THE PEACOCK

SATURDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2026



Soul Music

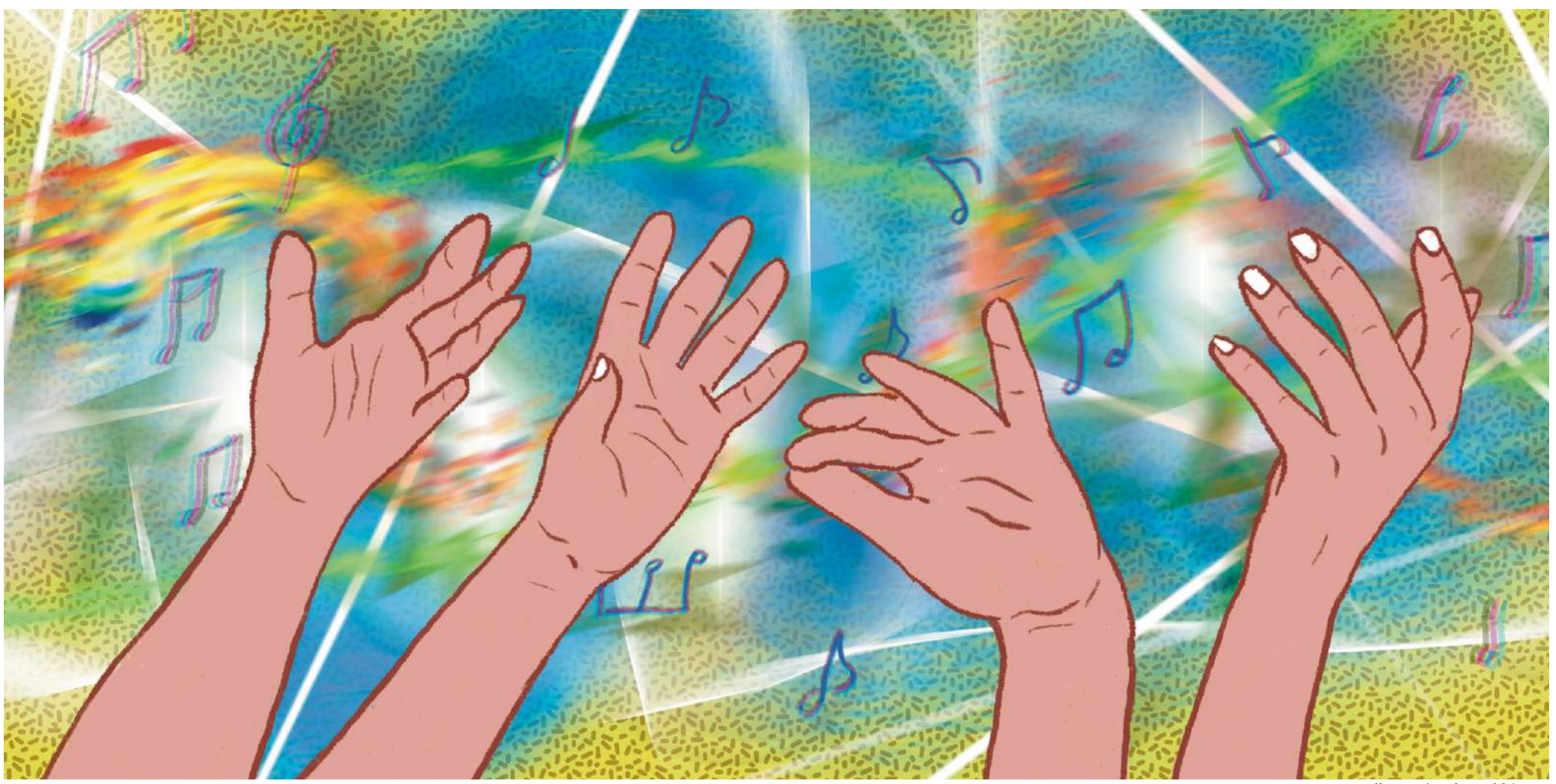


Illustration by Pakhi Sen

BY DAMODAR MAUZO

"Indian classical music is a soulful and spiritual experience," said the Gaan Tapaswini Kishori Amonkar in Margao. That was in the year 2002, when we organised the first ever All India Konkani Sangeet Mahotsav. At that time, I was the President of Konkani Bhasha Mandal, the people's organisation that strives to promote the language, culture and literature of my home state of Goa. Though we had always planned to have the event in a big way, I was myself a bit apprehensive about the nomenclature that we used - the term Konkani Sangeet. It was not so clear to me there was anything that could be specifically labelled Konkani music? But my anxieties were laid to rest when yet another Konkani personality, the music guru Bhaskar Chandavarkar addressed the organisers at a curtain raiser event to the festival. A proud Konkani, the sitarist said, "if you have a language you have a culture, and then rest assured you have a music."

The first All India Konkani Sangeet Mahotsav was inaugurated by none other than our own legendary vocalist Kishori Amonkar, in the presence of then-Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar, and the event was a huge success. Kishoritai, as she is called in Goa, spoke her heart in chaste Konkani. The two-day event opened with a heartwarming musical symphony orchestrated by the music maestro Fr. Peter Cardozo, that gave the event a rousing start. Fr. Cardozo, known for his love for Indian as well as Western classical music, simply poured his soul into the conducting of the musical opus filled with Indian classical melodies fused with Western pieces of music.

Kishoritai was in a good mood, and sat through the evening enjoying the music. It was the first time that all of Goa's amazing range of folk music and Zagor, the Bhavgeet and Natya *Sangeet*. The film songs and Cantaram, the Mandos and Dulpods, all these forms were performed under one roof on one stage. I was astonished to see the opulence of Konkani music that had remained overlooked, and hence disregarded. The two days opened up such a treasure of harmony that even Kishori Amonkar - who was known for throwing tantrums at the slightest mistakes on the part of the organisers - kept enjoying the events throughout the festival.

We made sure to remember the stalwarts of Konkani Cinema, while some of them, like Emiliano D'Cruz, performed to the delight of the spectators. We had legends like Alfred Rose, M. Boyer, and a host of others who showed up as well. The festival ended on a gala note with our own master performer Remo Fernandes, who was at his best. As the crowd kept on swelling, we had to dismantle the enclosed pandal to accommodate over 5000 music enthusiasts. The Indian pop pioneer put up such a superb show dancing with his guitar, and occasionally playing his flute, to the huge satisfaction of his fans in the audience. Inspired by Remo's accomplished presentation, Kishoritai was so excited that she instantly expressed her readiness to perform in a musical fusion along with him. It was quite unlike what most people expect from Kishoritai, and it is unfortunate that it never happened due to other reasons. Nevertheless, as the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Shrinivas Dempo said that day, it was proved right that 'the language of music is universal.'

SHORT TAKES



Cinema has come from our culture, going back to cave paintings. Now, we have been able to make moving pictures that reflect life.

Fiona Eldred
Retired Teacher
London



There are a lot of good selections at the festival this year. I'm looking forward to watching and studying them as I am a film professional.

Avhiroop Mazzumdar
Creative Producer
Mumbai



Cinema works as a window to open your eyes to a bigger world. It depicts a reality that otherwise would not be seen by others.

Nathalia Syam
Film Director
London



Not everybody creates an imaginary world. So, cinema makes it easy for them to understand their own story.

Ambuj Anand
Reporter
Delhi

Where Stories Transcend Borders





Photos by Michael Praveen

BY SHERRY FERNANDES

The International Film Festival of India (IFFI) offers two particular pleasures: the chance to discover stories from places you may never have been and the spectacle of seeing different countries bring their cultures, identities and cinema to one stage. Under the lights of the Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium on Friday, you could feel the second aspect happening in real time.

The curtain rose on an enthusiastic celebration of cinema and storytelling as Goa rolled out the red carpet for the 57th edition of IFFI. The ceremony brought together some of Indian cinema's most recognisable faces, government leaders, musicians and filmmakers from across the world for an evening of revelry. This was an opening ceremony of real grandeur: exuberant and unapologetically musical. From a symphonic orchestra to performances celebrating cultures beyond national boundaries, the evening captured the spirit of this year's theme: *Stories Without Borders*.

