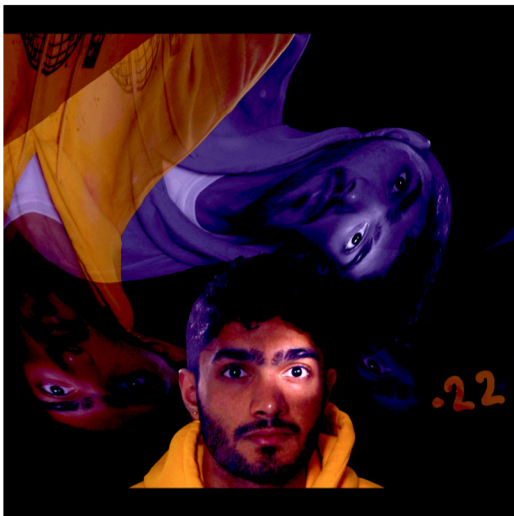




MUSIC



Single: .22
Artist: Adi
Release: Out now

Hip hop has spiralled off into exciting directions and artists are adding new colours with bright song releases like this superb effort. Talented rapper Adi delivers a turbo-charged track that is full of meaning and uses his superb vocals to make it come alive. The lyrically rich track cleverly adds a subtle Indian influence in a cool manner without overpowering a western track framed in an international way. The clever use of samples and deep lyrics will make you want to press rewind. After hearing this free-flowing song, you may want to find out more about this exciting new hip hop star.



Single: Groove
Artist: Avina Shah Ft. Chris Gayle
Release: Out now

British singer Avina Shah has teamed up with big-hitting West Indian batsmen Chris Gayle for this dynamic dance number. The song cleverly combines the powerful vocals of Avina with a surprisingly good rap interlude from the sporting superstar. Various influences are injected into this fast-food number, which rides on top of a catchy beat and will give you an instant musical fix. Groove is best appreciated on a dance floor, but with lockdown there is nothing stopping you from finding this high-energy number, turning up the volume and busting a move.



Single: Tamasha
Artist: Marshall Sehgal
Release: Out now

This mid-tempo Punjabi song is framed in an epic way and is filled with drama. What is essentially a heartbreak song has dramatic music and an emotion-filled vocal delivery from a talented singer you may not be familiar with. The theatrical song will most connect with those who have been let down in love. It will also appeal to those who enjoy story-based song releases. The song deserved a much stronger hook, but that doesn't harm this ambitious Punjabi number too much and that is why it deserves to be added to a playlist. It will likely surprise you.



Album: Khaali Peeli
Artist: Various
Release: Out now

The romantic action comedy has just three tracks, which have been composed by Bollywood hit-making music duo Vishal-Shekhar. The opening song *Duniya Sharma Jaayegi* had to remove Beyonce from the title after accusations of racism, but it makes little difference to a fast-food song with nothing new to offer and wasn't good to begin with. The other two songs *Tehas Nehas* and *Shana Dil* have a similar story in terms of music. They come across as poor copies of much better songs. The songs seem like rejects bigger film productions likely didn't want.



FILM



DOLLY KITTY AUR WOH CHAMAKTE SITARE

Rule-breaking film on taboo subject dares to be different



Starring: Konkona Sen Sharma, Bhumi Pednekar, Amol Parashar, Aamir Bashir, Karan Kundra and Vikrant Massey
Director: Alankrita Shrivastava

HINDI cinema may be open to more subjects than ever before, but there are still some territories that it doesn't explore and female desire is one of them.

This fearless feminist drama, which premiered on Netflix, attempts to go down that uncharted territory. The story revolves around two cousins, who are at different stages in their lives, but are connected by a desire for freedom. Dolly lives with her husband and two children, when her single cousin Kitty arrives from another city. A series of events lead to them going down different paths, which are connected by an inner desire to find meaning and then reuniting.

Although the plotline may sound like a gentle run of the mill story, the latest offering from *Lipstick Under My Burkha* writer-director Alankrita Shrivastava is another rule-breaking film that tackles taboo subjects head on.

