

nandita das initiatives



## PRODUCTION NOTES

[www.manto.film](http://www.manto.film)

Running Time: 113 minutes

Social Media: #Manto / F: @Mantofilm / T: @Mantospeaks / I: MantoFilm

Contact: [manto@aaa.film](mailto:manto@aaa.film)

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## CREDITS

### FILMMAKERS

Written and Directed by	NANDITA DAS
Produced by	NANDITA DAS INITIATIVES FILMSTOC HP STUDIOS VIACOM 18 MOTION PICTURES
Co-Produced by	EN COMPAGNIE DES LAMAS MAGIC IF FILMS
Director of Photography	KARTIK VIJAY
Film Editor	SREEKAR PRASAD
Production Designer	RITA GHOSH
Costume Designer	SHEETAL IOBAL SHARMA
Background Score	ZAKIR HUSSAIN
Music	SNEHA KHANWALKAR
Post Production	PRANA STUDIOS
Sound Designer	RESUL POOKUTTY

### CAST

Saadat Hasan Manto	NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI
Safia	RASIKA DUGAL
Shyam	TAHIR RAJ BHASIN

## **LOGLINE**

The film follows the most tumultuous years (1946-1950) in the life of one of the world's greatest and most controversial short story writers, Saadat Hasan Manto, and that of the two countries he inhabits – India and Pakistan.

## **SHORT SYNOPSIS**

MANTO begins in an optimistic India waiting to be free from British colonial rule. No one has any idea of the upheaval the Partition of India and Pakistan will soon bring. Riots between Hindu and Muslim pit neighbour against neighbour, and strain even the deepest friendship. During this period, Manto - one of history's greatest short story writers - is torn between his beloved Bombay, and moving to Pakistan. Increasingly, his writings bear shocking witness to a society caught up in communal violence in which people become, for no reason at all, predators or prey.

Meanwhile, Manto's own flawed humanity drives him to shine a light on the dark underbelly of society that so many chose to ignore. As Manto fights to clear himself from charges of obscenity and maintain his freedom, his increasing alcoholism and anguish takes a toll on his family and leads him to a downward spiral. Through all of this, he continues to write, his works mirroring the harsh realities of the time as he continues to pen the truth, for which he pays the ultimate price.

This is the tale of two emerging nations, two faltering cities and one man who tries to make sense of it all.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

Bombay 1946: Amidst the freedom struggle against the British Empire and the forewarning of India being partitioned, Saadat Hasan Manto, a maverick short story writer works in the glittering world of the Bombay film industry as a scriptwriter to make ends meet.

Manto and his close friends and fellow writers are members of the Progressive Writers' Association, including the feminist writer, Ismat Chughtai. They are both acquitted from charges of obscenity for their respective works. Manto also has many friends in the film industry who highly regard Manto for his literary works, the closest being Shyam, a charming budding actor, but his biggest supporter and the unwavering pillar of strength is his wife, Safia.

Soon after India gains independence, on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947, and the new nation of Pakistan is born, Safia leaves for Lahore in Pakistan to attend her sister's wedding and returns soon after. Manto decides to stay back in Bombay. Sectarian violence continues as Hindu-Muslim tensions flare. One day, Shyam, on hearing that his cousin was attacked by a Muslim, in a fit of anger, tells his most dear friend and confidante Manto: "even I could kill you." Shocked and anguished, and as a non-practicing Muslim, Manto suddenly becomes conscious of his religious identity and the vulnerabilities that come with it. He makes the unthinkable decision of leaving his beloved city of Bombay in India and moves to Pakistan.

Lahore, 1948: A city full of refugees, forsaken property, and burnt buildings becomes Manto's new home. He is left grappling with a growing sense of isolation and betrayal. As he struggles to come to terms with his new reality, removed from his friends and everything he holds dear, all while pushing to tell his stories, he spirals into a state of alcoholism. Though Safia continues to stand by him, their marriage begins to feel the strain. Relentless and long-drawn court trials for alleged obscenity in his latest provocative story 'Cold Meat' take a severe toll on his health and finances. Despite this, he continues to pen some of his sharpest and most courageous works.