Explaining the thinking behind the theme, festival director Ashutosh Gowariker spoke about cinema's ability to make audiences connect with lives and experiences far removed from their own. "When someone watches a film from another country in a language they do not speak, and still feels what the characters feel, something small but significant happens, the distance shrinks. That to me is what cinema does best and that is the thought behind our theme," he said.

Among those in attendance were actors Sai Pallavi, Shraddha Kapoor and Kartik Aaryan, and film producer Dinesh Vijan. They were joined by Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ashwini Vaishnaw, Goa's Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and NFDC Chairman G. Krishnakumar. Also present were the actor and Lok Sabha MP Ravi Kishan, Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Shet Tanavade, and filmmakers Madhur Bhandarkar and Aanand L. Rai, along with Information and Broadcasting Secretary Chanchal Kumar, Goa Chief Secretary V. Candavelou, Prasar Bharati Chairman Prasoon Joshi, NFDC Managing Director Dheeraj Singh, and our own Entertainment Society of Goa Vice-Chairperson and Siolim MLA Delilah Lobo, with the ESG CEO Dipak Bandekar.

The evening brought its own kind of spectacle offstage too. Guests arrived in everything from sequined gowns and tailored suits to traditional Indian wear and punk inspired outfits, coming together in conversations about the festival's film line-ups. At the red carpet, well over 100 photographers jostled for position, with necks craned and cameras raised as the actors and filmmakers paused for the flash bulbs.

Beyond the ceremonial fanfare, the evening was also an attempt to make a larger statement about cinema's ability to travel across languages, cultures and geographies. Three-time Grammy Award-winning composer and environmentalist Ricky Kej took centre stage with *'A World of Cinema Through Music'*, a symphonic presentation built around ten iconic film scores from around the world. The selection travelled across film industries, with music from India, Japan, South Korea, the United States, Italy and France finding its way into the orchestra's repertoire. Despite their remarkably synchronised performance, Kej promised that his team of artists had only a few hours of rehearsals to ensure everything would be perfect. They delivered — and then some.

Speaking to *The Peacock*, Kej, who has visited Goa several times over the years, said "most of the musicians met each other for the first time yesterday."

cont...

SHORT TAKES



Cinema is a very beautiful medium that portrays the culture of the land where it is from.

Dr. Basavadatta Mitra
Academician
Zuari Nagar



In my daily life, I don't get to watch four films a day, but here, my hope is to be exposed to newer cinema from various parts of the world.

Sarakshi Puranik
Film Student
Pune



I've always been interested in movies and film. Being closer to the creative world is what I am looking forward to the most.

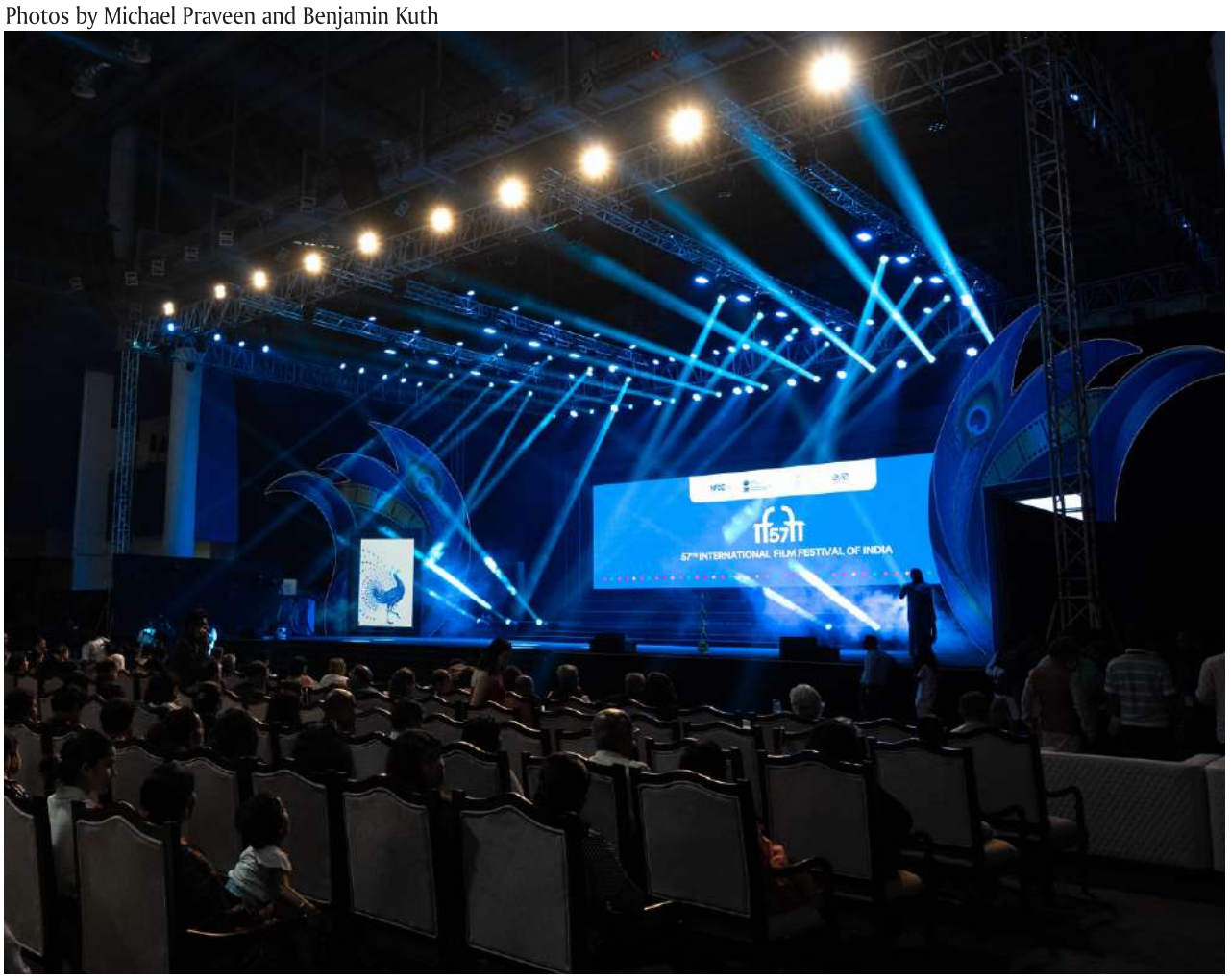
Rohan Joshi
Graphic Designer
Pune



I plan on producing my own feature film. I'm looking forward to meeting and collaborating with creative creators.

Arunima Malik
Filmmaker
Kolkata

Photos by Michael Praveen and Benjamin Kuth





The spectacle then gave way to *Music Without Borders*, a segment bringing together artists flown in from five different countries. Both musical segments had been curated in collaboration with Gowariker. "I've been a huge fan of Ashutosh Gowariker, and it's an amazing moment that I get to collaborate with him," said Kej.

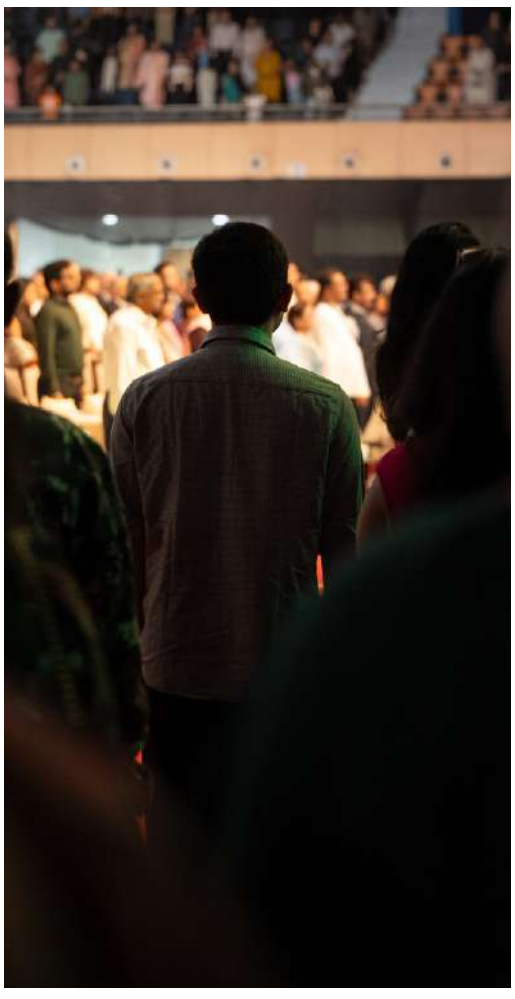
Among the performers was traditional throat singer Davaasuren Damjin from Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, making his first visit to India. We struggled a little with conversation, relying on translation apps and Google images on our phones, but his enthusiasm needed little interpretation. He spoke warmly about the welcome he had received, said he loved India and hoped to return to Goa. He was particularly taken with Goa's hospitality. It was a small exchange, but one that captured the festival's remarkable diversity.

