

**Mongrel Media  
Presents**

**A David Hamilton Production of**

**A Film by Deepa Mehta**

# Heaven on Earth

(Canada, 106 minutes, Punjabi/English, 2008)

**Hamilton-Mehta Productions  
In co-production with The National Film Board of Canada**

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## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

Chand (Preity Zinta) is a young woman who travels from India to Canada to marry Rocky (Vansh Bhardwaj), a man she has never met. Her dream of a new life morphs into a nightmare as marriage to Rocky and his family becomes a numbing spiral of confusion and pain. Chand finds hope in her friendship with Rosa (Yanna McIntosh), a street-smart woman from Jamaica who works with Chand at a laundry factory. Rosa gives Chand a magical root and promises that it will make Rocky fall deeply in love with her. The experiment ends in a surreal parallel life that mirrors an Indian fable involving a King Cobra.

## **LONG SYNOPSIS**

Vibrant and irrepressibly alive, Chand (Preity Zinta) is a young bride leaving her home in Ludhiana, India, for the cavernous landscape of Brampton, Ontario, where her husband Rocky (Vansh Bhardwaj) and his very traditional family await her arrival. Everything is new to Chand; everything is unfamiliar including the quiet and shy Rocky who she meets for the first time at the Arrivals level of Pearson Airport. Chand approaches her new life and her new land with equanimity and grace, and at times the wide-eyed optimism of hope—her first snowfall is a tiny miracle of beauty, and the roar of Niagara Falls creates the excitement of new beginnings.

But soon optimism turns to isolation as the family she has inherited struggles beneath the weight of unspoken words, their collective frustration becoming palpable. No one feels the pressure more than Rocky, weighed down by familial obligations. A controlling mother who can't let him go, a sweet but ineffectual father, and a sister whose two children and unemployed husband are also a burden. All live with Rocky and Chand in a two-bedroom house in the suburbs of Toronto. To make matters worse, Rocky is expected to find the money to bring his extended family to Canada. Unable to express his anger, he finds other ways to release it and it's Chand who bears the brunt of his repressed rage.

Trapped in a world she cannot comprehend and unable to please her husband, Chand is desperate. Hope comes in the form of Rosa (Yanna McIntosh), a tough and savvy Jamaican-Canadian woman who works alongside Chand in a factory where immigrant women from all over the world clean and press dirty hotel laundry. Rosa sees past the make-up that covers Chand's bruised face. Realizing Chand has nowhere to turn, Rosa gives her a magical root advising her "to put it in whatever the bastard drinks." The root seduces the one who takes it, making them fall hopelessly in love with the person who gives it to them. Chand's attempts with the magic root lead to surreal incidents and her life gradually begins to mirror an Indian fable involving a King Cobra. As the lines between fantasy and reality converge, Chand and Rocky come face to face with each other and themselves.

## **LOGLINE**

Chand (Preity Zinta) journeys from India to Canada to marry Rocky (Vansh Bhardwaj), a man she has never met and to live with her husband's extended family in Brampton. Soon trapped between tradition and the desire for happiness, she retreats into a parallel mythical world. But when myth and reality collide Chand must choose between duty and freedom.

## **THE STORY**

In a middle-class home in Ludhiana, Punjab, the sound of a dholak marks time as a chorus of female voices sing traditional wedding songs. Tonight is Chand's (Preity Zinta) ladies sangeet (the equivalent of a bachelorette party) full of singing, dancing, laughter and good old-fashioned lewd humour. Chand is radiant in her green salwar kameez, her wrists heavy with bangles, and her dark eyes flashing brilliantly. She is beautiful, brimming with life and in this melee of women it is clear she is well loved. Tonight is Chand's last evening in her home and in Punjab. Tomorrow she leaves India for Canada to marry a man she is betrothed to through a family arrangement.

Night gives in to day, and in the thin blue light of morning, as the city quietly awakes, Chand's mother watches her sleeping daughter. "Wake up," she whispers, and once Chand is roused, she tells her for the umpteenth time the fable of the King Cobra and the Saint. Chand rolls her eyes, teases her mother but eventually lets her know that the lesson of the story is not lost... "You can protect yourself without hurting anyone else" Chand announces. And her mother knows that she has armed her daughter well.

Just before her plane touches down in Toronto, Chand goes to the bathroom and in its cramped, grey space changes into clothes befitting a bride-to-be.

At the airport she greets her new family: Her mother-in-law, Maji (Balinder Johal), her father-in-law, Papaji, (Rajinder Singh Cheema), sister-in-law, Aman (Ramanjit Kaur), her husband, Baldev (Gourrav Sihan) and their two children, Kabir (Orville Maciel) and Loveleen (Geetika Sharma) and finally there is the man she will marry the next day, Rocky (Vansh Bhardwaj), who blushes as deeply as the bride.

In the airport limousine, which Rocky drives for a living, Chand takes in with curiosity the wintry emptiness of the suburbs –large monotonous spaces punctuated by strip malls and coffee shops. Punjab could not be further away. Finally the car pulls into the driveway of a modest two-bedroom bungalow where all of them will live.

Before Chand enters the house, Aman takes a bottle of mustard oil and squeezes a few drops on both the left and right side of the threshold—an age-old tradition welcoming the new bride to her home. And in another such gesture, Chand is seated and fed sweets from Maji's hand. Once the formalities are over, Kabir quickly turns on the television and a blanket of silence descends, broken only by the occasional sound of cricket scores and awkward questions. Chand is asked to serve the men drinks. Later she offers her

gifts including 20,000 dollars from her father to Rocky—her dowry. She learns the money will be used to sponsor Rocky's brother from India.

The day of her wedding, it snows. Waiting in an antechamber in the Gurdwara (Sikh Temple), Chand smiles to herself as the big white, flakes fall gently outside. "Jesus," grimaces another bride who is also waiting for her own marriage ceremony.

On her wedding night, Rocky lies beside her and Chand shifts anxiously. "Don't worry," he reassures, "we won't do anything tonight." Relieved, she tries to talk about the flowers. Rocky is uninterested. "Could I call my mother?" Chand asks. "Tomorrow," he says and falls asleep. Quietly, Chand gets out of bed and from her bags finds her phulkari (a sheet embroidered by a bride for her trousseau). She covers Rocky and watches as the greens and yellows rise and fall with his breath.

When it is finally time to have their honeymoon, Rocky takes Chand to Niagara Falls. She loves their majesty, their crashing roar and asks for a photograph. "Photos are for tourists," says Rocky.

In their honeymoon suite Chand tries once more for intimacy. "What are your hobbies?" she asks. And Rocky, startled but obliging starts to respond. Slowly they become more comfortable with each other. Suddenly there is a knock on the door. It is Maji and Baldev. "I had a dream something happened to you," Maji says, possessively hugging Rocky. "Now that I know you are okay, we can leave." Rocky stops her insisting that she sleep with Chand while he sleeps in the car with Baldev. "Perhaps we could rent a second room?" suggests Chand. Unexpectedly, Rocky slaps Chand's face and sends her crashing across the room. No one reacts. "Don't waste your tears" says Maji, "this is all part of married life."

Unable to contact her mother in Punjab, Chand withdraws into herself. She begins to live in a fantasy world inspired by the story of the King Cobra her mother had recounted so often.

Maji and Papaji spend their days in the local shopping mall so that the family can earn a little more income by renting out the pull out bed to day boarders. Chand works in a factory cleaning hotel laundry. On one side of her is Aman, and on the other side is Rosa (Yanna McIntosh). Street smart and wise, Rosa is a Jamaican-Canadian woman who knows Chand needs help. The police are out of the question. Instead Rosa gives Chand a magical root that a witch had given her in Jamaica. The root is supposed to ignite love in the heart of the person who ingests it. "Put it in whatever the bastard drinks," Rosa instructs Chand.

The first time she gives it to Rocky in a glass of milk he collapses in a heap—and it's not love induced. The second time she grinds the entire root as Rosa advised but the glass of milk turns into a bizarre concoction that she throws out in the backyard. It burns a hole in the ground and suddenly a snake pit appears and Brampton becomes home to its first ever King Cobra.

