

THE CURTAIN RISES ON THE 18TH EDITION OF THE JIO MAMI MUMBAI FILM FESTIVAL WITH STAR AT THE ICONIC ROYAL OPERA HOUSE

- *MAMI Co-Chairperson Mrs. Nita Mukesh Ambani and Mr. Mukesh Ambani, Maharani of Gondal and family, along with prominent Bollywood personalities graced the opening ceremony of the festival*
- *Shri Amitabh Bachchan, Mrs. Nita Mukesh Ambani and Yuvraj Saheb Himanshu Singh Ji of Gondal declared the festival open*
- *Director and screenwriter Sai Paranjpye received the 'Excellence in Cinema-India' award from Mrs. Jaya Bachchan*
- *Acclaimed filmmaker Jia Zhangke received 'Excellence in Cinema- International' award by actor Aamir Khan*
- *The week-long festival which starts from October 21, will showcase over 175 films from 54 countries including features, documentaries and short films*

Mumbai, October 20, 2016: Jio MAMI Mumbai Film Festival with Star kicked off its 18th edition with a grand ceremony at the iconic Royal Opera House as world-renowned filmmakers, talent and Bollywood stars walked the red carpet to celebrate the city's very own film festival.

The Royal Opera House is the last standing Baroque building in Mumbai. The royal family of Gondal – the owners of the venue – have worked towards ensuring the complete restoration of this centre under the watchful eye of conservation architect Abha Narain Lambah. The iconic structure has a long standing association with art, literature, theatre, music, and has hosted operas and live performances of many celebrated artists.

Bollywood came in full support at the opening ceremony Red Carpet which was attended by Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan, Aamir Khan, Poonam Dhillon, Ayan Mukerji, Vinod Chopra, Genelia Dsouza, Shabana Azmi, Zoya Akhtar, Kalki Koechlin, Shobha De, Rajeev Samant, Reema Kagti, Ashutosh and Sunita Gowariker, Huma Quershi, Rahul Bose, Harshvardhan Kapoor, Kunal Kapoor, Nandita Das, R Balki, Abhishek Kapoor, Mini Mathur, Imran Khan, Diya Mirza, Richa Chaddha, Abhay Deol, Vicky Kaushal and many more.

Jacqueline Fernandez hosted the event. Also present were Festival Director Anupama Chopra, Co-Chairperson Kiran Rao and other Board of Directors including Anurag Kashyap, Rohan Sippy, Riteish Deshmukh, Siddharth Roy Kapur and Vikramaditya Motwane.

Mrs. Nita Mukesh Ambani, Festival Co-Chair said, "We are all privileged to be here at the resurrected Royal Opera House in its new avatar, a quintessential Mumbai Icon that has been lovingly brought to life for all of us. We really could not have asked for a more befitting venue to open this festival. In the true tradition of the Mumbai, Jio MAMI continues to delight us and surprise us. Each year they are raising the bar higher and higher for themselves. The festival has put together a truly incredible program and a stellar line-up of films this year. Today is my proud privilege to announce and introduce a new category of award- 'The Jio MAMI Award for Excellence in Digital Narrative Content'. Through this award we want to discover and celebrate, the talent and potential of our youth. This award will be presented from next year onward. We hope this award will encourage young talent to reimagine their creative promise and take Indian cinema to newer and greater heights, especially in the digital space. Jio MAMI is of Mumbai, by Mumbai and of Mumbai."

Uday Shankar, CEO, Star India said, "Mumbai Film Festival stands out as a more celebratory event than a ceremonial one. It celebrates great stories and serves as a podium for young talent. In our third year of association with MAMI, our endeavour is to make world-class cinema an accessible and organic experience to the people of Mumbai - a city with deep roots in cinema and its history."

Festival Director, Anupama Chopra said, "The 18th Edition of the festival will celebrates stories and cinema traditions from around the world. We hope that people enjoy this film feast."

Creative Director, Smriti Kiran said, “Dazzled by the elegance and grandeur of the Opening Ceremony of the festival at the Royal Opera House. At one point I think I was not even breathing. Over 500 film lovers ringing in the festival for 2016. It was a dream come true.”

The Award for ‘Excellence in Cinema-India’ was presented to Director and screenwriter Sai Paranjpye by Mrs. Jaya Bachchan. Paranjpye has won numerous awards, both National and International for her writing and films. She was conferred with the prestigious Padma Bhushan in 2006 and has served on numerous juries and has been the Chairperson of the Children’s Film Society of India.

On receiving the Award for Excellence in Cinema-India, Filmmaker and Screenwriter Sai Paranjpye said, “It is wonderful to see the program being made here, encouraging new directors and women directors. I really feel privileged to receive this award from Mrs. Jaya Bachchan in the magnificent Royal Opera House.”