The festival's iconic peacock emblem also found its way onto the stage in a dance performance *'Beyond the Frame'*, as dancers in flowing, peacock-inspired costumes twirled and spun in synchrony to the familiar calls of our favourite bird.

For the dancers, the performance had meant weeks of preparation. Sumanth, a dancer from Bengaluru, told *The Peacock* his troupe had begun rehearsing two weeks ago. "We started practice maybe 15 days ago and have not slept for one week almost. I was too excited to do anything else," he said. CM Sawant spoke about Goa's place in the festival and its ambitions as a destination for filmmaking. "Every November these stories find home in Goa and for the nine days this beautiful state becomes the making place for the world's imaginations," he said. Pointing to Goa's appearances in films such as *Dear Zindagi* (2016) and *Dil Chahta Hai* (2001), Sawant said our state wanted to move beyond being a picturesque filming location. "We want Goa to become the place where the films were produced and completed. We want filmmakers to find opportunities here," he said.

The evening also recognised the teams of filmmakers and cinephiles entrusted with selecting this year's films. The International Competition Jury, chaired by Rai, includes Sol Berruezo Pichon-Rivière from Argentina, Bogdan Mureșanu from Romania, María Alejandra Rojas from Colombia and Ratchapoom Boonbunchachoke from Thailand.

The national anthem brought the opening ceremony to an end, marking the start of the festival. By the end of the night, Goa delivered a love letter to cinema across cultures, music and the simple joy of gathering together and enjoying films. And that is perhaps the best thing about a film festival: for a few days, people who might never otherwise cross paths find themselves in the same room, watching the same story unfold.



SHORT TAKES



I think I expect to become a different person once I leave here; to learn and unlearn a lot of things.

Sahithi Talluri
Director's Assistant
Hyderabad



The biggest challenge to cinema is how to blend commerce with art.

Esshan Katara
Filmmaker
Mumbai



I'm looking forward to experiencing the culture of IFFI, because I'm volunteering here for the first time.

Alicia Fernandes
Student
Santacruz



A festival like this is a small bubble of people who are interested in the same stuff. The filtration of passion is already done when you reach this place.

Nikhil Brahmadandi
Screenwriter
Hyderabad













SHORT TAKES



The impact of a film is neither good nor bad. It's like you come out of the cinema and you keep thinking about it.

Uddhav Goswami
Cinematography
Delhi



I look forward to socializing with everyone; meeting new people, sharing ideas.

Mitul Kalita
Student
Guwahati



I like the atmosphere of Goa, the natural vibes here; everyone can watch movies, after that they can watch the sunset peacefully, calmly.

Arnab Jyoti Kalita
Student
Guwahati



Our cultures will also be exchanged here. This is how we get diversity.

Kaustav Moni Baruah
Student
Guwahati

From Mexico to Goa

BY MAURO MUELLER

A year ago, David Figueroa García and I brought our film *The Janitor* (2025) to IFFI in Goa. It was a very small film: black and white, shot in twenty days in a single school in Mexico City, about an old janitor trying to hold his life together. I'm deeply grateful to be coming back this year with the world premiere of *A Few Days in the Sun*, which in many ways is the opposite of that film. *The Janitor* was about one man slowly losing his footing. This one is about two couples losing theirs all at once, in a place sold to the world as paradise.

I began writing *A Few Days in the Sun* in 2012, together with David, and it took more than a decade to get made. At one point it was fully financed in Hollywood, and then that version slipped away, as these things sometimes do. On the surface, it's a kidnapping thriller. A foreign couple who come to the Riviera Maya to close a land deal and a Mexican family become entangled through a chain of unintended consequences, and a kidnapping throws all of them off balance. Underneath, it's a story about fragile systems and power imbalances, and about what happens to people's moral compass when survival demands impossible choices. Behind the postcard image of that coast, local communities are pushed aside by development, often in ways that aren't entirely legal. I wasn't interested in heroes and villains. Every character makes choices that are understandable and also wrong, and the balance of power keeps shifting until nobody is quite sure who is saving whom.

It's also, I'll admit, an ambitious film for an independent production, maybe more ambitious than was sensible. We spent days in a water tank staging sequences I'm very proud of. There's a cistern slowly filling up with two people trapped inside, several shootouts, and a tense scene in which a hostage is forced to record a video for the kidnappers. Films on this scale are usually made by studios, with the time and money to match. We had neither in abundance. We shot first in the Dominican Republic at Lantica Pinewood Studios before Christmas, paused for the holidays, and then picked up again in Mexico after New Year's, where the dense greenery of the Riviera Maya surrounded us. The heat, the mosquitoes and the feeling of being far from help put real pressure on our cast, Matilda Lutz, Costa Ronin, Mabel Cadena, Harold Torres, Benny Emmanuel, and Jorge A. Jimenez, and I suspect some of the exhaustion you see on screen isn't entirely acted. Our cinematographer, Juan Pablo Ramírez, made that paradise look both beautiful and threatening.

Getting there took a patchwork. The money didn't come as a single greenlight but in pieces: public funding from Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Germany, along with a share of US equity. It meant three countries in the co-production, three sets of regulations, and a lot of paperwork nobody will ever see on screen. I was very lucky with the people who made it possible, among them the Oscar-nominated producer Leslie Holleran. They protected the film's vision while solving problems I often didn't know existed.

Why does a festival matter so much for a film like this? Because a film with this kind of ambition and without a studio behind it has no guaranteed path to an audience. There's no marketing machine and no release date waiting for it. For independent films, festivals are often the only way to be seen at all, by audiences and critics, and by the buyers and distributors who decide whether a film travels further. Last year IFFI gave *The Janitor* that chance, and I'll never forget it. The house was full at nine in the morning, and I almost felt guilty walking in with my coffee while the audience arrived with such enthusiasm. People stayed long after the Q&A to tell us how familiar the story felt, and how the pressures and contradictions of Indian society



echoed in our Mexican characters. Since then the film has traveled to London, Bogotá, Chile and across Mexico, and it will keep traveling in 2027. We're now working on bringing it back to Indian audiences, and I hope *A Few Days in the Sun* can follow the same path. That India opened its doors first still feels strangely perfect to me.

Then there's the exchange. I grew up in Switzerland and live in Mexico, and I've always been drawn to stories that happen where worlds meet. I'm only beginning to discover India, but last year I kept noticing how many of our stories share the same questions, even when they come from very different places. I'd love to learn more about storytelling here, and if this trip leads to a friendship or a collaboration, I'll be very happy.

So I'm coming back to Goa with a film that took fourteen years, several countries and a lot of stubbornness to make. I hope it entertains people, and I hope it leaves them with a few hard questions to take home. Thank you for having us again.

SHORT TAKES



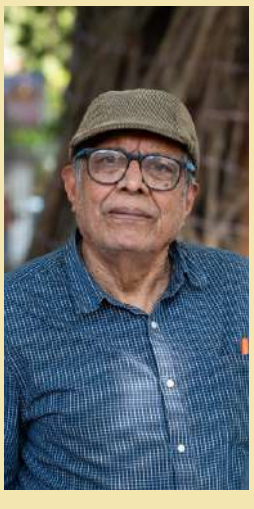
Everyone's storytelling is different. Everyone has their own perspective.

