

## NEWS bytes

### Gravity holds firm at top of US box office



Sandra Bullock's space thriller "Gravity" has held on to the top of the US and Canadian box office for a third week. The 3D thriller, co-starring George Clooney, took \$31m according to figures from Rentrak. "Captain Phillips", starring Tom Hanks, stayed in second place in its second week.

Meanwhile, WikiLeaks drama "The Fifth Estate", had 2013's worst debut weekend so far. Assange, who founded whistle-blowing website WikiLeaks, had claimed Disney's film would be a failure.

Gravity, directed by Alfonso Cuarón and starring Bullock and Clooney as astronauts stranded in space, has now made more than \$170m (£105m) in three weeks.

"Carrie", the horror remake took third place. Family favourite "Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs 2", was in fourth, while Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger's new action film "Escape Plan" rounded off the top five.

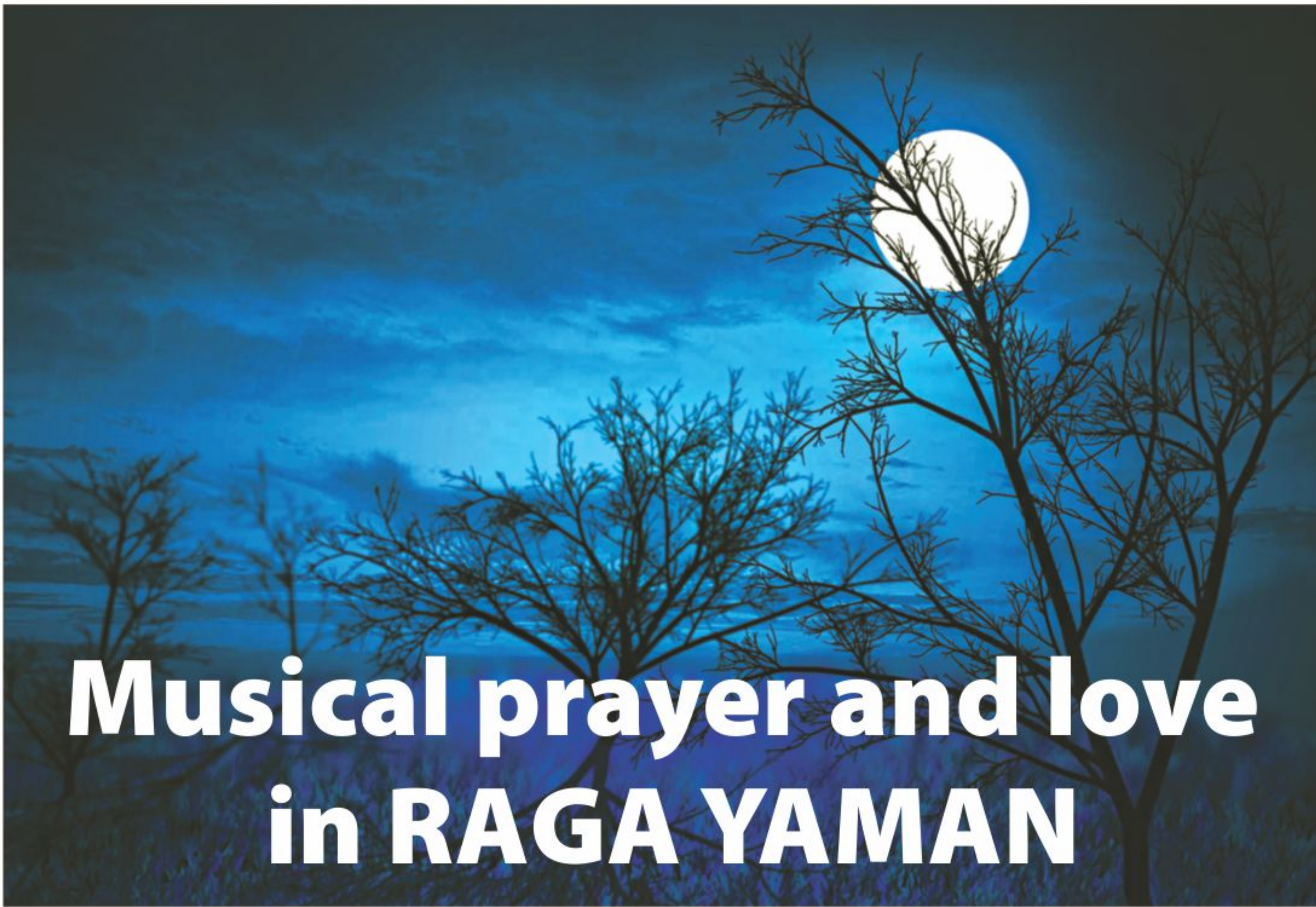
Source: BBC

## IT'S TRUE!



Michael Peter Balzary, known better as Flea and considered one of the best rock bassists of all time, was originally a jazz trumpet player. Apart from being the only constant member of Red Hot Chili Peppers for 30 years, Flea has also made occasional forays into acting, appearing in films that span many genres such as "Suburbia" (1983), "Back to the Future" Part II (1989) and Part III (1990), "My Own Private Idaho" (1991), "The Chase" (1994), "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" (1998) and "The Big Lebowski" (1998), in addition to voicing the character Donnie Thornberry in the animated TV series "The Wild Thornberrys" (1998-2004).

## RASA OF A RAGA



### Musical prayer and love in RAGA YAMAN

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Raga Yaman expresses the ultimate humility. The raga has an untainted appeal or urge of shaking off ego, haughtiness and arrogance. One can completely surrender one's soul to the ultimate, through immersing in the ecstatic melody of Yaman.

Prayer and love are complementarily expressed through the rendition of the raga just like the inseparable connection between the moon and moonbeam, or between fish and water. Both the artistes and the audiences can reach the absolute nothingness through meditating the raga.

All the swar (notes) except *Madham* ('ma') of Yaman are *shuddha*. This is Yaman's distinctive quality of peace and tranquility that is diffused from *tivra madhyam* or *kodi* 'ma'. If the swar 're' is *komal*, the raga then converts to *Puriya Kalyan*, of which *Purbanga* is 'Purya' and *Uttaranga* is 'Yaman'; if the note 'dha' is made *komal* along with it, then the raga formed is called *Puriya Dhaneshree*.

