

**The Department of English
University of Delhi**

invites you to a talk on

Film Musicals Around the World: Towards a Critical Canon

by

Dr. Harald Pittel, Potsdam University, Germany

Recent comparative studies refer to “film musicals” as an umbrella term for all kinds of cinematic musical traditions. Unlike earlier uses of the word denoting a specific Hollywood tradition and (mostly European) transformations, “film musicals” in the more recent sense also subsumes examples from the Middle East, Latin America and Asia, with a special focus on Indian cinema’s long and vibrant musical traditions.

It is hence inviting to deploy the term “film musicals” in critical fashion, as a ‘world literature’ of related cinematic forms, apt to bring out the complex networks of cross-cultural influence and indebtedness. There seems to be a specific tension in musical forms as they seem to have, on the one hand, a special aptness for dramatizing political events (such as the ecstatic bursting-into-song as a moment of interruption, or more generally, the celebration of community spirit in group dance routines) but, on the other, often crystallize into predictable forms making them opium for the people rather than politically inspiring. A canon of a world literature of musical forms should therefore include films that resist this ossifying tendency.

The lecture will argue that it is precisely by innovations in form vis-à-vis generic expectations that the critical and political dimension in musicals can be realized successfully. Examples shown will be mostly from US-American and European historical contexts.

Date: 01 November, 2018

Time: 2:00 pm

Venue: Room no. 60, Department of English, University of Delhi

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Dr. Harald Pittel studied English and German Literature, Philosophy and History at RWTH Aachen University, Newcastle University and the University of Potsdam. He was a teaching assistant at Potsdam's Department for English and American Studies from 2011-17. His doctoral thesis was titled "Romance and Irony - Oscar Wilde and the Political". His research interests include propaganda, genre theories and materialist theories of culture.