

The Asian Age (India)

— Lekha J. Shankar

"One of the very best movies at the India International Film Festival, **DELINQUENT** is a mood piece of high psychological drama, a trend-setting movie."

A REVIEW OF THE BEST MOVIES AT THE 27TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Casino (USA)

Martin Scorsese's latest film has Robert de Niro and Sharon Stone playing the lead in an intense drama that deals with the glitzy but dangerous world of the underworld. Sam 'Ace' Rothstein revels in his job as a bookie in charge of four big casinos in Las Vegas and he raises to the top.

He refers to his job as a "morality carwash," thanks to the quick and clever way the bucks pour in. Rothstein's problems start when he falls in love with a hooker, Ginger McKenna, marries her and becomes ruthlessly possessive about her. She recounts this curbing of her free spirits and turns to drink and drugs, ending up as a total neurotic.

Sex-symbol Sharon Stone's acting talents surface in this film, as she gives a powerful performance of a strong woman breaking up. The screen sizzles with drama when she and Niro meet as they incessantly hurt and destroy each other.

The film is heavily verbal, and this includes a surfeit of four-letter expletives. The first half of the film, in fact, centres around the words of the narrator (which includes Rothstein, and his mate, Nick) and moves at a desultory pace.

But the film pulsates with action in the second half, studded with violence and

ringing with emotion. There is no respite to the destruction with clubbings, killings, car-explosions and even the gruesome burying alive of men.

This film is not for the weak-hearted and as a "gangster film" is ruthlessly honest and disturbing.

Delinquent (Australia)

The debut film of young Australian director Peter Hall, has won much praise from film buffs. "A haunting, memorable, psychological thriller" is how the "American cinematographer" described it. "It's disturbing and entertaining, a terrific mix" raved *Critics Choice*. Hall, in fact, has been prophesied as being "the next Quentin Tarantino or Hal Hartley!"

The film is a psychological thriller, on the disturbed youth of today. Harry is a sensitive 15-year-old, who is deeply upset by his abusive, alcoholic father. He has fantasies about his lady-teacher, and also about the pretty girl, Tracy, who has an empty summer-house close to his home.

Tracy herself is in a confusing relationship with her professor, and is pregnant. Harry and Tracy hide in her summer-home one night, both unaware of each other's presence, with cataclysmic results.

It's the under-stated tone that gives this

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film its impact. Desmond Devinish, as Harry, articulates by his silences. Many of the scenes, in fact, are effectively couched without words. The background scores have some interesting snatches of songs by the Gang of Four. As a mood-piece of high psychological drama, *Delinquent* is a trend-setting movie.

Ulysses' Gaze (Greece)

The film that won the Grand Jury award at Cannes is a monumental work by Greece's most famous filmmaker, Theo Angelopoulos. It is an epic drama that combines history, geography and high aesthetics with compelling mastery.

An American filmmaker of Greek origin makes a difficult journey through many countries, including war-torn Sarajevo, to recover the three missing reels of a documentary made by the legendary Manakias Brothers. He has many encounters and experiences during his long journey, including meeting a woman who deeply affects him. But in the political climate or the region, love and creativity cannot flourish, and all he's left with at the end are a huddle of dead bodies, and the empty, white snow

when she meets the fiery postmistress, Jeanne.

Jeanne convinces her to leave her job. But before she does, the duo inflict their pent-up anger on the "upper class" family by slowly tearing apart the house and also shooting down every one of its inhabitants.

The gruesome last scene knocks one's breath out, more so because of the casual, almost humorous, way it is executed. Chabrel's films always have a "gut-level" impact, and this film is no exception.

Two Features with One Ticket (Iran)

Yet another enjoyable Iranian film, Dariush Farhang's movie has been screened at festivals all over the world, and won various awards at the Teheran Festival.

It is all about "small people with big ambitions," and centres around a lively, small-time peddler on the streets, whose movie-dreams come true when the lead actor of a film breaks his leg and the desperate unit hires him to complete the movie. The film portrays the thrills and traumas of showbiz, with simplistic candour. The lead actor cannot afford his hospital bills, the lead actress wants to migrate to America.

The "nouveau" actor wants quick and

fast bucks—too. These are believable characters, with no frills or hypocrisies and it's the way they balance fact with fantasy that accounts for the humanity of the neat film.

Feast of July (UK)

This is a neat, taut drama about a woman's tragic search for love, in an old-world 19th century scenario. The pregnant Bella Ford sets out to the countryside for the father of her child, only to find him missing.

She meets another family and falls in love with their son. The couple decide to get married, when Bella's ex-lover returns, to cause tragedy and destroy her happiness. The simple, domestic drama has some enchanting locales and spontaneous performances from the cast. Otherwise, it is a run-of-the-mill love-story.

Billy's Holiday (Australia)

This enjoyable comedy centres around an ageing jazz-singer Billy, who is going through a low phase in his professional and personal life. His starry dreams come true when he accidentally imitates the female voice of his favourite singer, Billie Holiday, to excite audiences and achieve fame!

For the music lover, this film has many feet-tapping numbers.

all around. The stunning camerawork sets the grand background for an epic theme like this one. But the long takes and empty frames set a slow pace, and the film is interminably long.

Elevator To The Gallows (France)

Louis Malle, one of the most celebrated of French filmmakers died late last year and a "Homage" has been dedicated to him, at this festival. The film screened is his debut film of 1957, which won the Prix Louis Delluc award.

Elevator To The Gallows is a thriller and centres around the murder of a wealthy man by his young wife and her lover. They set up irrefutable alibis, but many unexpected things happen. Irony plays a key-note in this mesmeric film which set the tone for Malle's many vibrant films to follow.

Malle was Besson's assistant for a while and the technical skills are already visible. The film is a sordid portrait of class-warfare.

Sophie is the illiterate country maid hired by the Lolievre household, whose smug and unthinking attitudes towards her increases her resentment and anger. But the quiet girl finds her voice, only