Yaman is the called the king of the entire raga, while "Puriya Dhaneshree" is termed as the king of the entire evening ragas. Yaman means the full moon. Hazrat Amir Khusrau composed the raga at the time of Khilji dynasty. Hazrat Amir Khusrau (real

name Abul Hasan) is the only one termed 'Hazrat' in the realm of Music; as he is the creator of *Khayal*, *Ghazal*, *Raga Yaman*, *Gulnux* (a genre of music), *sitar*, *tabla* and *baya*.

Raga Yaman is performed at a time when the nature or the universe creates an ambience of complete surrender to the ultimate, after a hectic day. The rasa of Yaman emits when the nature takes all the living beings in her lap with kindness and generosity. Yaman is a raga through which one can purify oneself with the holy hum of evening prayer at a mosque, temple, pagoda or church.

Raga Yaman is an evening raga which is romantic in nature. The raga is often taught to beginners in Hindustani classical music. Some say its origin is from the Persian mode "Ei'man" from which "Yaman" was derived. Others say it has Vedic origins as *Raga Yamuna* which over time altered as Yaman.

Raga Yaman generates *bhakti*, *gambhir*, *shringer*, serene and suggestive rasa. Yaman is the defining raga of its own *thaat* *Kalyan*, meaning the full moon. Its similar ragas are *Yaman Kalyan* and *Maru Behag*.

There are virtually limitless variations in this raga and each of them is so different that one thinks the canvas of this raga is as colossus as the horizon. The deeper you go,

you find it fathomless; the higher you see, it remains a dashingly over and above the rest of the world of music.

A Tagore composition "Dariye Achho Tumi Amar" is set on raga Yaman while our National Poet's compositions "Bulbuli Nirob Nargis Bon-e" and "Mon-e Porey Aj Se Kon Janome" are evocative of the raga.

Master vocalists including Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ustad Amir Khan, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Ustad Rashid Khan, Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande, Pt. Ajoy Chakrabarty, Pt. Tushar Dutta have showcased their musical prayers through performing raga Yaman, alongside eminent instrumentalists including Ustad Vilayat Khan (sitar), Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute), Pt. Nikhil Banerjee (sitar), Pt. Ravi Shankar (sitar) and Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt (Mohonveena).

The ghazals "Aa Gayi Yaad Shaam Dhalte Hi", recorded by Ghulam Ali; "Ranjish Hi Sahi", recorded by Mehdi Hassan and "Chand Angraiyan Le Raha Hai", recorded by Anup Jalota are set on the raga.