Kuldeep Saikia
Student
Guwahati



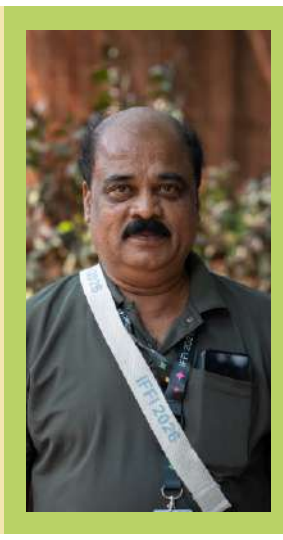
Films let us see the problems of people in other countries, because we cannot go there ourselves. What they face now, we may face later.

Bobbili Prabhakara Rao
Bank manager
Vijayavada



IFFI festival is sort of democratic. Everyone can come and take part. They have provisions for senior citizens, students, and all.

N. Shashibhara -
V P Federation of Film Society of India
Bengaluru



A film is a medium through which we can convey a message to society. But a film is first and foremost entertainment.

H. M. Imran
Producer
Mumbai

The Master Who Tells Stories Quietly

BY SACHIN CHATTE

I can't remember the exact year, but if memory serves, it was a lazy Sunday afternoon in 2013. The term OTT wasn't in use yet, but there were hundreds of television channels. Flipping through them, I stopped at a film on Doordarshan about a television serial being made on Mahatma Gandhi. A government employee is cast as Gandhi because of his resemblance. He knows little about the Mahatma and has many questions about his character, but no one is interested in exploring them, so he sets out to find the answers himself. The film raised those questions organically and found irony in every situation.

I had no idea of the film's name or its director, but it got me hook, line and sinker. It was clearly not the work of an ordinary filmmaker, and the end credits confirmed it: "Directed by Girish Kasaravalli." I still feel a little pride at having passed that blind test. The film was *Koormavatara* (2012).

Some filmmakers tell stories. Others use stories to examine society, human behaviour and the moral contradictions of their times. Kasaravalli firmly belongs to the latter group. One of the most distinguished voices in Indian cinema, he has built a body of work marked by restraint, realism and a rare sensitivity to ordinary lives. His films rarely rely on spectacle or melodrama. They draw their strength from everyday situations and complex characters.

He has won 14 National Awards, including the Golden Lotus for *Ghatashraddha* (1977), *Tabarana Kathe* (1986), *Thaayi Saheba* (1997) and *Dweepa* (2002). For anyone unfamiliar with his work, there is a treasure trove waiting.

Kasaravalli went from studying pharmacy to the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), because cinema was always his calling. He graduated in 1975, and his student film *Avasesh* won the President's Silver Lotus for best experimental short film.

His debut feature, *Ghatashraddha* (1977), based on a story by U. R. Ananthamurthy, won him the Golden Lotus at the age of 27. With remarkable depth and maturity, it examined the harsh consequences of caste, superstition and social ostracism through the story of a young widow. A restored version premiered at the 81st Venice International Film Festival in 2024.

Tabarana Kathe (1986) came almost a decade later and remains one of his most celebrated films. An ageing government employee struggles to get his pension after retirement. Through this modest premise, Kasaravalli exposes the indignity an uncaring system inflicts on ordinary citizens. I first saw it in the 90s, when I was deeply immersed in mainstream Hindi cinema. It hit me like an avalanche, and the climax, where the protagonist loses it, has stayed with me for decades.

Other films followed. *Thaayi Saheba* (1997) traced a family's changing fortunes through a period of social and political upheaval, and *Dweepa* (2002) was about a village threatened by a dam. People and society play an important role in all his films. *Hasina* (2004) examined the vulnerability of a woman abandoned by her husband and her struggle to survive with
dignit



Illustration by Sayali Khairnar

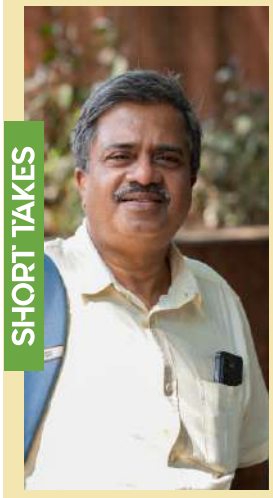
y. *Gulabi Talkies* (2008) followed a midwife in a fishing village, exploring gender, community, isolation and the arrival of television in a traditional society.

Kanasemba Kudureyaneri (2010), titled *Riding the Stallion of Dreams* in English, is a Nolan-esque film with shifting timelines, set in a Karnataka village. It moves towards a more dreamlike, psychological form of storytelling and is told from different perspectives, so some scenes repeat. The filmmaker once told me that a jury member even thought the reels had been mixed up when the same scene appeared again.

In 2017, I had the good fortune of inviting him to the Cinephile Film Club of the Entertainment Society of Goa for a retrospective of his films and had freewheeling conversations about life and, of course, cinema. It was an experience of a lifetime. Many filmmakers are good, but very few can talk about their films, and cinema as a whole, the way he can. If you've never seen a Kasaravalli film, there's no better moment to start. And if you have, there's no better person to hear talk about them.

Naman Ramchandran will be in conversation with Girish Kasaravalli in a session titled "The Moral Universe of Parallel Cinema: 50 Years of Girish Kasaravalli", on 21 November at 11:30 am, Kala Academy

SHORT TAKES



I think the variety here is great, because not only do you get to see films in Bengali, in Tamil, or in Malayalam, but you also get to meet different people.

Brian De Souza
Media Correspondent
Margao



For young, budding filmmakers, IFFI is a platform to showcase their movies.

Bambino Dias
Anchor
Loutolim



I'm looking forward to films and masterclasses. I just want to watch movies and learn.

Saurabh Karkhanis
Actor
Panaji



I want to make connections and also meet new people, new filmmakers. I want to know their experience too. With cinema, you can change people's thoughts.

Rahul Ghosh
Film Student
Kamalpur























The Tenderness of Hirokazu Kore-eda

BY POULOMI DAS

It was close to midnight in Toronto when the lights came up on Hirokazu Kore-eda's *Look Back* (2026) and nobody moved. I was at the Princess of Wales Theatre, a 2,000-seater with tiers of balconies, that is one of the grandest venues of the Toronto International Film Festival. TIFF, now in its 51st edition, is one of the world's largest public film festivals, and every September it takes over downtown Toronto. All around me, people were wiping their faces with the heels of their palms or with the sleeves of their shirts. The woman beside me had stopped pretending and was simply crying into the dark. So was I. Crying at a late show among strangers in a foreign country should have felt embarrassing. Instead, it felt like belonging.

When Kore-eda walked on stage, he told us about how he had brought every one of his films to this festival. Then he said the thing that stayed with me. He had found Tatsuki Fujimoto's manga during the pandemic, at a time when he was creatively spent, when he had lost sight of why he kept making things. He read it in one sitting. It gave him, as he has put it, a "push from behind," and he decided to helm its film adaptation.

Spent. That word sounds absurd next to his name. Kore-eda has made films for more than three decades at a pace most directors would find punishing. *Look Back* (2026) is not even his only film this year. It reached Toronto a few months after *Sheep in the Box* (2026), his science-fiction family drama, which premiered in competition at Cannes. Two features in one year, each opening at major festivals. If Kore-eda can run dry, what hope do the rest of us have?

But I suppose burnout can reach anyone. What moved me was his candour in admitting it, on a stage, to a room that treats him as a master. In a later interview, he also admitted that in the first decade of his career, he was "constantly anxious" about whether he could keep directing, and that "the anxiety is gone now." What remained was a harder question: why keep making films at all?

What does a filmmaker make when he no longer knows why he makes films? In Kore-eda's case, it is a film about two girls who draw.

