

**"A HEARTFELT, ACTUALLY HONEST PORTRAIT OF
RURAL INDIAN ADOLESCENCE"** - Screen Daily

"QUIETLY INSIGHTFUL"
The Hollywood Reporter



Flying River Films presents

BULBUL can SING

a film by Rima Das

2018 / India / 95min / Color / Fiction / 2.35:1

Flying River Films

303, Bridge, 3rd cross lane, Lokhandwala,
Mumbai 400053, India

+91 75063 10048 | flyingriverfilms@gmail.com | rima.films@gmail.com
www.rimadas.com

SYNOPSIS



Bulbul, a young girl, living in village in Assam, India, fighting her way through love and loss as she figures out who really she is!



Interview with RIMA DAS



What was the starting point of this film?

The idea started about a year ago while I was shooting Village Rockstars in my village at Chayagaon, Assam. Whilst working with the children in Village Rockstars I already planned internally that I must make a trilogy. In fact, looking back now, it is all falling together in a piece. Dhunnu, the child protagonist in Village Rockstars and her boy band narrated to us the journey of children, their innocence, dreams and abilities. During its creation, I began to think what's next. Teenage of course. That's when the idea about Bulbul Can Sing started to take shape.

I met our protagonist Bulbul while shooting Village Rockstars and was able to connect this internal journey about the trilogy, to explore teenage feelings and thoughts, researched by interacting with the village teenagers, issues they face in school and surroundings and their life in general. First love, the experience of it, outcome – be it positive or negative and how it impacts one's journey of life, came across to me as a story worth telling.

How did you cast the kids and work with them?

Spontaneity. This is a process I have all along identified to be authentic and something that touches my gut. Serendipity of course plays a part in almost most things that I do. Thus, whilst shooting Village Rockstars I met my future actors of Bulbul Can Sing. It has been an exploratory journey. Apart from two known faces from my previous film Village Rockstars, rest of the actors you see in Bulbul Can Sing are all new first timers, attending high school at Chayagaon, Assam.



How long did you shoot this film?

I completed this film within 1 year. This was an intense period of balancing many priorities. My second film Village Rockstars was touring around the world and I needed to give time attending various festivals. Whilst I was mindful that my teenagers in Bulbul Can Sing will be growing fast, added the additional pressure and deadlines. As a director, I wish I had few more months, but as a producer the project had a distinct deadline. Therefore, balancing my time and using it well was paramount.

What was the biggest challenge in making the film?

I think dealing with the “teenage mood” that my actors bring on board was something I did not anticipate and required lot of my energy, focus and patience. I cannot judge them and must remain neutral, whilst directing and allowing them to tell my story. Then the usual challenges of working with children and teenagers demanded that the project remain flexible with their school schedule, which meant that we wait for the correct light or finish early.

Additionally, Bulbul Can Sing is a complex film with many actors. Sets were created to depict various village life. So unlike Village Rockstars which was a journey following children using nature as a backdrop, Bulbul Can Sing is an entirely complex, challenging and large film with more 100 actors. Managing all of this on my own, with only my cousin Malika Das as my assistant, has been challenging but enjoyable at the same time.

What do you want people to think about when they are leaving the theatre?

There are many outside influence or thoughts that effects our growing up ways. Especially these are most evident during teenage days. As a director when I was making Bulbul Can Sing, I had to constantly check myself to remain detached and non-judgemental, while my characters carry out their parts. I am still exploring perhaps and trying to find what is my role or which character I should be able to identify while seeing the film. That way if audience too can find themselves as a character in this film and take home their meanings will be a good outcome for met



How did you get your film funded?

This is a self-funded film like all my previous films. I did make some money out Village Rockstars which then was entirely invested in Bulbul Can Sing. Any shortfalls I borrowed from my family. Same story of an independent film maker I guess...



Future projects....

I want to complete the trilogy. Village Rockstars is the first of the series – children, then Bulbul Can Sing is with teenagers and now my next attempt would be to look at a woman who got divorced and how she deals with her mid- life. Looking back at my first film Man with the Binoculars which will then become the last and final part of this trilogy – thus the culmination of my journey with a 4-part series or quadrilogy. It is interesting that I made Man with the Binoculars first. I wonder, I might have had the maturity to manage a 60+ year old retired professor and whilst making it Village Rockstar arrived and I see this as my personal re-birth working with children, and now with teenagers and soon an adult. I am developing the plot, drawing from my inner personal experiences. Let's see...

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY



Rima Das is a self-taught screenwriter, producer and director who also takes on the roles of cinematographer and editor for her films. Born and raised in a small village in Assam in northeast India, she is now based in Mumbai and Assam. She is the Managing Director of Flying River Films which supports local, independent filmmaking in the region.

Best known for making indigenous and realistic films with non-professional actors, her films have been striking a chord with people not just in India but across the globe.

VILLAGE ROCKSTARS, Rima's second feature film premiered at Toronto International Film Festival 2017, then travelled to more than 80 film festivals around the world like San Sebastian, Tallinn Black Nights, IFFI Goa, Mumbai Film Festival, Cairo International Film Festival, Hongkong International Film Festival, Goteberg Film Festival etc. The film has received over 50 Awards including the National Film Awards as the Best Feature Film in India 2018 and Oscar entry from India 2019.

BULBUL CAN SING, her third feature film had its world premiere at Toronto International Film Festival 2018, in the Contemporary World Cinema section. Followed by the Asian Premier at Busan International Film Festival and will be having its European premier- at Berlin International Film festival (Generation 14 section) 2019.

Bulbul Can Sing won Golden Gateway Award for best film in Mumbai Film Festival, Best actor at Singapore Film Festival. Rima Das is also nominated for Best new director Asian Awards for Bulbul Can Sing 2019.

Her first feature **MAN WITH THE BINOCULARS (ANTARDRISHTI)** premiered in the First Feature Competition at Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival 2016 and at MAMI Mumbai Film Festival.

For more information about Rima Das visit <https://www.rimadas.com>



FILMOGRAPHY



MAN WITH THE BINOCULARS (ANTARDRISHTI)

2016, Fiction, 100 min, Drama, Color, India

- Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, First Feature Competition

VILLAGE ROCKSTARS

2017, Fiction, 87 min, Color, India

- Premiered at Toronto International Film Festival, San Sebastián Film Festival, Tallinn Black Nights, Hongkong International Film Festival, Mumbai Film Festival, Göteborg Film Festival, Cairo Film Festival, Kerala Film Festival etc

- Around 80 festivals 44 awards till now including National Awards Best Feature film of India
- India's Official entry to Oscars 2019

Bulbul Can Sing

2018, Fiction, 95 mins, Colour, India

- World Premiere-Toronto International Film Festival 2018 (Contemporary World Cinema)
- European Premiere-Berlin International Film Festival 2019(Generation 14)
- AFI
- Busan International Film Festival

WINNER

- Golden Gateway Best Film at JIO MAMI Mumbai Film Festival
- Best Performance at Singapore international film Festival

CAST & CREW



CAST

Pakija Begam | Arnali Das | Manoranjan Das | Banita Thakuria | Manabendra Das

CREW

Produced by - RIMA DAS | **Co-Produced by** - JAYA DAS | **Sound Design** - SUSMIT BOB NATH
Cinematography - RIMA DAS | **Editor** - RIMA DAS | **Colorist** - SID MEER | **Stills** - AYUSH DAS
Production Design - RIMA DAS | **Production Controller** - MALLIKA DAS |
Written & Directed by - RIMA DAS



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