

French audience gathered at the Nirvana Film Festival held in St. Trope, showed amazing enthusiasm for Indian films

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A large number of French audiences have shown interest in Indian films at the Nirvana Film Festival organized in the historical city of Saint-Trope in southern France. In the third decade of the 19th century, a wonderful love story took place in undivided Punjab, the memories of which are still preserved in a garden in the city of St. Trope. Here the statues of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, French commander Jean François Allard and his Indian wife Bannu Pan Dei keep reminding us of that love story.

On the initiative of Henri Allard and his son Frédéric Allard, descendants of Jean François Allard, commander of Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab in the third decade of the 19th century, Mayor of Saint-Trope Sylvie Sirie, India's Ambassador to France Javed Ashraf, French actress Marianne Borgo, India's famous writer and journalist Dr. Bhuvan Lal, in collaboration with Prakash P. Hinduja, President of Hinduja Industry Group (Europe), has started this festival to promote Indian culture through cinema in France.

This time, Indian film director Ashutosh Gowariker, J. Anthony Joseph, Leena Yadav, famous cinematographer Aseem Bajaj, film producer Captain Gulab Singh, famous Hollywood distributor Marie Adler and British MP Lord Ramy Ranger had a special presence here. Captain Gulab Singh stressed that such festivals must be held in those countries of the world with which India has cultural and historical relations.

Jean François Allard was a commander in the army of French ruler Napoleon Bonaparte. After Napoleon's death, in March 1822, he reached Lahore in the court of Maharaj Ranjit Singh via Iran-Afghanistan and trained his army in modern French style to fight the British. He had good knowledge of Persian language. He had a love marriage with Princess Bannu Pan Dei of Himachal Pradesh in March 1826. Henry Allard and his son Frederick Allard are descendants of the same Jean François Allard who loves India very much and wants that the mutual relations between the two countries should continue to strengthen.

Along with Indian cinema, Indian dance, music, yoga and meditation, fashion show and food have also been included in the Nirvana Film Festival. Therefore, this festival is named in French – 'Nirvana di Festival Della Culture et du Cinema Indien.' This festival is organized immediately after the Cannes Film Festival. The city of Saint Trope in the French Riviera is about ninety kilometers away from the coastal city of Cannes, which can be reached in one to one and a half hours by road or sea. This festival was started last year but in the second year itself it became so popular that every show became houseful with French audiences.

Nirvana Film Festival started with the premiere of Raghunath Manet's new French film 'Return to Pondicherry' in which famous French actress Marianne Borgo has played the lead role. This is his first feature film. Before this, he has made a documentary film named 'Dance of Shiva'

and two short films – Karma and Yoga Seventh Chakra. Raghunath Manet is a French veena player and dancer (Bharatanatyam) of Indian origin and lives in Paris. Here he teaches Indian dance and music to French youth.

Before the screening of the film, Raghunath Manet and his disciples presented beautiful dance and music based on Indian mythology. The good thing was that the entire proceedings were conducted in French and the English language was used minimally. Other films that were India's official entries for the Oscars last year were J. Anthony Joseph's Malayalam film '2018 - Everyone is a Hero', Leena Yadav's Hindi film 'Parched' and Ashutosh Gowariker's Hindi film 'Swadesh' shown with French subtitles. The directors of all these films were also present here. In fact, every year in the month of July, a grand Sikh festival is held in the city of Saint-Trope in memory of the friendship between Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab and Jean Francois Allard, the commander of Napoleon Bonaparte. Nirvana Film Festival is an extension of that.

Raghunath Manet's film 'Return to Pondicherry' talks together about many issues like adoption of Indian orphan/poor children by foreigners, increasing identity crisis among those children, dance therapy, spirituality of Indian culture, classical dance etc. Does. One of the strongest aspects of the film is its cinematography. Velu Prabhakaran's camera effectively shows the emotions of the characters along with the beautiful sea of Pondicherry, its streets and public life. Although the film is often filled with themes of liberation from daily sorrows through dance dedicated to Lord Shiva, sometimes the pain of the heart comes out in the form of tears. Every character of the film is engrossed in his life's journey suppressing the pain in his chest. This film brings to the center stage man's search for cultural identity.

In the film we see that Raghunath Manet runs a dance school for orphan children in Pondicherry. Ruby, a ten-year-old orphan girl living there, is adopted by two elite and rich women of France, Marianne Borgo and Karin, and bring her to Paris. Ruby, Marianne and Karin are happy in Paris and there is no shortage of anything. The problem arises when Ruby turns twenty and has to go through a crisis of her identity. Scenes from his childhood start flashing in his memories. She tells her adoptive mothers that she has to go to her hometown Pondicherry and meet her real parents. Marianne and Karin come to Pondicherry with him.

Ruby's world starts changing when she joins Raghunath Manet's dance school. Here he learns that he is the child of a nomad (gypsy) mother. His mother had left him at the doorstep of Raghunath Manet's orphanage. Here she befriends a young man but his love does not give her any relief. On the other hand, his childhood friend has been waiting for him for ten years. Here we take a look at some amazing childhood images of the two of them in the flash bank. For a while, Ruby is also attracted to her dance guru Raghunath, but there too she is disappointed. Raghunath is so engrossed in the dance and worship of Shiva that there is no room left for anyone else in his life. Ultimately both of Ruby's adoptive mothers are returning to Paris disappointed and in the last scene we see Ruby going somewhere on a motorcycle with her childhood friend.

It means a lot to have a Nirvana Film Festival of Indian culture in the maritime city of Saint Trope in southern France. This small town has been attracting celebrities from all over the world. Private ships of rich people from all over the world will be seen anchored at the port

here. Many big films of Hollywood and Europe have been shooting here. From world famous painter Picasso to modern painters, writers like Ernest Hemingway to Jean Paul Sartre, Arson Welles, Queen of Monaco and famous Hollywood actress Grace Kelly to Leonardo DiCaprio, Quentin Tarantino and today's superstar Tom Cruise have all visited this city. Have given a lot of love to. Amidst all this grandeur, the love story of French commander Jean François Allard and Himachal's princess Bannu Pan Dei is still breathing in this city.

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