

CLASSIC REVIEW



Director: Federico Fellini

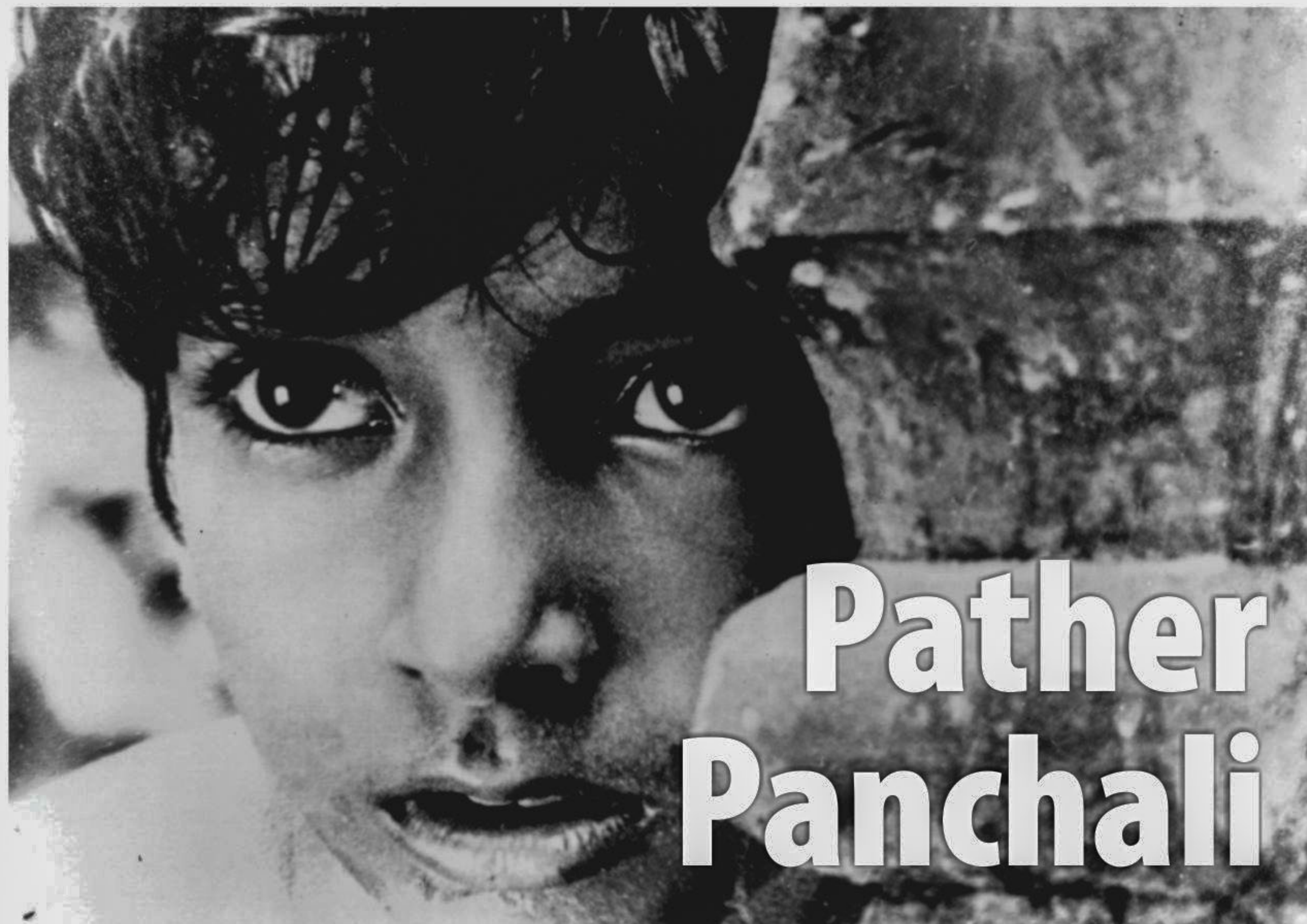
Story: Federico Fellini, Ennio Flaiano

Stars: Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale, Anouk Aimée, Sandra Milo

Runtime: 138 minutes

PLOT: Guido Anselmi (Marcello Mastroianni), a famous Italian film director, is suffering from "director's block". Stalled on his new science fiction film that includes veiled autobiographical references, he has lost interest amid artistic and marital difficulties. As Guido struggles half-heartedly to work on the film, a series of flash-backs and dreams delve into his memories and fantasies; they are frequently interwoven with reality.

