

CINEMA

The American Scene: Of Scorsese and De Niro

by Nupu Chaudhuri

EACH season brings many films to the theatres and the flmogor, faced with a wide range of choices, often selects one carrying familiar names. If that is the case, we can hope for a decent turnout for the upcoming film *Casino*. This film reunites director Martin Scorsese and actor Robert De Niro, whose previous collaborations have contributed to the finest of recent American cinema.

Scorsese, an innovator in film even during film school at New York University, quickly caught the public's eye in 1969 with his first feature, *Who's That Knocking On My Door?* With all the films that followed, he gave contemporary American cinema the push that it needed to be held in the same high esteem as European classics. He eschewed all conventional approaches to filmmaking and offered an exciting alternative use of the medium through uneven pacing, hand held cameras, conversations that resembled real-life street dialogue, still frames with voice-overs, slow motion shots, and the omnipresent popular music playing in the background. Scorsese turned each of his films into technical monuments, enriching the medium, and becoming the darling of film schools that could analyse his work and find meaning even in the grains. A fine example of Scorsese's talents can be viewed in *Goodfellas* (1990), the true story of crime man Henry Hill. One scene depicts Hill's first date with his wife-to-be: in one long shot, the camera follows the couple from the parked car outside, into the back door, winding through the bustling kitchen of a club, onto the main kitchen door, onto the club floor, straight to the front, where a special table is set up for them. This magnificent shot shows Hill's rise and acceptance in the society of organised crime.

Scorsese's career has hit many peaks and a few lows, the latter being demonstrated by his turning to documentaries (one about fashion designer Armani) and music videos (including Michael Jackson's *Bad*) to which he resorted after falling out of financial favour resulting from his controversial *The Last Temptation Of Christ*. He rose again with the under-rated *After Hours*, and firmly re-established his presence as a

force in American cinema with *Goodfellas*. While he continues to explore difficult territories as he did in the breathtaking *Age Of Innocence*, he has found his niche in some common themes which permeate his more popular films: Italian-American culture, New York City, organised crime, and Catholicism. Even when the stories appear commonplace, Scorsese's avant-garde treatments, influenced by the neo-realism of filmmakers Federico Fellini and Michelangelo Antonioni, make all his films a joy to view.

Fellini frequently employed his favourite actor Marcello Mastroianni as his alter ego in his most prominent films, and playing Mastroianni to Scorsese's Fellini is De Niro, a chameleon who often prefers a blank canvas onto which the audience projects itself. De Niro, born to artist parents in New York's Greenwich Village, trained in the Method School of Acting, popularised by Marlon Brando in the 1950s, where an actor is taught to use his own real experiences to capture emotions necessary for the script. (An amusing example is the much quoted incident when fellow Method actor Dustin Hoffman stayed awake for two nights in order to correctly portray his sleep-deprived character in *Marathon Man*; his started co-star, Sir Laurence Olivier, remarked, "My dear boy, have you tried acting?")

Scorsese's *Mean Streets* (1972) saw the beginning of a beautiful friendship as De Niro starred as Johnny Boy, the impetuous street punk with a short fuse. Scorsese found an actor who successfully projected the everyman and gave his films a dynamic flavour, and De Niro found an auteur who permitted him access to his extensive talents. The films that followed proved this union to be a fruitful one: *Taxi Driver*, *New York New York*, *Raging Bull*, *Goodfellas*, *King of Comedy*, and *Cape Fear*. *Raging Bull* (1980), based on the life of boxer Jake La Motta, was a milestone in cinematic history, with its powerful black and white photography, and an unforgettable performance by De Niro, who ballooned over two hundred pounds for his role as the aged La Motta, and consequently won himself an Oscar. It is *Taxi Driver* (1976) that remains in the minds of flmogors as evidence of the true genius of both Scorsese

and De Niro. The tale of a New York cab driver Travis Bickle, who sees the dregs of society come out at night to wreck the city he lives in, attempts to assassinate the local senator running for presidency and eventually kills two pimps to free 15-year-old prostitute (Jodie Foster) and becomes a public hero. The controversies that followed in the aftermath reached a climax when the unsuccessful assassinator of President Ronald Reagan in 1981 claimed to have been inspired by De Niro's performance in *Driver*.

