



MIFF 2026 Showcases Documentary Tributes to Indian Maestros of Photography and Classical Music

Homage Section Features Films on Renowned Photographer Raghu Rai and Mridangam Maestro Palghat Raghu

Mumbai, 19 June 2026

Two acclaimed documentaries, *Raghu Rai: Hearing Through the Eyes* and *Tala and Rhythm – Mridangam Played by Palghat Raghu*, were showcased today in the Homage section of the 19th Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF). The screenings paid tribute to distinguished contributions in the fields of photography, cinema and Indian classical music.

Directed by Suvendu Chatterjee, *Raghu Rai: Hearing Through the Eyes* offers an insight into the life and work of renowned Indian photographer Raghu Rai. Through photographs and personal reflections, the documentary traces his creative journey and the experiences that shaped his vision. In 1977, Rai was nominated to Magnum Photos by legendary photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson.



The film explores Rai's concept of "darshan", which he describes as an emotional and spiritual connection with the subject. According to him, photography is not just about capturing images but about understanding people and their emotions.

The documentary revisits major historical events documented by Rai and showcases his iconic photographs of personalities such as Mother Teresa, alongside images of everyday life, including Ganesh Visarjan, the Taj Mahal and Naga Sadhus, reflecting India's rich cultural diversity and heritage.

The film also features his daughter, filmmaker Avani Rai, whose perspective provides a glimpse into the person behind the camera and creates a dialogue between two generations of image-makers.

Reflecting on creativity, Raghu Rai says that love is the central thread that connects artistic expression. He believes that a photograph should speak for itself and describes an image as the coming together of one's inner and outer worlds in a meaningful moment. He also encourages young photographers to discover their own voice and approach to the medium.

The second film showcased today, *Tala and Rhythm – Mridangam Played by Palghat Raghu*, was produced by the Films Division of India and directed by noted filmmaker Shyam Benegal. The documentary explores the Mridangam, one of the oldest and most important percussion instruments in Carnatic music.



Featuring renowned percussionist Palghat Raghu, the film explains the concepts of tala (rhythmic cycle) and rhythm in Indian classical music. Through demonstrations and performances, it introduces audiences to the structure of beats, cycles and improvisation that form the foundation of the musical tradition.

The documentary also showcases the techniques involved in playing the Mridangam, including finger movements, tonal variations and rhythmic patterns. It highlights the importance of discipline, practice and creativity in mastering the instrument.

Alongside its exploration of musical theory, the film emphasizes the rich oral tradition through which knowledge is passed from teacher to student. It reflects the strong bond between guru and disciple that has sustained India's classical music traditions across generations.

The screenings of both documentaries in the Homage section offered audiences an opportunity to gain insight into the lives and contributions of celebrated masters, while deepening their appreciation of India's artistic and cultural heritage.

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PIB Team MIFF | Supriya Ghaytadak/Mohammad Aqib Khan- Kunal Vyas/Darshana Rane

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