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Suraj Sharma of 'Life of Pi' and 'Million Dollar Arm' fame graces Mosaic film festival

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Suraj Sharma announcing an award at the Mosaic International South Asian Film Festival (MISAFF).

By Nita Balani

MISSISSAUGA: The four-day Mosaic International South Asian Film Festival (MISAFF) from August 6 to Aug 9 was a grand success, screening some of the best socially relevant movies and documentaries from South Asian countries and some from the Middle East.

Suraj Sharma, internationally known for his roles in 'Life of Pi', 'Million Dollar Arm' and now 'Umrika'(Indian pronunciation of America)- the latter screened at MISAFF- was on hand to grace the closing and award ceremonies on Aug 9, along with several other personalities, including Canadian actress Supinder Wraich as the movie star of the festival, Huse Madhavji (of TV series 'Saving Hope' fame) and Gabe Grey from 'Beeba Boys', Deepa Mehta's new venture that is to premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) later this year.

Even the Consul-General of Pakistan, Mr. Asghar Golo, was present for the final ceremonies and addressed the eminent crowd of cinephiles.



Deepa Mehta and cast of 'Beeba Boys'

To honor the opening night gala festival, none other than globally prominent Canadian director Deepa Mehta was there to announce her upcoming movie, 'Beeba Boys' and to introduce the opening night movie 'Court', a masterpiece by Chaitanya Tamhane about a folk singer who is accused of writing lyrics that leads to a sewage worker committing suicide. This movie won awards at the Venice and Mumbai film festivals.

Another grand movie screened at the festival was 'Siddharth' by another acclaimed Canadian director Richie Mehta. Moreover, the rich repertoire of movies included 'Dhanak', 'Margarita with a Straw', 'Monsoon', 'Labour of Love', 'Tell Spring not to Come', 'Amar, Akbar and Tony', 'Speed Sisters', 'Timbuktu', 'One Crazy Thing' and several more. Many had won several accolades and awards at various illustrious international festivals.

Included in the list of movies were several shorts with 'The Time Traveler' starring Huse Madhavji taking the top prize in this category.



Supinder Wraich announcing an award

Several directors and actors of the movies screened chatted with the audience either live in person or via skype throughout the festival. The festival was well organized using every modern method and facility available and was held in the Cineplex complex near Square One and the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga.

For the closing night festivities, Sundance film festival audience award winner, 'Umrika' was screened. Prashant Nair's 'Umrika' , stars Smita Patil's son Prateik Babbar and Suraj Sharma and relates the story of how the elder son Udai (Prateik) of a family in an Indian village goes to find fortune in Umrika (America) and loses touch with his family. Years later, after much consternation, younger son Rama (Suraj) sets out in search of him.



Gabe, Anya, Arshad, Supinder and Suraj

MISAFF is led by its original founder Arshad Khan and Anya Mackenzie and is currently Mississauga's finest and longest running South Asian film festival bringing in quality mentally provoking and soul-stirring movies that traverse a different path from the usual commercial fare. This eminent festival has always hosted Canadian, North American and world premieres of excellent movies from the alternate cinema universe and grows bigger and better with each passing year.

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