De Niro's other Oscar was won playing the young Vito Corleone in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather, Part II*, and this is another demonstration of De Niro's talent in choosing difficult roles and never over-playing them. Starring in more than thirty films which include *Deer Hunter*, *The Last Tycoon*, *One Upon A Time In America*, *The Untouchables*, *Awakenings*, and his directorial debut *A Bronx Tale*. De Niro has never given a bad performance. Although the mid-80s saw a spate of, at best, mediocre films, his acting remained, at worst, sufficient, and he shone in smaller roles in more marginal films like *Angel Heart* and *Brazil*. Although he has never sought publicity, he has become a pop icon without trying; when British pop trio Bananarama honoured him with a song, *Robert De Niro's Watling*, he appeared uncomfortable with his cult status.

De Niro's influence can be noted in a whole generation of younger American actors like Matt Dillon and Nicholas Cage, while Scorsese has influenced younger filmmakers like Spike Lee and Quentin Tarantino with his avant-garde techniques and vision. When not directly working on his own work, Scorsese steers his energies towards restoring old prints of classic films which are likely to be permanently disintegrated if not tended to in the immediate future. De Niro is converting previously industrial grounds, Tribeca, in the downtown New York area into film studios and schools. In a time when fame is more easily and readily attained by publicising private scandals and media over-exposure, it is admirable to witness that Scorsese and De Niro have achieved and retained the public's interest solely through their superb talents and hard work.