The men in the family are shocked by the snake and bring out their cricket bats to give it a good thrashing. But the snake keeps coming back. In Hindu mythology the King Cobra is the most feared and worshipped of all the snakes. Lord Shiva, the most powerful of the Hindu Gods, wears a King Cobra like a garland around his neck. This is to show he is beyond death. The King Cobra can also take any guise. When the snake appears to Chand, it comes in the form of a very loving and different Rocky. It is the Rocky she longs for and soon she cannot tell the two apart.

The real Rocky is struggling to keep afloat. Burdened by the pressure of supporting his parents and a brother-in-law who can't find a job, Rocky begins to feel the weight of family obligations. It doesn't help when Maji keeps insisting he raise the money to sponsor his brother from India. His rage continues to build.

One morning, a battle weary Chand takes the day off work. She locks herself in her room to give the day tenants their privacy. Rocky in his loving guise comes home to be with her. One of the day tenants knocks on Chand's door and asks after her health. She tells the tenants she is fine and that her husband is with her.

The next day Rocky learns from the tenants that Chand was in the bedroom with a man she called her husband. Rocky accuses Chand of being unfaithful. Chand insists that it was he, Rocky, who was with her. "Don't you remember, you read my palm?"

Rocky beats her mercilessly. He leaves the room to tell his family and they decide what to do with the unfaithful wife. As soon as he is gone, the kinder Rocky appears to console Chand. She implores him to leave her alone. "Wait," he tells her, "when you face the family tell them you want to prove your innocence by taking the snake ordeal." "Won't the snake bite me?" she asks. "Not if you tell the truth."

In the backyard Chand faces Rocky and his family. They sit in judgment like a tribunal. Terrified, she musters the courage to walk to the snake pit. She must put her hand into the pit, take hold of the King Cobra and speak the truth—this is the snake ordeal. Shakingly, she reaches into the pit, grabs the Cobra and slowly looks at the family. In one moment she makes a choice that will change all their lives.

## **THE CHARACTERS**

**Chand:** Educated, vibrant and very pretty, Chand is a bride-to-be who embarks on a journey that is both physical and internal. Leaving the warmth and familiarity of her Punjabi home she lands in Canada in the middle of winter to marry a stranger in a strange land. At first she is optimistic and obliging to her new family but that soon changes. Alienated, alone and without the comfort of her mother, Chand finds friendship in a co-worker named Rosa who works beside her on an assembly line in a factory. She seeks solace from the abuse she is suffering by slipping into a fantasy world where her husband Rocky is gentle and compassionate. When the line between fantasy and reality starts to blur, Chand must come to terms with who she really is and make a choice between a life of freedom or fear.

**Rocky:** Bound by the obligations of family, trapped by the narrow definition of being a man in traditional Punjabi culture, Rocky is the hope and pride of his family. He drives an airport limousine and is the principal earner in the family. The pressure this puts on him is immense. Life with his clan and all their expectations is claustrophobic. His possessive and overbearing mother wants him to sponsor his brother to Canada, and this on his driver's salary. When Chand enters the picture, it is a pressure that puts him over the edge. Unable to articulate his frustration and helplessness, he takes his rage out on Chand. His violence toward her is terrifying and it culminates in one moment of undeniable self-reckoning.

**Maji:** The domineering matriarch, Maji's demands on her son create an atmosphere that is suffocating and oppressive. Maji dotes on Rocky but it is clear that part of her is afraid he will be overcome by Chand's charm and forget his duty to his parents. Unable to let Rocky go and unaware of the pressure he is under, Maji's expectations become overwhelming.

**Papaji:** Sweet but ultimately ineffectual, Papaji tries to be the healing balm that soothes his troubled family. But he is no match for the power of his wife. The loss of his dentures becomes the defining tragedy of his life. In spite of his physical decay, Papaji retains his honour and his dignity. He is the only one who can express his compassion for Chand. He quotes, "better to live in hell than a heaven without dignity".

**Aman:** Rocky's sister, is married to Baldev who is unemployed. His laziness creates much tension in the family but Aman loves him and is loyal to him. "Didn't he sponsor all of you?" She yells one night at the dinner table. Aman works with Chand at the factory and doesn't cringe when her brother beats her. "Don't mind Rocky," she says, "he's a nice boy he just has a quick temper." She wears her resignation like a badge of honour and expects Chand to do the same.

**Baldev:** Apart from having sex and eating tandoori chicken, Baldev does very little. Though he loves his wife and family he has resigned himself to not finding a job. His unemployment is having a devastating impact on his sense of self worth. At the dinner table he says under his breath for all the family to hear that "a man who is dependent on his in-laws is worse than a dog."

**Kabir:** Kabir is thirteen years old and clearly angry. He sleeps in a cot in the living room with his grandparents while his sister shares a bedroom with their parents. His uncle Rocky's treatment of Chand is difficult for Kabir to bear but there is nothing he can do to stop it. Instead he reacts, expressing his frustration through action, not unlike his uncle Rocky. Kabir flushes Papaji's dentures down the toilet and one night when the family is arguing at the dinner table he throws down a snakeskin from the Cobra who supposedly lives in the backyard. When he learns that his uncle Gurpreet is coming from India he is furious to know that one more body will be occupying an already overcrowded space and that he will also have to sleep with his parents.

**Loveleen:** 10 years old, soft spoken and gentle, Loveleen has a special bond with Chand. Though she loves her uncle Rocky, she is afraid of him and at times tries in vain to pacify him. Confused and frightened by the violence, Loveleen looks for comfort in the arms of her mother.

**Rosa:** Street wise, Rosa is a woman from Jamaica. She too was abused and knows what Chand is struggling with. When Rocky repeatedly ignores Chand's pleas to phone her mother, Rosa teaches her how to make a long distance call. Aman is suspicious of their growing relationship and tries to interfere. Rosa, knowing that Chand will never reveal her plight to the police, offers her another alternative—a magical root from Jamaica that will ignite the love of the one who takes it. Having used it herself she advises Chand to “put it in whatever the bastard drinks.”

### **THE COLLISION OF WORLDS**

Ludhiana, Punjab vs. Brampton, Ontario.

According to the most recent census, South Asians have become the largest immigrant group in Canada. Of these, the majority are Sikhs from the Punjab. The history of the South Asian community in Canada began with a handful of brave, Punjabi pioneers who were former soldiers for her majesty's army. They settled in British Columbia at the beginning of the last century and started the story of a community that grew from a few hundred to now over one million people.

The Punjab is a small state in India and yet it is responsible for the biggest migration of South Asians to Canada. Many of these hail from the industrial hub of Ludhiana, the largest city in Punjab, where signs reading “easy immigration to Canada” abound on nearly every street corner.

Known as the “Manchester” of Punjab, Ludhiana prides itself on a number of things: its central role in India's struggle for independence; a strong work ethic and, a literacy rate of nearly 76%, one of the highest in India. To go from being an educated middle-class woman to a factory worker is demeaning for Chand. “I have a degree,” she says proudly, “perhaps I could do something else?” But as Aman tells Rosa with a jaundiced wisdom, “Meet my sister-in-law, she thinks jobs grow on maple trees in Canada.”

The suburb of Brampton, Ontario is often called “Bramladesh” by those in the know. There are now schools in Brampton where 90% of the population is South Asian. Street signs are often in both English and Punjabi and kids study Bhangra (traditional Punjabi folk dance) and Bollywood after school. Punjabi is quickly becoming the fourth most popular language in Canada and certainly in places like Brampton and Malton where the Punjabi community is so entrenched and large, one can go ones whole life never needing to speak English.

Living in similar extended family situations as they did in India, many immigrants recreate the social and cultural structures of the country they left behind. But often these

exist in a kind of social vacuum and are not sustainable—like taking an orchid and expecting it to bloom in the cold.

The isolation is heightened when one goes from the bustling streets of Ludhiana to the wide sprawl of Brampton, for how does a community recreate a culture from the old country when even the simple physicality of the place doesn't allow for it? As Chand says to her brother on the phone, "Why do you want to come here? There's nothing here!"

Like Chand, there have been numerous and well documented stories of South Asian women who have come to Canada in arranged marriages and now live in impossibly difficult relationships totally isolated from their supportive families at home in India. They are unable to leave their marriages because of the traditional concept of izzat or family honour. For so many of these women and men, divorce is not an option and discussing the issues that take place in their homes is not done. As Aman says, "in our community we deal with problems in house."