His compulsion to write and drink are in direct conflict with his desire to see his family - wife and two daughters, happy and secure. Unable to see his family suffer any longer, he finally admits himself into the alcohol rehabilitation centre in Lahore Mental Hospital. All the while, writing of the world around him, his truth, refusing to succumb to this compulsion no matter the toll.

This is the tale of two emerging nations, two faltering cities, and one man who tries to make sense of it all.

Saadat Hasan Manto was not just a bold writer, he went on to become the conscience of his generation.

*Saadat Hasan died at 42. Manto lives on.*

## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

### **Director's Note, by Nandita Das**

I first read Saadat Hasan Manto when I was in college and was struck by his simple yet profound narratives. He wrote as he saw, as he felt, without dilution. For years I thought of making a film based on his short stories, even before I made my directorial debut, *Firaaq*. His essays and polemics about his life helped the idea expand beyond his stories. It was in 2012 that I decided to make a film inspired by Manto's life and works. It took me five years to feel equipped, both emotionally and creatively, to tell this story that so needs to be told. For me, films have always been a means to an end. Through *Manto*, I found a way to respond to the issues of today that we are all grappling with.

What initially drew me to Manto was his free spirit and courage to stand up against orthodoxy of all kinds. As I plunged deeper into his life, I wondered why he seemed so familiar. I realized that it felt like I was reading about my father! He too is an artist, intuitively unconventional, a misunderstood misfit and fearlessly blunt. Despite the difficulties of growing up with such a man, he is the inspiration for my convictions and courage. He has helped me understand Manto better. I believe there is a *Mantoiyat* (Manto-ness) in all of us - the part that wants to be more honest and courageous.

The film is an intimate retelling of the times, seen through the eyes of an intensely engaged writer. His story cannot be told without giving a glimpse of his works. Just as in his writings, where fact and fiction overlap, the film blurs the lines between the main narrative and his short stories. I am also fortunate that Manto's family has given me their unconditional support. It is through them that I found some precious nuggets that are not available in books.

Having been involved in issues of women for over 25 years, it was expected of me to make a "woman centric" film. It was a surprise for many that I chose a male protagonist again. But Manto had a great sensitivity towards women, both in his writings and in the way he interacted with the women in his life. Also, I believe that women are equally, if

not more, impacted by everything that happens around them. My films have a socio-political context, however the lens always remains personal and inadvertently through a female gaze.

Finally, a story can stir the mind and move the heart only if it is told well, and for that I had to ensure that I had a stellar cast and crew. From very eminent talent to discovering gems, it has been a creatively stimulating process to put this film together. While there have been many challenges that I have faced at every step, I am grateful for all the support I have received from my cast, crew, and even some strangers who have now become friends.

While Cannes is the most prestigious platform for the film and a great start, the journey will be complete only when we share it with the widest audience possible. The film is culturally and socially rooted in its context, but universal in its emotions and a part of world cinema that transcends boundaries. Finally, Manto's unflinching faith in the redemptive power of the written word resonates with my own compulsion to tell stories. In some mystical way, I feel I am part of that hopeful legacy.

The spirit of Manto is the spirit of the film.

## **Background**

MANTO begins in an optimistic India waiting to be free from British colonial rule. No one has any idea of the upheaval the Partition of India into a separate India and Pakistan will soon bring. Riots between Hindu and Muslims pit neighbour against neighbour, and strain even the deepest friendships.

During this period, Manto is a torn between his beloved Bombay and Pakistan. Increasingly, his writings bear shocking witness to a society caught up in communal violence in which people become for no reason at all predators or prey.



### **Manto, the Legacy**

Saadat Hasan Manto (1912-1955), is celebrated as one of the greatest short story writers to hail from India and South Asia. In his short life of 42 years, Manto wrote almost 300 short stories, more than 100 radio plays and numerous film scripts and essays. He is studied by literary and history students in universities across the globe. He has inspired countless South Asian writers and writers around the world. His works are studied, critiqued and referenced to this day as his legacy has grown since his death at an early age. It is often noted that Manto's works may be more important today than they were then. He is recognized as a gift to the subcontinent for his ability to tell the uncomfortable, and often ugly truths, about people and society. While underappreciated during his time, today his works are among the most respected in the world for writing what needed to be written, no matter the consequences.