There is kissing, sex, openly talking about inner desires, some eye-popping visuals and what can best be described as a real exploration of human relationships. The engaging film offers up plenty of surprises and attempts to explore emotions in a more real way. Although the story is centred on the two lead protagonists, there are plenty of well-etched out characters,

which turn this into a melting pot of parallel storylines.

Great performances from the cast are led admirably by outstanding turns from acclaimed actresses Konkona Sen Sharma and Bhumi Pednekar. Both are superb in their roles and have plenty of powerful dialogues.

Although the well-intentioned film is multi-layered, more could have perhaps been added to make it accessible to a wider audience. Some may also find the film a little too outrageous or experimental, but they will appreciate that it is offering up something new. That is why it deserves to be found. The film dares to be different and succeeds.

BOOK REVIEW

Captivating account offers vivid snapshots of a British landscape



Author: Jini Reddy
Publisher: Bloomsbury

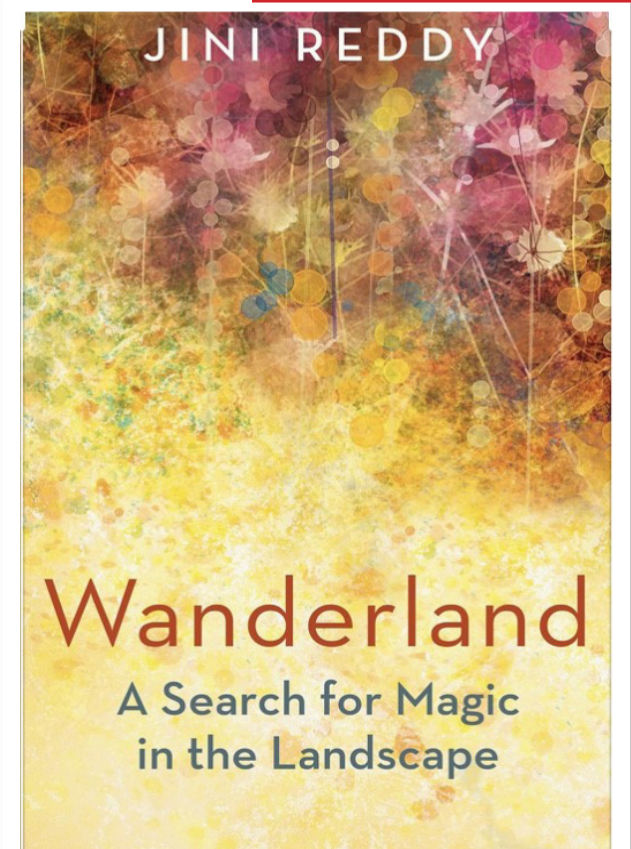
AT A time when there is a heightened interest in nature, walking and time spent outdoors as a balm for the soul, books inviting us to take a closer look at our connection with the natural world are perhaps needed more than ever.

Jini Reddy's refreshing book *Wanderland* is about her search for the magical in Britain's landscape. The book, part memoir, nature and travel writing, takes the reader on a journey around Britain in search of the wild and the mystical.

Reddy begins her journey in the spirit of serendipity - uncovering a Labyrinth in Cornwall, which leads her to a Cornish cliff-top maze. She continues to follow her heart and chance conversations to destinations from Lindisfarne Hastings, Derbyshire and Iona to Glastonbury. En-route to these places she encounters people with diverse spiritual beliefs, including a Shaman in Herefordshire, who inspires her to have a conversation with the land.

Not only is the book about searching for magic in the landscape, it is an inner journey of finding ways to feel at home.

Born in London to Indian parents from South Africa, and



brought up in Canada, Reddy often feels like an outsider, particularly in natural spaces where there are few people of colour.

This sense of not belonging often shows up on Reddy's journey when legends and myths, which connect many people to places, are not a part of her story. And therefore, themes of identity and belonging are central to this book.

Wanderland is an engaging journey and joyful book of charming descriptions. Reddy

has created a fresh and much-needed narrative, which evokes a sense of magic while finding your place in the world. This book is a rare treat offering vivid snapshots of nature and glimpses into her childhood.

This captivating account led to a deserving short-list for the 2020 Wainwright Prize. It is highly recommended for anyone with an interest in travel, spirituality and nature.

Reviews by Asjad Nazir & Mita Mistry