Fujino (Furi Nanase as a child, Natsuki Deguchi as an adult) is a fourth grader in a small town in Akita who draws four-panel comics for the school newspaper. She is the class star and pretends not to enjoy it. Then her teacher hands half her space to Kyomoto (Rokka Okada, later Aju Makita), a girl who never comes to school, and whose backgrounds are so precise and so alive that Fujino's confidence splits clean in two. She draws obsessively for two years to catch up. She quits. Then, when she is sent to deliver a certificate to Kyomoto's house, she discovers that this reclusive girl has been her most devoted fan all along.

What follows is one of the most tender creative partnerships I have seen on screen. They publish under one shared name with Fujino drawing the figures and Kyomoto building the worlds around them. They win prizes, grow up, and slowly begin to want different things. And then, a tragedy cuts their story short.



Illustration by Sayali Khairnar

For *Look Back*, Kore-eda shot on 35mm in Nikaho, the coastal town where Fujimoto grew up, from February to November, so the seasons could age alongside his characters. We see it all on screen: Snow melts into cherry blossom. Rice seedlings go into flooded fields under Mount Chōkai, and the fields turn gold. There are windchimes, insects humming in the heat, bowls of cold sōmen, and a hot pot steaming on a winter night. His four lead actors spent months learning to draw manga, and some of their drawings made it into the film. The film is full of the scratch of pen on paper.

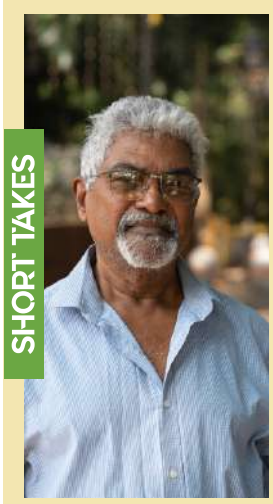
To me, this is Kore-eda's rarest gift. Very few filmmakers working today can observe life with his patience and clarity. He lets the drama arrive on its own time and keeps watching: a girl's hunched back at a desk through four seasons, a stack of sketchbooks rising taller than the child who filled them, the small, ungenerous jealousy that lives inside every artist and every friendship. He understands that ambition is lonely, that making art is mostly repetition, and that the people who push us to be better are often the ones we compete with hardest.

Kore-eda once said that as he lost his parents and many of the actors and producers he had worked with, the number of "gazes from the departed that I'm conscious of" has grown significantly, and that this had become a motivation for him to keep on creating. In that sense, *Look Back* is a film made under those gazes.

The film ends with a startling scene: the manga's final panel, rotoscoped, Fujino seen from behind at her desk, still drawing. It is the only answer Kore-eda offers to the question of why we keep making things. Someone once believed in us. We owe them the next page.

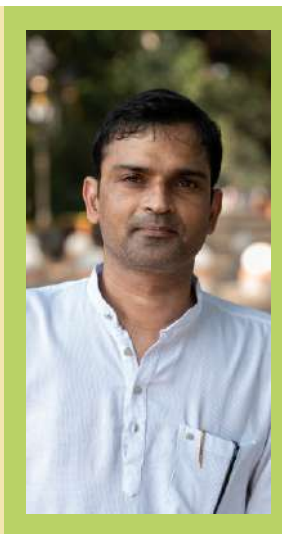
Look Back plays at 9:45 am at Inox Panjim Audi 1 on November 21

SHORT TAKES



Through certain movies, you get to learn about the culture of different places and their people.

Daniel Patrick Fernandes
Ex. Banker
Porvorim



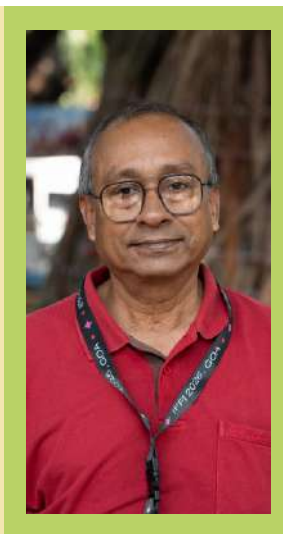
Filmmaking affects culture; it's the most important thing for every person and every state and country.

Chandan Singh
Counsellor
Mumbai



I've come to IFFI to interact with people and to see new movies.

Dr. Hirachand Dand
Film Production
Mumbai



Goa is a little different; it has a different vibe, and it is very clean and pollution-free.

Utpal Das
Retired Banker
Pune

Homecoming for Ancessão

BY ARTI DAS

After travelling the world to be screened at a range of different film festivals, *Ancessão* (2025) is back to its home base in India's smallest state. It opens the Goan Films section of the 57th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Panaji today.

Co-written and directed by Manguirish Bandodkar, *Ancessão* is a moving portrait of an elderly Goan woman living in isolation. As loneliness and regret quietly shape her days, she finds comfort in gossip and in becoming entangled in the lives of those around her. Through her seemingly ordinary conversations, the film portrays deeper questions around ageing, companionship and guilt.

Bandodkar told *The Peacock* that the story was his co-writer Elton Coutinho's concept (who is also the creative director of the movie). "He came up with the idea of doing something on old age and grandparents. It took us 14 drafts and two years to work on the script alone. It also involved my mentor Ashish Nagvenkar, who has written dialogues for the film."

Set in a Goan village, *Ancessão* uses surrealism, music, and lots of humour to approach its main themes of mental health, human psyche, and ageing. "Humour was important for us to talk about these serious issues, as we wanted the younger audience to connect to their grandparents and empathise with the older generation," adds Bandodkar, who told us he is heavily influenced by Malayalam cinema.

Speaking about the broad reactions and response to his using surrealist themes, Bandodkar told us he doesn't believe in spoon-feeding his audience. He is of the belief that since the audience is nowadays exposed to world cinema, thanks to OTTs and film festivals, their palates are more open to less formulaic forms of storytelling.

Ancessão has travelled to many different platforms including the 18th International Documentary and Short Film Festival of Kerala, Ahmedabad International Film Festival 2026, and the International Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir, to name a few. Bandodkar's film has even won awards, like Best Film and Best Actor at the International Film Festival of South Asia in Toronto last year, as well as five awards in the State category at the first K Vaikunth International Short Film Festival in Goa.

Speaking of rewards and appreciations, Bandodkar maintains that the lead actor, Prashanti Talpankar, is the beating heart of the film. He wrote the script keeping her in mind. "Elton and I were keen on casting her as we were inspired after watching her role in Miransha Naik's Konkani film, *Juze* (2017). We knew that she would do justice to the film. If she were not there, I would not have even done the film. She added another layer to it by bringing nuances to her character."

Bandodkar also gives due credit to the sound designer, Abhishek Nair, who has worked on films like *Manjummel Boys* (2024), and *Barfi!* (2012). They met on the sets of *Baramulla* (2025), where Bandodkar worked as an assistant director. "Sound is the soul of the film, and Nair gave a lot of sound inputs along with notes on the script level. He even suggested not to exceed the film length by more than 30 minutes. Our first cut was 40 minutes."

Speaking about the short film format, Bandodkar maintains that it has now become the norm in Goa. "Feature film budgets are high; also, there are a lot of responsibilities in bringing people to the theatre, so producers don't take the risk. Also, for filmmakers to sustain only on films is difficult right now. To move away from a short film to a feature film, it will take time here. It took 60 years for Kerala film industry to reach where it is today and because of actors like Mammootty and Mohanlal".

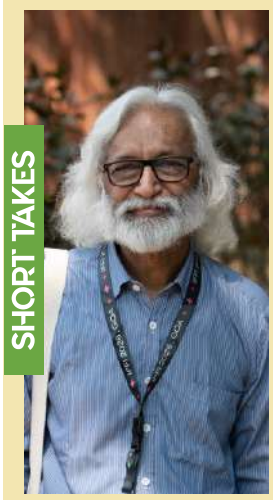
Ancessão is produced by Dr. K. K. Sanzgiri and Pravin Parker, and has so far been screened in various churches and art galleries in Goa before IFFI this year. Bandodkar suggests that the state government, as a way to promote Goan films, can host film screenings at venues like ESG. "We can club five-six short films and screen them together for a day and charge a nominal fee for the same. So, people can enjoy different films, and it will also be easier to get a larger audience. As there are now so many young filmmakers in Goa who are making short films, it will be a good platform."

