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**A ZEITGEIST FILMS RELEASE
in association with KINO LORBER**

THE DOCTOR FROM INDIA

A film by Jeremy Frindel

SYNOPSIS

THE DOCTOR FROM INDIA is a meditative and immersive portrait of the life and work of Dr. Vasant Lad, the holistic health pioneer who first brought the ancient medical practice of Ayurveda from India to the west in the late 1970s. Integrating his gifts as both a healer and a mystic, Dr. Lad has dedicated his life to sharing what is considered the oldest healthcare system on earth in the complex medical landscape of the United States. This is the beautiful and inspiring story of a man who has for decades been quietly at the center of a revolutionary movement to change the way we care for our bodies and our spirits. Directed by Jeremy Frindel (*One Track Heart: The Story of Krishna Das*) with an elegant musical score by Rachel Grimes, and featuring Deepak Chopra, Robert Svoboda, David Frawley, and Claudia Welch.

THE BRIEFEST AYURVEDA OVERVIEW

adapted from the writings of DR. VASANT LAD

Ayurveda is considered by many scholars to be the oldest healing science. In Sanskrit, Ayurveda means “The Science of Life.” Ayurvedic knowledge originated in India more than 5,000 years ago and is often called the “Mother of All Healing.” It stems from the ancient Vedic culture and was taught for many thousands of years in an oral tradition from accomplished masters to their disciples. Some of this knowledge was set to print a few thousand years ago, but much of it is inaccessible.

Ayurveda is the art of daily living in harmony with the laws of nature. The aims and objectives of this science are to maintain the health of a healthy person and to heal the disease of an unhealthy person. Both prevention (maintenance of good health) and healing are carried out by entirely natural means. According to Ayurveda, health is a state of balance among the body’s three fundamental energies, or doshas. Vata – quality of movement, pitta – quality of transformation, and kapha – building block materials. And an equally vital balance among body, mind and consciousness.

We all have a unique constitution, our genetic makeup, which Ayurveda refers to as our prakriti, that does not change throughout life. It is our own unique pattern of energy, our combination of physical, mental and emotional characteristics and predispositions. Though the underlying structure of our prakriti remains a fixed reality, our home base, or essential individuality, it is constantly bombarded by numerous forces. Changes in age and in our external environment, our endlessly shifting thoughts, feelings and emotions, and the quality and quantity of the food we eat continuously affect us. Unhealthy diet, excess stress, insufficient rest or exercise, and repressed emotions all disturb our doshic balance.

As the internal and external conditions of our lives change, if we are going to remain healthy we need to constantly adjust in order to maintain equilibrium. Some of this adjustment takes place automatically due to the beautiful wisdom and intelligence with which our bodies have been designed. But much demands conscious choice.

To maintain health and balance, we have to juggle with the three doshas, taking action to increase or decrease vata, pitta, or kapha as conditions demand. This requires moment-to-moment awareness. Thus healing – healthy, balanced, conscious living in the fullness of the present moment – is really a way of life. Ayurveda is not a passive therapy but rather asks each individual to take responsibility for his or her own daily living. Through our diet, our relationships, our job, our numerous responsibilities and our daily life as a whole, we can take simple actions for prevention, self-healing, wholeness, and growth towards fulfillment.

For more info: <https://www.ayurveda.com/resources/articles/ayurveda-a-brief-introduction-and-guide>

FEATURED CAST BIOGRAPHIES

VASANT LAD is considered one of the preeminent Ayurvedic practitioners and teachers in the world. In 1984, he founded the Ayurvedic Institute in New Mexico, the first Ayurveda school in the US. He has written numerous books, including *Ayurveda: The Science of Self Healing* considered a classic in the field and one of the most widely read books on Ayurveda. He is currently based in both Albuquerque, New Mexico and Pune, India.

DEEPAK CHOPRA is a world-renowned pioneer in integrative medicine and personal transformation. He is board certified in internal medicine, endocrinology, and metabolism. He is the author of more than 85 books translated into over 43 languages, including numerous *New York Times* bestsellers.

ROBERT SVOBODA is the first Westerner ever to graduate from a college of Ayurveda and be licensed to practice Ayurveda in India. During and after his formal Ayurvedic training he was tutored in Ayurveda, Yoga, Jyotish, Tantra and other forms of classical Indian lore by his mentor, the Aghori Vimalananda. He is the author of twelve books including *Prakriti: Your Ayurvedic Constitution* and the Aghora series, which discusses his experiences with his mentor during the years 1975 – 1983.

DAVID FRAWLEY is an American Hindu teacher and author, who has written more than thirty books on topics such as the Vedas, Hinduism, Yoga, Ayurveda and Vedic astrology, published both in India, the United States and around the world.

CLAUDIA WELCH is a Doctor of Oriental Medicine, an Ayurvedic practitioner and international speaker and author. She explores how ideas in Eastern medicine apply to women's health, and today's reality in general.

FILMMAKERS BIOGRAPHIES

JEREMY FRINDEL (Director/Producer/Editor) is the founder of [Substratum Films](#), specializing in cinematic portraiture exploring the resilience and majesty of the human spirit. In 2013 Jeremy released his first feature film, [One Track Heart: The Story of Krishna Das](#). Distributed by Zeitgeist Films, the film screened theatrically across the US, and won the Best Documentary prize at the Maui, Dharamsala and Gold Coast Film Festivals among others. Jeremy is in post-production now on his next project *Spacefox*, a feature documentary following the reinvention of Marty Friedman from lead guitarist in Megadeth to one of the most famous TV comedians in Japan. *The Doctor From India* is his second feature release.

