

# Time Out

July 22 1998



## 'Dance of the Wind'

Renoir

Though extremely beautiful in terms of its lustrous, burnished visuals and its classical Indian music, British-based director Rajan Khosa's first feature never opts for a picture-postcard view of life in contemporary Delhi. Indeed, even as it asserts the importance of age-old tradition, it also insists on the need to remain aware of, and responsive to, changes around us. It centres on an acclaimed singer, Pallavi (Kitu Gidwani), literally unable to perform, both privately and in public, following the death of her mother Karuni Devi (Kapila Vatsyayan), who has also been her demanding musical guru; the sudden, shocking loss affects not only Pallavi's blossoming career but her relationship with her husband and students. Only a small, silver-voiced beggar-girl, Tara (Roshan Bano), who appears, as if by destiny, in Karuni's garden at the moment of her death, offers a glimmer of hope...

Lyrical, languorous and meditative it may be, but Khosa's prize-winning film is not simply an exquisite art-movie: it shows things seldom depicted in Indian cinema (Pallavi with her husband in bed, for example, or vomiting in the loo), and firmly contextualises her life – steeped in art, tradition and taste – within a world that also has room for poverty, injustice and bhangra. It's a deceptively simple piece of work, as elegant, sensuous and resonant as the lovely sounds heard throughout, and concerned to weigh the value of artistic integrity against the cost of its achievement. How one responds to the movie's more mystical moments may depend on one's culture and faith, but Gidwani's performance, Piyush Shah's fluid, stately camerawork and Shubha Mudgal's haunting music provide a real feast for the eyes and ears. *Geoff Andrew*

## REVIEW

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