNO. THE ADVENTURE OF BREATHING LIFE INTO A STORY WRITTEN BY A NOBEL LAUREATE A CENTURY AGO AND GIVING IT A MODERN RELEVANCE.

FILMOGRAPHY

1991 **HIRER AANGTI** DIAMOND RING
SPECIAL JURY AWARD,
CAMBO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL.

1994 **UNISHEY APRIL** NINETEENTH APRIL
BEST FEATURE FILM, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
BEST ACTRESS, NATIONAL AWARD, INDIA.

1997 **DAHAN** CROSSFIRE
BEST SCREENPLAY, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
BEST BENGALI FEATURE FILM, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
JOINT BEST ACTRESS, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
TEPRENCI AWARD, CAMBO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
MAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM AWARDS, DUMKAL
INAUGURAL FILM AWARDS, DUMKAL, INDIA

2000 **ASHUKH** MALAYE
BEST BENGALI FEATURE FILM, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
TEPRENCI AWARD, CAMBO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
MAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM AWARDS, DUMKAL
SPECIAL JURY AWARD, CAMBO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
ROTTERDAM INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, HOLLAND

1999 **BAARIWALI**
THE METEOR OUTSIDE
BEST BENGALI FILM, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
BEST ACTRESS, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
BEST FILM SELECTION, SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, USA

2000 **UTSAB**
BEST DIRECTOR, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
PART OF INDIAN CINEMA, LOCARNO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, SWITZERLAND

2001 **TITLI**
TEPRENCI AWARD, CAMBO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
MAMI INTERNATIONAL FILM AWARDS, DUMKAL

2002 **SHUBHO MOMORAT** THE HAPPY MOMENT
BEST BENGALI FILM, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA

CHOKHER BALI



CINEMATOGRAPHY

ABHIK MUKHERJEE

IS BY FAR ONE OF INDIA'S MOST ACCOMPLISHED CINEMATOGRAPHERS AND VIDEOGRAPHERS.

TRAINED AT THE FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE OF INDIA (FTI) HE HAS BEEN WORKING BOTH IN INDIA AND ABROAD.

HE HAS WORKED ON FEATURE FILMS AS WELL AS COMMERCIALS, INCLUDING THE ROGER CORMAN PRODUCED 'NIGHTFALL' DIRECTED BY GWYNETH GILBY.

IN BENGAL HE HAS WORKED WITH DIRECTORS OF THE STATURE OF APARNA SEN AND MRINAL SEN. 'CHOKHER BALI' IS THE FIFTH AND LATEST FILM HE CINEMATOGRAPHED FOR RITUPARNO GHOSH. THE OTHERS WERE 'ASHUKH', 'UTSAB', 'TITLI' AND 'SHUBHO MOHORAT'.

AVEEK MUKHERJEE HAS BEEN ADJUDGED THE BEST CAMERAMAN OF 2003, NATIONAL AWARDS, INDIA, A COVETTED HONOUR IN HIS FIELD.

EDITING

ARGHYAKAMAL MITRA

GRADUATED IN FILM EDITING FROM THE FTI. HIS MAJOR FEATURE FILM WAS CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED AT THE OBERHAUSEN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL IN 1987. OVER THE YEARS HE HAS EDITED ALMOST ALL OF RITUPARNO'S FILMS.

ARGHYAKAMAL HAS ALSO WORKED WITH OTHER NOTED INDIAN DIRECTORS LIKE APARNA SEN, MOLOY BHATTACHARJEE AND ANUP SINGH... TO NAME A FEW.

A FIRM BELIEVER IN THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBLIME PRESENCE OF EDITORS IN FILMS, ARGHYA FUSES HIS SKILLS AND MOULDS HIS STYLE TO SUIT THE REQUIREMENTS OF FILMS.

HE IS ALSO AN INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR, PRODUCER AND IDEATOR OF TELEVISION COMMERCIALS AND PROGRAMMES FOR VARIOUS PRODUCTION HOUSES.