### **Manto, Voice for the Voiceless**

What set Manto apart was his unwavering empathy for and attention on those who lived on the margins of society, particularly women and more uniquely, sex workers. His defining works were set during Partition which led to the largest single mass migration of people in history, killing hundreds of thousands in its wake. Manto was tried six times on charges of obscenity for his irreverent and bold stories, both in India and Pakistan. He was viewed as giving a voice to those that had none, overshadowed by the forces of the time. Today, his stories are regarded as some of India's greatest literary works, and some of the most honest accounts of his times.

### **Manto, the Feminist**

"The construction and treatment of female characters by Manto turns them into complex, and sometimes ambiguous metaphors for humanity. This is why the story of suffering during 1947 is often a tale of women surviving the horrors of crimes against humanity, rescuing and salvaging life, when men turn into communal butchers, and not giving up even in the face of greatest adversities. Other than the Partition stories, women characters in much of Manto's fiction are strong and unique. They appear as defiant and righteous, even when their circumstances are mired in taboo and social marginalization.

Women in Manto's stories come from diverse backgrounds and form a clear conduit for his humanism. According to noted Urdu poet and writer Fahmida Riaz, Manto "saw women the way he saw men." Like most of his characters, women exhibit a conviction that happiness does not lie in winning conflicts on religious or nationalist lines, but in fostering human ties based on feminist threads of love, care, respect and tolerance."

<http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/mantos-women/> - author Raza Rumi, 13<sup>th</sup> Feb 2015.

### **The Short Stories Featured in the Movie**

Recreated within the film, some of Manto's most powerful stories are seamlessly interspersed, the last being his most famous - *Toba Tek Singh*. Manto begins the story with, "two or three years after Partition, it occurred to the governments of India and Pakistan to exchange their lunatics like they had exchanged their criminals. The Muslim lunatics in India were to be sent to Pakistan and the Hindu and Sikh lunatics in Pakistani asylums were to be handed over to India." The Sikh protagonist, remains standing until he finds his village, it's truly heartbreaking as he lies in death in no-man's land, confused between two realities and two nations. Which way is my home? Where do I belong? Manto's predicament is not too different.

#### **- *Dus Rupay (10 Rupees)***

In *Dus Rupay (10 Rupees)*, Manto describes the story of an innocent young girl named Sarita who works as a part-time prostitute. Grinding poverty has forced her widowed mother to send her daughter, barely in her teens, for 'outings' with men. One day, three men visiting Bombay have hired her and pick her up for the day. Sarita is paid 10 rupays for her time which she tucks away in her dress. Not knowing where they will go, the trio take a drive and they end up on the beach as she laughs and plays while the men enjoy playing with the young girl in front of them. For Sarita, it is a moment away from her everyday life – a playful day on the beach that any child would love. When she is dropped back home the two men are exhausted and asleep in the back of the car. Sarita leaves them and walks towards her the front door... she suddenly turns back to the car, and with confidence, and innocence Sarita returns the 'dus rupay' or ten rupees. How could she take their money, as she didn't do what she was paid to do.

- **100 Watt Bulb**

This story is about an emotionally broken prostitute who, in a fit of rage and despair kills her pimp because he starved her of sleep, forcing her to go to bed with customer after customer, for days on end. Agonized beyond endurance, by being kept awake, in a moment of madness she smashes his head with a brick. Alas, she is finally able to sleep.

- **Khol do (Open It)**

'Khol do' typifies the traumatic effects Partition had on everyday people, whose voices are left unheard. In recounting the stories of nameless and faceless millions, Manto chooses the metaphor of a woman raped to highlight the 'gang rape' of humanity that was a hallmark of 1947. This is a story of a girl abducted from East Punjab, a father in desperate search who finally discovers her in a hospital in a refugee camp where she lies in a traumatized state, not knowing what happened only to find her raped by her abductors as well as her rescuers. The ending of the story is what makes the reader shudder at the extent of barbarity unleashed during the tumult of 1947:

"The doctor glanced at the body lying on the stretcher. He felt the pulse and, pointing at the window, told Sirajuddin, "Open it!" Sakina's body stirred ever so faintly on the stretcher. With lifeless hands, she slowly undid the knot of her waistband and lowered her shalwar. "She's alive! My daughter is alive!" Old Sirajuddin screamed with unbounded joy. The doctor broke into a cold sweat.