## **DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

### **On the Genesis of the film...**

In 1989 I saw Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry's version of *Naga Mandala*, a play written by India's acclaimed writer, actor and filmmaker, Girish Karnad. The play itself was based on an old Indian folk tale about a lonely and unhappy wife who finds comfort when she is visited by a snake who has taken on the form of her husband.

Then four years ago, at a reception in Edmonton, I met Mona Gill, a young Punjabi woman. We got to talking and she proceeded to tell me her story and what brought her to Canada from Punjab, India. Her arranged marriage to a Sikh man soon disintegrated into an abusive relationship which was exacerbated by the presence of her mother-in-law and sister-in-law in the joint family. It was only after the birth of her daughter that she got the courage to leave her abusive husband. Her mind-numbing story was about isolation and an emotional and physical hell. It ended in triumph for her when she walked out and turned her back, not only on the marriage, but also to years of a patriarchal and cultural structure in which she and thousands of women like her grew up in. She had the courage to break the code of silence. A silence that is a mandatory requirement as far as marriage in South Asian culture is concerned.

In talking about this she ran a serious risk of bringing a great deal of shame upon herself, her family and her husband. 'To wash one's dirty linen in public' is an anathema to many such women. Realizing what a great role model Mona is, The National Film Board of Canada has just finished a documentary on her.

Ironically, Mona's story wasn't unique. Hundreds of women from the South Asian community shared pretty much the same narrative.

A year later I was asked by Noemi Weis to direct *Lets Talk About It* a documentary about children growing up in abusive households within the immigrant community. Along with a Nigerian and Ecuadorian woman, I wanted to include Mona. Sadly, our budget did not allow for a shoot in Edmonton. However, we did meet another Punjabi woman, Amandeep, whose story was not dissimilar to Mona's. Both Mona and Amandeep became a source of inspiration for me.

Around this time, I saw *Naga Mandala* again in New Delhi. To weave both a personal story of a young immigrant woman and the myth of the Cobra, the nature of duality, seemed like an interesting combination. The script, which follows Chand's journey, took about a year to write. The whole process from script to final cut took 18 months.

*Naga Mandala* is a story that is fluid enough to disturb stable representations. It is the story of an unhappy bride, who fills her loneliness by conjuring fantasies, dreams and illusions to give meaning to her life. Stories which then get a life of their own, and start functioning independently from her.

The story about a snake becoming her lover, after drinking the magic potion can be perceived on many levels. There is the literal narrative - a snake assuming the role of her husband. And on a completely different register, the transformation of the husband into the snake assumes a philosophical tenor. Does the Naga (snake) lover really exist or is he a figment of her imagination? Or is it the husband playing a game of his own? Or is it the wife who creates her story?

Karnad explores the meaning of creativity by presenting a complex and provocatively ambiguous world where fictional characters and real characters intermingle and the lines between the visible and the invisible are blurred. What makes his work fascinating is that even though it is set in the traditional/folk format, it examines issues that are contemporary.

The character of the husband is split into two. In his human form, he is the coarse and boorish man, who brutalizes his wife Rani during the day, but at night he metamorphoses into a divine lover – a Naga-Raja. Both halves are unaware of each other, both exist in one another, both are each other's divided selves, contradicting and contrasting with each other in a dynamic play of fantasy and illusion. The real merges with the fictive, and the imagined dissolves with the material. This duality is played out within all the characters of this play. Rani, the wife, is an active participant in this game of the ephemeral, building it like a house of cards, pushing it inch by inch. She needs the vertiginous thrill of the transitory to be truly creative and alive. She is not alone in this game, each character plays it out within their own cycle of pain and joy, adding layer upon layer, knitting together a complex cosmos where half truths hover tantalizingly over the quotidian, conscious world. In the play, the Rosa character is a blind woman, who takes pity on Rani and asks her son to bring her a magic root.

The story is grounded in reality, with its daily chores of washing and cooking. But within that world the characters take flight, inhabiting a fluid and magical world, where anything

can happen. A snake can manifest itself as a character, a snake can assume a human form, and a woman writes her own story by the power of her imagination. That combination and interplay between the fantastic and the ordinary was something I wanted to explore in the film.

### **On working with the actors ...**

Preity Zinta, who plays Chand, is a huge star in Bollywood. In most of her films she plays the 'uber-cool chick'. I met her last year in England and her translucency as a person really struck a chord in me. I cast instinctively. I knew within the span of ten minutes that Preity would make the perfect Chand. Preity is smart, honest, adventurous, and has no attitude considering her marquee status. Luckily, Preity was at a point in her career where she wanted to experiment, do something other than Bollywood.

To work with Preity was an absolute joy. She is a consummate professional and extremely diligent. She has an academic background in psychology, so she wrote copious notes and had a barrage of questions regarding her character and motivation. To play Chand was all consuming for Preity. She became Chand and worked her bones off to give her role authenticity, and this included learning Punjabi.

Maji's character, played with such conviction by Balinder Johal, was typical of the victim becoming the victimizer, the woman taking on the role of the abusive patriarchy. Balinder proved her mettle professionally and physically during the shooting of the film. We did seven takes of the shot where Balinder is pushed to the kitchen floor by Preity. It was only after I had OK'd the final shot that Balinder admitted that her wrists were weak. She came into her own when she would do improvisation. She improvised all the dialogues between her and Papaji in the scenes shot in the mall. When Papaji was doing his exercise on the escalator she burst into an impromptu song, taking me by surprise! Sadly, it didn't make the final cut.

I first met Vansh Bhardwaj who plays Rocky, at a performance of *Naga Mandala*. It was Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry's version and the talent and focus Vansh brought to the role were tangible. After the play was over I went to meet him backstage and found the awesome lead with a broom in his hand helping to clean up the set! ***Heaven On Earth*** is Vansh's first film and to this day his charisma blows me away. My only concern was Vansh performing with Preity. Would he be diffident to her star status? As it turns out, I had nothing to worry about. The discipline that Vansh had imbibed working with Neelam held him in good stead and Preity was extremely generous in sharing the 'film language' she had garnered over the years with Vansh.

Rajinder Singh Cheema from Vancouver played the kind but ineffectual patriarch of the household. He brought incredible dignity to the role and I think surprised even himself with his stamina and single mindedness in not giving up until he got a line or a body movement just right. He continues to call me 'bhenji' (sister, in Punjabi) even though I was a hard taskmaster.

Gourrav Sihan was a discovery! I was going nuts trying to find a Baldev-- the son-in-law who is dependent on his wife's family and not having much luck. If somebody looked the part, they didn't know Punjabi, and if they knew Punjabi and looked the part they had no propensity towards the craft of performance. Then along came an audition with Gourrav. He was perfect. The beaten son-in-law who tries to put up a brave face and keep his dignity intact without rocking the boat. There are these 'quick looks' that Gourrav gives to people, looks that take in the situation at hand and then ignore it.

Ramanjit Kaur plays Aman, Baldev's wife, Rocky's sister, Chand's sister-in-law, Maji and Papaji's daughter and the mother to Kabir and Loveleen. A woman defined through her relationships rather than her own identity. I have known Raman for years. She did a cameo for *Fire* and is an extremely well respected theatre actor. She continues to play the lead in all of Neelam's plays. To work with her was effortless. She too brought the discipline of theatre with her and an uncanny ability to have fun. A storehouse of Punjabi songs for ALL occasions, she came up with the folk songs sung in the film.

Rosa turned out to be the toughest role to cast. I was looking not only for a fine actor, but also one that could physically pull off being 'magical' in a rather mundane environment; to be mystical yet rooted in reality. When I saw Yanna's audition tape, I knew she was the one! Rosa is Jamaican-Canadian, and Yanna brought a non-stereotypical presence to her. She imbued Rosa's character with compassion without ever resorting to sentimentality. The 'bonding' between her and Chand was used to emphasize the cross-ethnic allegiances that spring up between women in similar situations.

I had worked with Orville Maciel in the radio play *Funny Boy* and was very impressed by him. So when it came to cast Kabir, he was a shoe-in! Kabir is an angry 13 year old who has some of the darkest lines in the film. He perhaps is the only one in the family who is truly "Canadian," much to the confusion and bewilderment of the rest of the family.

I love to talk about Geetika Sharma, my lovely Loveleen, the classic victim in-the-making. Geetika brightened each working day for me. This was her first film and she is an absolute natural--very talented, hard working and such a joy to be around. Geetika is the only person I know who can cry on demand! We had our own language going "Don't be filmy Geetika, Just... 'FEEL,' she would pipe in, finishing my sentence! Her mother Mamta brought us the most delicious home made parathas to set.