REVIEW: The self-reflexive title of '8 1/2' refers to the film's numerical position in Federico Fellini's career. The story is punctuated by Guido's fantasies, dreams, and reminiscences. In the film's famous opening, the character imagines himself claustrophobically trapped in a traffic jam, the world pressing down on him, until he tries to escape. Later, he delves back into exaggerated memories of his childhood – the psychological scars imposed on him by a Catholic upbringing, and his first exposure to sex via the beauty and grotesquerie of Saraghina, a raw earthy figure of monstrous sexuality. Among other things, this leads to a fantasy of Guido corralling all the women in his life into his own personal harem, where they express both their love and hatred for him and for each other, and must be tamed like wild animals. All the while, as his project becomes more personal and autobiographical, our understanding grows that the movie Guido is making is the very one we're watching. It's not just the fantastical portions that make '8 1/2' a masterpiece. He doesn't hold back at all from depicting his own self-absorption, his philandering, and his reprehensible treatment of his wife (Anouk Aimée, obviously standing in for Guiletta Masina). Every thought in Fellini's head is projected into the character, seemingly without filtering. The movie allows him to cut to some deep emotional truths about himself. And yet, despite these potentially dark themes, '8 1/2' is a work of great joy and exuberance, of wonder and amazement, and love of life and art. Fellini's movies often contain a circus motif. He treated his own life and career as a giant circus, full of fabulous and bizarre sights, some possibly frightening but altogether a cause for celebration. This theme culminates in the movie's glorious ending, one of the



Pather Panchali

Producer: Government of West Bengal

Screenplay & Direction: Satyajit Ray, based on the novel "Pather Panchali" by Bibhutibhusan Banerjee.

Cinematography: Subrata Mitra

Editing: Dulal Dutta

Art Direction: Bansi Chandragupta

Music: Pandit Ravi Shankar

Casts: Kanu Banerjee, Karuna Banerjee, Subir Banerjee, Uma Das Gupta, Chunibala Devi

PLOT: The time is early twentieth century, a remote village in Bengal. The film deals with a Brahmin family, a priest - Harihar, his wife Sarbajaya, daughter Durga, and his aged cousin Indir Thakrun - struggling to make both ends meet. Harihar is frequently away from home on work. The wife is raising her mischievous daughter Durga and caring for elderly cousin Indir, whose independent spirit sometimes irritates her... Apu is born. With the

little boy's arrival, happiness, play and exploration uplift the children's daily life. Durga and Apu share an intimate bond.. On a stormy day, when Harihar is away on work, Durga dies.

REVIEW: Pather Panchali is Ray's debut film, and the first film of his 'The Apu trilogy'. The remaining two films of the trilogy, Aparajito and Apur Sansar, follow Apu as the son, the man and finally the father. Pather Panchali has a universal humanist appeal. Though the film deals with the grim struggle for survival by a poor family, it has no trace melodrama. What is projected instead is the respect for human dignity. The most loveable character is that of Indir Thakrun, an old, cynical, loving and storytelling aunt of Apu and Durga. It was played by an 80-year-old Chunibala, a retired theatre performer who relished coming back into the limelight after 30 years of

obscurity.

The sequences of Apu and elder sister Durga, exploring their little world and sharing secrets are most remarkable aspect of the film. These include the scenes of - discovery of train by Durga and Apu in field of white Kash flowers, the candy seller sequence, and Indir Thakrun's death. The film develops its characters and the atmosphere slowly and resolutely. The narrative builds up to a powerful climax as we begin to empathise with the characters.

Harihar returns, unaware of Durga's death. In a jovial mood he calls out his children. Without any reaction, Sarbajaya fetches water and a towel for him. Harihar begins to show the gifts he has brought for them. When he shows a sari that he has bought for Durga, Sarbajaya breaks down. We hear the high notes of a musical instrument "Tarshahnai" symbolising her uncontrollable weeping. Realising Durga's

ARDH SATYA

Director: Govind Nihalani

Writer: Based on short story Surya by S. D. Panwalkar

Cinematography: Govind Nihalani

Stars: Om Puri, Smita Patil, Nasiruddin Shah, Sadashiv Amrapurkar

Runtime: 130 minutes

PLOT: The film opens at a party where Anant Welankar (Om Puri), a police officer, meets Jyotsna Gokhale (Smita Patil), a lecturer in literature at a local college. Anant is a sub-inspector with Bombay police. They seem to hit it off despite some initial skirmishing about ideology, and the friendship blossoms into a relationship.

REVIEW: Ardh Satya (The Half-truth,

1983) is the story set in corruption and mafia infested contemporary India. Anant Velankar (played by Om Puri) is a son of a violent policeman (played by Amrish Puri) and himself a police sub-inspector. Desperate to arrest the gangster-politician Rama Shetty, Velankar is constantly frustrated by the mafia-politician nexus. A powerful movie with superb cinematography (by Govind Nihalani) Ardh Satya is a disturbing and a landmark movie. Sadashiv Amrapurkar as Rama Shetty gives a convincing performance and Om Puri excels as the frustrated young man of the period. This movie, unlike most of Indian movies lacks song and dance. A must see movie.