Eminent artiste Manna Dey's record of the songs "Shundori Go" and "Deep Chhilo Shikha Chhilo" are set on the raga. Raga Yaman has been frequently used in film songs including a duet "Re Maan Sur Mein Ga", recorded by Asha Bhosle and Manna Dey and "Kuchh Na Kaho, Kuchh Bhi Na Kaho" recorded by Kumar Shanu.

## Jibanananda Das Exploring the beauty of nature

In the latter half of the 20th century, Jibanananda Das emerged as the most popular poet of modern Bengali literature. His unfamiliar poetic articulation, choice of words and thematic preferences took time to reach readers' hearts. He was also known as a surrealist poet because of his spontaneous, frenzied overflow of the subconscious in poetry and especially in diction. The poetry of Jibanananda has become the defining essence of modernism in twentieth century Bengali poetry.



Today marks the 59th death anniversary of the poet. Jibanananda was born on February 17, 1899 in Barisal, then East Bengal. His ancestors came from the Bikrampur region of Dhaka district. Jibanananda's father Satyananda Das was a schoolteacher, essayist and a publisher. His mother Kusumkumari Das was a poet. Jibanananda was the eldest son of his parents, and was nicknamed Milu.

His school life passed relatively uneventfully. In 1915, he successfully completed his Matriculation exams from Brajamohan School and two years later, completed Intermediate from Brajamohan College.

Later, he enrolled in Presidency College, Calcutta and graduated with a BA (Honours) in English Literature in 1919. The same year, his first poem appeared in print in the *Baishakh* issue of *Brahmobadi* journal.

In 1935, Jibanananda -- familiar by then to professional disappointment and poverty -- returned to his alma mater Brajamohan College. He joined as a lecturer in the English department. In Kolkata (then Calcutta), Buddhadeb Bose, Premendra Mitra and Samar Sen were starting a brand new poetry magazine called *Kobita*. Jibanananda's work featured in the first issue of the magazine, a poem called "Mrittu'r Aagey".

Young Jibanananda fell in love with Shobhona, daughter of his uncle Atulchandra Das, who lived in his neighbourhood. He dedicated his first anthology of poems to Shobhona without mentioning her name explicitly. The poet, however, married Labanyaprabha Das in 1930. A clash of personalities erupted and Jibanananda gave up all hope of a happy married life. The estrangement with his wife never ended.

Das' notable poetic works are "Jhora Palok", "Dhushor Pandulipi", "Bonolota Sen", "Mohaprithibi", "Shaat-ti Tarar Timir", "Shrestho Kobita" and "Ruposhi Bangla".

On October 14, 1954, while unmindfully crossing a street near Kolkata's Deshpriya Park, he was hit by a tram. Seriously injured, he was taken to Shambhunath Pundit Hospital. The injury was too fatal to redress. Jibanananda died in hospital on October 22, 1954 after eight days of struggle with death. He left behind his wife, a son and a daughter, and an ever-growing band of readers.

Compiled by Correspondent



## Bobby makes it big

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

*Bobby, an upcoming actor, stepped into the showbiz world as a model. After finding success in MA Jalil Ananta's debut film "Khoj: The Search", she starred in a TV commercial with Shakib Khan. Her roles in TV plays and the film "Dehorokkhi" have also proved successful. Today, she has made major inroads into the celluloid world. In a recent interview, Bobby spoke about her professional life.*

**When did you enter the media world?**  
Bobby: I made my debut in a commercial for "Ruchi Chanchur" when I was still in school. I continued to do modelling assignments. Later, I started to act in TV plays and films.

**What drew you towards the world of films?**  
Bobby: For me, cinema is a platform to

showcase my acting skills and talent, so I've always wanted to be a part of it.

**Tell us about your recent hit commercial.**  
Bobby: It was a commercial with Shakib Khan for Power Drinks, telecast by all TV channels for several days. The TVC called for acting abilities.

**We hear you've also worked with Shakib Khan in a movie?**

Bobby: Yes, a film called "Full and Final" directed by Malek Afsari, was released on Eid-ul-Azha. It is a great honour for me that the film was released in time for such an important festival. I have worked with Shakib Khan in another movie called "Rajatto".

**Tell us about your previous appearances on celluloid.**

Bobby: My first film was "Khoj: The Search" directed by Iftekhar Chowdhury where Ananta Jalil was my co-actor. The movie did well at the box office. "Dehorokkhi" was my second commercial

movie; it was a huge hit at the box office.

**What is your ultimate target as an actor?**  
Bobby: My dream is to win people's hearts. I want to be remembered.

**How busy is your schedule currently?**  
Bobby: I am flooded with offers right now. I am rushed off my feet with at least six movies. I am very selective about the script however.