Ancessão will be screened on November 21 at 12:45 pm at INOX Screen-IV, Panaji.



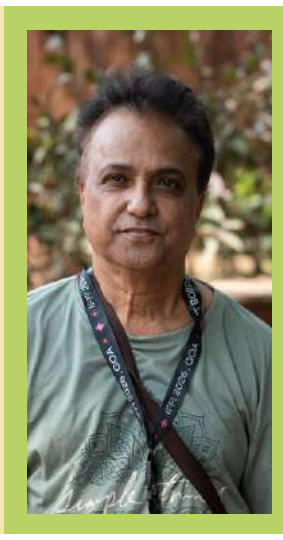
Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

SHORT TAKES



I will be watching world cinema, especially international and national competition films. I get many chances to meet all the established film industry people.

Yogesh Sanghvi
Writer
Mumbai



I've been attending IFFI since 2005, because I'm a Goan and it's happening in Goa.

Mahesh Rane
Filmmaker
Goa



For the past 22 years, Goa has been developing a film culture and I think that has changed filmmaking in Goa.

Nikhil Haldankar
Cinematographer
Goa



I think culture is created by cinema. I'm looking forward to watching *Ramayana*.

Sanskruti Amonkar
Student
Porvorim

IFFI Belongs to the People

BY SWAPNIL A.

The Peacock sat down in conversation with Neha Thakkar, the Head of Programming for International Cinema at IFFI 2026.

Having programmed the festival for two years, how do you think its curation has evolved?

It has evolved in many, many ways. First and foremost, we have introduced two new sections—Films about Films and Animation. While there used to be an animation section in the past, we decided to bring it back as there are such interesting concepts and films emerging today—we didn't want the IFFI audience to miss out on them. Moreover, some countries are very underrepresented in cinema. Our intent this year has been to ensure the curation brings in those voices. This year we have programmed an excellent BRICS section dedicated to bringing films from the 21 BRICS nations along with the 11 partner countries. On November 22, the BRICS section opens with *Ramayana* (2026).

I see you have also ensured the representation of emerging young voices?

Our strategy continues to evolve. While we don't want audiences to miss out on celebrated filmmakers like Paweł Pawlikowski, the director of our opening film, *Fatherland* (2026), we have also ensured space for new talent. The Emerging Filmmakers section is very important to us.

You have travelled to the big festivals, what makes IFFI special and exciting?

Truthfully, while Cannes and the other festivals are undoubtedly splendid, I have observed IFFI bringing in people from all across the country and demography—travelling, attending, making the effort of getting a delegate pass, purely for cinema. I remember a family coming in from Bengaluru last year, and I met them again on the closing day—so they stayed for the entire ten days of the festival. This brings me great joy and satisfaction. Additionally, no other place in the world offers this kind of hospitality. India truly stands true to the dictum *Atithi Devo Bhava* and Goa, especially, is extremely welcoming for festival-goers. IFFI also really marries the public into the festival by screening films at the beaches in Vagator and Miramar, and the Margao Open Lawns. Everybody really partakes in the fun of Asia's largest film festival.



Photo by Assavri Kulkarni

What are some films that you are excited about from the programme?

From the Festivals Worldwide is our most popular section and holds some exceptional films. My personal favourite is *Jospehine* (2026), a film like no other—it stopped me in my tracks. It's screening on November 24. It's about this eight year old girl who witnesses rape and how her personality changes completely after that. She starts hating men—including her father whom she used to adore and admire. The director has done a fantastic job at handling the subject, directing the girl and weaving the film around her. I have not seen such a film in my life. Additionally, the animation lineup is really promising. It is opening with *Ray Gunn* (2026) in collaboration with Netflix and is directed by renowned director, Brad Bird.

Do you feel a theme emerging in the kind of stories filmmakers are trying to tell?

This year we observed a lot of films concerned with coming-of-age and bullying. While they shared the subject; the treatment, look-and-feel, performances, and country representations, made them very distinct. These themes are not yet highlighted in Indian cinema but are extremely common in films coming from South-east Asia and Europe.

There are a lot of mature dramas as well. My second favourite film is *Queen at Sea* (2026). Beautiful film, truly, but sad at the same time—showcasing a harsh reality. It's about an elderly couple and their middle-aged daughter. The film opens with the daughter walking in on her father having sex with her mother, while she is lying very awkwardly. The mother has dementia, and the daughter thinks that the father has engaged in the act without her consent, and warns him that she would report him to the police. His response is—you don't know your mother, I have been married to her for sixteen years, she was full of life and loved having sex. The daughter still insists that while that may be, she is not the same woman anymore. So, he has a point of view, the daughter has a point of view, and since the mother has lost of a lot of memories, one is attempting to fathom hers. The daughter goes on to report the father, and then the story takes a drastic turn. I will not give any spoilers here but the director has done phenomenal work. Again, these kinds of subjects are taboo, because here, even if there is a joke about one's parents having sex, we are not comfortable with it.

There is also *3 Weeks After* (2026), from the in-competition section, which has a linear style of storytelling and looks at the consequences of bullying. People continue to bully and often nobody takes a stand against it. And sometimes, children have to join [in the act of bullying, for the fear of becoming the next target, or maybe some of them think that its okay. So this is yet another film with multiple perspectives on a harsh reality.

Do you have any recommendations for the IFFI Delegates?

I think they should definitely not miss the Animation Section. It's very interesting. There is a film called *Jim Queen* (2026) which is hilarious and after a whole day of film-watching or a heavy day at work, would refresh one completely. Additionally, the 'Emerging Filmmakers' section has very tight curation. We have aimed for a healthy mix of arthouse cinema and more mainstream works in the festival line-up, so I am sure the audiences have much to look forward to!

Are there any guests and creators that you are excited to host at IFFI this year?

For me, every guest who is coming is very special—they are coming from different parts of the world, taking the time and coming to present their films. Still, I am looking forward to the Director and the Lead Performer, Abinash Bikram Shah and Pushpa Thing Lama, of *Elephants in the Fog* (2026)—a beautiful Nepali film that also won the Jury Prize at Cannes.

This sounds like a dream job for you. How did you find yourself here?

Oh yes, I love watching films! My seventeen years of work experience is all in TV, OTT background. So, I have come from the *saas-bahu* era to the festival league. But the common thing in all this is that I love content. Anything that is related to storytelling, I absolutely love. I have never had Sunday Blues or Monday Blues, I always look forward to my work.

I think stories are a very powerful medium to convey the right things to the audience. Because stories hold the power to really influence the person. I truly believe we, as programmers, should pick films that can serve society and can individually benefit a viewer—even if it is a single song or a scene or the narrative. While some things may be for sheer entertainment, I do think we, as programmers, should position ourselves with impact in mind.

Jazz Muzg



Illustration by Chloe Cordeiro

BY LEAXAN FREITAS

In the 16th century, King John III of Portugal issued decrees mandating the creation of parish schools (*Escolas Paroquiais*) attached to village churches. Music was part of the curriculum, with young boys learning solfeggio and the violin, laying a foundation that would shape Goa's musical traditions, including the *Mando*, *Dulpod*, *Dekhni* and *Cantaram*.

Centuries later, another chapter in Goa's musical journey was unfolding in Bombay. The cotton boom of the 1860s attracted young Goans seeking work. Many found their rhythm in the city's jazz scene before making a name for themselves as arrangers in the Indian film industry.

Goan musicians such as Sebastian D'Souza, Chic Chocolate, Frank Fernand and Anthony Gonsalves, followed by Chris Perry and Braz Gonsalves, traced a similar journey: from the humble *Escola Paroquial* of their villages to jazz clubs and music studios across India.

While the earlier maestros settled down as arrangers in the Indian film industry, Chris Perry focussed most of his creativity on introducing jazz and Latin elements into Konkani compositions. Along with Lorna, the trumpeter was responsible for some of the biggest Konkani hits of the 1970s that are still covered by bands today. Notably, Roz Angon, a 7-piece ensemble, led by Jose Neil Gomes, has done a few eclectic renditions of these classics.