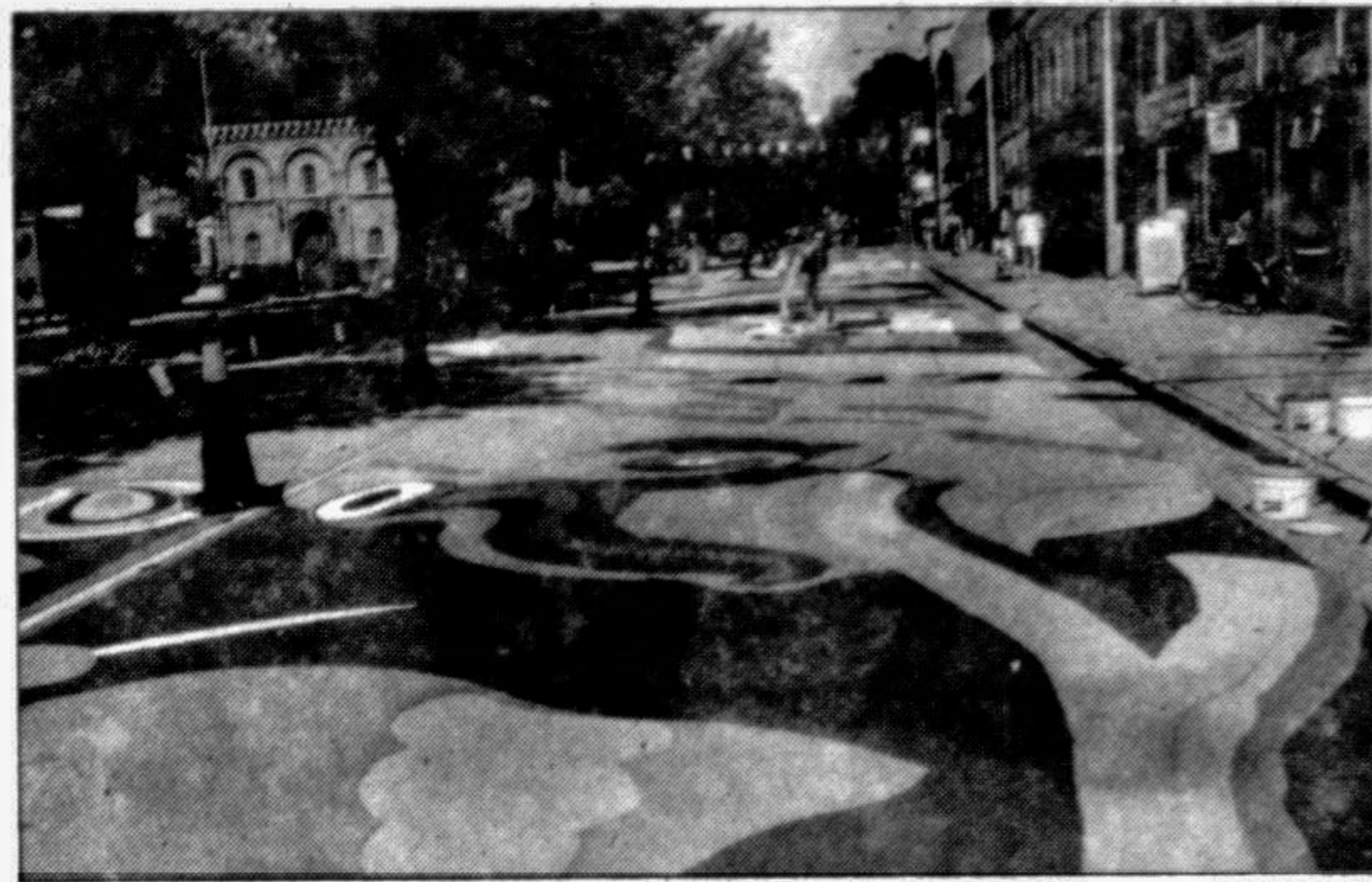
ART

Longest Street Painting in the World

Touch of Magic Colours Transforms the Grey Asphalt

by Fayza Haq

SITTING in the hall of Alliance Francaise de Dhaka and watching Kajol's video, one could witness how in the coastal town of Landskrona in southern Sweden the dull black asphalt had been turned into an explosion of colours and imaginative art. Kajol, who had already created a record with his longest mural painting in the world, had launched into the longest street-painting in the world. This was a stretch of 560 metres of street-painting called "Heaven on Earth." It depicted man and nature and had been inspired by Swedish folklore, Bangladeshi legends and traditional Latin American carnival art.



Kajol takes his imagination and enthusiasm to Sweden, and transforms 560 metres of dull black street into a pulsating stretch of vibrant colours with meaningful motifs.

This painting, has been recorded in the Guinness Book of records as the longest painting in the world on a thoroughfare street. Although the painting will eventually fade with time, most of Landskrona will remember the fascinating and original art work that once decorated the main street of their town, and transformed the dull, conventional static massive of grey streets into a long chain of vibrant motifs that dealt with human life.

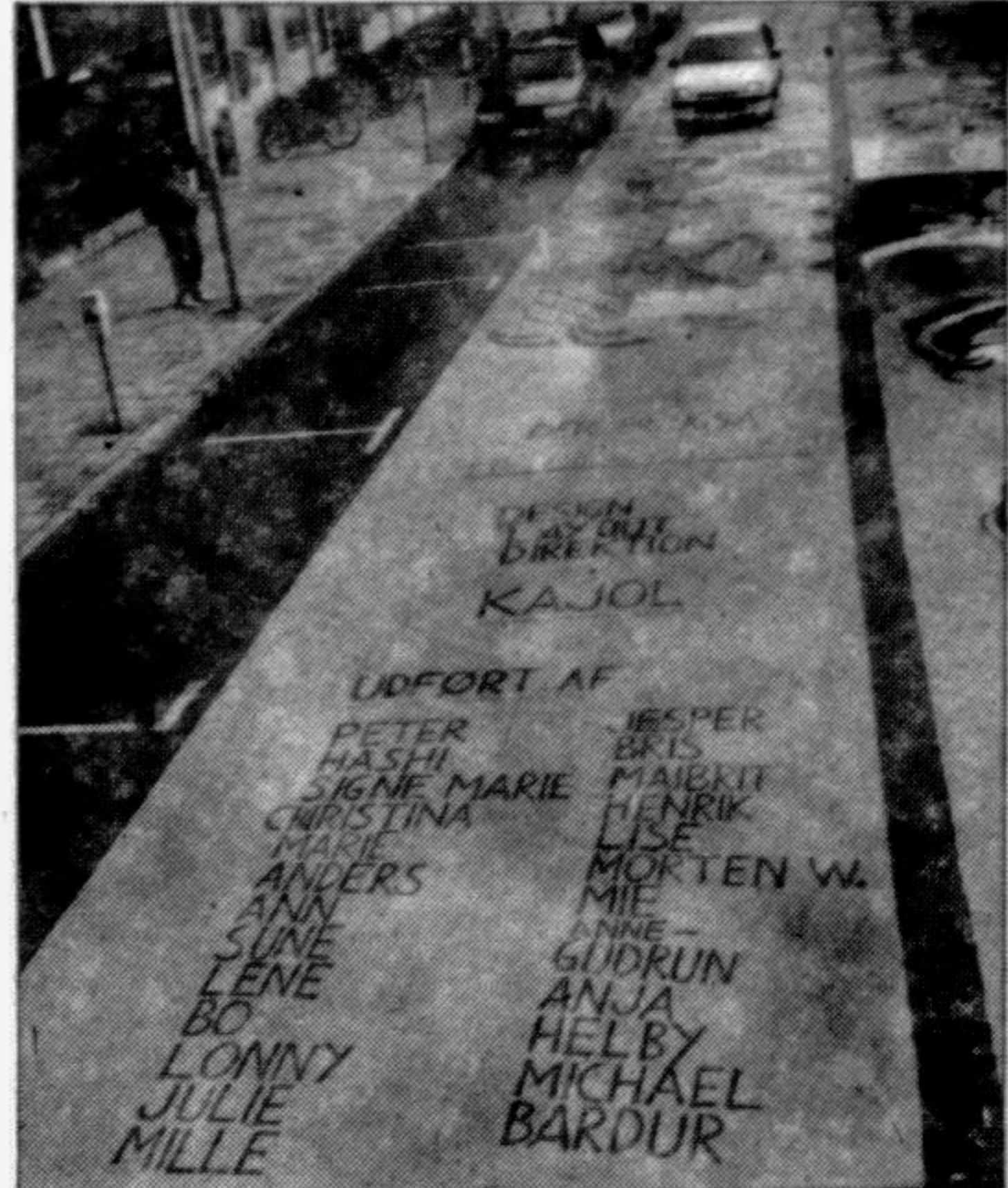
Kajol, who lives and works in Copenhagen, Denmark, came across the Copenhagen carnival committee's artistic advisors Bjorn Hernes and Tjil Dreyer, who contacted and commissioned him for the massive job of street painting in Landskrona. They were acquainted with Kajol's experience with the longest mural in Spain.

