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Film on Prabhat Film Company founder V G Damle

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Pune: The cinematic contributions of Vishnupant Govind Damle, co-founder of the iconic Prabhat Film Company in Pune, will now be offered as a docu-drama at major film festivals.

Titled 'Vishnupant Damle: The Unsung Hero of Talkies,' the hour-long docu-drama in Marathi has been directed by Virendra Valsangkar. It was screened at the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) on Tuesday.

"The objective of the project, being worked upon for the last three years, is to highlight V G Damle's contribution to films and to also have an award instituted in his name. We will send a proposal to this effect to the I&B Ministry," said Damle's grandson Anil.

The docu-drama traces Damle's journey starting as a young artiste who steadily went on to learn and master art direction, sound recording and film direction under able hands, and the film projects he handled with other company co-founders like S Fatehlal. It also throws light on some of the most important films he did that leveraged Indian cinema, for instance, 'Sant Tukaram' and 'Sant Dnyaneshwar,' among others. The Prabhat Film Company itself stood on the present-day premises of the FTII.

"Research on this project was on for the last three years. We've used pictures, information and other data from various sources. It took us this entire year to shoot and complete the film. This project consciously focuses on his career, his creative contributions and

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his life. The story of Prabhat is told simultaneously," said Valsangkar, who has edited Marathi films like 'Devrai' and 'Ha Bharat Majha.' "We also sought guidance from filmmakers Sumitra Bhavne and Sunil Sukhtankar," he added.

The film, shot on a high definition camera for a budget of around Rs 10 lakh, is a Damle family initiative. "We have financed the film. The FTII provided us infrastructure," said Anil Damle.

The film will be screened on December 23 at the Asian Film Festival in Kolhapur and at the Pune International Film Festival (PIFF) scheduled early next year.

"The film's censor certificate will arrive within a week. We will start sending it to other film festivals as well. Next year, we are planning to bring out the film's CDs and DVDs in the market," Damle said.

A book on V G Damle is also on cards. "The book will be a semi-biographical, tracing his life journey and career. It will be ready next year," said Anil Damle.