JWJ FERGUSON (Director of Photography) based in NYC, was named “Louisiana Filmmaker of the Year” in 2008 by the New Orleans Film Festival, and now has lensed over fifty films. The films he has photographed have premiered at prestigious festivals (Mill Valley, Salento International, Newport Beach, Cannes) and cultural institutions (The Whitney, MOMA, Viennale, Smithsonian). They have won numerous awards and grants (Tiffany, Jerome, IFP, TFI).

RACHEL GRIMES (Composer) is a pianist, composer, and arranger based in Kentucky. Heralded “one of American independent music’s few truly inspired technicians” by WIRE magazine she is widely known for her role in the groundbreaking chamber ensemble Rachel’s, (six albums on Quarterstick/Touch and Go). She has since toured worldwide as a solo pianist, and as a collaborator with various artists. Her work has been performed by ensembles such as the Louisville Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, A Far Cry, Longleash, Portland Cello Project, Amsterdam Sinfonietta Trio, Dublin Guitar Quartet, Borusan Quartet and Önder sisters. Releases include *Through the Sparkle* (with astrid on Gizeh Records 2017), *The Clearing* (Temporary Residence), *Book of Leaves*, *Marion County 1938*, and *Compound Leaves*. She is also a member of Louisville band King's Daughters & Sons (Chemikal Underground). She scores for film and multi-media installations and has licensed music to numerous film and TV works internationally. Her latest release is the soundtrack album to THE DOCTOR FROM INDIA and information about that can be found at the end of this press kit.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I completed my first film *One Track Heart: The Story of Krishna Das*, I was quite certain that I did not want my next project to have anything to do with eastern spirituality. I didn't want to become known as the yoga movie guy. I was developing a political film. I started shooting a music doc about the 80's band Foreigner. I was working on a fiction script. But then I met Dr. Lad and that all got messed up. I met him and was captivated, the idea for a film floated into conversation, and within a couple of months I had initial funding and was on a plane to India with my camera.

One of the most exciting things for me in setting off on a new project is the discovery and immersion into a world. It was highly intriguing for me to explore the synthesis of deep listening and intuition with medical care. Very quickly it became clear that this could not be a film that focused too heavily on Ayurveda though. It was far too vast and would be impossible. What was most exciting to me was the quality of presence that Dr. Lad brought to his patients and students. The way he transformed a room and opened people's hearts, and the healing power within that. It felt to me that he embodied what I understood to be the spirit of Ayurveda, and that if somehow the film could bring people into that space and feeling in themselves, they would understand the Ayurveda that Dr. Lad has devoted his life to sharing.

Figuring out how to go about creating the experience was a process of experimentation. It was a delicate balancing act between focusing on the narrative arc of his life and work, deciding which characters to include to tell that story, and weaving that with the more intimate verité footage of him moving through his world with patients and students. There were two especially key collaborators in the process of crafting this: cinematographer Jimmy Ferguson and composer Rachel Grimes.

Jimmy and I worked closely together developing an approach to filming Dr. Lad in mostly small, highly intimate environments. We used a 35mm lens, very close up, hand held, trying not to get tangled in and interfere with Dr. Lad as he worked with his patients and students, but bringing the audience as close as we could to these delicate interactions. We had pretty much full access to Dr. Lad and followed him closely for weeks at a time over a few trips to India, to Albuquerque, in his home, clinics, schools and throughout his travels.

The other major piece was the music. When editing, the first thing I do is looking to music to help create the atmosphere and bring out the emotional timbre I'm working to build. The obvious answer to the music for this would probably have been sitars and

tablas, which I knew was not the direction I wanted to go. I wanted the music to feel like it was emerging from the emotional body and world of Dr. Lad, not from a cultural place. When Rachel Grimes agreed to compose the score, I knew she was going to elevate the film magically. Her intuitive understanding of the natural world that Dr. Lad moves from, and deep musical sensitivity, helped weave many of the subtler elements of the film together and create an immersive, cohesive experience. There is perhaps an unusual amount of music for a documentary film, over 2/3 of the film has music, which I hope creates an almost balletic feel.

There is a Gaelic term *anam cara* which means “soul friend.” A friend for whom the connection on the personal level is less important than connection at the soul level. A connection that is deeper than the ebb and flow of personality and worldly successes and failures. In the years of filming with Dr. Lad I found that he doesn’t involve himself very much in the dramas and details of the lives of his students, patients and friends. It feels like he looks to the core of the people around him and connects there. In the film, Len Blank tells the story of meeting Dr. Lad for the first time, and Dr. Lad touching him on the cheek and telling him “you’re a beautiful person.” And the profound affect that moment had on his life. My hope with the film is that for 90 minutes the audience is transported into Dr. Lad’s life and world, feels that touch on the cheek, and walks away with a new friend.

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A film by Jeremy Frindel

Starring

Dr. Vasant Lad
Deepak Chopra
Robert Svoboda
David Frawley
Claudia Welch

Directed and Edited by
Jeremy Frindel

Score composed by
Rachel Grimes

Cinematography
Jimmy Ferguson

Associate Producers
Wynn Werner
Keshari Mohanty Das

Producers
Sartaj Alag
Kevin Casey
Jeremy Frindel
Douglas Neal

Executive Producers
Mike Dhaliwal
Annette Dyvi
Sapna Punjabi-Gupta

A Substratum Films production

USA - 2018 - 89 mins - Color - DCP and Blu-ray

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