Along with 25 young art students of Denmark, a visiting Bangladeshi friend Hashi Chakraborty (who made three masks and a snake motif and helped for a week), and with the help of several members of the Copenhagen carnival workshop, the artist went about his work for a month. He worked with acrylic based plastic colour normally used for wood or metal surface for outdoor work. Kajol, who has spoken to the chemists say that in future they can create a stronger binding composition. While

Kajol was paid for his labour of love for a month, his young and enthusiastic helpers were provided with food and lodging.

The basic theme of the painting was "Heaven on Earth" and this went to heighten the joys of the people in the Swedish harbour town of Landskrona (Copenhagen) who celebrate a carnival in the streets in which 40,000 people participate every year with dancing, samba music and parade. Studying the video one found Kajol's recurrent theme of the eyes with different coloured pupils depicting the coming together of the different races and the quiet, and patient sea-gulls of the northern countries who stand for mute witnesses. One has seen these themes earlier in the artist's work in Bangladesh. These were combined with the Amazon snake, the Indian peacock, the fish and butterfly form of Modhumoni (northern Bengal).

The traditional Christmas motif of the birth of Christ, lovers in weather - moving out from cold autumn, exotic flowers, palm-trees, flitting angels, Latin American masks and sunbursts all went into this massive creation which had all the qualities of an ecstatic dream. Soft blues, pulsating reds and yellows were combined with touches of soothing whites and greens. As the artist did the outlines, the young students filled it up with colours.



perience in doing folk-lore motifs for local parades. In Dhaka for Pabeha Baishakh and Ekushey February, he has helped clean up the walls of the Institute of Fine Arts DU and taught how to cover them with meaningful designs. The pageants and processions of Pabeha Baishakh also attract him a lot. Although Kajol lives automatically. An ideal place for an experiment in front of a school or playground.

It is admirable indeed when the thought processes of a single individual like Kajol can provide joy to 40,000 people in Sweden. Thousands of miles away from home, the artist brings honour and recognition to the place of his origin.

In Denmark, he makes it a point to visit home in Dhaka as often as he can.

"Just as *Alpana* painting on the streets of Dhaka was demonstrating for the right to the nation's own language, painting in Landskrona was demonstrating for the right to peace in the traffic. More than 30 years of tradition of painting in the street in Bangladesh finally developed into an art form in a street of Landskrona, Sweden," Kajol explains.

While giving the details of his experience of traffic art, Kajol talks of how it can prove to be a speed limit therapy. "An analysis from Landskrona shows that at the traffic speed was slower during the past five months due to the painting on the street. This has given me the idea of 'traffic therapy'."

