



Hollywood comes to Pondicherry

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Oscar winning director Ang lee shot parts of his next movie "Life of Pi" in Pondicherry.

The movie "Life of Pi", based on the Booker prize winner authored by Canadian Yann Martel, is being directed by Oscar winning director Ang Lee. It was partly shot in Pondicherry and Lee's presence in Pondicherry, sure was a good

treat for the people in the town.

The sequences of the movie shot in this small town illustrate the childhood days of the protagonist. The movie crew was in Pondicherry for exactly a month and shooting took place in different parts of the town.

Ang Lee emerged as the first Asian director to win an Oscar for his critically acclaimed movie *Brokeback Mountain* in 2005. He is directing *Life of Pi* in 3D, which he confesses is one of his biggest challenges. His many other honours include an Oscar nomination for his direction of *Crouching tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and Best Picture for *Sense and Sensibility*.

The world's largest producers and distributors of motion pictures, Twentieth Century Fox, will be releasing *Life of Pi* on December 14th, 2012. The movie is about an incredible adventure of a young boy, Pi, who travels from an exotic zoo in India on to a voyage across the Pacific, where, he survives a shipwreck. He is cast adrift in a lifeboat with a 450-pound Bengal tiger as his only companion. Away in the infinite vastness of the ocean, Pi struggles to survive and train his companion. They reach a mysterious island that offers the two the only respite on their desperate journey. The movie will take its audience to a thrilling and spiritual; joyous and harrowing; humorous and tragic adventure of the two odd survivors.

Suraj Sharma, a 17-year-old boy from Delhi was selected as the lead after auditioning 3,000 young men in an extensive worldwide talent search. French actor Gerard Depardieu, Indian actors Tabu, Irrfan Khan, and Adil Hussain are the other co-stars. One third of the movie was shot in this small coastal town of India. The team is headed to Taiwan for the remaining shoot.

Bagalavan's Interview

Some of the students from the department of Mass Communication, Pondicherry University, had the opportunity of working and meeting with Ang Lee and his crew. Bagalavan Perier, who was among the fortunate ones, talks about his working experience with the international crew of *Life of Pi*. And this is what he had to say.

Aviini: What was it like working with an internationally acclaimed director and his crew?

Baglavan: It was definitely a wonderful and memorable experience. The hard work put in by the pre-production team was something to admire. No matter how experienced one was, the only thing they wanted from us was hard work. The help extended by the crew members and the punctuality maintained was something which really impressed me.

A: How did you get this opportunity and what was the kind of work assigned to you?

B: The pre-production team came to our campus to recruit students for the set. After a round of interview I was selected. It was my first entrance to the real world of the big screen industry. I joined as an intern and within a few days I was allocated as a set assistant. Later I acted as a background actor too. We were about 25 crew members from different parts of the country with nearly 400 crew members altogether. Being the only student in the team, I was privileged enough to work with many well experienced people from the international film fraternity. One among them was Prashant, who worked as an assistant director for the movie *Inception*.

A: You have worked on making videos as part of the course for the department; what are the differences you noticed while working with the crew?

B: Their pre-production work was flawless. There were different departments teamed into sub-groups; each group diligently took up its responsibilities. Because of the good planning the shooting got over on time. There was more planning and not much lighting was used. The main procedure applied was the allotted call sheets, where all the planning for shooting the next scene was written and was strictly followed.

A: Any particular moments which will stay close to your heart?

B: Every moment spent on the sets was memorable. Lots of good and thought provoking lessons were learnt. But the most memorable were the two instances when I directly worked under the direction of Ang Lee himself. It was like a dream come true.

My meeting with the Oscar winner Director Ang Lee

I remember reading about Ang Lee's plan to come to Pondicherry some months ago in a magazine. One fine January afternoon, a classmate of mine brought back the news about the director's visit to Pondicherry. This time it was for real. He was finally in town, shooting for the • Life of Pi. I excitedly waited for a day to at least see the filmmaker while shooting in town but never got a chance to do so. At the same time, I was doing my winter internship with the newspaper • The Hindu. Time passed by and my hope was fading away slowly. When I reached the office on the last day of my internship, on 31st January 11, my senior reporter from • The Hindu surprised me with the news that I will be sent to a press conference with Ang Lee. Indeed, it was a pleasant surprise. I waited anxiously for the hour to come. Finally, there I was, sitting right in the front row with the press. I saw him and was fascinated by his humbleness and humility. I grabbed the opportunity to ask him a question. I ended the day well with an autograph of one of the best directors in the world.

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1. Around The Town

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