

a quarterly Magazine

Baylon Fonseca

on Sound Design of

Dil Dhadakne Do

Agneya Singh

on his Debut Film

M CREAM

NSD Productions

Interview with Chittaranjan Tripathy &

Dinesh Khanna

DOP

Sandeep Patil

On Shooting Sardaar Ji 2

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On Designing Puppets For Haider

Aseem Mishra

On Shooting Bajrangi Bhaijaan & His Other Films

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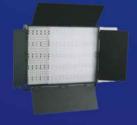
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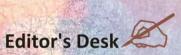
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Dear Friends,

With each passing issue, we try to make this magazine more content oriented. Until now, we have included many sections to engage variety of fields in order to be able to reach the wider audience. From next issue, we are focusing the magazine towards the aspects of cinematography and 25% of the content will be on the rest of film making aspects like editing sound, art direction. This decision was prompted by the demands of wonderful works happening in various parts of our nation namely Hyderabad, Kerala, Kolkata, Chennai etc.

A whole range of treasure of experiences lies with master cinematographers who have been working for more than past three decades. Their efforts need to be documented at all costs. We are also keen to start a series on the great cinematographer late Ashok Mehta who gave unique dimension to the art of Indian cinematography.

There is also the plan to make this magazine known widely. We are seriously working towards the possibility of attending various international exhibitions as India is very wide market of selling the equipment /products in India and they don't have distributors. Since India has all kind of film makers working in the budget which range from high to low, economical quality products has a great scope in India to be sold. In the long run we are keen that the magazine should also initiate "cinematography art" award to felicitate the cinematography work done in all genre in various languages. We are looking forward to he day soon to happen.

Cheers!!

Naresh Sharma

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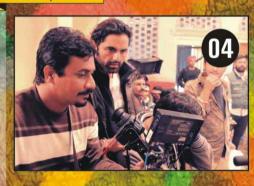
On his Experience as DOP

Shanker Raman

His experience of Shooting Frozen



Sandeep Patil



His experience of Shooting Sardaar

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Product Overview



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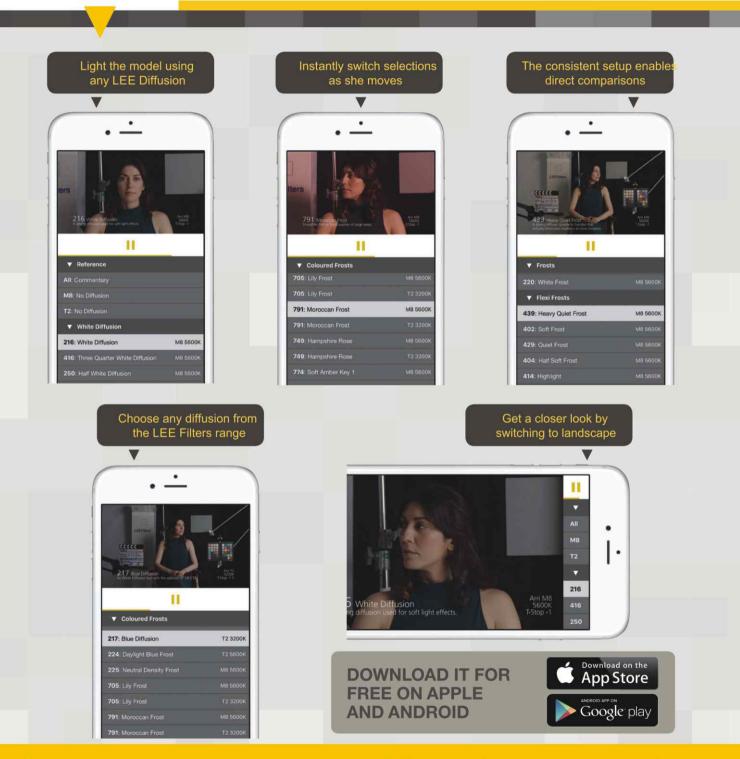


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Tell us about your background Sandeep, how did you come to take up cinematography as your profession?

To start with, I have done my BFA, from Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai and post graduation in Cinematography from FTII, Pune. This helped me a lot. During JJ days, we studied paintings, sculptures and other art forms over the period of four years, which eventually helps a lot in understanding colors and lighting too. During that period we used to attend many advertising festivals which used to showcase advertising films made worldwide. Comparing those advertisements with Indian advertisements was quite a tough thought process for me personally. Indian advertisements never appealed to me. I wasn't happy enough to struggle in advertising world. Hence, I decided to do something else. Eventually, I ended up joining FTII. Those days were the golden days of my life, watching world cinema, discussing them with knowledgeable



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I never liked Red epic's color rendition. While grading apparently that scene became the most difficult one to grade. Red is always too saturated in terms of primary colors which one has to desaturate during final grade.

