

## Film Review

# CHARITRA

IN Hindi Cinema we have come to expect certain things from certain people: "daring", "unusual" "adult" themes (in other words sex) are now associated with B. R. Ishara. Just how unusual they are must be judged in the context of our films. We must also keep in mind the intellect-

ual limitations of most of our major film directors including B. R. Ishara. That he thinks up a weird subject and makes a hash of it in *Milap* is beside the point. The important thing is that he does try to say something different.

Now the fact that B. R. Ishara has begun to cash in on his earlier successes and started repeating himself is also very much in keeping with our *filmi* tradition. In *Charitra*, which is a bit like *Chetna* and *Zaroorat* both, he introduces the hottest (sic) discovery Parveen Babi, who in her turn looks like Zeenat Aman.

Doubtless the present breed of Rehana Sultan, Neetu Singh, Radha Saluja, Zahirra, etc, are a far cry from the coy and cloying Asha Parekhs and Mala Sinhas of yesteryear. They represent the "swinging", "liberated", contemporary young women of Bombay and Delhi. Parveen Babi, too, is as mod as they come. But she is too sophisticated to look like the daughter of a middle-class family, as shown in *Charitra*. Her father (Manmohan Krishan) lives in an elegant well-furnished bungalow and philosophises on the morals of the rich and the middle classes. Parveen is a *Pavitra Bharatiya Kanya* but she has to sell her honour to a sleek, evil man in order to save her family from financial disaster. She attempts suicide, turns into a callgirl and is saved by another rich man who is a lecher by night and a *devta* by day.

### Salim Durrani

Now this other character has possibilities. But Salim Durrani who plays the role seems to have been abandoned on the sets by the director who concentrates mostly on the heroine. At times the star cricketer just does not know what to do with himself. However, Salim Durrani very much wanted to appear in a film and he has done so. Now he can happily go back to hitting his sixers.

Gautam Sarin is the devil masquerading as an angel. He does look like a typical polished businessman of Delhi or Bombay. But he could do without that hang-dog expression.

Parveen Babi has talent. She has already signed a large number of films and has started giving outrageous statements to the gossip- and sex-oriented filmi press. She will go far.

*Charitra* has no songs and dances and has good editing. The awkward opening scenes in which mod couples come and go saying "O.K." and "Bye" are redeemed later.

# SAUDAGAR

**S**AUDAGAR has a good story, a good cast, yet it fails to click. The film directed by Sudhendu Roy and shot on location near Calcutta is based on a well-known Bengali story. And yet it is quite un-Bengali in atmosphere and nuances. The characters look Bihari and self-conscious.

Still it is a praiseworthy attempt at portraying the life of ordinary people. We also have an anti-hero in Moti Mian (Amitabh Bachchan). He is a bit of a rogue. He sells jaggery which a young widow (Nutan) makes for him. Moti Mian falls in love with this wench Phool Bano (Padma Khanna), who is the most filmi *gaon ki gauri* to date. Her father (Murad) smokes the hookah in a monotonous manner and demands five hundred rupees as her *mehr* (bride's financial security). Moti Mian marries the trusting widow. She works hard and his business prospers. Then he divorces the woman and marries the flippant, spendthrift Phool Bano who can't make *gur* (neither can she act). Moti Mian is ruined, Nutan marries a prosperous widower (Trilok Kapoor). Moti Mian realises his folly. Repents. The story which began quite powerfully somehow fizzles out.

Nutan is, as usual, great. Amitabh Bachchan is self-conscious. Trilok Kapoor is as wooden as he has been for the last forty years in Hindi films. That is some consistency. Padma Khanna is eminently successful in ruining the film.

### QURRATULAIN HYDER



NUTAN, the betrayed *Maju* of *Saudagar*, gives a performance in keeping with her stature as a dramatic actress. With the death of Meena Kumari and the impending retirement of Waheeda Rehman, Nutan may well take the top place on the Indian screen.



PARVEEN BABI, leading lady of *Charitra*, belongs to a notable family of Junagadh. She is a graduate and affects a bohemian life-style. She does not like to be labelled "another Zeenat Aman".



NEW TALENT: ANUPAMA DESHPANDE AND MUSIC DIRECTOR RAJ ROSHAN. The playback singer is introduced by Raj Roshan in M. K. M. Films' *Kala Gulab*. Raj Roshan specialises in folk songs of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Kashmir.