The 2008 Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA), starting tomorrow April 22-27, includes a tribute to Bollywood dancing queen and Padma Shri recipient Madhuri Dixit who will appear in person for discussion. Two films released in 1997 will display her diversity, The Death Sentence (Mrityudand), set in a remote village in Bihar where class conflicts affect the personal lives of three women, and the dance dramedy My Heart is Crazy (Dil To Pagal Hai) featuring Dixit as a new dancer who falls in love with her troupe’s director (a pre-Lux SRK).

As usual, IFFLA has an impressive program of films to pique my curiosity (plus one that I can heartily recommend—the charmingly hilarious Loins of Punjab). Here are a few:

“Silent Hues.” Veteran actress and former child star Rohini provides an emotional peek into the lives of child actors in the Indian film industry in this documentary.

“Beast.” Tagline: There’s more to the mousy Indian girl in the next cubicle than meets the eye. This short is by Geeta Malik—you may have seen another one of her shorts, Aunty Gs. Also interesting is her short doc on South Asians (in the US) and skin color, “Not Fair, Still Lovely.”

“Quamar — Working to Live.” In this documentary short, Quamar, a 10-year-old girl who works with her mother making bangles tells her story directly and with heartbreaking knowledge that her childhood (and future) may already be lost.


Plus: “Bollywood Comes to Hollywood for Sixth Annual IFFLA” (LA Weekly); “Madhuri Mania in Los
Angeles” (IndiaInfo.com); “I was introduced to India early, watching Indian films in Greece as a teenager” (ScreenIndia.com’s interview with IFFLA Founder-Director Christina Marouda).

— Pavani Yalamanchili

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