MUSIC

DEBOJYOTI MISHRA

LEARNED THE VIOLIN FROM HIS FATHER AND PROCEEDED TO EARN A DIPLOMA FROM THE KENNEDY ROYAL SCHOOL OF MUSIC. HE PLAYED SOLO VIOLIN FOR SATYAJIT RAY'S 'GHAREY BAIREY' AND 'NASHATRU' AS WELL AS SANDIP RAY'S 'GOODBYE GHAREY ELO' MUSIC DIRECTED BY SATYAJIT RAY.

HE WORKED WITH THE NOTED MUSIC COMPOSER MOULANADHURI AND LATER WITH ANUP SINGH. OVER THE YEARS DEBOJYOTI HAS COMPOSED MUSIC FOR COMMERCIALS, TELEVISION SERIALS AND FEATURE FILMS ALIKE, WINNING AWARDS ALONG THE WAY.

HIS MUSIC HAS FEATURED IN THE NATIONAL AWARD WINNING GOVIND Nihalani film 'HAZAR CHAURASI KI MA', MOLOY BHATTACHARJEE'S 'KAHINI', ARHITH CHAUDHURI'S 'PATALGHAR', AND RITUPARNO GHOSH'S 'DAHAN', 'ASHUKH', 'BAARIWAALI', 'TITLI', 'UTSAB' AND MOST RECENTLY 'CHOKHER BALI'.

SOUND DESIGN

BISHWADEEP CHATTERJEE GRADUATED WITH RARE DISTINCTION AS A STUDENT OF SOUND FROM FTII. HIS MAIDEN DIPLOMA FILM WON A NATIONAL AWARD. HIS INDEPENDENT ASSIGNMENTS BEGAN AS LOCATION SOUND RECORDIST FOR 'BANDHNI', A KETAN MEHTA DOCUMENTARY.

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUND DEPARTMENT OF MIRA NAIR'S 'SALAAM BOMBAY' FOLLOWED. HE BECAME RENOWNED IN BOLLYWOOD WITH SANJAY LEELA BHANSALI'S 'HUM DIL DE CHUKE SANAM', AND 'DEVDA'S', FOR WHICH HE WAS HONOURED AS THE BEST MUSIC RECORDIST AT THE IIFA AWARDS 2003.

BISHWADEEP FINDS TIME TO PURSUE OFFBEAT ARTISTIC PROJECTS FOR CREATIVE INSPIRATION. A FINE CARTOONIST, HE IS ALSO AN AVID COLLECTOR OF TRIBAL MUSIC.

ART DIRECTION

INDRANIL GHOSH BEGAN HIS CAREER AS AN ASSISTANT ART DIRECTOR IN THE NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED SHYAM BENEGAL SERIES, 'BHARAT EK KHOJ'. HIS PORTFOLIO EXPANDED TO TAKE IN AD FILMS AND HE MADE SEVERAL COMMERCIALS.

ELABORATION WITH PRECISION CHARACTERISES HIS WORK. FOR 'CHOKHER BALI' HIS RESEARCH SPANNED EVERYTHING FROM OLD PALACES TO PERIOD PIECES LIKE IN 'CHARULATA'.

HIS SPECIAL TOUCH IS SEEN IN THE RIVERFRONT LAMPPOSTS AT BENARES AND THE GORGEOUS 'BAJRA' OR HOUSEBOAT WHICH, PUMPKIN-LIKE, EVOLVED FROM AN ORDINARY BOAT.

AN ACCOMPLISHED FLAUTIST, INDRANIL GHOSH'S WIDE RANGE OF PASSIONS INCLUDE WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC.