- **Thanda Gosht (Colder than Ice / Cold Meat)**

Amongst his most controversial stories, 'Thanda Gosht', illustrates the episode of a Sikh named Isher Singh who abducts a Muslim girl during the riots and rapes her, only to realize that she had been dead all along. His jealous girlfriend Kulwant Kaur, rebukes him after she finds him unable to give her sexual pleasure. She is suspicious that he has been with another woman. Isher Singh pants for breath as he narrates

the chilling encounter (of attempting to rape the dead girl) that rendered him impotent. In this story, the dead Muslim girl is far more symbolic than either Singh's impotence or Kaur's desire.

- ***Toba Tek Singh***

The story is set two or three years after the 1947 independence, when the Governments of India and Pakistan decided to exchange some Muslim, Sikh and Hindu lunatics, and revolves around Bishan Singh, a Sikh inmate of an asylum in Lahore, who is from the town of Toba Tek Singh. As part of the exchange, Bishan is sent under police escort to India, but upon being told that his hometown Toba Tek Singh is in Pakistan, he refuses to go. The story ends with Bishan lying down in the no man's land between the two barbed wire fences: "There, behind barbed wire, was Hindustan. Here, behind the same kind of barbed wire, was Pakistan. In between, on that piece of ground that had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh."

### **Cinematography**

The rich fabric of the film helps transport the audience to another time and place and establish a tone for the film that is dark and vibrant at the same time. Wonderfully textured visuals create a sense of both the bright optimism of the last days of colonial India as well as the dark, often uncomfortable underbelly of Bombay and Lahore.

The film recreates 1940s India and Pakistan in incredible detail authentic to the time, in tone, look and feel – from costume design to the sets. This adds depth and richness on-screen. The film further refabricates the thriving artistic, cinema and literary culture of 1940's Bombay including the city's most famous coffee shop where the cabal of progressive writers of the time would gather to debate the times.

Further adding to the authenticity of the production, the film recreates Manto's universe of famous players from India and Pakistani's literary and cinematic circles that Manto knew so well - from famous writers of the time to screen legends of the 1940's and 1950s,

including the appearance of a young Nargis of India's epic film Mother India and film icon actor Ashok Kumar who had played a significant role in Manto's life.

## **Locations**

While much of the architecture and cartography of Bombay and Lahor remain intact today, it is the onslaught of hastened modernization that has ruined the charm and the beauty of that era.

The production had to look far and wide to find locations that would take the audience back to the late 40s and early 50s. For a long time, the team did not feel confident that they would be able to recreate the authenticity of that period.

A lot of the locations in Bombay, that the team explored as part of their recce, had drastically changed closer to the shooting date. Finding the right locations was challenging and, it has also highlighted the conditions of the buildings that exist now.

## **Post-Production and Technology**

While looking for locations, it became clear early on that technology would be required to recreate the period the film was set in. All the modern-day clutter of technology such as ACs, satellite dishes, hoardings, cables, and grills had to be removed.

One of the industry's leasing VFX studios - Prana Studios with offices in LA and Bombay and known for its extensive animation work in Hollywood, joined the crew early on and led VFX for the film.

Using state of the art technology by HP Inc, Prana Studios have created an authentic world for the backdrop of the story, bringing to life 1940s India.

## **Characterization**

Nawazuddin Siddiqui as Manto is compelling and captivating as we watch his spiraling story unfold. Manto's wife Safia, is played by Rasika Dugal, with a quietly strong unwavering performance that invokes an equal measure of respect, admiration and pity. The ensemble cast includes Tahir Raj Bhasin, Rajshri Deshpande, Divya Dutta, Tillotama, Shome Ranveer Shorey, and Swanand Kirkere. Together, they help drive the arc of the story forward with polished performances that show how the events we are witnessing affect the people around Manto as well.

In a nod to Bombay cinema of the 1940s which was thriving globally, critically acclaimed Hindi film icon Rishi Kapoor – son of Bollywood legend Raj Kapoor – makes a cameo appearance playing a chauvinistic producer with a penchant for “fair skinned” girls. An additional guest appearance is made by eminent and popular film actor and playwright, Paresh Rawal.