"

people and faculty, everything helped to become a better filmmaker. It also helped to gain a better understanding about life. For this reason, films are always on priority list.

What is your approach for lighting for any scene or shot and when you listen to a script for a film or advertisement for that matter? How do you design the lighting first?

For me it is really difficult to differentiate between any specific shot taken from a scene. Many scenes give rise to a story on screen for which you need a good script. Hence, firstly thoroughly reading a script is most important factor. As a cinematographer



director's vision. For that understanding the script is the most crucial part. Then come several discussions with the director and the core crew. This process remains same for both films and advertisements. The script describes the characters, ambiance, feel and locations and even the target audience. This is the reason why the script and the discussions with the director make you have clear ideas about the lighting approach. Personally, I do believe that according to the scene the shot division should be interesting, lighting is always the last thing for me. Once you design your camera movements interestingly then even simple lighting works. Though it varies from script to script. For "Sardarji 2" Rohit Jugraj and I, we were working together for the first time, though I know him from many years. Rohit himself is a trained filmmaker and is very clear about the process of making and what he wants. He has already proved himself over the years. Thus, it was a challenge for me to prove myself. Before going ahead with the discussions with him, I watched all his previous works just to understand his working style. When I met him, he gave me more challenges by saying, "Don't follow my previous work, we have to achieve something more and different from that." The result was that many discussions and script reading sessions were organized. We had ample time to discuss; we did some very interesting shot breakdowns on paper. We discussed many things over lighting also. This process helped me a lot to plan things. And the output is guite satisfactory. I feel that sometimes even if you don't get the time for lighting, the shot will work if it is designed properly. Overall it is misc-enscene and the choreography of a scene. Framing or lensing for a shot depends on the mood of the scene. Actually camera position decides everything. In this space you can place your camera anywhere and it is the chosen specific camera position which changes everything. Then lighting comes and even if you use minimum lighting then also it works. I have shot 14 features till now in different languages and I am lucky enough that 10 of the films were shot on 35mm negative. All this work on film and the metering we used to do helped a lot to

it's my job to give justice to the film

understand the lighting ratios. The eye itself can decide the ratios. Generally, you know whenever one goes to the set everyday there is you know fill light etc. certain elements of the composition. In this way, one draws inspiration of doing the same thing again and again but in a different way if possible. Even if technically the shot looks same, it is never the same in my vision. The character, the mood, the surrounding and the story change with every shot which itself gives the energy to create something different in every given situation. It is never monotonous for me.

How do you go about it in terms of night outdoor. Do you like to boost up the existing level or you? How you go about in the night lighting situation in an outdoor location?

A night exterior is always challenging to light. It is as if one has to create that natural ambience without overdoing the lighting where shadows play an important role. I remember during the discussions of 'Sardarji 2' Rohit and I were discussing about Punjab night lighting. I was excited about the winter nights in Punjab but Rohit was little reluctant about nights. He informed me that in Punjab nights are very dark. I didn't get what he was trying to say but I promised him that I will give him one night exterior scene at least in a way he wants. And that scene turned out to be my favorite scene from the film. It's a scene where Diljit is in big trouble, he has to arrange huge amount to save his village. He is in deep thoughts sitting in his house. Where his past comes alive in front of his eyes. He sees his childhood and remembers his father's suicide. This scene is a mix of past and present. The treatment and choreography of this scene is very poetic. In this scene only Diljit goes on the rooftop where we see his farms surrounding his house. Lighting up this scene was a very challenging task for me. We managed the interiors but the main thing was exterior. We couldn't get proper rostrums in Chandigarh so my gaffer suggested the use of industrial cranes. It worked really well, budget wise also. We got stuck to the same plan even for the vast songs. Although it became a big task for production to manage but in the end they managed everything well.





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Today there are a variety of lights in terms of not the baby, multi 10, HMIs but also there are power lights. There is kino flow also there are some other sort of lights. In such a scenario, how do you go about it choosing the lights for different scenes?

Nowadays it is very easy for a cinematographer to light as so many different lights are available for different situations. The base sensitivity of the camera sensors also helps a lot. In my personal point of view, the tungsten lights have the best quality, the texture and the richness. Although I do use par lights depending on the situation as the quality can be managed by various filtrations and diffusions available. The best part is addition of various small lights and LED's which are mostly battery operated. These lights really solve

problems while shooting vehicle interiors, smaller spaces like lifts and even it helps in difficult locations where you mainly work with available lights in nights.