People have a tendency of avoiding disturbing art work. Again, something strong ahead on the road makes people careful, and they slow down



Kajol (second from left) with officials in Landskrona.

ENTERTAINMENT

TELEVISION

Arabian Nights: Fisherman Traps the Genie

THE fisherman could not believe that if one saved the life of somebody how could that person decide to kill the one who saved him.

He had rescued the genie from the brass bottle - where the genie was destined to be imprisoned for about 400 years - and yet the genie wanted to kill him in spite of his arguments, logic and reason.

The clever fisherman, in the name of Prophet Suleman, defied the genie to show him that he actually could fit into a small brass bottle.

The stupid genie shrunk himself to the size of the bottle.

At once the fisherman put the lid on the bottle and trapped the genie again.

Fisherman Narrates Genie a

Story : Genie realized the cleverness of the human being and begged to be freed.

The fisherman told him if he did so the genie would kill him just as in the story of Hakim Doban and Badshah Zoman in the country of Faris.

Badshah Zoman Turns Ugly : Badshah Zoman was a brave and handsome young man. His scheming Vazir had his eyes on the throne. In this evil plan he made the king drink Unani medicines with intention to murder him - but instead of death, the king became ugly and got white patches all over his face, hands and body.

As per rule of the land, any Hakim (mediceman) who did not succeed in curing the king faced death by getting his head chopped by the executioner.

Hakim Doban's Challenge to Cure the King : Miracle mediceman Doban entered the king's court and proclaimed that he has been sent by Divine powers to cure the ugly king.

Badshah Zoman accepted the challenge and also warned Hakim Doban of the consequences if he failed.

Hakim Doban accepted the offer on one condition that the Vazir be left free. The king was surprised but very pleased at Hakim Doban's human gesture. Hakim Doban had no idea of the Vazir's evil intentions.

Badshah Zoman not only agreed to free the Vazir but made a public proclamation that if Hakim Doban succeeded, he will give him the riches of the world.

A Special Polo Stick : Day and night the miracle mediceman worked on herbs, poisons and metal and prepared a hollow metal polo stick.

This over 8 ft. stick was heated and filled with medicinal herbs.

Badshah Zoman played polo as advised by the Hakim and beads of sweat started flowing from his hands head and the whole body became wet. The medicine effect flowed from the metal stick through the hands into the entire body.

Episode 15 on BTV today (Friday) at 8-30 pm.

The Crystal Maze
Episode 15 on BTV today (Friday) at 9:05 am

computer. Darien learns who the dead ISA agent was that he is accused of murdering and who the dead agent's partner is. Darien wants to question the partner. But when he goes to the partner's house, he finds the partner has also been killed.

Darien teams up with Tulsa again. Certain that the fugitives will kill the director of the ISA next, Darien goes to the director's house, bringing Tulsa with him. Darien plans to let Tulsa ask the director to meet him at a rendezvous, away from other ISA agents. By the time Tulsa identifies herself and is let inside the house, however, Burke and Michaels have already killed the director. Burke tells Tulsa that he's director.

Episode 21 on BTV on 3-5-95, Wednesday at 9:00pm.

Dark Justice : "The Neutralizing Factor"