Supported by a strong cast and special appearances, ultimately, it is Nawazuddin Siddiqui as Manto, who is the driving force of this story. His humanity, his conscience and his struggle as Manto tries to deal with what he sees around him comes across in every frame of the film. It is a powerful and convincing performance that will surely be noted.

## **The Score**

MANTO is given a beautiful, haunting score by legendary and world music phenomenon Maestro Zakir Hussain. Considered one of India's national treasures, Hussain has won multiple Grammy Awards across categories of world music.

In 2016, Hussain was invited by President Barack Obama to perform at the 5th Annual International Jazz Day All-Star Global Concert at the White House. Widely regarded as one of the chief architects of the world music movement, Hussain brought Indian classical sounds and instrumentation to the West and is known for his collaborations between Indian music and jazz and pop music

### **Making the film by Nandita Das**

Researching, script writing and filming were most challenging but also most rewarding. As Manto was so prolific, it was painful to leave out many aspects of his life and work. For the film though, choosing what stories not to tell has made the ones that are told even more precious. I am grateful that a cast of passionate and eminent actors have lent their support, by doing even cameos in the film. The struggles of making an independent film, that has a large canvas and an even larger vision, has been well worth it.

I can't wait for the film to reach the audiences. I firmly believe it will find deep resonance all over the world. After 20 years of being associated with the film world, it is only now that I feel emotionally and creatively equipped to tell his story that so needs to be told. Manto's story and stories will remain relevant for a long time to come.

### **Manto's Relevance Today**

In many ways the legacy of Manto is more relevant today than ever before. In these times, the freedom to express, the power of words and the commitment to truth has never been more important. Manto was a writer who was a natural maverick. A man who went against the tide - for he always dared to speak the truth.

Words have immense power, that stand the test of time. This is a story of how a great writer used words to shock a nation and highlight injustice. If Manto was alive, what words would he write to bear witness to such inhumanity, and how would that make us feel?

The Black Lives Matter, MeToo and High School Gun Reform protests are reflections of historic influencers like Manto's legacies. The bravery he showed in his time is reflected in the courage ordinary people have shown today, to propel these issues to the forefront of the political agenda in America.

## Today's Literary Greats and Artists on Manto

*Paulo Coelho* - "I was delighted to discover Manto through Nandita's artistic project and can't wait to see the film. Manto shines light in times of darkness and will continue to be relevant."

*Salman Rushdie* - "I can't wait to see this film. Manto is a literary hero of mine and everyone should know about him."

*Shekhar Kapur* - "Larger stories are always better told through individual angst. And what better way to look at the partition of India than through the eyes of Manto, one of the greatest story tellers of that time."

## Further Reading

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/06/29/the-great-divide-books-dalrymple>

<https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/the-seer-of-pakistan>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/11/books/review/bombay-stories-by-saadat-hasan-manto.html>

<http://www.thefridaytimes.com/beta3/tft/article.php?issue=20130118&page=26>

<http://www.thefridaytimes.com/tft/mantos-women/>

Bitter Fruit: The Very Best of Saadat Hasan Manto, Edited and Translated by Khalid Hasan



## CAST BIOGRAPHIES

### **NAWAZUDDIN SIDDIQUI as Saadat Hasan Manto**

Nawazuddin, the protagonist of the film is the face of New Wave Cinema in India, known for his nuanced performances. Many of his films have been official entries at Cannes and other international film festivals. Most notably, Nawazuddin is known for his roles in films like Anurag Kashyap's *Gangs of Wasseypur* (parts 1 and 2), *Raman Raghav 2.0*, Ritesh Batra's *Lunchbox*, Ashim Ahluwalia's *Miss Lovely*, Garth Davis' *Lion*, TV Series *McMafia* and Nandita Das' directorial debut, *Firaaq*. He has struck a fine balance between mainstream and independent cinema.

### **RASIKA DUGAL as Safia Manto**

Rasika, a critically acclaimed actor, did her BFA in acting from the Film and Television Institute of India. She is best known for her work in Anup Singh's *Qissa: The Tale of a Lonely Ghost*, Karan Gour's *Kshay* and many short films. Her performances have been appreciated by audiences and critics alike. Rasika plays a pivotal role in *Manto* as the wife of Saadat Hasan Manto.