**What was the first film you saw in a movie theatre?**

Bobby: At a very early, age I went along with my parents to see "Shonkhoni Karagar", directed by Humayun Ahmed. I thoroughly enjoyed the movie and it lingers in my memory.

**Which are your favourite movies?**

Bobby: I enjoyed Vidya Balan's film "The Dirty Picture". Apart from this, Leonardo Di Caprio-starrer "Inception" was enjoyable. It felt good to watch my film "Dehorokkhi" too.

## Western Cinema's New Trend!

SYED MAQSUD JAMIL

There was a time that lived and grew on cinema--Bengali, Hindi and Western. Unlike in this part of the world, the ways of the western world are different. Couples in love or even when flirting submit to a romantic embrace and smooching passionately in public. Western movies treat it as a natural sequence. This part of the world is discreet and treats such intimacy as a private matter. However, West Bengal's Bengali and India's Hindi movies are no longer that bashful. It was taboo even in some parts of the western world way back in the late forties and fifties. In the popular Italian movie "Cinema Paradiso" in a sequence of that period when the backward Sicily town movie theatre was projecting a movie, the kissing part was always cut.

From Brigitte Bardot of the fifties and sixties, Catherine Deneuve and Maria Schneider of middle sixties and seventies, nudity in western cinema has come a long way. Very few films are without erotic scenes except those based on classic literature, war and sci-fiction. Female nudity in western films has reached the ultimate with Kate Winslet and Helen Hunt's total exposure in "The Reader" and "The Sessions". In fact libido and passion are facts of life and western societies have different values.

Lesbianism and Homosexuality are tolerated and even recognised in western society. There are countries and regions in USA where same sex marriage is legal. These topics are increasingly finding preference with the film makers of western cinema. "Crouching

Tiger, Hidden Dragon"- famed Oscar Award winner film maker Ang Lee moved on to the subject and made "Brokeback" Mountain based on a gay partnership.

The story is about two cowboy friends Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) and Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhal). The relationship was secret, emotional and intense. Ang Lee got Oscar Award for Best Director 2005. Heath Ledger, an Australian was a promising film actor, but unfortunately died of intoxication from a prescription drug in 2008. Famous actor Tony Curtis expressed his revulsion about going to see the movie.

Before that South African actress Charlize Theron played the role of a Dayton beach prostitute and lesbian in the movie "Monster". The character was shown to commit a number of murders. It was amazing to see that a charming lady like her turned herself into such a repulsive woman for the role. She got the Oscar Award 2003 for Best Actress.

Sean Penn got his second Oscar for Best Actor 2009 for his role as gay rights activist Harvey Milk. He was the first gay in San Francisco to get elected as a public official. His acting was understandably splendid. The screenplay was more focused on the commitment of the gay rights activist Milk than on the passionate aspect.

Then there was a film on black lesbianism "Pariah" (2011). Adepero Oduye and Kim Wayans played the principal roles. The two actresses, and Adepero in particular, drew critical attention because of their powerful acting. It is the story of a Brooklyn teenager shuffling identities desperate for fulfillment of wayward love.

The "Secret Diaries of Miss Anne Lister" based on a Victorian background is the story of lesbian heiress of Yorkshire living with her uncle and aunt. She left behind the diary of her life. The heiress Mariana Belcombe goes to the extent of trying to wreck the marriage of her partner Anna Medley. And then she picks another one. The heiress is contemptuous of social attitude and runs her estate with great resolve. The movie is rather bold in its portrayal of the passionate relationship of the heiress.

"Blue Is the Warmest Colour" aka "La vie D'Adèle" won the Palm D'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival. Abdullatif Kerriche is the director of the movie. Léa Seydoux and Adele Exarchopoulos are in the leading roles. The film narrates the youth, middle and old age of a lesbian couple. The tempestuous relationship of the lesbian couple is the outstanding feature of the film.

"Don Jon", a film by actor-director-actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt, won the best picture award in this year's Sundance Film Festival (American). The main character is a New Jersey guy, an employed man committed to his family, friends and church. He develops an unrealistic interest in watching pornography. He finds it more absorbing than the company of a woman. In his opinion there is a control in the company of a woman, which is not there in watching pornography.

If this new trend continues and gets stronger some critics may sarcastically observe that western cinema has returned to the age of Sodomites.



Risqué films that won big prizes: Scenes from "Brokeback Mountain" (top) and "La vie D'Adèle".