

The World **online.ae**»

Search

Home About Us Register Subscribe Marketing Contact Us

The Cultural Disconnect - Pumping Up Confidence - Investors Wait for the Right Opportunity to Re-enter Their Playing

Current Affairs



Architecture

Arts

Aviation

Banking & Finance

Books

Business

Corporate Affairs

Cover Story

Culture

Economy

Education

Energy

Entertainment

Environment

Films

Health

Hospitality

Human Resources

Humour

Lifestyle

Markets

Media

Opinion

People

Ports & Shipping

Region

Religion

Science & Technology

Society

Transport & Logistics

Travel & Tourism

Links

العلم

Films

Kate Winslet Emerges Among the Big Names

More than a decade after Titanic, and five nominations, the British actress wins her first Oscar

By Gautaman Bhaskaran,

India-based film critic and writer and winner of the Cannes gold medal for consistent excellence in coverage

<http://www.gautamanbhaskaran.com/>



Cinema has had very few actresses of grace and grandeur. Elizabeth Taylor, Ingrid Bergman and Grace Kelly are a few one can easily recollect, and Kate Winslet may well be a new face of this brilliant brigade. Few seemed to notice her in 1997 when as a 22-year-old Winslet played Rose in "Titanic", the survivor who would swim out of the icy Atlantic and live to tell the story of her exhilarating but tragic on-board romance?

The film got the box-office merrily jingling and won 11 Oscars, but none for Best Actress that Winslet had been nominated for. "Titanic" was unlucky for her in another sense: she lost her actor-writer husband, Stephen Tredre, with whom she had a five-year relationship. He died of bone cancer, and she could not attend the movie's premiere.



Though "Titanic" did not quite prove her acting prowess, it opened up immense possibilities and in many ways introduced her to the world beyond Hollywood and British cinema. Critics saw the spark in her even earlier. In 1995, Winslet landed the second leading role of Marianne Dashwood in the adaptation of Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility" though she had auditioned for the small but significant part of Lucy Steele. The film did roaring business, was critically applauded and fetched her nods from the Academy and Golden Globe, belying director Ang Lee's fears about Winslet's suitability for a role that required sheer poise. "Sense and Sensibility" gave her a dash of stardom that "Titanic" consolidated.

After Lee's work, the media began a honeymoon with her, saying that she was refreshingly different from her other Hollywood peers. Winslet was so in a way. For instance, she refused to be obsessed with an hourglass figure. She ate and drank to her heart's content, and found her rounded body lending itself to costume dramas. "Jude" and "Hamlet" were two: critics adored her as Sue Bridehead in the first, based on Thomas Hardy's Victorian novel "Jude the Obscure", where she falls in love with her cousin, and as Ophelia, Hamlet's drowned lover, in the second. Time magazine wrote that Winslet was "perfect, a modernist ahead of her time".

However, as the 1900s were closing, she broke out of the Victorian shackles in Jane Campion's "Holy Smoke". As an Australian girl visiting India as part of a cult, she had to in one scene stand naked and relieve herself in front of actor Harvey Keitel. Later, as young Iris Murdoch in "Iris", she stole the show with one more daring performance that got her yet another Oscar nomination. But, again, not the statuette.

It was only this year that the Oscar came to her in "The Reader", after five nods. As Hanna Schmitz, a former Nazi prison guard, in the movie helmed by Stephen Daldry, she is extraordinary – first as the older lover of a 15-year-old boy and later as a confused woman defending her role in a Nazi atrocity. As she grows old in prison, she fulfils one dream of hers: to read and write. So ashamed is she of her illiterate status that she does not use it as a legitimate reason which could have got her a shorter sentence. We see an incarcerated Hanna being awakened by her new intellectualism that will not, ultimately, let her forgive herself. She is marvellously convincing as she grows from a lustful woman to a mature human being, realising the enormity of her obsession.

Winslet's April Wheeler in "Revolutionary Road" (released in 2008 along with "The Reader"), based on Richard Yates' 1961 novel, also finds herself imprisoned, though not in Hanna's literal sense. A fledgling Bohemian actress trapped in a conservative 1950s American suburb, April finds her plan to relocate in Paris with her husband Frank (essayed by Leonardo DiCaprio) and two children going wrong when he is offered a financially tempting job promotion and she gets accidentally pregnant. When April's dream dies, her disappointment and desperation for a new, uninhibited life in Europe translate into a one-night stand with a neighbour in a car. In the end, April makes a fateful decision in a role enacted with pain and feeling.

Extremely expressive, she dares to be rebelliously different from the others in the glam world: sans makeup in "The Reader", she uses her eyes and much of her face to tell the story of a woman tortured by her inability to enter the world of books. In "Revolutionary Road", she is equally tormented, but this time by her failure as a stage actress in a community that lays down unfair rules for women. Her friends are aghast when she says she will keep the home fire burning in Paris while her husband takes time off to study and find his way about to discover what he actually wants to do.

Indeed a fine actress and now being frequently compared to the likes of Meryl Streep, Winslet was born in 1975 in Reading, England, to parents who were in theatre. Winslet must have caught the bug from them, and though her first foray into the performing world was through the stage, she has little of that hang-up today. She is purely cinematic and splendidly so.

[Edit](#)

No Comments »

No comments yet.

[RSS feed for comments on this post.](#) [TrackBack URL](#)

Leave a comment

Name *

Email *

Website

Submit Comment

Number of Visitors **0014977**

"World View Communications" All rights reserved