

#Homecoming Movie Review: A Delightful Delve Into the Past on a Durga Puja Night



Soumyajit Majumdar's debut directorial, with Sayani Gupta, Hussain Dalal, Plabita Borthakur making up a brilliant ensemble cast, seems like a bestselling page turner with short, crisp scenes.

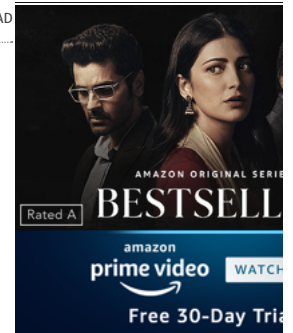
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GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN

#Homecoming, starring Sayani Gupta, Tushar Pandey, Plabita Borthakur and Soham Majumdar, is written and directed by Soumyajit Majumdar.



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#H omecoming

Director: Soumyajit Majumdar

Cast: Sayani Gupta, Tushar Pandey, Hussain Dalal, Plabita Borthakur, Soham Majumdar, Tuhina Das

There is something magical and mystical about Kolkata, especially for one like me who grew up there, when Job Charnock's famous midday halt became Calcutta, when Park Street was the most happening place and when New Market was one of the first malls in India. It is a city that evokes sheer joy and heartrending nostalgia, a metropolis that created men like BC Roy, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Ritwik Ghatak and Satyajit Ray. It grows on you and makes a home in the very core of your heart. That is Kolkata, where several friends meet after seven long years in Soumyajit Majumdar's debut feature #Homecoming.

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The occasion is Durga Puja – the festival that is sublimely religious as it is delightfully joyful – when women

dress in their newest best, when the innumerable pandals become a happy meeting ground for hearts filled with love. That is Durga Puja, when the elderly reminisce about the exciting times that Kolkata offered with its carefree culture.

Crafted superbly, the film on SonyLiv is an exciting watch – full of life, chatter, music and dance, and all these converge on Navami night, the ninth day of Durga Puja or Dussehra. The friends pick an old bungalow – which used to double up as their playground for passionate plays – for a reunion of their theatre group, Amra (We). It was disbanded and the building soon to be turned into a heritage hotel by the River Ganges – a telling comment on how we trample upon and destroy our history and culture.

Penned with feeling by the director himself, who had his project run through the Film Bazaar, organised by the National Film Development Corporation of India at Goa, and smartly edited by Bodhaditya Banerjee, #Homecoming seems like a bestselling page turner with short, crisp scenes that add up to a very comfortable runtime of 90 minutes.

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There may not be much of a plot here, but little incidents, which are narrated in flashbacks that seamlessly fit into the present, are engaging. Like Godot (played with subtle finesse by Soham Majumdar), who had drifted away from Amra (after it closed down) and Kolkata to find his career in San Francisco, but flies down to the Durga Puja after a mail from home makes him emotional and longing. When asked about life abroad, he looks disappointed and says that it is routine, nowhere as exhilarating as his time in Kolkata, especially with Amra. He is in the city primarily to attend the reunion.

We are then introduced to Sri, a film actress essayed by Sayani Gupta (whose performance in Article 15 and Shameless was compelling), and we see her talking to a friend outside the bungalow – which is all lit up and breathes an air of festivity. Sri says that she got a script whose director told her that she would have to do three kissing scenes and one in bed. When asked about the remuneration, he told her that his was a small budget work...

And her eyes fall on Imroze (Hussain Dalal); the two had an intense affair but broke up before tying the knot. At the reunion, he gets into what used to be the group's green room with a girl and is surprised to see Sri. "You chose this room," she charges. "You chose this, you came here first," he retorts. But this used to be our secret, our hideout," she rues, unleashing a box of memories, romantic memories. "For our relationship to continue, it

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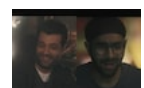
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Nargis (Plabita Borthakur, remember her in Lipstick Under My Burkha?) says that ever since she came to Kolkata from Delhi, she has been stuffing herself with a mind-boggling variety of food – another plus point about the city, where people just love to eat and indulge in "adda". I do not think that there is any other place in the world where "adda" is such an integral part of everyday life. And when she meets Godot, they remember their first meeting when she breaks into his hostel room all drunk, and tells him that she is a love child. "I told you," she tells him at the reunion, "if we ever meet again it would be in Kolkata... would this have been a surprise if I had been on Facebook or Instagram..." she smiles.

A great ensemble cast whose performances are uniformly satisfying. A Durga Puja that mixes and mingles with the Amra gathering. Easy on the eye and imaginatively photographed by Maharani, who captures the myriad moods and the scintillating colours of the evening. And pepped up with some melodious songs (music by Sameer Rahat and Neil Mukherjee) – both in Hindi and Bengali.

#Homecoming is an honest attempt to walk down memory lane with men and women trying to relive their younger days on and off the Amra stage, trying to relive their first affairs, the breakups, the heartache – all acted out with natural ease.

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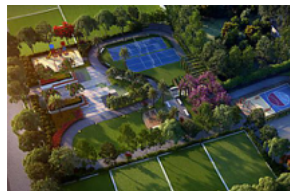


GAUTAMAN BHASKARAN *Gautaman Bhaskaran is a movie critic, commentator and an author, who penned the first ever biography of Adoor Gopalakrishnan, and has been covering ma...* [Read More](#)

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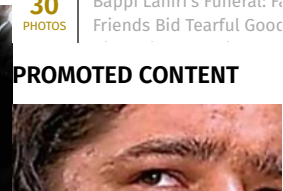
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