Mad Sad & Bad
Indian Film Festival 2010

A quaint Independent film from the UK, Mad Sad & Bad made its North American debut at the Indian Film Festival this week. True to form with regards to the Indian indies especially from England I expected a cutting film wrought with sarcasm and irony and of course this film didn’t disappoint.

In the realm of “reality” based films of Indian origin, this is one which really strikes a cord with real issues, family drama, and the true essence of reality.

The patchwork of Indian families is both a diverse and intricately woven carpet, as colorful as they are complex at times, and just like good Indian tapestry, the larger, more elaborate designs and imagery depicted therein is meant to catch the viewers eyes to deflect one’s attention away from the intricate complexity that lies underneath or involves the complication that makes up that particular imagery.

This is the best way to I can sum up Mad, Sad & Bad. It is exactly such a film. The characters in the film are very much complex, troubled diamonds in the rough that never have found their sheen and polish, and we join them at a random moment in their lives in which the nexus or rather breaking point of their lives will tie together with a key member of their family.

At its core, this film is one of genuine sincerity in the wielding of its subject matter, the two brothers and sister are perfectly cast and work well together as a family unit.

The only real glaring issue I found with the film is the fact that at some point, the movie lost its sheen as it
went on, especially when the characters all seemed to encounter calamities at the same time and that too of an intertwined nature.

**Spirituality Quotient**

The spirituality quotient in this film is not fairly obvious, and I think this is the mark of a skilled director and film crew. If I was going to pick out a theme to describe the film I would have to admit it would have to be about appreciation.

So many times in our lives, with our busy schedules, and busy work that we often do not take the time to truly appreciate what it is that we have in our lives and appreciate the ones in our family who provide us love.

Most of the characters in the story ceased living in the present moment choosing instead to wrap their grief, disdain and general malaise around subjects and issues residing format their pasts, which seems to be more often than naught to be a developed Indian trait.

Having said all that, there is a spiritual quotient in this film. That quotient, to me seems to be “compassion”. As human beings, its one of the most beautiful emotions we can express to each other and yet, we very rarely do so. As Indians we tend to rarely exhibit this trait and condition, and as such we try to instill as “lessons” from parent to children and children to parents about being tough, and showing no vulnerability and how these are virtues that show to the outside world especially how strong we are.

In reality, the opposite is true. The reality is such that we use this as a crutch to deflect our real emotions, our real feelings and this is very truth growth and true compassion and strength resound. This film, shows how denial of such basic compassion can result in true suffering.

** 1/2 out of *****

The Spirited Critic

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