### **On cultural authenticity and the larger social context...**

The family in Brampton represents a typical working class immigrant family in Canada. They could be from any community. The reason I focused on a Punjabi family was, to a large extent, because I am a Punjabi and grew up in Amritsar, speaking the language. It is easier to be authentic if you belong to the milieu and are familiar with it. The fact that Neelam's play was in Punjabi had a lot to do with it as well. And finally the women I met, read about, all belonged to this community. All of them gave generously of their experience, of their stories. Thanks to our researcher and friend, Nep Siddhu, I met families in the suburbs of Toronto who I could draw upon to do the film. Characters, the

rituals, every small detail of the film are rooted in reality. The reality of dislocation; the effect that immigration has on people who leave their native land to come to Canada in search of monetary security and instead find themselves living in the fringes, trying desperately to simulate elements of their homeland in isolation from the mainstream.

*Heaven On Earth* has three distinct themes. Immigration, isolation, and the power of the imagination that finally enables Chand to escape her grim reality. Most of us like to believe that migration to Canada improves women's status, but this isn't necessarily so. Though it might help some women escape from oppression in their homeland, unfortunately it also deprives them of protection that their families offer back home. In India, abusive behaviour might be checked by family members, friends or neighbors. But in their adopted homeland these women are bereft of family and friends. And in many cases, totally isolated and therefore vulnerable. Everybody in *Heaven On Earth* is a victim. Not only of the cultural baggage which they brought with them to their new home, but also because of the lack of support they find when they get here. There is little or no network that prepares these characters for an alien world, which they can navigate with dignity.

### **On the look of the film...**

The family in Brampton is a microcosm of a much larger reality. I wanted to be a fly on the wall observing their intimate drama unfold. In order to do this we decided we needed mobility to follow the characters and not be tied down to technical baggage. It seemed imminently sensible to shoot the film handheld and in 16mm. Both Giles and myself decided that not only would 16mm give it the grainy look that I wanted, but also free us from huge lighting setups, which would have inhibited the actors tremendously.

The 'look' of the film is dictated to me by the script and the characters. This is the fifth film that Giles and myself have worked on together. Giles has an incredible understanding of script and knows that a camera movement should be dictated by the actors and not the other way around.

Authenticity of course was also paramount for this film. Days of hanging around families similar to the ones in the film, helped tremendously. Dilip, our Production Designer, has an uncanny eye for detail. His challenge was to recreate a house in Brampton that even 'smelled' real.

Making *Heaven On Earth* gave me an opportunity not only to explore subjects that I care about passionately, that is, isolation, immigration and imagination, but the film also gave me an opportunity to go into territories technically that I have never grappled with before. The story dictated its own style. I went minimal.

The use of black and white was a choice that Giles and I made fairly early in the creative process. We decided to shoot a few portions in black and white to emphasize the main theme of the film: dislocation and isolation. I felt that the 'twilight zone' quality of these moments needed to be highlighted and using black and white seemed the most organic

way of doing it. It wasn't as simple as 'intensity is leached of all colour, so let's go to black and white'. Rather, it was to try and encourage the viewer to see the characters lay bare their most intimate fears and delusions in monochromatic austerity. The first use of black and white in the film is at Niagara Falls and is a bit startling. However, it delivers a profound sense of isolation and a disconnect between our idea of something (the romanticism of Niagara Falls) and the reality of our circumstances at the moment.

There is something fascinating, as well as uncomfortable, when we see the characters in this visual context; a bit like witnessing the aftermath of an accident. We can't take our eyes off the victims and yet feel terribly guilty about watching them. In order not to feel like a voyeur there is a tendency to distance ourselves from what we are seeing. In *Heaven On Earth* the device we use to achieve this 'distance', this 'objectivity' is black and white. The fractured intimate moments of Chand and Rocky's lives are like seeing an x-ray of a broken bone or tumor. Stark, ominous and yet compelling.

In terms of locations, we shot mostly in Brampton, but also in Niagara Falls, Toronto, the Gardiner Expressway and Punjab, India.

### **On the Physical Violence...**

The focus of *Heaven On Earth* is not physical abuse per se, rather, I wanted to explore the different aspects that might lead to it. In this particular case dislocation and the emotional stress and isolation that this brings with it, and finally, Chand's imagination which is a tool that can counter it. So the 'abuse' scenes are very few in the film. What was tough was to sustain that tension throughout. It was almost like shooting a thriller - as in what's going to happen next?

Vansh was pretty cerebral in his approach to these scenes, while Preity was entirely emotional. There were days, she said, when she couldn't sleep.

### **On some of the production challenges...**

We shot for 30 days and it was so cold! Minus 20 degrees. That's what I remember vividly, shivering throughout the shoot. Especially the last scene of the film which we shot over three days because the weather fluctuated between those deadly clear days of winter and unexpected blizzards. A real challenge.

Preity was a real trooper considering she comes from balmy Mumbai. The rest of the cast from Vancouver, Toronto and India also met the winter head-on. Especially the kids.

### **On the role of the filmmaker...**

Making films is like going on an exploration for me. To explore and to try and unravel a set of circumstances, to examine the psychology behind them is what I find fascinating.

Finally, it's about telling a story about a subject I care about passionately. Where does

this desire come from? Perhaps the politics and policies that define all our lives. We are all susceptible to the dictates of culture, religion and economics. How we negotiate with all the above is what I find compelling. My community has evolved over the last century in Canada from one that was eschewed and expelled to one that is found a way within the mainstream. There are many role models of success in business, politics and the arts that reflect this. However, for many new immigrants searching out this same pathway, the initial transition can be grueling. The strong social and cultural bonds which are the strengths of our community, ironically, is what sometimes causes us to mask problems in order to project a flawless image.

## **ABOUT THE CAST**

### **Preity Zinta Chand**

Preity Zinta is a multi award winning Bollywood actress who originally shot to fame as a model, most notably as the fresh-faced, dimpled beauty of Liril soap ads. Preity had never imagined a career as an actress, but while studying Criminal Psychology at Bombay University, Shekhar Kapoor (*Elizabeth*) saw the Liril ad and decided to cast her as the lead in his next film-- *Tara Rum Pum*. The film is still to be made but other offers soon followed, including Kundan Shah's *Kya Kehna*, the fabulous Mani Ratnam's *Dil Se* and Abaas-Mustan's *Soldier*. All three were critical and box office hits and Preity soon took her place in Bollywood's A List.

With break out roles in *Dil Chahta Hai* and *Dil Hai Tumhara* Preity became an actress to be reckoned with. Her screen presence, charm and talent have made her a favourite casting choice for Bollywood's top producers and directors. Some of her most notable work includes Rakesh Roshan's *Koi Mil Gaya* where she stars opposite the talented Hrithik Roshan; Nikhil Advani's *Kal Ho Na Ho* starring superstar Shahrukh Khan; Farhan Akhtar's *Lakshya* featuring the great Amitabh Bachchan; Yash Chopra's *Veer Zaara*; Siddhart Anand's *Salaam Namaste* with Saif Ali Khan and Karan Johar's *Kabhi Alvida Na Kehna* with Preity and an all star cast including Shahrukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Abhishek Bachchan, Rani Mukherjee, and John Abraham.

