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**Chicago South Asian Film Festival showcases new era of South Asian films and filmmakers**

CHICAGO, IL – September 24, 2012 – Chicago film aficionados were treated to an array of stellar films, acclaimed artists, and energetic parties at the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Chicago South Asian Film Festival. The four-day festival held its Opening Night on September 20<sup>th</sup> with a star-studded red carpet reception followed by the North American premiere of the much anticipated Bollywood film "Heroine". Artists who walked the red carpet include acclaimed actor Farooq Shaikh, Lillete Dubey, and Adil Hussain. Indian Consul General Mukta Dutta Tomar, Field Museum President Richard Lariviere, and Columbia College Vice President Dr. Eric Winston were also present to show their support. In his opening remarks, Dr. Winston said "I feel like a proud father" as he expressed his and Columbia College Chicago's support for the Festival from its inception back in 2010.

Over the next three days, the Festival showcased the best of South Asian independent cinema to packed audiences at Showplace Icon Theater and Film Row Cinema at Columbia College Chicago. Moviegoers especially enjoyed hearing the various artists and filmmakers talk about their films and performances in the post film discussions. "Doggoned" director Arshad Khan described how his lead actress almost got arrested as they filmed without a permit in the streets of Montreal. Actor Adil Hussain got a standing ovation for his performance in "Lessons in Forgetting", a film based on Anita Nair's book of the same name.

The highlight of the Festival was undoubtedly the world premiere of "Listen Amaya" starring the magical yester-year pairing of Farooq Shaikh and Deepti Naval. Director Avinash Kumar Singh's debut film played to a sold out theater with numerous people sitting on the aisle floors to watch the tale of a daughter coming to grips with her widow mother's relationship with a man who is not her father. "I desperately missed having my friend, confidante, editor, writer and wife Geeta sitting beside me as she has done all the way through this film" – said Singh in a touching acknowledgement to his wife.

If the Festival began with a glamorous affair, the closing was no less sensational with Bollywood star Raveena Tandon attending the premiere of her film "Shobhna's 7 Nights". "We've made this film with a lot of love, not money" quipped the charming Tandon before the adoring audience.

A special panel on entertainment law was also held during the festival with one of Chicago's premiere entertainment lawyers Robert Labate explaining the legal aspects of independent filmmaking. "We've found our stride as a Festival this year and truly elevated it to a world class event. We've got some interesting initiatives in store for 2013 and are looking forward to developing them in the coming year" said Festival Director Amit Rana.

**About CSAFF**

[Chicago South Asian Film Festival](http://www.csaff.org/) is dedicated to fostering a diverse cinematic experience through South Asian films. The Festival was founded in 2010 and is organized by the Chicago South Asian Arts Council Inc. The Festival is held in late September in conjunction with Columbia College Chicago and includes a stellar selection of films and guests, panel discussions, opportunities for filmmakers and film lovers to connect, musical performances, tributes to major artists, and gala's. The Festival is committed to providing a ground-breaking cinematic experience for filmmakers and moviegoers alike with the warmth and personal touch that is unique to Chicago. For more information, visit <http://www.csaff.org/>.

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