GLOSSARY

ROHINI

A YOUNG WIDOW IN 'KRISHNAKANTER WILL', A BENGALI NOVEL BY BANKIMCHANDRA CHATTERJEE, A LEADING AUTHOR OF NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL. ROHINI WAS FAMOUS FOR HER BEAUTY AND INFAMOUS FOR HER PHYSICALITY, WHICH WAS DEEMED TO BE UNFIT FOR A WIDOW. SHE WAS ONE OF THE FIRST WOMAN CHARACTERS IN INDIAN LITERATURE TO EXPRESS HERSELF WITHOUT REGARD TO SOCIAL MORES AND IN THIS IS A PREDECESSOR TO BINODINI. BEHARI REFERS TO ROHINI IN THE FILM.

'RAJMOHAN'S WIFE' 1864


RAJMOHAN'S WIFE IS THE FIRST ENGLISH NOVEL WRITTEN BY AN INDIAN, BANKIMCHANDRA CHATTERJEE, THE CELEBRATED BENGALI NOVELIST AND ESSAYIST. MAHENDRA REFERS TO IT IN THE FILM.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA 1863-1902

GREAT SOCIAL REFORMER AND PHILOSOPHER. BORN NARENDRANATH DATTA HE STARTED PONDERING PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS FROM AN EARLY AGE, UNTIL HE MET HIS GURU, THE GREAT RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA, MADE HISTORY WITH AN IMMORTAL SPEECH ON THE ESSENCE OF HINDUISM AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS IN CHICAGO IN 1893. REVERED AS A SEER AND A SAVANT, 'CHOKHER BALI' BEGINS AT THE TIME OF HIS DEMISE.

ISHWARCHANDRA VIDYASAGAR 1820-91

BORN OF POOR BRAHMIN PARENTS, HE EARNED THE TITLE 'VIDYASAGAR' OR 'OCEAN OF KNOWLEDGE'. AN ENIGMA WHO SINGLEHANDEDLY FOUGHT FOR THE REFORM OF BENGALI SOCIETY, HE INSISTED ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WIDOW REMARRIAGE ACT IN 1856. AN EDUCATIONIST PAR EXCELLENCE, VIDYASAGAR WORKED LIFELONG FOR ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN'S EDUCATION. ASHALATA'S AUNT ANNAPURNA REFERS TO HIM IN THE FILM.



SIR JAGADISH CHANDRA BOSE 1858-1937

THE PHYSICIST AND BIOPHYSICIST
DISCOVERED MICROWAVE WHILE
WORKING ON ELECTROMAGNETISM.

HE BROKE NEW GROUND IN
ELECTROPHYSIOLOGY, AND PROVED
THAT PLANTS RESPOND TO
ELECTROMAGNETIC FORCE. THIS WAS
POPULARLY TAKEN TO MEAN THAT
PLANTS HAVE LIFE. A LOGIC BEHARI
USES IN THE FILM.

BIPIN CHANDRA PAL 1858-1932

EMINENT LEADER, ORATOR AND
ESSAYIST. HE IS REMEMBERED AS THE
NATIONAL LEADER WHO SPARKED OFF
INDIA'S FIRST EXTREMIST MOVEMENT
IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.
BEHARI, IN THE FILM, TALKS ABOUT
ATTENDING ONE OF HIS LECTURES.

THE WIDOW SYSTEM AND THE
RELEVANCE OF BENARES

AT THE TURN OF THE 20TH CENTURY
BENGAL WAS THE EPICENTRE OF
REFORMS IN INDIA. BUT THE LIFE OF AN
AVERAGE HINDU WOMAN WAS A SHARP
CONTRAST. YOUNG GIRLS WERE
MARRIED TO ELIGIBLE UPPERCASTE
MALES, MANY OF WHOM WERE QUITE
OLD. THE CONSEQUENT LARGE NUMBER
OF YOUNG WIDOWS WERE MADE TO
ESCHEW NORMAL LIVING. SHROUDED
IN WHITE, THEY HAD TO BE STRICT
VEGETARIANS, FOLLOW RIGOROUS
RELIGIOUS RITES, AND REFRAIN FROM
CONTACT WITH WESTERN INFLUENCES,
INCLUDING EDUCATION.