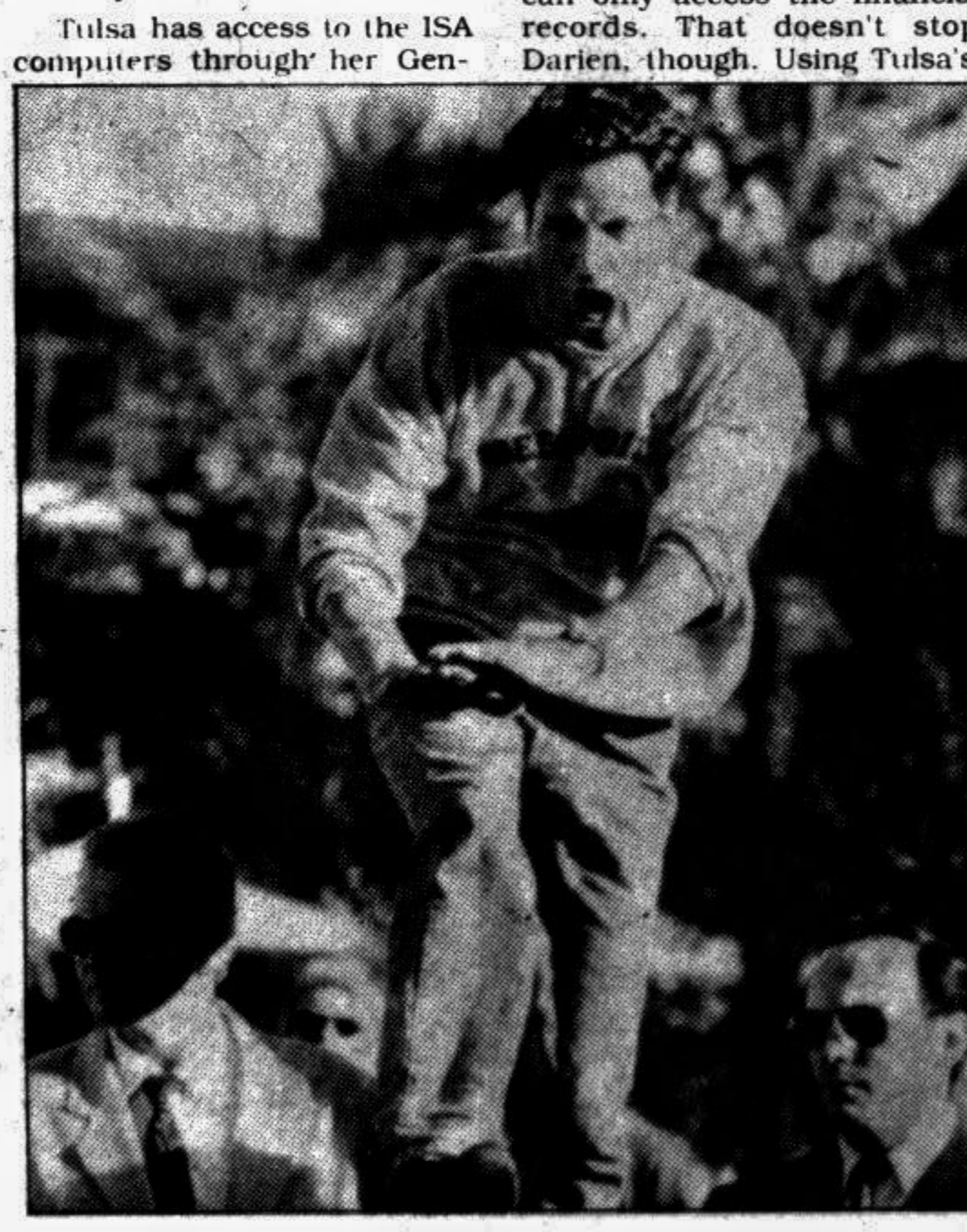
In an attempt to extract a confession from the owner of a chemical company who is a reputed polluter, Nick (Ramy Zada) and his team come close to killing him. But the owner turns out to be innocent.

Episode 16 on BTV on 30-4-95, Sunday at 9:00 pm.

Time Trax : "Framed"

CL Burke (Lewis Fitz-Gerald), a 22nd century fugitive, becomes an important agent for the International Security Agency (ISA). His bosses suspect there is a traitor somewhere in the department, but they don't realize that it is Burke. In fact, they entrust the assignment of finding the traitor to Burke. Burke decides to use the agency to solve an unrelated problem of his own - Darien Lambert (Dale Midkiff). Using 22nd century techniques, Burke can prove that Darien is the traitor. His partner in the deception is Andrew Michaels (Peter Webb), another ISA agent and fugitive from the future.

Burke kills a fellow ISA agent but makes it appear that Darien is, the killer. Darien evades the agency when they try to arrest him. Then he sneaks into ISA headquarters and uses their computers to discover who in the ISA would want to blame him for murder. He learns of Burke and Michaels. Darien is aided by Tulsa Giles (Mary-Margaret Humes), an attractive, if eccentric, government computer worker.



ZEE TV

BANEGI APNI BAAT
Ritu is shocked to see Mrs. Seth and Vikram together. There is hectic activity - singing, dancing at the ladies saangeet in full swing. Everyone is looking for Ritu.

Vivek is waiting for Ritu to come with Vikki but is shocked to see her enter alone. The boys side present Radha with a chunni to be given to Richa. A sad moment which the kids break by singing wedding songs.

