

## WHEN BADSHAH OF BOLLYWOOD GRACED INDIAN FILM FESTIVAL OF MELBOURNE 2019



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August has always been a very special month for Indians in Melbourne. For 10 years, our wonderful city has been graced by the who's who of Bollywood to mark the Indian Film Festival in Melbourne. This year, was no different. Infact, this year was bigger than ever. It was the Badshah of Bollywood – Shah Rukh Khan – as the chief guest. It couldn't have been better. I remember riding in the elevator of the building on Collins Street, where the press conference was being held, and hearing someone ask innocently 'What's going on mate, why are there so many police cars and people, and the paparazzi?' And the other person



chimed 'Aah, apparently it's a famous Bollywood movie star.' I remember thinking to myself (silently of course), it's the King Khan mate !!! This year was more special, as it marked a decade since this festival was first started, and it was befitting that Shah Rukh Khan was present to mark the decade. While he is a long way since the Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge days, he still has an ardent 'Fan' following, and when he took the mike and spoke 'Dil Se', definitely 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' even today (pun definitely intended) ! I guess with all the attention on him, some of the other stars might have felt a little underwhelmed, but the Melbourne crowd ensured that all of them received the adulation they deserved, including our first time visitors, the ravishing Tabu and the Tamil superstar Vijay Sethupathi. Others like the flamboyant Arjun Kapoor, the sensational lady in red Malaika Arora, the effervescent Karan Johar, and a host of other directors and producers, were present to commemorate a decade of IFFM.

While there are so many sponsors who make a festival like this happen, one person that needs to be mentioned, is Mitu Bhowmick- Lange. A lady with a vision, and a lot of passion, who makes this festival happen year after year, uniting all Indians, for a festival to celebrate the magic of movies. This year, there was also the short film festival, and some of the entries were played on the awards night.

The dance competition, like every year, was a platform where Melbourne's dancers showcased their talent. It is always a pleasure to see, people



of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, gather the courage to come up on stage and perform. Kudos to all those who participated, and congratulations to all the winners. Now that the bar is set so high, let's see what IFFM 2020 brings to Melbourne, and who it brings too. I am certain, knowing Mitu and her team, it will only get better. To get a taste of what IFFM 2019 was, for some of the folks that attended on different days, Indus Age asked them to describe what they thought of the festival, and what they would like to see next year. Here's what a few of them had to say:



**Korein Rodrigues, Melbourne**

Attending the Indian Film Festival has always been an exciting experience.

This year was all the more special with SRK in town.

There are many aspects of the festival that I enjoyed, the awards night being one of them especially with Melbourne Symphony Orchestra performing live and synchronising so well to so many Bollywood tunes.

The show of talent via Short Films & Telstra Bollywood Dace competition was remarkable.

In the coming years, I'd like to see a Fashion event, where we could have celebrity stylist do a talk or bring on some of our big fashion designers in town.

I would also encourage having a theme for the next awards night, like encourage people to come in their favourite Bollywood look :) that way it can be a lot of fun.

**Anita Gupte, Melbourne**

The gloomy Melbourne winter lit up with a spark of Bollywood... thanks to Indian Film Festival Melbourne (IFFM). IFFM brought in top glitterati including the King Khan, Malaika Arora, Zoya Akhtar, Arjun Kapoor and many more mesmerizing the fan fraternity from all over Australia. For many of us, it was a dream come true to witness Shah Rukh Khan perform live. The TBDC Event was yet another highlight of the festival with more 100 enthusiasts performed at Federation Square, Representing the Western and Indian culture. This festival also gave us a chance to speak with the best of Bollywood! We look forward to many Bollywood live performances along with the movies next year.



**Bhakti Mangle, Melbourne**

Since I moved to Melbourne, IFFM had been integral part of my August, for last 3 years. Attending our tricolour hoisting at Fed Square, Telstra Bollywood dance competition, IFFM awards night, movie screenings, have been to all of them.

Being a hardcore Bollywood fan, it's a treat for me to see our favorite stars and have an opportunity to get clicked with them. This year was extra special as I got to meet our most beloved King Khan. I was lucky enough to be able to get a special autograph from him at the IFFM opening night film screening 'Bulbul Can Sing'. This was a double bubble for me as I could watch a wonderful film and fulfill my dream of meeting the King of Romance. 'Bulbul can Sing' is a beautiful story of three teenagers from a small village trying to find their identity and sign their own song, depicted wonderfully on screen by Rima Das. I would never have imagined myself watching an Assamese movie as being a 'Marathi Mulgi', I don't understand the language. But IFFM opened these doors for viewers like me. While I already miss SRK and all the fun we had during the festival, I look forward to next IFFM already!