### **Selected Filmography:**

*Jhoom Barabar Jhoom* (2007)

*Jaaneman* (2006)

*Kabhi Alvida Naa Kehna* (2006)

*Salaam Namaste* (2005)

*Khullam Khulla Pyaar Karen* (2005)

*Veer Zaara* (2004)

*Dil Ne Jise Apna Kaha* (2004)

*Lakshya* (2004)

*Kal Ho Naa Ho* (2003)

*Koi Mil Gaya* (2003)

*Armaan* (2003)

*The Hero: Love Story of a Spy* (2003)  
*Dil Hai Tumhaara* (2002)  
*Yeh Raaste Hain Pyaar Ke* (2001)  
*Dil Chahta Hai* (2001)  
*Farz* (2001)  
*Chori Chori Chupke Chupke* (2001)  
*Mission Kashmir* (2000)  
*Har Dil Jo Pyar Karega* (2000)  
*Kya Kehna* (2000)

### **Accolades & Achievements**

44th Filmfare Award 1999 - Best Female Debut –*Dil Se & Soldier* (1998)  
Lux New Face Of the year – *Dil Se*  
Zee Cine Award 1999 - Best Debut (Female) – *Soldier* (1998)  
Sansui Viewer’s Choice Movie Awards 2002 – Best Actress  
Red & White Bravery Award – 2003  
Advertising Club, Mumbai – 2003  
Lion’s Club International – 2003 & 2004  
POGO Voice Awards 2004 – The Amazing Heroine  
7th Sansui Viewer’s Choice Movie Awards 2004 – Best Actress – *Kal Ho Naa Ho* (2003)  
5th IIFA 2004 - Best Actress – *Kal Ho Naa Ho* (2003)  
7th Zee Cine Awards 2004 – Female Super Star of the Year  
49th Filmfare Award 2004 - Best Actress – *Kal Ho Naa Ho* (2003)  
Max Stardust Awards 2005 – Star of the Year (Female) – *Veer Zara* (2004)  
Whirlpool Gr8 Women Achiever’s Award – 2005  
Voted as Most Popular Indian Actress by BBC Network – 2005

### **Balinder Johal**

#### **Maji**

Born, raised and educated in India, Johal came to Canada in 1965 with a Masters in Punjabi and a Bachelor in Teaching. She obtained an M.A. in Education from the University of British Columbia. Eventually she became a teacher for the B.C. school system and at Vancouver Community College where she taught for 24 years before taking early retirement to follow her dreams.

Theatre was always her passion in India. Johal has performed in plays in most of the big cities in Canada and also in California often with India based Harpal Tiwana’s Theatre Group. Being a community activist, Johal has also been involved in issue oriented community plays done locally and the forum play, *Here and Now* about gang violence.

Since 1990, Johal has worked in Hollywood and Canadian Television and movies, educational videos and on many voice-overs on and off camera in English, Punjabi and Hindi. Her *Chachi ji* episodes on community related issues, previously on multicultural and vision channels have been an attempt to bridge the cultural, educational, gender and

generational gaps.

Working in *Heaven on Earth* under Deepa Mehta's direction last year and winning the Leo Award as Best Female Performer in the short Film, *The Birthday*, are the best rewards she has reaped in the television and film industry. She embraces any future opportunities that should come forth with acting, especially if they are connected to Indo-Canadian or universal Issues.

### **Vansh Bhardwaj** **Rocky**

Vansh Bhardwaj was born in Chandigarh (Punjab) on April 7, 1981. He started doing theatre at the age of 11 and has done both children's theatre, amateur theatre and professional theatre where he has been lauded as an up and coming actor of note.

After completing his masters in theatre from the Indian Theatre Department at Punjab University in Chandigarh, Vansh began running his own company called 'Holy Theatre.'

He has also been working with renowned thespian Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry for the past five years.

Vansh has toured all over India and Pakistan and has done an international project for Japan, working with actors from all over the world. The play was a multilingual project and was directed by Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry.

### **Ramanjit Kaur** **Aman**

Ramanjit Kaur graduated in Dance and Music and did a masters degree in Music at the Punjab University in Chandigarh. She has been a professional actor for over 20 years but her journey in theatre began as a child—specifically the day she was selected as a delegate for the International Children's Theatre Festival in Chandigarh.

In 1986 at the age of fifteen, she began working professionally with Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry's 'The Company,' and trained under her as an actress. Chowdhry's 'The Company' consists of traditional musicians, female impersonators and urban actors, trained by Chowdhry, B.V. Karanth (Music) and Surjit Patar (Writer, Poet and Translator). Ramanjit is still influenced by her years in 'The Company' and continues to work with them, often in the role of lead actress. She has toured with several of their theatre productions including *Naga Mandala* (which inspired Deepa Mehta's *Heaven on Earth*); *Yerma*, *The Madwoman of Chaillot*, *Phaedra*, *Kitchen Katha*, *An Unposted Love Letter*, *Sibo in Supermarket* and *The Suit*.

As a recipient of the Charles Wallace India Trust Award (UK) Ramanjit was able to train at the Central School of Speech and Drama, London Academy of Music and Dramatic

Arts, and the Birmingham School of Speech and Drama. She has also worked with the Improbable Theatre and the Firenza Guidi in Italy. She has received several awards for her work in theatre including the Sanskriti Award for Theatre (2006) and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for Theatre (2006).

Currently she runs the theatre company 'The Creative Arts' in Kolkata where she is the artistic director.

Ramanjit was also cast in Deepa Mehta's *Fire*.

**Gourrav Sihan**  
**Baldev**

Born in Ludhiana, Punjab, raised in Calcutta, Gourrav has lived in Canada and the United States for the last 21 years. He has a Bachelors in Commerce and a BA in Accounting and Economics and also did Graduate studies in Ship Chartering.

As an actor he has appeared in numerous ads (both print and television) and has performed as a lead and supporting actor in both South Asian and North American productions. These include lead roles in, *A Piece of Heaven; Encounter* and *Pechaan* all for Pakistan's Hum TV; supporting roles in *The Sopranos*; and the popular Bollywood film *Aa ab Laut Chalen*. Gourrav has also lent his voice to such films as *The Guru, The Darjeeling Limited* and *The Warrior*.

He is fluent in English, Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali and Gujarati.

**Rajinder Singh Cheema**  
**Papaji**

Rajinder Singh Cheema was raised in Moga, Punjab, India alongside his two sisters and brother. In 1969, following the completion of his education, Rajinder Singh immigrated to Canada. He married Surinder Kaur in Vancouver in 1974.

In his 39 years in Vancouver Rajinder Singh has worked within a number of fields including real estate and the lumber industry. More recently he has become involved in the television and film industries. He can be seen in *CBC's DaVinci's Inquest* and *DaVinci's City Hall*. Previously he has been involved in a Canadian Unity commercial campaign.

Due to his love of Sikh and Punjabi culture and history, Rajinder Singh has always chosen projects that promote his heritage within the broader Canadian multicultural tapestry. He participated in the production of *CBC's Murder Unveiled* as an actor, cultural advisor and turban stylist as well. Rajinder also had a lead role in the South Asian film *Enough is Enough* produced by the Vancouver & Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Services.

He continues to reside in Richmond, B.C. with his wife, two sons, two daughters, and

two daughter-in-laws. They are all active members within the Sikh, and South Asian communities.

### **Orville Maciel**

#### **Kabir**

Orville Maciel, was born in Muscat, Oman on April 1 1992, spent his early childhood in Goa, India and immigrated with his family to Canada in 1997 at the young age of four. Orville in the past has performed in many plays at his elementary school.

However, Orville's first break was in 2004, when he voiced the character Kareem in the animated short film *Tomboy*, which was just released in May 2008. He also used his voice in the documentary *The In Between World of MG Vassanji* and he was a regular on the hit radio drama *Afghanada*, on CBC Radio. Orville's acting career really took off, when he played the lead role in the radio play for CBC, called *Funny Boy*. The play was directed by Deepa Mehta, and based on the novel by Shyam Selvadurai.

### **Geetika Sharma**

#### **Loveleen**

Geetika was born on September 7 1995 in Etobicoke, Ontario. Geetika was only 12 years old when she was cast in *Heaven On Earth* which was her first role in a motion picture. Her positive experiences working with Deepa Mehta have inspired her to continue acting. Aside from acting, Geetika enjoys sports and dancing.

Geetika plans to pursue acting until she is 18, after which she will pursue her goal of becoming a lawyer.

### **Yanna McIntosh**

#### **Rosa**

Yanna McIntosh is a multi-award winning actor known both for her television and theatre performances. She is also a writer and a teacher having directed students at the National Theatre School and Humber College in productions of *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar* and *Richard III*.

Her recent theatre credits include the title role in *Mary Stuart* for Soulpepper Theatre; *The Syringa Tree* for Canadian Stage for which she has been nominated for a Dora; *Skylight*, for the Tarragon Theatre, for which she won a Dora and Andre Alexis's *Lambton Kent* which she performed at the Edinburgh Festival. She also co-wrote and performed the play *Trace*. Yanna has performed in several plays over the years on most of this country's and city's top stages, including the National Arts Centre, the Factory Theatre, Soulpepper Theatre and Theatre Passe Murailles.

