



AMERICAN POP CULTURE,
A CLICK AWAY
BY KANISHKA GANGOPADHYAY

Living far from home has meant that in many ways I've become even more aware of the pop culture landscape in the U.S. – and that it's incredibly easy for anyone, anywhere, to get information and stay plugged in.

Film is the easiest medium to keep track of the latest and greatest while being thousands of miles from the nearest American multiplex. It's obvious that we're now living in a global film culture. Well before the *Slumdog Millionaire* phenomenon, Hollywood was aware of the huge, lucrative world outside of the U.S. domestic marketplace. One need

only see the Mumbai receipts of *The Watchmen* or the popularity of Hollywood actors on Indian gossip pages to see that the film world is almost borderless. Consider the year's (arguably) biggest hits thus far. Just as Hollywood looked to Bollywood for inspiration for *Slumdog*, last year's biggest Bollywood film, *Ghajini*, was inspired by *Memento*, a film written by a British-American, and produced in Los Angeles. Films are now regularly opening simultaneously all over the world, and if I can't catch a movie in the theater, the remarkably fast turnaround to commercial DVD release means I'll be able to see something I've missed only a couple of months later, at home.

In recent years, American TV producers have moved away from the broadcast market, less because of open-mindedness and more because of necessity. Technologies like TiVo and cable on-demand are increasingly ubiquitous in the U.S., and have meant a shift in the TV marketplace to a model where viewers can record, replay, and rewatch television shows with ease. This change in the television industry has pushed TV producers to release more shows on DVD, provide Internet streams, and allow viewers to purchase programs to download. So, despite being virtually unavailable via Indian broadcast, I've been able to share my love of shows like HBO's *The Wire* through the box set I recently purchased. And when the advance planning



(Continued on page 2)

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(Monday through Friday)

HOLIDAYS
NONE

A WORD FROM THE CENTER

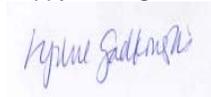
Dear American Center Bulletin Readers,

June is upon us and it is time to enjoy the great outdoors! As part of this month's theme on American pop culture, we hope you'll enjoy Kanishka's article on some recent American television shows. How do we Americans overseas get these TV shows? We legally download them on line, of course. Also, please do enjoy our new logo! After a lengthy competition, a Mumbai resident was selected as the winner. We're all very proud of the creative talent in our district. We hope that you are enjoying some of the changes we're making to the bulletin to make it more interesting to read and more enjoyable for all our recipients. If you do have any comments or feedback, we'd love to hear them!

Mumbai happenings this month include our film series, back-to-school time, and the annual turnover of Foreign Service Officers at post. Next month, we'll be reading the farewell edition to our American Center Director, Elizabeth Kauffman. Liz and her husband John will return to Washington in mid-July for an assignment there. They are delighted to be reunited with the campus happenings of their college-aged kids and to reconnect with ... American culture! They've been away for almost ten years, so it will be complete reverse culture shock.

Enjoy this month's edition!

Happy reading,



Lynne Gadkowski
Deputy Director

(Continued from page 1)

required for DVDs or streaming is too much, there's my personal favorite backup, AXN. Sony's global cable network broadcasts two of the best American reality TV shows currently running, *The Amazing Race* and *Top Chef*.

Of all the pop culture media I've had a hard time keeping up with while living abroad, music has been the most difficult and the most



U.S. Communications Satellite

Internet-dependent. Unlike television and movies, the music world is more fragmented, and my favorite genres aren't those of the average consumer – so it's hard to find new music I may enjoy at a music store. Luckily, the Internet provides. The world of music is so vast and so subjective that there are numerous web pages devoted to all kinds of subgenres, places where I can read reviews of new artists, "best-of" lists, and often find easy, legal, ways of getting the music I want on my laptop. One of my personal favorite sources is Pitchfork Media (www.pitchfork.com), where, in addition to reading about new music, readers can download MP3s and watch videos. Streaming also allows for the spread of genre-specific radio stations on the web, like modern rock station WOXY (www.woxy.com) and bluegrass station WAMU (www.bluegrasscountry.org). And more and more podcasts – basically a radio show made for download and listening at your leisure – means I only need an MP3 player, a pair of headphones, and some download time to hear more obscure artists, old classics, and everything in between.