Saxophonist Braz Gonsalves, however, was the one who took his music to a global audience. Inspired by Indian ragas, he pioneered a form of jazz that brought together Indian classical music and Western improvisation. If you have not heard his compositions, I recommend *Raga Rock* and *Beautiful Goa*, the latter inspired by the *Dekhni*, *Aum Saiba Poltoddi Vetam*.

In the early 1980s, at the height of his musical career, Braz suffered an accident in Munich. He slipped on black ice and broke his arm. The incident became a turning point in his life and he decided to step away from jazz and devoted himself to gospel music. However, in 2020, Braz returned to jazz, this time playing alongside his grandson Jarryd Rodrigues, who's also a saxophonist.

While I eagerly await the release of *Raga Rock*, Nalini Elvino de Sousa's upcoming documentary on the life of Braz, there's another film I'm looking forward to catching at IFFI: Grant Gee's *Everybody Digs Bill Evans* (2026). The biographical drama on the life of the famed American jazz pianist and composer is screening today and later on in the festival too.

If all this talk about jazz has you craving some live music, there are a few local bands I recommend you check out. Braz, now 92, still performs at Take5 in Candolim on the last Saturday of every month, alongside his wife Yvonne, as part of the quintet—Braz Gonsalves Legacy Collective.

Yvonne Gonsalves, a Goan jazz vocalist is the daughter of renowned trumpeter, composer and bandleader Chic Chocolate, who had written the swing and brass arrangement for the hit 1957 Bollywood song *Ina Mina Dika*. Outside of Jazz she has also recorded a few tracks on Chris Perry's Konkani cassettes in the 1980s.

Another act worth catching is Mujo. The band's core lineup comprises Karim Ellaboudi on keys, Dhir Mody on drums and Jonathan Furtardo on bass—all seasoned jazz musicians. They play jazz standards and contemporary jazz, often joined by guest musicians. Catch them on Wednesday nights at Hideaway in Anjuna.

One cannot talk about the music scene in Goa without mentioning *Jazz Goa*, an organization founded by bassist and producer Colin D'Cruz. Their International Jazz Day celebrations at Panjim's Jardim Garcia de Orta are an annual affair that features a diverse lineup of amateur and professional musicians. You can stream some of the music that has come through their studio on the Jazz Goa Bandcamp page.

While the *Escola Paroquial* enrolled only young boys, women like pianist Lucilla Pacheco still made their mark in Bombay's jazz scene as early as the 1950s. Today, Goa's music scene is seeing a growing number of young women taking up wind and brass instruments. From trumpeters Velrose Pereira and Jeslyn Rodrigues to saxophonists Clarissa Lobo and Swizel Costa, and even an all-girl tiatr band, women are increasingly making their presence felt.

The future of Jazz in Goa seems to be heading in the right direction. Kolkata's *Skinny Mo's Jazz Club* will soon be opening its doors in Moira, while the *Goa Jazz Academy*, a music school in Guirim, is nurturing a new generation of musicians and ensuring that the spirit of jazz lives on.

This column is dedicated to the memory of Chagas Fernandes, the master trumpeter from Carona, who passed away on 11 November 2026.

NADIA DE SOUZA: ANIMAL CRACKERS



We Need to Talk About Kevin
An interpretation of the movie *'We Need to Talk About Kevin'* (2011). Kevin's parents try to maintain a healthy family environment while also dealing with his Psychopathic tendencies'.

The River Runs Through Us

BY VIVEK MENEZES

As we are reminded by Ashish Phaldesai's stunning *The Peacock* cover today, the Mandovi river flowing past the International Film Festival of India's pleasant heritage campus has deep significance beyond the postcard backdrops. It is the very basis of our way of life in this ancient slice of the Konkan coastline. Today, you may look out on bucolic scenes, but for long periods this was one of the most consequential information superhighways in the history of globalization. At the turn of the 16th century, for example, the mushrooming capital of the Estado da Índia upriver from our festival location was twice the size of London or Paris, a churning hub of the Colombian Exchange, where the new and old worlds connected to change the trajectory of world history.

The River Mhadei: The Science and Politics of Diversion (Goa 1556) edited by the academics Peter Ronald de Souza, Solano Da Silva and Lakshmi Subramanian analyses and celebrates our living river systems, in which Rajendra Kerkar outlines the bounty within: "the basin is a biodiversity hotspot with a high level of species endemism. It is home to several globally threatened species of floral and faunal wealth – mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians, butterflies and various other insects. [It is] a tiger corridor, a bison resort, a bear habitat, a king cobra host and the only home in the world to Wroughton's freetailed bat." He says "floristically, the Western Ghats is one of the richest areas of the country, harbouring not less than 3500 species of flowering plants, which is 27 per cent of flowering plants in the country. There is no equal."

Helga do Rosario Gomes of Columbia University writes that "not only is the river Goa's primary freshwater source, but it also plays a crucial role in regulating the salinity of the *khazan* farmlands. *Khazans* are a unique type of coastal wetland found in Goa, used for rice farming, salt production, and aquaculture, while helping protect against coastal erosion. These low-lying areas are created by converting mangrove swamps and tidal flats into productive land through the construction of embankments, canals, and sluice gates to manage water flow." It is the sheer productivity of these *khazans* that have provided Goa its fabled prosperity and food security across generations. In the great DD Kosambi's analysis, their creation involved as much labour as the pyramids of Giza.

For me, the most valuable original contribution to this compilation comes from the brilliant young advocate Aurobindo Gomes Pereira, who writes about the "innate interconnection between the sacred Mandovi and the people of Goa"and explains how rivers "have an intrinsic value that is vital for human existence and the prosperity of the community. The people who live along the river or in river basins have a deep and intimate connection to the river: this can be socio-cultural, religious, customary, and/or folklore. The courts of law are now recognizing the distinct legal character of rivers and that a river is inherently vested with certain fundamental rights, just like a living being. His essay ends, rather beautifully, "Does the river belong to me? Or, do we belong to the river? Om Mane Padme Hum."

In the context of Ashish Phaldesai's painting, and the artworks of his entire ecologically engaged generation in India's smallest state, it is useful to recall what the great BB "Bakibab" Borkar had to say about "the significance of the significance of Goa's natural beauty". He said it "has a supernatural quality of refining the human mind, and of turning it inward into the depths of creativity and spirituality. Tribals, Dravidians, Aryans, Assyrians and Sumerians settled in this territory but Goa's scenic beauty humanized them al so insistently and efficiently that they amalgamated into a single society, with one common language and one cultural heritage. The kinship and co-operation forged unto them by the aesthetic impact of Goa's rich scenery taught them the art of living in peace and friendship, and inspired them to strive for nobler ideals. So comfortably set up in such a rich aesthetic setting, the Goan consciously and unconsciously absorbs Nature's varied promptings through all the pores. In the festival of colours and shapes and sounds and smells and touches and tastes afforded by the nature that surrounds him, his angularities are rounded and his senses are continually sharpened. You may analyse any art form the Goan has produced, and you will soon realise that the aesthetic characteristics of Goa's scenic beauty reveal themselves through it."

