



Sir Ian McKellen to visit India with 'Shakespeare Lives on Film'

Sunday 1 May 2016

Shakespeare's legacy across theatre and film has been unparalleled. It has transcended borders and has been adapted, represented and celebrated globally. 2016 is the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. To mark the occasion, the world will pay tribute to the greatest playwright of all time.

'Shakespeare Lives' a global programme launched by the British Council and GREAT Britain Campaign will celebrate Shakespeare's works and his influence on culture, education and society. As a part of this programme, the BFI (British Film Institute) has curated a special international touring programme of British Shakespeare adaptations, spearheaded by world famous actor, Ian McKellen. Celebrating the iconic playwright's legacy in film, the 'Shakespeare Lives on Film' programme explores on an epic scale how filmmakers have adapted, been inspired by and interpreted Shakespeare's work for the big screen. The selection includes 18 classic British Films that will travel to 110 countries across the world with the British Council. Over a period of a year, 11 of these titles will be screened across the 9 British Council Centres in India. Mumbai is the first stop on Ian McKellen's global tour as the BFI's ambassador for 'Shakespeare Lives on Film'. As part of the international tour, Ian will be presenting *Richard III* (1995, dir. Richard Loncraine) the film he co-adapted for the big screen and starred in, which is currently enjoying great critical acclaim in the UK due to its re-release on DVD and at BFI Southbank as part of its season 'BFI Presents: Shakespeare on Film'.

MAMI Film Club is partnering with the British Council, the BFI, GREAT, NCPA and Fountainhead to bring Ian McKellen and the incredible 'Shakespeare Lives on Film' programme to India. Ian McKellen's first stop will be a public conversation with a undisclosed Indian superstars scheduled on Monday 23 and will mark the debut outing of MAMI Film Club, which will soon roll out an exciting year-round programme of activities for the denizens of Mumbai. In its seventeen-year history, Mumbai Academy of Moving Image will, for the first time, be opening its doors for a year-long engagement with its patrons. Tuesday 24 May will see the launch of the 'Shakespeare Lives On Film' screenings with an exclusive screening of McKellen's *Richard III*, introduced by its star.

Ms. Kiran Rao, Chairperson, MAMI feels, "I am a great admirer of Sir Ian's work, and it is an honour for the Jio MAMI Film Club to be able to partner in this event. Shakespeare has seen rich and varied

interpretations in cinema over the years. This is a chance for film lovers to hear one of the most iconic actors of Shakespeare speak in our city. We could not have asked for a better launch for our Film Club!"

In addition, on Wednesday 25 May Ian will be the guest of honour at the launch of the 7th Kashish Mumbai International Queer Festival at Liberty Cinema. On Thursday 26 May he will host a schools education event at BD Somani International School and be the guest of honour at the Queen's Birthday Party, organised by the British High Commission.

Sharon Memis, Director West India British Council said "It is wonderful to work with the BFI, MAMI, to celebrate the ever contemporary William Shakespeare with one of our finest actors, internationally renowned and award winning theatre and film actor, Ian McKellen. Shakespeare's stories are universal; they transcend cultures, society and time. The many translations and adaptations of his work across the world are a tribute to Shakespeare's enduring relevance and appeal. We are thrilled that Ian McKellen's first visit to Mumbai will be to launch Shakespeare Lives On Film!"

Ian McKellen has been awarded over 60 international acting awards for his half century on stage and screen. He has appeared in more than half of Shakespeare's plays all over the world. On film he has starred in Gods and Monsters, as Gandalf in The Lord of the Rings, as Magneto in the X-Men movies, and most recently as Sherlock in Mr Holmes.

Ian McKellen said "I have been aware of India's passion for Shakespeare ever since I saw Shakespeare Wallah (1965) and more recently the outstanding Bollywood versions of the plays. This is my first visit to Mumbai when I look forward to hearing local reaction to the Shakespeare on Film season and to meeting with colleagues in the Indian film industry".

