



DVD press release

A Throw of Dice

A film by Franz Osten, with a new score by Nitin Sawhney

**“A cross between Chaplin, Cecil B. DeMille and an early Bollywood movie” –
Nitin Sawhney**

Inspired by the gambling episode in the ancient Hindu epic *The Mahabharata*, this rare classic of Indian silent cinema tells of two kings who share a passion for reckless gambling, and for the same woman.

A Throw of Dice (Prapancha Pash) is the third film in a pioneering trilogy of silent films made through a unique partnership between German director Franz Osten and Indian actor-producer Himansu Rai, whose films combined documentary techniques with narratives derived from Indian myths and legends. After the beautiful Sunita nurses Ranjit back to health following dramatic events during a royal tiger hunt, his wicked rival Sohata persuades him to risk his kingdom and his love in a fateful game of dice.

Shot on location in Rajasthan, the film features over ten thousand extras and an impressive array of horses, elephants and tigers. Its star actors all had major careers in Indian cinema and remain legendary and much-loved figures. Rai stars in the role of nefarious Sohata, with Charu Roy as Ranjit, and Seeta Devi (the Anglo-Indian actress born Renee Smith) as Sunita.

The film is presented with a new full orchestral score by award-winning musician, producer and composer Nitin Sawhney, performed by the London Symphony Orchestra. Sawhney's distinctive compositional style, steeped in both western and South Asian musical traditions, results in an evocative, lyrical soundtrack to this sumptuous film, transforming it into a fresh experience almost eighty years after it first opened.

Now digitally restored by the BFI National Archive, the DVD release follows a special free preview on a giant screen in Trafalgar Square on 30 August, seen by over 6,000 people. A highlight of the Mayor of London's 'India Now' celebrations, the score was performed live by Nitin Sawhney and the London Symphony Orchestra. The film was released in cinemas across the UK on 31 August.

Extras

- Exclusive filmed interview with Nitin Sawhney
- Fully illustrated 22-page booklet including essays by film historian Amrit Gangar and filmmaker Asif Kapadia (*The Warrior*), biographies and reviews

Release date: 29 October 2007

RRP £19.99 / cat. no. BFIVD734 / cert U

Germany, India, UK / 1929 / b&w / silent with music / 74 mins / ratio 4:3FF

This disc contains optional subtitles for the hearing-impaired

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Images are available at www.image.net under BFI > DVD releases 2007

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