As a Shakespearean actor, she has performed in many of the Bard's plays at Stratford and the Canadian Stage including *The Taming of the Shrew*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Twelfth Night* and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

Her film and television credits include *The Best Years* (2007); *The Sentinel* (2006); *This is Wonderland* (2006); *Blue Murder* (2004); *John Q* (2002); *Riverdale* (1997) and *Doomstown* (2006) for which she won a Gemini.

Yanna's upcoming projects include *Stuff Happens* in which she plays Condoleeza Rice. She also will be in the ABC version of the classic *A Raisin in the Sun* and has a role in the new TMN series *The Weight*.

### **ABOUT THE CREW**

#### **Deepa Mehta**

#### **Director, Producer & Screenwriter**

**Deepa Mehta** was born in India and received a degree in philosophy from the University of New Delhi. In 1991, Mehta produced and directed her first feature film *Sam & Me*, the poignant story of an unlikely friendship between two outcasts who form a deep and permanent bond despite the fact that neither is welcome in the other's world. *Sam & Me* won the very first Honorable Mention by the Critics in the prestigious Camera D'Or category at the 1991 Cannes Film Festival.

In 1992, she directed a one-hour episode of the *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* (the adventures of Indiana Jones as a boy) produced by George Lucas for ABC television. "Benares" was filmed on location in Benares, India.

In 1993, Mehta directed her second feature film, *Camilla*, a Canadian / UK co-production starring (the late) Jessica Tandy and Bridget Fonda. Other cast members included Elias Koteas, Maury Chaykin, Graham Greene and Hume Cronyn. It was shot on location in Toronto, Ontario and Savannah, Georgia. *Camilla* had a worldwide release early in 1995.

Mehta directed the final episode of George Lucas's *Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* in 1994. "Travels with Father" was shot on location in Prague, C.R. and Greece.

*Fire*, Mehta's third feature film, based on an original screenplay, was written, directed and produced by Mehta. *Fire* opened the Perspective Canada Program at the 1996 Toronto International Film Festival, where it was runner-up (with *Fly Away Home*) for the Air Canada People's Choice Award. It was one of 29 films selected from over 1400 entries, worldwide, for the prestigious New York Film Festival. At the Vancouver International Film Festival, *Fire* won the Federal Express Award for Best Canadian Film as chosen by the audience. At the Chicago International Film Festival, it won two Silver Hugo Awards for Best Direction and Best Actress. In Mannheim, *Fire* won the Jury Award and in Paris, it was voted Favourite Foreign Film. *Fire* has currently been sold to 30 countries and had its North American release on August 22, 1997, followed by releases in Europe, Australia and India in September 1997.

*Earth*, based on Bapsi Sidhwa's critically acclaimed novel, Cracking India, is the second film in Mehta's trilogy of the elements, *Fire*, *Earth* and *Water*. *Earth* was shot in New Delhi, India, in January of 1998. It had its world premiere as a Special Presentation at the 1998 Toronto Film Festival where it was received with a standing ovation and critical acclaim. *Earth* won the Prix Premiere du Public at the Festival du film Asiatique de Deauville (France) in March 1999 and the Critics' Award at the Schermi d'Amore International Film Festival (Italy) in April of the same year. Currently, *Earth* has been sold to 22 countries and was selected by the Film Federation of India as India's nomination for consideration for an Academy Award in the category of Best Foreign Language Film.

Her film *Bollywood/ Hollywood* opened the Perspective Canada Program at the 2002 Toronto International Film Festival, and has remained in the top 10 grossing English movies since its Canadian opening on October 25, 2002. In 2003, Mehta co-wrote and directed *Republic of Love*, starring Bruce Greenwood and Amelia Fox, and based on the novel of the same title by the world-renowned author Carol Shields.

In the same year, Mehta won the prestigious CineAsia “Best Director” Award – an acclaim awarded to Steven Spielberg in 2002.

*Water*, the third film in the “elements” trilogy, opened the 2005 Toronto International Film Festival. *Water* is the first Canadian film ever acquired by U.S. distributor Fox Searchlight and was released in the United States in the spring of 2006.

Initially, *Water* was to be shot in India, but Hindu fundamentalists created riots, burnt the sets and issued death threats to the director and actors forcing the film to stop production in early 2000. The film was remounted and completed shooting in Sri Lanka in June 2004.

*Water* has played many film festivals in North America and internationally, winning festival awards in Sudbury, Edmonton, Italy, Valladolid, Bangkok and San Francisco. The film received the Taormina Arte Awards for Cinematic Excellence in 2006. *Water* received the Golden Kinnaree Awards for best picture from the Bangkok International Film Festival. The film was nominated for nine Genie awards, winning three. The Vancouver Film Critics Circle named Deepa Mehta the Best Director of a Canadian Film in 2006. More recently, the film was nominated for Best Foreign Film at the 79th Annual Academy Awards.

#### *FILMOGRAPHY*

<i>SAM AND ME</i>	1991
<i>CAMILLA</i>	1994
<i>FIRE</i>	1996
<i>EARTH</i>	1998
<i>BOLLYWOOD/HOLLYWOOD</i>	2002
<i>REPUBLIC OF LOVE</i>	2003

*WATER* 2004  
*LETS TALK ABOUT IT* 2006

**David Hamilton**

**Producer/Executive Producer**

**David Hamilton** is the producer of the Oscar nominated film *Water*, directed by Deepa Mehta. He was the producer on *Water* when it was shut down by Hindu fundamentalist factions during the attempted shooting in India in 2000 and has worked together with Deepa Mehta over the past five years to re-assemble the production that was ultimately shot in Sri Lanka in 2004. He had previously produced Deepa Mehta's critically acclaimed feature films *Fire* and *Earth* which he sold in conjunction with United Artists to over 40 countries worldwide. Following the original shutdown of *Water*, Hamilton collaborated once again with Mehta by producing *Bollywood/Hollywood*, which was shot in Toronto in late 2001, and the following year opened Perspective Canada at the Toronto International Film Festival. It was a box office success in Canada and sold in over 20 countries worldwide. He has also executive produced *Lunch With Charles*, a Hong Kong-Canadian co-production starring Sean Lau, Theresa Lee, Nicholas Lea and Bif Naked.

After completing his undergraduate studies at McGill, Hamilton went on to Harvard for a masters degree. While at Harvard, he wrote a book on decision theory that was published by MIT Press. A Harvard Sheldon Traveling Fellowship enabled him to travel and study for one year in the Middle East, Iran and India. His business ventures have taken him to every corner of the globe and span a variety of enterprises, including communications, publishing, concert production/promotion and feature film production.

His passions early in life were gymnastics and theatre. He performed a tight rope act in a children's circus and wrote and acted in numerous plays and musicals. A strong supporter of the arts, Hamilton has been an active member of the board of directors of the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, School of Dance and is the current chairman of the Ottawa International Writers Festival.

**FILMOGRAPHY**

<i>FIRE</i>	1996	FEATURE FILM	107 MINUTES
<i>EARTH</i>	1998	FEATURE FILM	117 MINUTES
<i>LUNCH WITH CHARLES</i>	2001	FEATURE FILM	97 MINUTES
<i>BOLLYWOOD HOLLYWOOD</i>	2002	FEATURE FILM	98 MINUTES
<i>WATER</i>	2004	FEATURE FILM	114 MINUTES
<i>FORGOTTEN WOMAN</i>	2007	FEATURE DOC	100 MINUTES

**Giles Nuttgens**

**Director of Photography**

Giles joined the British Broadcasting Corporation in the UK in 1981 as Assistant Film Cameraman working worldwide on documentaries for the renowned Natural History

Unit. At the age of 26 he became one of the youngest Film Cameramen ever in the BBC and over the next few years shot many documentaries on environmental and social issues, working in locations ranging from the Amazon rainforest to the depressed urban jungle of Glasgow. In 1989 he shot his first feature for Film Four International on location in India, a place that was to become a second home over the next decade. At the beginning of the 90's he started working for Lucasfilm on *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* where he first met Deepa Mehta to shoot an episode about Krishnamurthy in Benares (Varanasi) . For cinema he collaborated on *Bandit Queen*(1990) with Shekhar Kapur and *Fire* (1994) for Deepa Mehta, two films that caused great political upheaval in India (ironically cinemas were burnt down for projecting *Fire*). Alongside the continuing work for Lucasfilm, he shot various seasons of TV police shows for British television and several films for cinema including *Earth* for Deepa Mehta and worked as 2nd Unit Director of Photography on Episode I of *Star Wars*.