The Award for ‘Excellence in Cinema- International’ was presented to Chinese Filmmaker, Jia Zhangke known for his cinematic representation of his country’s post-Mao and post-globalization cultural history. His recent films *A Touch of Sin*, 2013; *Mountains May Depart*, 2015), has offered a unique perspective on a transitional generation whose commonplace lives evoke universal resonance. The award to Jia Zhangke was presented by Actor Aamir Khan.

On receiving the Award for Excellence in Cinema- International, Chinese Filmmaker Jia Zhangke said, “It is the first time I am coming to Mumbai and India and really thankful to MAMI film festival and the film fraternity. No matter if its China or India, we have really good audience and we should continue to produce good movies for them.”

Also present at the Opening Ceremony were the esteemed jurors of India Gold section – Head of Jury Reha Erdem, Mychael Danna, Stephanie Zacharek, Yonfan and Tomasz Wasilewski. Head of International Competition Jury, Miguel Gomes was present along with other jurors Tala Hadid, Chris Mcdonald, Anurag Kashyap and Christine Vachon.

The special guests of the evening were nine delegates from Bhutan who were especially flown down to Mumbai to experience this festival. The Hon'ble Secretary of Ministry of Information and Communications - Mr. Dasho Karma W Penjor, Librarian, Department of Information and Media - Mr. Thinley Dorji, Assistant Information and Media, Department of Information and Media- Mr. Phub Wangdi, and other members from the Bhutan Film Association were present to grace the evening.

Four-time National Award winner, Shankar Mahadevan gave a mesmerising performance at the opening ceremony.

The Mumbai Film Festival will include a new programme, Country Focus. This year the country in focus is Turkey. The festival will screen 10 films from Turkey, which represent the different strains of cinema in the country.

On this association H. E. Mr. Erdal Sabri Ergen, Consul General of Turkey said, “Turkey is delighted and honoured to be the Country of Focus at the Jio MAMI 18th Mumbai Film Festival with Star. It is wonderful to see the amazing MAMI organizing team elevate the festival to a such a high level. Participating in this wonderful event will be a large Turkish delegation who will be in Mumbai – leading Film Producers, Directors and CEOs of both Film and Television industries, who are very closely connected, to interact with their counterparts here. We are looking forward to an exciting week of engagement and exchange!”

The festival now opens at seven venues across the city. Apart from screening exceptional films, the festival has many exciting events in store.

- Jio MAMI Movie Mela with Star which will take place over two days – October 22 and 23 – promises to be double the fun for fans of mainstream cinema.
- Masterclasses will be led by Chinese filmmaker Jia Zhangke and Primetime Emmy Award Winner, Cary Fukunaga at the festival.
- PLAY, is an exciting milieu at MAMI. It seeks to celebrate the youngest medium for storytelling, the internet, through the youngest format of film, the web series.

- 'Word To Screen' is envisaged as a platform where publishers and the book trade engage directly with content creators for film, TV and digital.
- This year MAMI announced a special award called the **MasterCard Best Indian Female Filmmaker 2016 award**.
- Oxfam India in partnership with the festival has instituted an award for **Best Film on Gender Equality**.
- **Half ticket** our children's section which will now be open to delegates for designated days.

ABOUT Jio MAMI with Star Film Festival

Mumbai - the financial capital of India is also the epicentre of the Indian film industry. The city plays such a major role in production and dissemination of Indian films and television programs that it is widely known by its acronym 'Bollywood'. In 1997, a group of film industry stalwarts headed by late Hrishikesh Mukherjee founded the Mumbai Academy of Moving Image (MAMI) as a not-for-profit Trust. Their main objective was to organize an annual International Film Festival which the film industry and the country could be proud of. MAMI has been organizing the festival for the last 16 years and aims to foster a climate of good cinema. MAMI engages people from all walks of life across the city and country that enjoy and love good cinema. It is Mumbai's only film festival that is entirely created and run by film professionals and a group of members from corporate India. Appreciation of good cinema, stripped off all the limiting labels of art and commercial, can only come about through exposure to the best of films the world has to offer. The Festival is the first step in that direction. In their Mission Statement in 1997, the MAMI Board of Trustees said, "We feel it is the need of the hour to disseminate and inculcate good cinema among Indian audiences. The only way to achieve this is to celebrate cinema by hosting an International Film Festival in Mumbai, India's film and entertainment capital. MAMI (Mumbai Academy of Moving Image) is committed to start Mumbai's first independent international film festival organized by practicing film makers."

For more information on Jio MAMI 18th Mumbai Film Festival with Star scheduled to be held from 20th October- 27th October 2016, do visit the official website, Twitter handle, Facebook Page, Instagram and YouTube as follows:

Website: www.mumbaifilmfestival.com

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