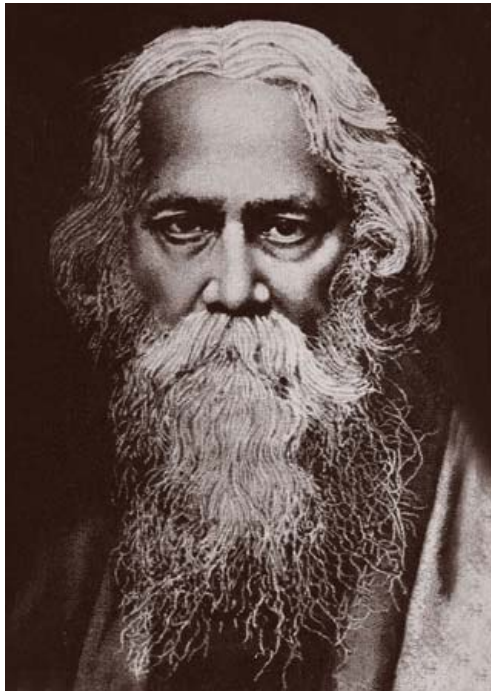




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Rabindranath Tagore at BFI Southbank in May 2011



In celebration of **Rabindranath Tagore's** 150th anniversary, **BFI Southbank** presents a season of films based on the Nobel laureate's literary and musical works. Incorporating both classics by **Satyajit Ray** (*Three Daughters India* 1961) and **Ritwik Ghatak** (*The Cloud-Capped Star* India 1960) as well as more contemporary work including **Chokher Bali: A Passion Play** (India 2003), the season will be introduced by director **Sangeeta Datta** who will also be taking part in an **Q&A** following the screening of *Life Goes On* (UK 2010)

Rabindranath Tagore was a multi-faceted man. He wrote novels, short stories, poetry, songs, essays, drama and dance-drama; and became a painter at 60. His oeuvre is the largest influence in shaping modern Bengali aesthetics. He also predicted that cinema would be the most influential medium of the 20th century. Born in 1861, the youngest in a family of 14 children, Tagore started writing poetry at the age of seven. He is best known to the world for his collection of poems, **Gitanjali**: its 'profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse' earned him the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913.

Tagore's stories offer great cinematic potential, rich in visual metaphors, detailed characterisation and lyrical moments. Hence, in the immediate post-Tagore era, his works were adapted into classic film texts by some of the greatest filmmakers in India. **Satyajit Ray** adapted Tagore's fiction in three women-oriented classics – *Three Daughters* (India 1961), *Charulata* (India 1964) and *The Home and the World* (India 1984) – and made a celebrated documentary on Tagore to mark the centenary of his birth. This year Ghosh has adapted the short story *Naukadubi* to mark Tagore's 150th anniversary. Tagore's most acclaimed lyrical novel, *Shesher Kobita*, was improvised as a contemporary drama in Subrajit Mitra's *Mon Amour* (2008), and other recent Tagore adaptations include *Chaturanga* by Suman Mukhopadhyay and *Laboratory* by Raja Sen (both 2009). Film adaptations of Tagore's literature are also embellished with his songs. Tagore wrote 2,500 original songs (called *Rabindrasangeet*), and they form the staple music in

Bengali culture. Outstanding use of Tagore's music is made in the Ritwik Ghatak classic **The Cloud-Capped Star**, while contemporary films like **Life Goes On** make fresh use of Tagore's music, poetry and aesthetics in a contemporary drama.

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Rabindranath Tagore

India 1961. Dir Satyajit Ray. 54min. EST

Made to mark the centenary of Tagore's birth, this was scripted and directed by Ray, who had graduated from Viswabharati, Santiniketan – the liberal arts university founded by Tagore. The film is a combination of dramatised sequences (including a very lyrical portrayal of the young poet and his inner world), still photos and archival footage, including the massive funeral procession, when thousands took to the streets to mourn the death of the poet-philosopher. Ray later said of his film, 'Ten or twelve minutes of it are among the most moving and powerful things that I have produced.'