Kanishka Gangopadhyay works at the American Consulate General, Mumbai

CHECK OUT THE AMERICAN CENTER'S NEW LOGO!

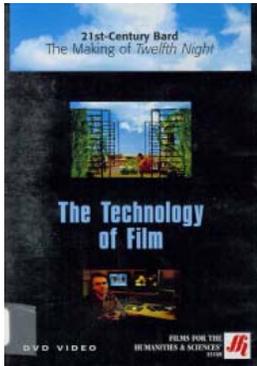
Our readers most likely noticed that the American Center Bulletin is sporting a new look, now that Ameet Mehta's shooting star is the new symbol of the American Center in India. This Mumbaier was declared the winner of the American Center's nationwide logo design contest in April. Chosen from more than 1,300 submissions, Mehta's winning design will become the nationwide brand of the American Centers throughout India. At a ceremony at the New Delhi American Center, Mehta was awarded a Motorola phone and a ten-day design fellowship to the United States to meet with top design schools and professionals.

Mehta, a 2004 graduate of the National Institute of Fashion Technology, is Principal Designer at Pineapple Consulting in Mumbai. Although he primarily designs bags, footwear, and leather articles, he is also an expert in branding. Says Mehta, "I emphasized bringing dynamism and visual integration of the two forces – India and America – fusing together to make one cohesive unit! I'd consider myself extremely fortunate if this logo can really invoke a new spirit to the glorious Indo-U.S. relationship!"

First runner-up was Inderjit Singh, a Delhi resident, whose eagle icon with wings shaded in the colors of the U.S. and Indian flags drew praise from judges. Second runner-up Michelle Shieh Chiao Shieh of Chennai connected the Indian chakra with a star to symbolize the partnership of the world's two greatest democracies.

NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

Select Resources Available on American Popular Entertainment

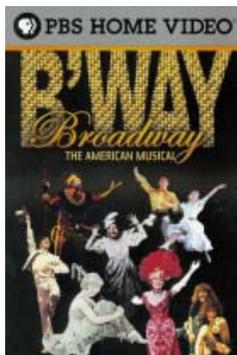
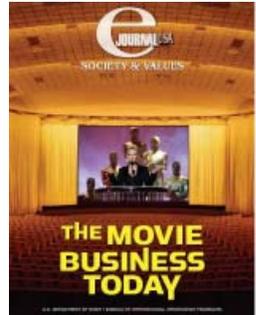


The Technology of Film (2004, 25 mins)

This program illustrates the digital postproduction process through numerous editing examples taken from *The Twelfth Night*. Key crew members – a film editor, sound designer, sound recording engineer, digital effects artist, and others – share their expertise with setting the film's pace and rhythm, constructing sequences with different types of shots, crafting the soundscapes that support the action and help tell the story, recording and mixing soundtrack, creating skiescapes for the blue screen, and grading the lighting.

The Movie Business Today (June 2007)

This issue of *eJournal USA* analyzes the increasing internationalization of the film industry, both in terms of audiences and filmmaking talent; the rise of a more personal style of independent filmmaking in recent years; the market for foreign-produced films in the United States; and the effects of the Internet and the digital revolution on how movies are made and distributed. Shorter pieces focus on film festivals like Sundance that seed young talent and some film studios' efforts to go green while making movies.

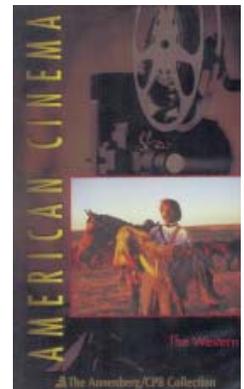


Broadway – The American Musical (2004, 360 mins)

This six-part documentary film showcases the uniquely American art form – the Broadway musical. Each episode explores different eras in American musical theater, spotlighting Broadway shows and songs defining that period. Hosted by Julie Andrews, the series draws on a wealth of rare performance footage and newly-restored film clips. As a special feature, the DVD offers over three hours of additional interviews with Broadway composers, directors and stars.

American Cinema (1995, 10 one-hour and 3 half-hour programs)

An instructional video series on U.S. film history for college and high-school classrooms and adult learners. Using clips from more than 300 of the greatest movies ever made, this series explores film history and American culture through the eyes of over 150 Hollywood insiders, including Clint Eastwood, Steven Spielberg, and Michael Eisner. The series includes the Western, the Hollywood Style, the Studio System, the Star, Romantic Comedy, the Combat Film, Film Noir, Film in the Television Age, the Film School Generation, and the Edge of Hollywood, plus a 90-minute cassette with programs on the filmmaking process.