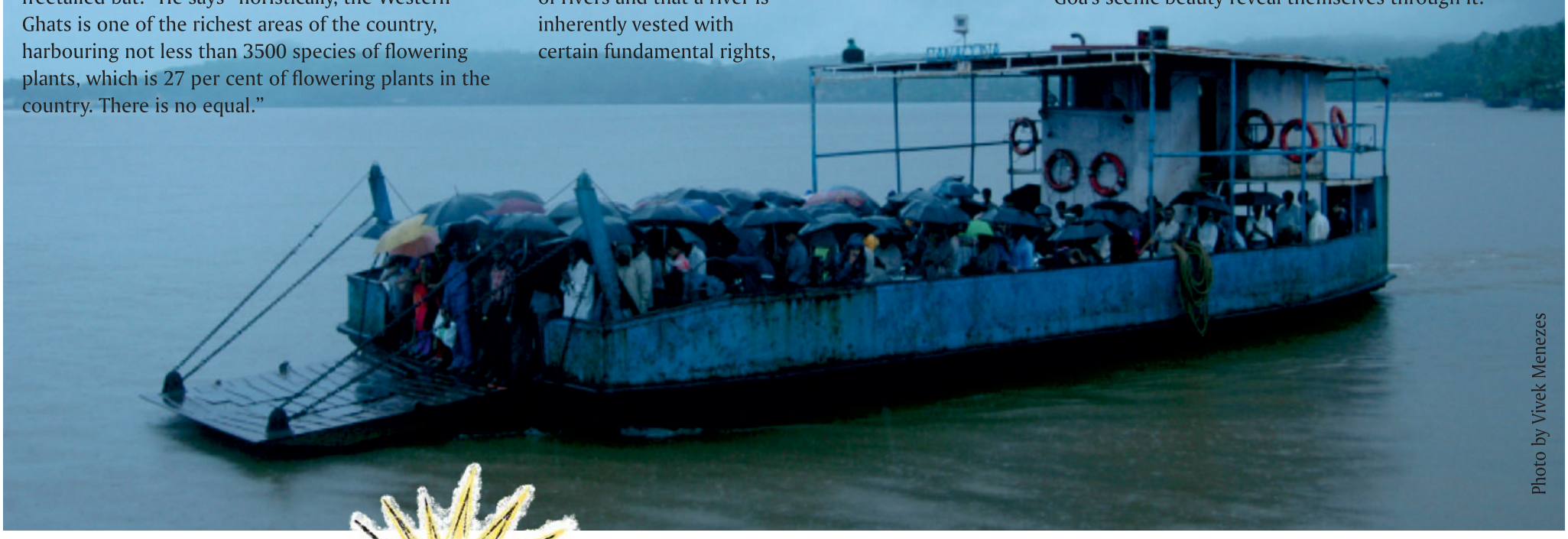


Photo by Vivek Menezes

Julia's Jump Cuts

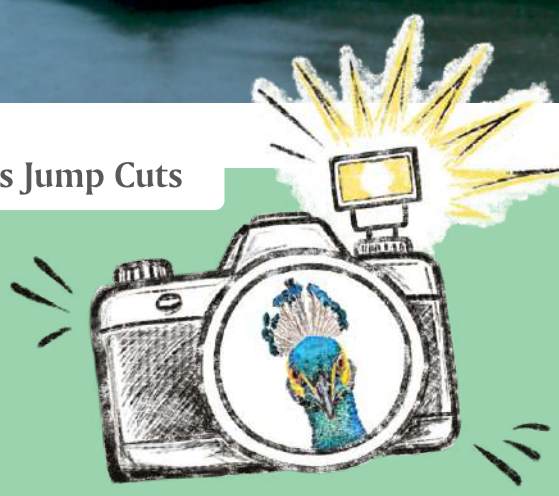


Illustration by Elisha Natália de Noronha

Red Carpet

You. Yes, you. You are on the guest list.

The ceremonial carpet calls. You are the celebrity, luminary, glitterati. Go past the velvet rope, through the arch, and into the tunnel. Images beckon you from the dark screen. Gaze at the scene. Come close. Even closer. Step into the poster, and into the magic of cinema. Sink into your seat. Pop the popcorn. Sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.

- Julia Esther Jacob

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INOX PANJIM AUDI - 1

LOOK BACK
9:45 AM

AQUÍ
12:15 PM
Red Carpet - 11:45 PM

PUSHPAK VIMAN
(2 Episodes)
5:30 PM
Red Carpet - 5:00 PM

THE SAMURAI AND THE PRISONER
7:45 PM

INOX PANJIM AUDI - 2

11:30 AM
Inaugural Ceremony of Indian Panorama 2026

12:15 PM
BECOMING

DHURANDHAR

RED CARPET

URUM
4.45 PM

THAAI KIZHAVI
8.30 PM

INOX PANJIM AUDI - 3

MAVERICK:
THE EPIC ADVENTURES OF DAVID LEAN
9:15 AM

CALL ME QUEEN
12:00 PM

A PLACE TO HEAL
2:30 PM

SUNSPOTS
5:00 PM
Red Carpet - 4:30 PM

JARIPEO
7:15 PM

DRAG
9:15 PM

INOX PANJIM AUDI - 4

CONGO BOY
10:00 AM

ANCESSAO
12:45 PM
Red Carpet - 12:15 PM

NEW HOME
2:00 PM
Red Carpet - 1:30 PM

LOOKING FOR MICHAEL
4:30 PM
Red Carpet - 4:00 PM

SHADOW'S EDGE
7:00 PM

MAQUINEZ PALACE AUDI - 1

LAGAAN
11:00 AM
Red Carpet - 10:30 AM

BHAKTA KANNAPPA
4:30 PM

MANN ITE RAMGAO HO

DERA : A HOME IN MOTION
7:30 PM

ASHOK AUDI

THE FORTUNATE ISLES
1:00 PM

ULYA
4:00 PM

FULL PHIL
7:00 PM

SAMRAT AUDI

QUEEN AT SEA
1:30 PM

ZEJTUNE
4:30 PM

OASIS
7:30 PM

INOX PORVORIM AUDI - 1

FOREVER YOUR MATERNAL ANIMAL
11:00 AM

YOU DON'T BELONG HERE
2:00 PM

TITANIC OCEAN
5:15 PM

INOX PORVORIM AUDI - 2

CHICA CHECA
11:15 AM

DHURANDHAR
4:15 PM

INOX PORVORIM AUDI - 3

DIANE IN THE LOOP
11:30 AM

SUZHOU QUARTET
2:30 PM

UNTIL THE DAY ENDS
5:30 PM

INOX PORVORIM AUDI - 4

DRUMSKIN
11:45 AM

SMALL GODS
2:45 PM

NOBODY'S VIOLENCE
5:45 PM

RAVINDRA BHAVAN MADGOAN

EVERYBODY DIGS BILL EVANS
1:00 PM

LIGHT PILLAR
4:00 PM

[OPEN AIR]
7:00 PM

MAGIC MOVIEZ PONDA AUDI 1

WAKING HOURS
6:00 PM



This year's exclusive *The Peacock* cover artist Ashish Phaldesai grew up in gorgeous Canacona taluka in the extreme south of Goa's coastline, and his work has reflected the natural heritage of India's smallest state from the very beginning, from the Goa College of Art through an increasingly celebrated stature on the national art scene. For today's spectacular, moody cover, he was inspired by our state's river lifeline, saying "this painting imagines a peacock taking flight, inviting the viewer to follow it on a journey through Goa's living landscape. The Mhadei, winding through dense forests and hills, represents more than a geographical lifeline; it is an integral part of Goa's ecology, biodiversity and collective identity. The peacock's flight becomes a metaphor for movement, hope and the interconnectedness of nature."

ENTERTAINMENT SOCIETY OF GOA

PEACOCK PICKS

LOOK BACK
9.45 AM
INOX PANJIM - AUDI 1

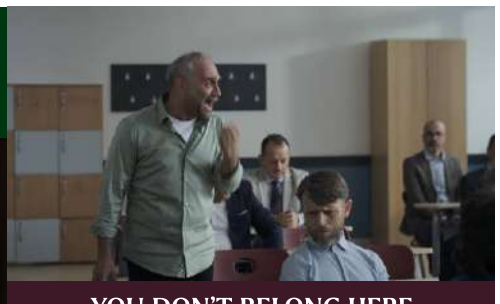




THE SAMURAI AND THE PRISONER
7:45 PM
INOX PANJIM - AUDI 1

CONGO BOY
10:00 AM
INOX PANJIM - AUDI 4





YOU DON'T BELONG HERE
2:00 PM
INOX PORVORIM - AUDI 1

Beverage Partner: BISON
Lounge Partner: XPANSE COFFEE, tātāki
Airline Partner: QATAR AIRWAYS, fly91
Airport Partner: GOX MANOHAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, GOA
Radio Partner: BIG FM
F&B Curation Partner: Hospitality AQ
Screening Partner: PVR INOX
Hydration partner: LAVISSA
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