Episode: 94 03.05.95 (2130), 05.05.95 (2400)

HASRATEIN
A new tabalchi is hired by

Panditji. Kedar and Sulakshana decide to meet at night but Kedar cannot come as his father-in-law has come from Delhi to intervene between Kedar and Kamal. Sulakshana waits for very long but then has to return home where she finds Panditji waiting for her.

Episode: 5 02.05.95 (2200), 03.05.95 (0080)

MERE GHAR ANA ZINDAGI
Tom Alter brings his wife Carol, and Children - Jeremy and Afshan, to meet the viewers of Mere Ghar Ana Zindagi. In a fulfilled conversation they share some very personal and moving experiences of the times when Carol delivered her children.

HUM PAANCH
All the five girls have gone for a picnic. Taking advantage of this situation, Anand Mathur and Bina try to get romantic. But unfortunately for them, "BINA'S MOTHER" lands up the girls come back from the Picnic.

Nani is very upset with the attitude of the girls and vows to discipline. The girls having a showdown with their Nani who is forced to surrender. As she is about to leave the house Anand Mathur's first wife's mother (the 2nd Nani) enters and forces the 1st Nani to stay

over. Now it is a catch twenty two situation.

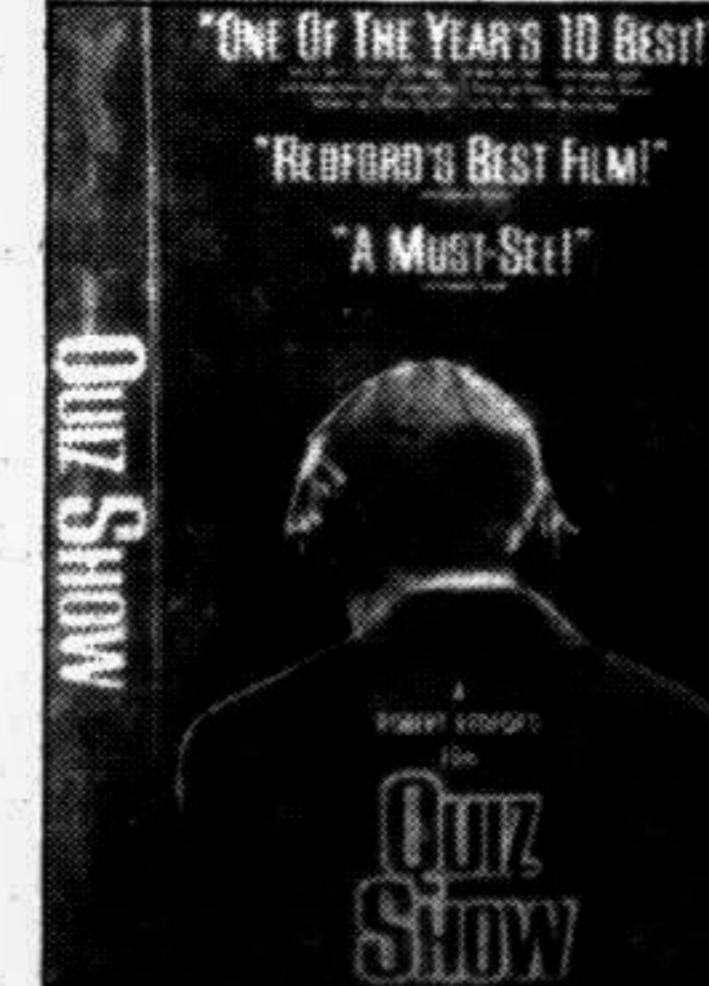
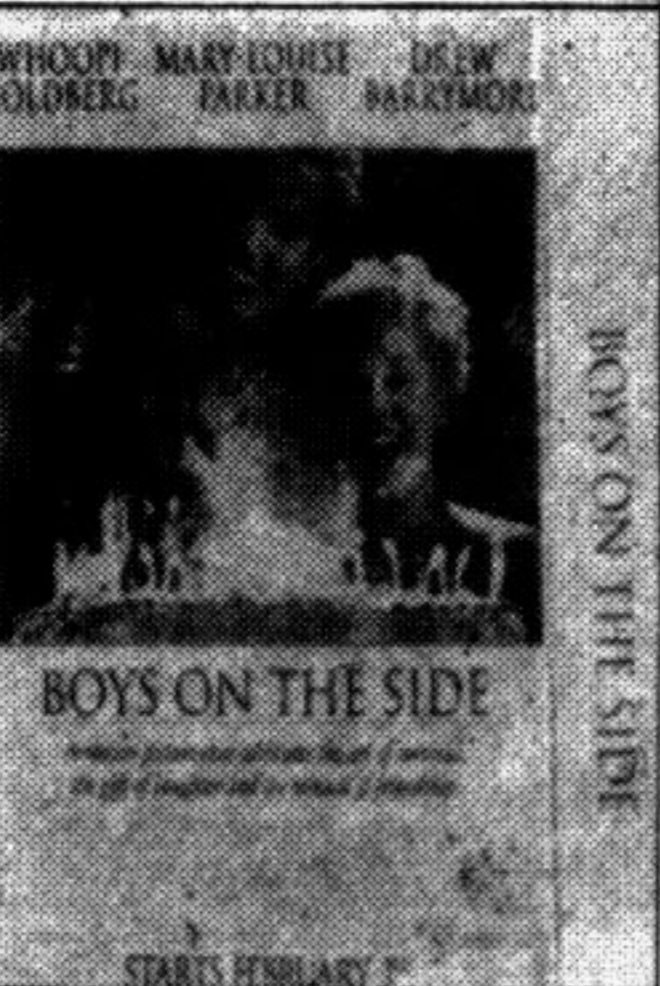
Episode: 5 02.05.95 (2100), 04.05.95 (2300)