### **TAHIR BHASIN as Shyam Chadda**

Tahir completed his master's degree in Media at the University of Melbourne. He was much talked about in the negative role he played in *Mardaani*, and then in a more mainstream film called *Force 2*. Shyam, the character Tahir plays, was an acclaimed actor of his time and a close friend of Manto.

## CREW BIOGRAPHIES

### **Nandita Das - Writer/Director/Producer**

Nandita is an actor, writer, director and a strong advocate of social issues. She has acted in over 40 feature films in 10 Indian languages. Her directorial debut *Firaaq* premiered in 2008 at the Toronto Film Festival after being screened at Telluride. She was twice (2005 & 2013) on the jury of the Cannes Film Festival, among others. Nandita was conferred the 'Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters' by the French Government and was the first Indian to be inducted into the Hall of Fame of the International Women's Forum in 2011. She was the Chairperson of the Children's Film Society, India and a World Fellow at Yale in 2014.

### **Kartik Vijay - Director of Photography**

Kartik, a graduate from The Los Angeles Film School, has photographed multiple award-winning shorts, including Moon Molson's *The Bravest, The Boldest* which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival 2014, and won 34 Awards at leading Short Film Festival Circuits in the world. His Indian work includes Dibakar Banerjee's *Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!* and Vishal Bharadwaj's *Matru Ki Bijlee Ka Mandola*.

### **Sreekar Prasad - Editor**

One of the most eminent film editors in the country, Sreekar has edited over 500 films. He has won many awards including 8 national awards, one of the highest in the country. He has worked with many notable directors including Shaji Karun, Mani Ratnam, Vishal Bhardwaj and Santosh Sivan. He also won the editing award at the Dubai International Film Festival, and the National Award for *Firaaq*.

### **Resul Pookutty – Sound Designer**

Resul Pookutty completed his Post Graduation in Cinema from the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune 1995. He has won many accolades for recording, editing, engineering, and designing sound. In his short illustrious career, he has worked on 90 films, winning many national and international awards. For his work in the film *Slumdog Millionaire*, he won the prestigious Academy Award (Oscar), British Academy of Film and

Television Arts (BAFTA) and the Cinema Audio Society (CAS) awards, making him the first and only Asian to win all these laurels.

### **Rita Ghosh - Production Designer**

Rita has an extensive experience in art direction from a very early age. She completed her Post Graduation in Production Design from the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune 2008. Since then, she has worked as an Art Director for Nishikant Kamat's *Madaari* and *Drishyam* and Nikhil Advani's *D-Day* among others. She is currently working on Abhishek Chaubey's *Son Chidiya*. *Manto* was her first period film as a Production Designer.

### **Sheetal Iqbal Sharma – Costume Designer**

Sheetal is Fashion Design graduate from Wigan & Leigh college. He has a keen eye for detail and does intensive research for his characters and story. His film work includes *Miss Lovely*, *Love You to Death*, *Hiroshima*, *The Hungry*, *Raees*, *D-Day*, *Kesari*, *Air Lift*, and *Manto* among others. He has designed costumes for actors like Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Shah Rukh Khan, Irfan Khan, Kangana Ranaut, Nimrit Kaur, Huma Qureshi, Chandan Roy Sanyal, Rishi Kapoor, Akshay Kumar, Rajkummar Rao and many more.

### **Zakir Hussain – Background Score**

Zakir Hussain is an Indian tabla player and a music composer and producer. He has been awarded two of the highest civilian awards conferred by the Government of India. In 1999, he was awarded the United States National Endowment for the Arts' National Heritage Fellowship, the highest award given to traditional artists and musicians. He has performed with world musicians as eminent and diverse as John McLaughlin, George Harrison, YoYo Ma, Joe Henderson, Van Morrison, and the Kodo drummers, and with almost all the masters of Indian Classical Music. He has composed music for Merchant Ivory's *Heat and Dust* and *In Custody*, Rahul Dholakia's *Parzania*, Aparna Sen's *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer*, and Shaji Karaun's *Vanaprastham*.

