

Bollywood Meets Hip-Hop

Written by Robert ID2471

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South Asian Supermodel, Film Director and Hip-Hop / Rap Personality Encourage "Gandhi" Reading

"Hip-Hop Literacy" campaign founder Raoul Juneja (a.k.a. DeeJay Ra) celebrated the highly anticipated "Water" Canadian home video release with star Lisa Ray and director Deepa Mehta, amongst hundreds of the film's fans at Blockbuster Canada's flagship video store March 12th in Downtown Toronto.

Juneja also launched a "Mahatma Gandhi" literacy tribute with the support of Ray and Mehta last week through his Lyrical Knockout Entertainment company, setting up Gandhi book and "Water" DVD giveaways for students commemorating the return of the world leader to North American cinema.

Born and raised in Toronto, it was while vacationing across India that Lisa Ray was offered a photo shoot by a Bollywood fashion magazine, the pictorial which soon catapulted her to being one of India's most recognized models. Accepting offers to appear in music videos and to host her own TV show soon led Lisa, of Bengali-Polish descent, to star in her first Bollywood movie.

"Kasoor" later caught the attention of acclaimed director Deepa Mehta and resulted in Lisa Ray starring in Mehta's "Bollywood/Hollywood" comedy, which received a world premiere at the 2002 Toronto Film Festival. Lisa then spent the next few years across London in theatre training to prepare for her role in Mehta's "Water" film, which illuminates the plight of widows in India during the 1930's.

Lisa Ray stars as one such widow who finds compassion in a young activist inspired by Gandhi's words, played by fellow Bollywood superstar John Abraham, who originally catapulted to fame in India as a supermodel of Iranian heritage. Deepa Mehta's "Water" film score was composed by AR Rahman, an award-winning producer who recently composed music for Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Bombay Dreams" play, and who is currently producing music for the "Lord of the Rings" stage adaptation.

"Not since Lord Attenborough's "Gandhi" film release over twenty years ago has the words of

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the Mahatma been prominently heard in Canadian or US movie theatres, or quoted this much in mainstream media," explains Juneja.

"Deepa's "Water" film provides the perfect time for North American teachers to re-introduce Gandhi to multi-cultural students and outline his contributions not only to India's independence movement, but also to Dr. Martin Luther King and the American civil rights struggle, as well as to Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa."

Attached photography from left to right (Lisa Ray, DeeJay Ra and Deepa Mehta) courtesy of Chathuri Perera.