BFI Head Curator, Robin Baker said "No writer has had greater impact on cinema – or inspired more films – than Shakespeare. At the latest count, IMDb lists Shakespeare as the 'writer' of 1120 titles. For me the best adaptations of Shakespeare are those that have taken his themes, situations, characters or language and presented them in ways that are purely cinematic: from the thrilling re-imagining of Loncraine's Richard III to the intimacy of the close-ups used in the love scenes of Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet and bleakly stunning landscapes of Polanski's Macbeth. Film and TV makes Shakespeare's work more accessible than any other medium and the BFI National Archive looks after the world's largest collection of film adaptations of his work, so I'm delighted that so many of the British adaptations are going to be shared with audiences in Mumbai in this year-long celebration MAMI are staging and who better to present these films to audiences around the world than one of Britain's finest Shakespearian actors, Ian McKellen."

Mr. Khusroo Suntook, Chairman NCPA said "We are delighted to welcome Sir Ian McKellen to the NCPA Mumbai. His dazzling performances are legendary and we are privileged to host him in our theatres. We eagerly look forward to his talk and the screening of his film."

Ms. Anupama Chopra, Director, MAMI said "We are very honoured to launch the club with a conversation with the iconic Ian McKellen. We are also thrilled to partner with the British Council and British Film Institute, Fountainhead and GREAT to celebrate Shakespeare on film."

Notes to the Editor:

ABOUT SHAKESPEARE LIVES

Shakespeare Lives is a major global programme for 2016 celebrating Shakespeare's works and his influence on culture, education and society on the 400th anniversary of his death and is possible due to the unprecedented number of partnerships and collaborations between the British Council, the GREAT Britain campaign partners and organisations including the BBC, the BFI (British Film Institute), the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Shakespeare 400 consortium, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Shakespeare's Globe. For more information, please see www.shakespearelives.org.

About the MAMI Film Club

The MAMI Film Club is a platform for filmmakers and film lovers, which is dedicated to igniting and cultivating a passion for cinema. Through year-round activities such as screenings, masterclasses, in-depth conversations with talent, and workshops, the Club aims to inspire and fuel creativity. There will also be activities designed to engage children and young adults, with the vision to nurture our future audiences.

Cinema educates, transforms and broadens sensibilities. The charter of the MAMI Film Club is to seed and grow an eco-system for cinema, and to champion cinema – from India and around the world.

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK - investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Greg Dyke.

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 8,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

For more information, please visit www.britishcouncil.org and for our work in India www.britishcouncil.in. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through <http://twitter.com/britishcouncil> and <http://blog.britishcouncil.org/>.

The British Council Film department links UK films and filmmakers to new international audiences, profiling the innovation, diversity and excellence of British films around the world and finding opportunities for creative exchange.

For more information, please see www.britishcouncil.org/film

About NCPA

The National Centre for the Performing Arts, Mumbai, is India's premier arts centre, hosting more than 600 events each year. The first multi-venue, multi-genre cultural centre to be built in South Asia, the NCPA has been committed since its inception to preserving and promoting the country's rich and vibrant artistic heritage in the fields of music, dance, theatre, film, literature and photography, as well as presenting new and innovative work in the performing arts. The NCPA is also home to the Symphony Orchestra of India, the country's first and only professional orchestra.

About Fountainhead

Fountainhead MKTG, part of Dentsu Aegis Network, is one of India's leading experiential marketing agencies. We combine brand insights and innovation with on-ground expertise. With business divisions ranging from Events & Activation, Exhibitions, MICE, Digital, Intellectual Properties, In-film branding, Rural Marketing, In-stadia advertising and PR, we create memorable & impactful experiences for brands that help them cut through the clutter.

Fountainhead MKTG is a global lifestyle marketing agency that builds impassioned, engaged communities around brands through a strategic mix of marketing services rooted in experiential, sports and entertainment. Through experiences, content generation and distribution, the agency is committed to reaching and positively affecting people's lives. Headquartered in New York City, MKTG employs over 1400 marketers and 7,000 brand ambassadors in 14 countries and produces more than 80,000 brand experiences each year.

In short we are truly the only 360 degree brand solutions company and offer our clients a one shot stop for all their brand needs from ATL to BTL.

For further details on the British Council's Shakespeare Lives programme, Sir Ian's engagements in India and the international tour, kindly get in touch with Renuka Reuben, Head External Relations and Programmes, British Council on Renuka.reuben@in.britishcouncil.org or on +(91)9820843608