### **Sneha Khanwalkar - Music**

Sneha Khanwalkar comes from a family of musicians and is an award-winning Indian music director who has a unique sensibility that sets her apart. She is one of the only female composers in an otherwise male-dominated music industry in Bollywood. She is best known for her score for the Dibakar Banerjee's *Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!* and Anurag Kashyap's *Gangs of Wasseypur* (Part 1 & Part 2). She was also the host of a popular music-based MTV mini-series called *Sound Trippin* for which she travelled all over the country collecting local sounds. She has composed three songs for *Manto*.

## THE PRODUCERS

### **HP Studios - Producer**

HP Inc. has been partnering with filmmakers and creative professionals for nearly 80 years. Through our portfolio of printers, PCs, mobile devices, solutions, and services, we enable the world's most creative people to push the boundaries of immersive entertainment and reinvent the possibilities of storytelling. We are developing and co-creating content that entertains and informs, aligns with our company values and raises awareness of the role technology plays in our lives and the world. In 2017, HP Studios released seasons one and two of *The Wolf*, a web series on security starring award-winning actor Christian Slater. *Manto* is our first feature film project.

### **FILMSTOC - Producer**

A film graduate from Queen Mary College, University of London, Namrata Goyal has truly followed her passion by starting her production house, FILMSTOC. As FILMSTOC's first feature film, Namrata is proud to bring *Manto's* story to life. She believes that cinema in India has huge potential which must be explored. Convinced that maintaining a balance between art and commerce gives birth to meaningful cinema, Namrata seeks to bring about cultural unity, celebrate diversity and give a voice to the voiceless.

### **Viacom18 Motion Pictures - Producer**

Viacom18 Motion Pictures (VMP) is India's finest fully integrated motion pictures studio that has emerged as a force to be reckoned with, offering differentiated and meaningful cinema. Some of its iconic releases have been: *Manjhi The Mountain Man*, *Mary Kom* and *Queen* to name a few. VMP is also one of the few studios to have successfully ventured into regional films and also has a strategic alliance with Paramount Pictures & LionsGate to market and distribute PPI line-up in the Indian sub-continent.

### **Nandita Das Initiatives – Producer**

Nandita Das set up the company in 2016 to give form to many of her interests and concerns. While *Manto* is the first film that NDI is producing, the company intends to explore various other creative means to tell stories that need to be told. Precisely for this reason, it does not see itself as a production house but a platform for diverse creative initiatives.

### **En Compagnie des Lamas - Co-Producer**

Sandrine Brauer and Marie Masmonteil founded the company in 2009. They collaborated with Gilles Jacob, the President of the Cannes Film Festival to produce, *To Each His Own Cinema* (2007), the 60<sup>th</sup> Festival de Cannes anniversary film involving 35 great filmmakers. They produced *Tous au Larzac*, an official selection at Cannes 2011, winning a César for best documentary in 2012, and *Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem*, presented at the Directors' Fortnight in 2014, Israel's Entry for the Oscars, and was a finalist for the Golden Globes in 2015.

### **Magic If Films – Co-Producer**

Founded in 2015, Magic If Films is a brainchild of award winning director Shamas Nawab Siddiqui and the acclaimed actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui. Magic If Films earned a global reputation with its first project *Miyan Kal Aana (Mister Come Tomorrow)*, an Internationally acclaimed short film which screened at the Cannes Film Festival 2015, was featured in 23 International Film Festivals and won 10 awards. The roster includes producing high quality creative work for commercials, feature films, music videos, documentaries and digital and branded content for clients globally.

## MANTO QUOTES

"If you cannot bear my stories, it is because we live in unbearable times."

"Both India and Pakistan have become independent, but their people are still slaves - of prejudice...of religious fanaticism...of inhumanity."

"In short I say: I don't write stories. Stories write me."

"Why would I want to undress a society that is already naked? True, I make no attempt to cover it but that's not my job. My job is to write with a white chalk, so that I can draw attention to the blackness of the board."

"When the pen is not in my hand, I am merely Saadat Hasan. Not Manto."

"Until humans, especially Saadat Hasan Manto has weaknesses, he will continue to look at them through the microscope and show them to others."

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