In the market one can find Red, Alexa, and Canon and all other 4k resolution cameras. How do you choose a particular model if the budget permit to choose any camera, what do you



choose and why?

Every camera has its own advantages and disadvantages but mainly the script and the locations demands a specific camera. If you are asking about my personal choice then Sony F65 and Arri Alexa XT are my favorites. F 65 is a bit bulky and it can be used where one has done rigorous planning and have time to shoot it calmly. The camera has great sensor and color depth and I feel it is more closer to the film. I would say that even Arri Alexa XT is a brilliant camera giving very natural results.

While shooting in Australia for "Sardaarji 2" some technical problems happened with my Arri camera which had to be sent for servicing and I ended shooting one entire scene on Red epic. I never liked Red epic's color rendition but I didn't have any option. While grading apparently that scene became the most difficult one to grade. Red is always too saturated in terms of primary colors which one has to desaturate during final grade. I love canon DSLR's as they have best advantages in difficult situations and limited budget. I have shot and produced an Assamese film titled "Bokul" which I have shot entirely on Canon 5D Mark 3 and the output on big screen is just superb.

What are the possibility for something to go wrong in post production in terms of grading and seeing final post production. It may not be the same what you finally graded. Did you encounter something like that?

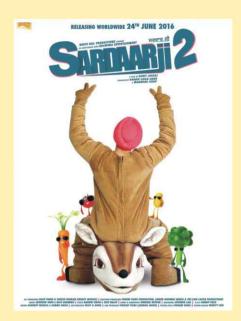
Yes. It does happen sometimes. You have to choose your lab correctly. Many small setups are emerging with grading facilities which comes out to be a cheaper proposition. But one should be careful as these setups are careless about the upgrades in technology and the final output. With just one wrong LUT, everything goes haywire. Apart from these factors, heavy compressions applied for the distribution, the projectors and screens in different theatres add to the problems. Many cinema halls don't even use the correct brightness level of the projector lamp just to save few hours. There are even some cinemas which don't change silver screens which are mainly meant for 3D projection which affects normally projected images.

According to you what is the solution?

I think technically labs should be up to date as work flows are changing in every few days. They have to adopt new technologies and they have to be at par otherwise it's very difficult to get the desired output. The cinemas should even monitor their systems properly with correct luminance levels and correct screens.

Why do people waste so much of money in terms of acquiring the high resolution footage then wasting time in dumping and wasting time in preproduction and rendering if the final output is going to be 2k?

It's in trend now. I don't find any



point doing that. We have to select our camera intelligently keeping in mind the workflow. There is no point in rendering heavier files by shooting on 8k camera just for the sake of it. Though it's true that these images help when you are in the process of making a film which involves heavy VFX work. Hence, depending on the requirement we should chose the format intelligently. The best advantage of digital technology is that a real passionate film maker can make his film easily without having heavy budget. But with digital we are losing on some important aspects of making, such as clarity of thoughts and seriousness. Due to the lack of clear vision we mostly end up shooting much more than required, which ends up having less time to execute main shots which are getting used in the final edit. At the end of the day if you calculate it is almost 30 percent of the excess shoot. It is a big loss (financially too) due to digital technology. I think we all should work towards the seriousness of making as we used to follow in Celluloid days. Else digital is a blessing in one sense for real passionate film makers.

Is there anything specific you want to tell about the film Sardaar ji-2?

I am really thankful to Rohit and White Hill production for giving me a chance to work with them. This film is really special to me due to many reasons. One of them is getting a chance to work with the talented actor Diljit Dosanjh, who is really a star performer.

Personally, I had a great time behind camera. The film has already been announced a blockbuster. For this reason people are liking whatever we have achieved. I am very glad about it. I am very much thankful to my colorist Xavier (Prime Focus) and Ashirwad for helping me in achieving my vision on screen and my entire team my chief Siddharth and Gaffer Sajid. The entire team helped to achieve it. The biggest challenge of this film was shooting in Australia. Though we shot the film in January (Summer) we faced every possible season change every day. We shot almost 80 percent outdoors. It was a nightmare to maintain the lighting continuity. It is due to costly manpower what I got was a crew of 5 persons, 3 light boys and 2 grip guys. It was really difficult to achieve whatever I wanted with just 5 persons in those drastic weather changes. Due to drastic variations and lack of time I decided to shoot most of the important scenes on handheld as the Steadycam was time consuming and costing much more. This decision worked for us. Finally, we shot whatever we have planned for without spilling over. Ultimately what matters is that the film should work for the target audience and "Sardaarji 2" is a big hit already, which is something what makes us smile proudly. I want to share one thing with aspiring cinematographers, "To break the rules, you should know the rules first". Make your basics clear, work hard. There is no shortcut to hard work. If you have it in you, one day it will get recognized. Any art form is a form where you can just learn till the end of your life. So keep learning.