Tickets £5

***Introduction by Sangeeta Datta**

Tue 3 May 20:30 NFT3*

Thu 5 May 18:20 NFT2

Three Daughters Teen Kanya

India 1961. Dir Satyajit Ray. With Soumitra Chatterjee. 163min. EST

A triptych of short stories, testifying to Tagore's first exposure to rustic Bengal and its people, with a female character central to each. In Postmaster a young man from the city arrives in a small village. A social misfit, he spends time with the young orphan girl Ratan, who cooks his meals and nurses him back to health. A story of betrayal – the last sequence of parting is pure cinema. Monihara is a ghost story about a woman obsessed with her jewels; while Samapti is about a tomboyish teenager (Aparna Sen, in an early role) whose wedding starts as a disaster, with the reluctant bride preferring to play in the fields with her young companions...

Fri 6 May 19:50 NFT2

Thu 12 May 20:00 NFT2

Charulata The Lonely Wife

India 1964. Dir Satyajit Ray. With Madhabi Mukherjee, Sailen Mukherjee, Soumitra Chatterjee. 119min. EST. U

Based on the short story Nastanir (The Broken Nest): a pro-feminist piece questioning the role of the woman in the home. Set in 19th-century Calcutta, where Charulata is the beautiful, intelligent and childless wife in an upper-class household, and her workaholic husband Bhupati edits a political newspaper. Into their household bursts Amol, Bhupati's younger, flamboyant cousin. He has literary ambitions and provides the lonely Charu with much-needed intellectual companionship. An intimate relationship develops, and Charu starts to write her first story...

Fri 6 May 20:40 NFT1

Sun 8 May 18:20 NFT1

Life Goes On

UK 2010. Dir Sangeeta Datta. With Sharmila Tagore, Girish Karnad, Om Puri, Soha Ali Khan. 120min. **12A**

An emotional family drama about a grieving family trying to cope with the mother's loss. Set in London, the story centres around Sanjay Banerjee's relation with three

daughters. The dead wife's memories and the use of Tagore's poetry and songs (rendered in Hindi for the first time by legendary poet Javed Akhtar) evoke a lyrical vision of life as seen through the character of Manju.

***Followed by Q&A with Sharmila Tagore and Sangeeta Datta**

Fri 27 May 18:00 NFT3*

Sat 28 May 17:50 NFT2

Mon 30 May 15:40 NFT2

Chokher Bali: A Passion Play

India 2003. Dir Rituparno Ghosh. With Aishwarya Rai, Prosenjit, Raima Sen. 167min. EST
Based on Tagore's novel, the film explores marital relationships and the position of the widow in upper-class colonial Bengal. The beautiful young widow comes to live in Mahindra's household in Calcutta, and thus begins a triangular story of close friendship and illicit passion. Mahindra's young wife Asha considers Binodini her best friend, but later discovers her husband has had an affair with her. The passion play unfolds under the backdrop of the nationalist movement in India. Stunning camerawork, sets, and costumes; and a beautiful score.

Fri 13 May 19:50 NFT2

Sun 15 May 15:10 NFT2

The Cloud-Capped Star Meghey Daka Tara

India 1960. Dir Ritwik Ghatak. With Supriya Choudhury, Anil Chatterjee. 126min. EST
The most widely viewed of Ghatak's works, as part of the Indian New Wave, the film is set in a refugee camp on the outskirts of Calcutta, and examines an impoverished family affected by the Bengal partition. The self-sacrificing Nita is riven by personal tragedy and exploited by everyone around her. Strongly melodramatic in tone, the film makes remarkable use of Tagore's music and poetry in the classic sequence of the brother singing 'Jey raatey mor duar guli...

Sat 21 May 15:40 NFT2

Wed 25 May 20:30 NFT2

The BFI Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £9.50, concs £6.75 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment

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Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

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***** PICTURE DESK *****

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