More DVDs and Videos on the Topic

- Digital Movie Maker – Guidance from an Expert (2005, 68 mins)
- Jazz: A Film by Ken Burns (2000, 10 episodes)
- Cameras & Lenses by Lilly Boruszkowski (2004, 17 mins)
- The Directors – Profiles of Today's Most Acclaimed Hollywood Directors (2000, 60 mins)
- Visions of Light – The Art of Cinematography (1992, 92 mins)
- Hollywood Chronicles – The Evolution of Sound (1990, 23 mins)
- The Blues (2003, 7 feature length programs)

Note: To access eJournal USA, please visit <http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html>
Ask a Librarian: Please write to the American Library at libref@state.gov for research queries related to information on U.S. international relations, education, law and legislation, English language, and literature.

MUMBAI MONDAYS

Los Angeles: America's True World City Discussion led by Bill Barry

Monday, June 15
American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

Los Angeles, the home of Hollywood, is also one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the world. In fact, more countries have their largest overseas population in Los Angeles than in any other city in the world. Beyond the glamour of Hollywood lies a truly diverse commercial and cultural center that makes Los Angeles one of the leading cities of the 21st century. From sunny weather, cool mountains and beautiful beaches to prestigious universities, museums and performing arts centers, the "City of Angels" has it all. While New York may be the most famous American city, Los Angeles is America's world city.

Bill Barry joined the Foreign Service in November 2008. He is currently serving at the U.S. Consulate General in Mumbai. Previously, he worked in animated film and television production in Los Angeles, California. Bill has a B.A. in Government from Georgetown University and a Master's degree in Television/Radio from Syracuse University. He enjoys watching movies, going to concerts, and the occasional game of tennis.

FILMS THIS MONTH

Friday, June 19 *Ed Wood* (1994, 127 mins)

Friday, June 26 *Walk the Line* (2005, 135 mins)

American Center Auditorium 3:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Ed Wood: "Can your heart stand the shocking facts of the true story of Edward D. Wood, Jr.?" Director Tim Burton's hilariously heartfelt paean to the cross-dressing creator of *Glen or Glenda* and *Plan 9 from Outer Space* stars Johnny Depp as Wood, with Sarah Jessica Parker, Bill Murray, Jeffrey Jones, Lisa Marie and George "The Animal" Steele as members of his eccentric stock company, and Best Supporting Actor Oscar-winner Martin Landau as aging horror icon/drug addict Bela Lugosi.



Walk the Line: Joaquin Phoenix stars as country music icon Johnny Cash in this superb biopic. Focusing on the singer's youth on an Arkansas cotton farm through to his stormy first marriage, his relationship with second wife June Carter (Best Actress Oscar-winner Reese Witherspoon), and his history-making performance at Folsom Prison, the film offers a glimpse into the wildly successful – and deeply troubled – life of a true American legend. With Ginnifer Goodwin; features songs performed by Phoenix and Witherspoon.

Poetry Digital Video Conference

A poetry discussion via Digital Video Conference, led by poet and author Lynn Aarti Chandhok, will be held in the American Center auditorium on Tuesday, June 16, at 6.30 p.m.

The discussion will focus on Chandhok's poems from *The View from Zero Bridge* – an anthology that embraces the predicament of distance – geographical, chronological, religious, and cultural. The book gathers quiet force as it weaves between worlds as seemingly distant as Kashmir and Brooklyn, childhood and parenthood, sensuality and intellect, science and tradition.

The View from Zero Bridge won the 2006 Philip Levine Prize. Chandhok's poetry has appeared widely in journals including *The New Republic*, *Tin House*, *The Antioch Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *The Missouri Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, and *Sewanee Theological Review*. A chapbook, *Picking the Flowers*, was published in 2007. Her work has also been featured in *Poetry Daily* and in the anthology *Poetry Daily Essentials 2007*. She grew up in Pittsburgh and spent many childhood summers with her father's family in Kashmir.

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Admission to all American Center programs, restricted to persons over 16, will be on a first-come, first-served basis. The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.