FORBIDDEN TO REMARRY, MANY WERE
MADE TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES TO AWAIT
DEATH AT BENARES, INDIA'S HOLIEST
CITY, A MELTING POT OF HER MYRIAD
COMMUNITIES AND CULTURES.

THE PARTITION OF BENGAL 1905

A PERIOD ETCHED IN INDIA'S
HISTORY AS THE RISE OF POLITICAL
TURMOIL. UNDER LORD CURZON'S
VICEROYSHIP, BRITISH INDIA SAW
A WESTERNISATION OF EDUCATION
THAT EVENTUALLY MADE INDIANS MORE
AWARE OF THE INJUSTICES OF COLONIAL
RULE. CURZON'S PLAN TO PARTITION
THE IMPORTANT STATE OF BENGAL
AS A CYNICAL POLITICAL MOVE, MADE
KOLKATA, THE THEN CAPITAL OF INDIA,
A HOTBED OF POLITICAL UNREST. THE
PERIOD WHEN THE FILM ENDS.

RADHA AND KRISHNA

THE MOST CELEBRATED LOVERS
IN HINDU PHILOSOPHY, THE ETERNAL
SYMBOL OF LOVE AND PASSION,
THEY ARE WORSHIPPED BY MILLIONS
THROUGH LYRICS AND HYMNS,
POSSIBLY THE ONLY SOCIALLY ACCEPTED
COUPLE WITHOUT THE SANCTITY
OF MARRIAGE. THE LYRICAL LEITMOTIF
THAT HOLDS TOGETHER THE
FORBIDDEN RELATIONSHIPS THAT
PREVAIL IN 'CHOKHER BALI'.



C R E D I T S

ORIGINAL NOVEL
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

SCRIPT APPROVED BY
VIJVA BHARATI MUSIC BOARD

CONSULTANTS

SHANTHA GHOSH
PABITRA SARKAR
PRASHANTA PAL
DEBESH RAY
SAMIK BANERJEE
ADYOK SEN
KADYANI CHAKRA
DIPANKAR MAHAPATRA
RUPSEKH SEN

PRINCIPAL PATRON
LEENAMITAS MOHITA

PRESENTATION
SIBIRKANTI MOHITA
MAHENDRA SONI

PRODUCTION
THREE VEDVATESH FILMS

SCREENPLAY & DIRECTION
BINUPARNO GHOSH

CHARACTERS
IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

RAJLAKSHMI
LILY CHAKRABARTI

MAHENDRA
PROSENJIT CHATTERJEE

BEHARI
TOTA RAYCHAUDHURI

BINODINI
AISHWARYA RAI

SHANTI
SONALI CHAKRABARTI

KAMAL
SUDESHNA RAY

SWARNA
MOUSUMI SAHA

BRITISH POLICEMAN
FRIEDRICH HERTZBERG

PROFESSOR
TIM BRIAN

STUDENTS
ANINDYA CHATTERJEE

ANURAG SINGH
ASHOK SHARMA
ANIRBAN MALLIK
BARUN CHAKRABARTI
DEBASISH BASU
INDRANIL MALLIK
SOUVIK SARKAR
UPAL SENGUPTA

ANNAPURNA
ASHALATA MINT
SHUCHITA RAYCHAUDHURI

SISTER AGNES
ZARIN CHAUDHURI

BINODINI'S
GRANDMOTHER-IN-LAW
DEBJANI GHOSH

SADHUCHARAN
DEBESH MUKHERJEE

ANUKULBABU
TAPOMOY BHATTACHARJEE

ASHALATA
RAIMA SEN
CHINTA
SHIBANI BHATTACHARJEE
KHEMI
SUPARNA GUHA BISWAS
SUDAM
DEBASISH BANERJEE
SERVANTS
BIDYUT DEY
RANJAN BARIK
ENGLISH MISSIONARY
CHARLOTTE HAYWARD
ACCOMPANYING WOMAN
RATNA GHOSHAL
BASANTA
ABHISHEK BOSE
DR SMITHSON
RD EARP
GIRIN
HARIDAS CHATTERJEE
MAQBUL
JIBON GUHA
BARBER'S WIFE
REENA MONDOL
NEIGHBOUR
JUI RAY
DAUGHTER-IN-LAW
SUDIPA DAS
MANORAMA
TINA DATTA