CAMPUS
Hasan Ali has a confrontation with Ravi, Salim and the other errant boys and tells Ravi that his own father, Commissioner Bhatnagar tipped him. Avinash and gang try to rag the new girls but are ragged themselves. Ravi tells Ranjana she is seeing too much of Ganesh but she declares this is the only way to an affluent life. Anjali has an argument with the guys and forms her own Toofan! Sena comprised only of girls with an unknown mission.

Episode: 96 01.05.95 (2130), 03.05.95 (2400)

Viewing Video

by Lenin Gani



Boys On The Side follows the lives of three very different women each trying to overcome their individual problems.

Whoopi Goldberg is the leader of the group. A headstrong person who is a lesbian. Mary-Louise Parker has an acute form of AIDS while Drew Barrymore is the battered wife of a drug dealer.

After playing a prank on Drew's hubby, the three women decide to make a fresh start somewhere else.

The trio have just settled at a location when the police take Drew away for the suspected murder of her husband. Whoopi together with Mary

testify in court, that she is in fact an innocent victim.

Quiz Show is the true story of how one of America's most popular programmes in the 50s was rigged so as to appease the ratings.

When NBC producers see the programme '20 Questions' slump in popularity they decide that drastic action is necessary to save it.

They get a stroke of luck when the son (Ralph Fiennes) of a prominent scholar wants to take part.

The resident champion has

to make way for the new face. Instantly the programme is making waves. However, little does anyone know the questions have already been leaked.

In the meantime, the previous undefeated champion writes to Congress and they send an investigator to probe

into the allegations that programme was 'fixed'.

Eventually the whole scam is exposed before a Congress committee hearing.

Hats off to Robert Redford for producing yet another masterpiece. Who can forget his *A River Runs Through It?*

ENGLISH		
NAME	TYPE	CAST
1. Boys On The Side	(Com/ Drama)	Whoopi Goldberg/Mary-Louise Parker/ Drew Barrymore
2. Kleptomania	(Drama)	Amy Irving/Patsy Kensit
3. Auntie Lee's Meat Pies	(Horror)	Karen Black/Pat Morita
4. Improper Conduct	(Rom/ Thriller)	Steve Bauer/Kathy Shower
5. Perfect Alibi		Teri Garr/Hector Elizondo/ Alex McArthur/ Lydie Denier/ Kathleen Quinlan
6. Judicial Consent		Bonnie Bedelia/Billy Wirth/ Will Patton/Kjevin McCarthy
7. The Rose Garden	(Drama)	
8. Revolution	(Historical)	Rock Hudson/Elizabeth Taylor
9. Giant	(Western)	Frank Sinatra/Dean Martin
10. 4 For Texas		

HINDI		
NAME	TYPE	CAST
1. Bombay Dir: Mani Ratnam	(Social)	Arvinda Swamy/ Manisha Koirala/Tiru Anand
BANGLA		
NAME	TYPE	CAST
1. Shanghorsho	(Social)	
2. Amudini	()	
3. Kecho Khurte Keote	()	

Source: Film Fair Video and other clubs.