In 2000 he met up with David Siegel and Scott McGehee and photographed *The Deep End* around Lake Tahoe in California for which he won the Cinematography Award at Sundance the following year.

2002 brought a new connection when Giles photographed *Young Adam* starring Ewan McGregor and Tilda Swinton, the first of his films for David Mackenzie. Over the next three years he finished off both Episodes II and III of *Star Wars* with George Lucas, *Asylum* starring Ian McKellen once again for director David Mackenzie, *Bee Season* starring Richard Gere and Juliette Binoche and *Water*, the third of Deepa Mehta's elemental trilogy. More recently he completed *Hallam Foe* and *Good Night* starring Penélope Cruz and Danny DeVito.

### **Dilip Mehta** **Production Designer**

**Dilip Mehta** was born in Delhi, India. For his secondary education, he attended the prestigious Doon School in Dehra Dun and graduated from the Delhi University with a degree in Economics/Commerce.

As an internationally renowned photojournalist, Dilip has photographed for some of the world's leading publications such as National Geographic, Time, Newsweek, Figaro, Stern, The London Sunday Times and The New York Times amongst others.

His incisive coverage of the Bhopal Gas tragedy and photo reportage of its aftermath over a five-year period won him accolades including the World Press and Overseas Press Awards.

He is a member-photographer of the prestigious New York and Paris based CONTACT PRESS IMAGES, a photo agency that represents an exclusive group of photojournalists who share a unique vision.

His work has been published in the award-winning Day in the Life series in America,

Canada, Russia, Australia, Japan, Italy, Spain, and China and he was the subject of a one hour documentary –*Traveling Light: The Photojournalism of Dilip Mehta*, co-produced with CBC and Channel-4, England.

In addition to his photojournalism, Dilip is active in the field of television and filmmaking. He was the Special Stills Photographer on *Gandhi*, *The Razor's Edge*, *Fire* and the Canadian television series, *Danger Bay*. He was the Creative Producer of Deepa Mehta's critically acclaimed *Earth*, and was the Production Designer and Associate Producer of the film, *Water*, shot on location in Sri Lanka.

In 2007 Dilip made his directorial debut with the feature documentary film *The Forgotten Woman* which explores the issues of Widows in contemporary India.

### **Colin Monie** **Film Editor**

**Colin Monie** was born in Scotland and attended the University of Glasgow where he studied Film and Drama before working for the BBC film unit. Peter Mullan's *Orphans* was his first feature credit and he went on to edit Mullan's *The Magdalene Sisters*, which won the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Film Festival and the Discovery Award at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Monie has edited both David Mackenzie's *Asylum* and *Young Adam*, which won the Alexander Korda Award at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. He is currently working on his next project *Hallam Foe*; again working with director David Mackenzie. His working relationship with Giles Nuttgens on the Mackenzie films led to his involvement in Deepa Mehta's *Water*. Colin has also worked with Beeban Kidron and on Alison Peebles' award winning film *Afterlife*. His television work has contributed to two Best Drama Series BAFTA Awards and one Royal Television Society Best Drama Series Award. In addition to his Genie nomination for *Water*, Colin has been nominated for a Pixie Award for the short film *California Sunshine*. He has lived in both México and Spain.

### **Mychael Danna** **Music Composer**

**Mychael Danna** has been scoring films since his 1987 feature debut for Atom Egoyan's *Family Viewing*, a score which earned Danna the first of his 11 Canadian film award nominations. Danna is recognized as one of the pioneers of combining non-Western sound sources with orchestral and electronic minimalism in the world of film music. This reputation has led him to work with such acclaimed directors as Atom Egoyan, Scott Hicks, Ang Lee, Gillies MacKinnon, James Mangold, Mira Nair, Billy Ray, Joel Schumacher and Denzel Washington.

He studied music composition at the University of Toronto, winning there the Glenn Gould Composition Scholarship in 1985. Danna also served for five years as composer-

in-residence at the McLaughlin Planetarium in Toronto (1987-1992). Works for dance include music for “Dead Souls” (Carbone Quatorze Dance Company, directed by Gilles Maheu 1996), and a score for the Royal Winnipeg Ballet’s “Gita Govinda” (2001) based on the 1000-year-old classical Indian erotic poem, with choreographer Nina Menon.

More recently, Danna scored *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006) and Atom Egoyan’s latest film *Adoration*.

# HEAVEN ON EARTH

A DEEPA MEHTA FILM

A HAMILTON MEHTA PRODUCTION  
in co-production with  
THE NATIONAL FILM BOARD OF CANADA