DR GRAHAM
CEDRIC SPANOS
MRS GRAHAM
DEENA ARDESHIR
LIBRARIAN
PAUL WALSH
FISHMONGER
RATNA DAS
WASHERMAN
TAPASH SEN
COACHMAN
RAJA GANGULI
DYING OLD LADY
BHARATI DEVI
YOUNG COURTESAN
SWASTIKA MUKHERJEE
SENIOR COURTESAN
SANGEETA DATTA
ZAMINDAR
KAMESHWAR MISHRA
MAD BEGGAR WOMAN
DOLA CHAKRABARTI
OTHER BEGGAR WOMAN
NILANJANA BISWAS
OLD WIDOW
RATNA RAKSHIT

CINEMATOGRAPHY
AVEEK MUKHERJEE
EDITING
ARGHYAKAMAL MITRA
ART
INDRANIL GHOSH
INTERIORS & COSTUMES
BIBI RAY
SUSHANTA PAL
DIRECTION ASSOCIATES
SUMANTA MUKHERJEE
SANGEETA DATTA
MUSIC
DEBOJYOTI MISRA
SOUND DESIGN
BISHWADEEP CHATTERJEE
SOUND EFFECTS
RAJIB NAYAN ADITYA
TIRTHANKAR MAJUMDAR
CHIEF ASSISTANTS
ABHIJIT GUHA
SANDIPAN MAJUMDAR
SPECIAL ASSISTANTS
SUDESHNA RAY
NILANJAN BANERJEE
SCREENPLAY INPUTS
GOUTAM SENGUPTA
MADHUCHHANDA BASU KARLEKAR
TILOTTAMA KARLEKAR
SONNET
ANJANA BASU

DIRECTION TEAM
JAYASHREE BHATTACHARJEE
DEBOLEENA MUKHERJEE
KARNA BASU
MADAN MAJHI
CINEMATOGRAPHY TEAM
GOOPI BHAGAT
PRADIP DAS
SAMPAD RAY
EDITING TEAM
MONTU DAS
ANIMESH BOSE
SUGATA MUKHERJEE
ART ASSOCIATES
ASHISH ADHIKARI
BIDYUT GHOSH
VISUAL RESEARCH
ABHIJIT GUPTA
ART TEAM
DILIP PATRA
PITOBAS JANA
BENU BISWAL
PRATAF PRADHAN
MUSIC TEAM
SOVITH DEY
ABHIR CHAKRABARTI
SANJOY DAS
BARUN CHAKRABARTI
RAJMARAYAN DEB
CHORUS COORDINATION
SRABANI SEN
CHANDRABALI RUDRA DATTA

MALE SINGERS

DEBABRATA DATTA
RAGHAB CHATTERJEE
MRITYUNJOY KUMAR SINGH
SUJAN BISWAS
KHARAJ MUKHERJEE

FEMALE SINGERS

FURNIMA CHAUDHURI
SWAGATALAKSHMI DASGUPTA
PARAMA BANERJEE
JAYITA PANDEY
SHANTA DAS
SANGLEETA DATTA

RE-RECORDING

G HARI
BHASKAR RAY
KIRAN KUMAR
RANDEB MUKHERJEE HYDERABAD

PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE

ANANDI SHARMA

PRODUCTION CONTROL

AMAL KUNDU
RAJ KUNDELA
TRIPATHI BENEARES

PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE

DEEPA BANERJEE
ANURAG CHATTERJEE
SARADIN DEB
SANGHVI

BENEARES COORDINATION

ANURAG CHATTERJEE
ANURAG CHATTERJEE
SANGHVI
SANGHVI

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