CAST  
IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

**Chand** PREITY ZINTA

**Chand’s Mother** GICK GREWAL

**Rocky** INTRODUCING VANSH BHARDWAJ

**Loveleen** GEETIKA SHARMA

**Kabir** ORVILLE MACIEL

**Aman** RAMANJIT KAUR

**Maji** BALINDER JOHAL

**Papaji** RAJINDER SINGH CHEEMA

**Baldev** GOURRAV SIHAN

**Other Bride** RAMONA OMIDVAR-KHULLAR

**Priest** BALWINDER SINGH CHANA

**Cabby** RODNY AHLUWALIA

**Rosa** YANNA MCINTOSH

**Supervisor** INDIANA JAGAIT

**Rocky's Friend** DILBAGH DHALIWAL

**Teenager** SHAINU BALA

**Singers** DOLLY MALKIAT & SONI

**Writer & Director** DEEPA MEHTA

**Producer** DAVID HAMILTON

**Director of Photography** GILES NUTTGENS

**Production Designer** DILIP MEHTA

**Editor** COLIN MONIE

**Music Score by** MYCHAEL DANNA

**Sound Recordist** SYLVAIN ARSENEAULT

**Costume Designer** RASHMI VARMA

**Produced with the participation of** TELEFILM CANADA

ASTRAL MEDIA THE HAROLD  
GREENBERG FUND

ONTARIO MEDIA DEVELOPMENT  
CORPORATION

**Produced In Association with** THE MOVIE NETWORK

CBC TELEVISION

MOVIE CENTRAL

**Co-Producers** ANITA LEE

MEHERNAZ LENTIN

**Executive Producers** RAVI CHOPRA

DAVID HAMILTON

SILVA BASMAJIAN

DEEPA MEHTA

SANJAY BHUTIANI

**Line Producer/Production Manager** STEPHEN TRAYNOR

**First Assistant Director** DAVID MCAREE

**Second Assistant Director** LORIN RAINE

**Associate Producer** RICHARD BLONSKI

**INSPIRED BY GIRISH KARNAD'S  
'NAGA MANDALA'  
AS PERFORMED BY  
NEELAM MANSINGH CHOWDHRY'S  
'THE COMPANY'.**

**Punjabi Dialogue** SURJIT SINGH PATAR

**Art Director** BILL LAYTON

**First Assistant Art Director** JERRY NICOLAOU

**Script Supervisor** WINNIFRED JONG

**Workshop Director** NEELAM MANSINGH CHOWDHRY

**Additional Music By** AMRITHA FERNANDES+BAKSHI

**Third Assistant Director** DAVID C. MALCOLM

**Trainee Assistant Director** DIVYA D'SOUZA

**Production Accountant** DOUG GILLESPIE

**First Assistant Accountant** SUSAN BASSETT

**Production Coordinator** ALICE WICKWIRE FOSTER

**Assistant Production Coordinator** GREG DENNY

**Office Production Assistants** GRAHAM ROGERS

**First Assistant Camera** YVONNE COLLINS

**Second Assistant Camera** BETH NOBES

**Third Assistant Camera** DAVID RUMLEY

**Camera Trainee** MICHAEL BATTISTONE

**Playback Operator** JAMES TAMBLYN

**B Camera - First Assistant Camera** CYLVAN DESROULEUX

**B Camera - Second Assistant Camera** COURTNEY GRAHAM

**Daily Camera Trainee** ROBYN CLARKE

**Daily Loaders** ROBYN CLARKE  
DAVID RUMLEY

**Stills Photographer** DUSTY MANCINELLI

**Casting Director** MARSHA CHESLEY

**Indian Extras Casting Director** RAKHI MUTTA

**Extras Casting Director** JANE ROGERS CASTING  
EDNEY HENDRICKSON  
LARA MCMAHON

**Assistant Costume Designer** BRENDA BROER

**Set Supervisor** JENNIFER BUCK

**Truck Coordinator** TRISH NICHOLSON

**Daily Wardrobe** LIZ WALTER  
PAUL BRECKENRIDGE  
ADRIENNE TRENT  
SARAH MOODIE  
ANNE PEIPONEN

**Gaffer** TERRY BANTING

**Best Boy Electric** CHAD EDWARDS

**Electrics** JOHN DOCOUTO  
BILL DOCOUTO

**Daily Electrics** GREG BURNS  
FELICIA SIMS  
PAUL DIAZ

RANDY BROWN  
MIKE AERID  
KELLY RICHARDSON  
RALPH SWABY  
**Generator Operator** MIKE GOWLAND  
**Key Grip** HARPER FORBES  
**Best Boy Grip** JOE MCCORMACK  
**Dolly Grip** JONNY WERSTA  
**Grips** TODD MOORES  
SHEM GREG  
CHRIS SCHILLINGER  
**Daily Grip** CHRIS MONK  
ROB LOPES  
JOHN MCGINLEY  
ROBERT HAID  
JOHN TENNANT  
JAMES GRANT  
RAM YOGENDRAN  
**Key Make Up** AVA STONE  
**Assistant Make Up** QUINN MATHEWS  
**Key Hair Stylist** ZINKA SHANKLAND  
**Assistant Hair** PEGGY KYRIAKIDOU  
**Daily Hair** JAMES O'REILLY  
CARMELLA DOS SANTOS  
**Daily Make up** SUZANNE BENOIT  
**Bridal Make up** KAVITA SURI  
**Director's Assistants** DUSTY MANCINELLI

TENZIN CHOGKYI

**Producer's Assistant** VIVIAN HANWELL

**Assistant to Production Designer** AMAN SANDHU

**Assistant to Ms. Zinta** PRASAD RAO

**Cast Assistants** ROHAN BADER

**Set Decorator** JIM LAMBIE

**Lead Dresser** CHRISTOPHER GALEA

**Set Buyer** ROB HEPBURN

**Set Dressers** NORM OUZOUNIS

**Chief Painter** MIKE GIBBS

ZANE GRIFFIN

**On-Set Dresser** STEPHEN MACDOUGALL

**Daily Set Dec** NORM OCZOUNIS

DAVID HERCHENRADER

MATT LOVE

JAMIE FLEMING

ROB MANOOCH

**Construction Coordinator** DWIGHT DOERKSEN

**Head Carpenter** ED DOERKSEN

**Assistant Head Carpenter** BILL WILLIAMSON

**Key Scenic** JACK MCCULLOUGH

**Head Painter** ROB TAYLOR

**Location Manager** EARDLEY WILMOT

**Assistant Location Managers** KYLE O'CONNOR

CATHERINE CRAWFORD

**Community Liaison** RAKHI MUTTA

**Locations Production Assistant** PAUL CALLAGHAN

IGOR ZAMBELLI

**Property Master** CRAIG GRANT

**Assistant Props** TANYA LEMKE

**Daily Props** ANDREW DALEY

**Boom Operator** ERIC PUTZER

**Daily Second Boom** NICK MARIAN

**Daily Production Assistants** CHRISTEN REYNOLDS

CHRIS ROSS

GREG EDMUNDS

GERROD SCHULLY

**Stunt Coordinator** ALISON REID

BRYAN RENFRO

**Special Effects Coordinator** DEREK LISCOUMB

**Snake Wrangler** TIGER PAW EXOTICS

**Snake Handler** TIM HEIGHT

**Education Liaison** LAUREL BRESNAHAN

**Tutor** RONALD ZACK

**Transport Coordinator** MIKE CURRAN

**Transport Captain** STEPHEN “SPARKY” CAR

**Head Driver** STEVE LAMBERT

**Drivers** STEVE WARREN

LARRY GREER

STEVE MAY

JIM RYDER

**Honeywagon** BRIAN JENNISON

**Craft Service** STARGRAZING

**Set Server** CHRIS TAGGART

**Daily Craft** RHONA KELLMAN

KIM WEBBER

DANIELLA GAREN

STACEY PALIN

SHAUNA JONES

**Caterers** BY DAVID'S

ZARA'S GOURMENT KITCHEN

**Ms. Zinta's Security** JAMES BROWNLEE

**Camera Car** BILL HUNG

**Camera Car Operator** WILLIAM HONG

**Helium Balloon Operator** ZACH WEST

**Stand-ins** BALJEET SAMRA

RICK GARCIA

AMANDEEP MALIK

KASHIF KAHN

ANGELO AVILES

JANICE EDWARDS

**Bridal Wear** KHOOBSURAT KLOTHING &

KHOOBSURAT JEWELS

**Daily Medic** SEAN CARNEY

**FOR THE NATIONAL FILM  
BOARD**

**Post Production Supervisor** MARK WILSON

**Production Coordinator** NORMA MENDOZA

**SERVICE PRODUCTION IN INDIA  
PROVIDED BY**

**B.R. FILMS MUMBAI**

**Associate Producer (India)** SWAPNA DAVID  
**Unit Production Manager** ALOK KAPUR  
**Production Coordinator** CHANDNI KUMAR  
**First Assistant Director** SIDDHARTHA LUTHER  
**Second Assistant Director** ANANYA RANE  
**Director's Assistant & Locations** KABIR SINGH  
**Focus Puller** N REDDY  
**Second Assistant A Camera** ANIL DEVAIYA  
**Camera Attendants** SANTOSH OJHA  
SUDHARSHAN CHINOY  
VINOD SINGH  
**Gaffer** MULCHAND DEDHIA  
**Best Boy** HETAL DEDHIA  
**Dolly Grip** SHANKAR  
**Grip** MARUTI  
ASHU SHARMA  
**Assistant Prop** VIJAY KUMAR  
**Wardrobe Supervisor** NARINDER SINGH  
**Ms. Zinta's Hair Stylist** LEERA D'SOUZA  
**Boom Operator** ANIL D'MELLO  
**Locations Manager** DARSHAN AULAKH  
**Production Accountant** LALIT JAIN  
**Transport Coordinator** ANTAR SINGH  
**Travel Agent India** UNIVERSAL EXPRESS  
INTERSERVE TRAVELS  
**ADR Recording - India** RAFIQ SHAIKH

B.R. FILM STUDIOS

**First Assistant Film Editor** DIANE BRUNJES

**Assistant Film Editor - India** BIJESSH DUTTA

**Post Production Supervisor** GREGOR HUTCHISON

**Assistant Post Production Supervisor** LORRAINE SAMUEL

**Picture Post Production** CINE-BYTE DIGITAL INC.

**Senior Supervisor** ALAN BAK

**DI Editor** TOM BAK

**DI Producer** RICK HANNIGAN

**Digital Colourist** DRAKE CONRAD

**Technical Supervisor** JEFF BAKER

**Scanning & Recording** PAUL MANTLER, FELIX HEEB

**Opticals** CHRIS ROSS

**Audio Post Production** URBAN POST PRODUCTION INC.

**Supervising Sound Fx Editor** MARK GRINGAS

**Supervising Dialogue Editor** GEOFF RAFFIN

**Assistant Sound Editors** GEOFF RAFFIN  
JIMMY ROBB

**Sound Assistant** JOSH MACHADO

**ADR Recordists** RUDY MICHAEL  
STACY COUTTS

**Foley Artist** TIM O'CONNELL

**Supervising Re-Recording Mixer** DANIEL PELLERIN

**Re-Recording Mixer** JAN RUDY

**Studio Assistant** CHRIS GUGLICK

**Mixing Facility** THEATRE D DIGITAL  
REGENT/ROYAL

**Dolby Sound Consultant** THOMAS KODROS

**Digital Visual Effects** ROCKET SCIENCE VFX

TOM TURNBULL

ANTHONY PATERSON

**Production Office Assistants** LINA RODRIGUEZ

CATHERINE HOWE

TEMPLE PRAYER VIDEO

COURTESY OF

PALCO VIDEO

NEW DELHI

MUSIC

SONG TITLE: MYRKFÆLNI

WRITERS: BIRGIR HILMARSSON

ARTIST: BLINDFOLD

**FOR DEVYANI**

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