In a short span of time, Aseem Mishra has created a niche for himself in the world of Indian cinematography. His canon of work includes varieties of genres. He has collaborated with directors like Maneesh Sharma on the "Band Baja Barat", Milan Luthria on "Upon a Time in Mumbai", Arbaaz Khan on "Dabang-2", Ali Abbas Zafar on "Gunday", Tigmanshu Dhulia on "Paan Singh Tomar".

He is well known for long term collaboration with his colleague from MCRC Jamia, Director Kabir Khan and has given blockbusters like "Bajrangi Bhaijaan". In this interview NARESH SHARMA, Editor, Cinematography Art, finds out his vision and approach towards lighting.

You have worked for both Feature Films and Documentaries. Which is more challenging for you as a DOP and why?

Well if you ask me honestly, I love my job. I don't consider anything challenging or difficult. Before I started shooting feature length films, I used to shoot a lot of documentary films. In fact I started my career as a news cameraman for television. I used to shoot for BBC and Star Plus way back in 1993. After that I started shooting documentaries for TV channels and independent producers. The interesting part in shooting documentaries is that you don't have any assistants. At least I didn't have any. I used to carry my own equipment and pull my own focus! There was no concept of a focus puller. Whereas in films it's a completely different scene. One has focus pullers, gaffers, rigs team etc.

Shooting documentaries gave me a lot of on location experience. It exposed me to shooting in difficult terrains, deserts, snow, mountains, ocean, from minus twenty degrees centigrade to forty- seven degrees centigrade! From problems such as water crisis in India to

war in Lebanon and Kosovo. Every day it's a different location and different lighting situation. It is a different kind of experience. One is thinking about compositions even while shooting a war! Your mind is also constantly thinking about mood of the documentary film. It has also taught me in a very big way how to be quick with the camera, lighting and the whole situation. It exposed me to different people and cultures all around the world and in India!

Shooting documentaries helped me a lot in understanding live locations and situations. I still use a lot of techniques used in documentary filming in my feature films. In fact there are so many situations which are so similar. For example the Syria war sequence in "Phantom" has come directly from my documentary experience! It was totally effortless for me. Even working with more than one camera comes from my experience of working on Mastermind India for BBC or India's Child genius for Star world. These were multi camera shows where as many as eight cameras were used. Hence, while currently shooting action sequences in feature films I can easily do the blocking without

any problem. I also shot fictions for television like 'Bhanwar' for Sony channel. We experimented a lot with whatever we had learnt from our film school. I used source light from a candle to lantern to Chinese lanterns to natural light to everything that was available! Everything that I know today is through experiments and trial and error method! I love experimenting with the medium... with the format. It gives me a different kind of joy! I don't know if it's a good thing or a bad thing that I had never assisted any cinematographer before I became a DOP myself. May be it's a blessing in disguise!

What is your approach for lighting any scene shot and how it differs from an ad film to a feature film?

My lighting approach for any particular scene or shot is very simple. I strongly believe in source lighting. My source can come from either a window a door or a lamp or a street light. I truly and firmly believe in source lighting. There are times when locations don't permit a natural source. In that case, I create a source for the scene and I work around that source. To me this approach works pretty well in ad films too. Yes, in



ad films we tend to glamorize the subject and the object little more than the feature films. This is because there is very little time to make the point clear! Hence one thinks on a micro level. Everything you look through the magnifying glass! But seriously it depends on the mood of the scene. I have shot so many commercials where the situations were very real. The lighting approach was also real. If you are shooting a hair commercial or any beauty product commercials then your lighting approach is little different. You are more careful about the glamour part and put a lot more stress on it. But more or less the script and the scene in the script will dictate your lighting approach.

How do you prepare your cinematography scheme while working for any film?

Well, as far as I am concerned I go through the script thoroughly. I read it again and again. After that I sit with the director and try and have a detailed discussion on how he is seeing the film. Are we on the same page? If the answer is yes then I start making my notes on the scenes. I try and initiate discussions on important scenes. The way the director is seeing a particular scene. Then I work on the look and the lighting design for the entire film. Then comes the shot breakdown and lensing for the film. After doing all this, I sit with my director and discuss the shot breakdown and if there are any special equipment required for the scene. After this I sit with my first assistant Mr. Anil Gaikwad and take him through the full script and the shot breakdown. We sit together and again do a proper light design scene by scene. I also try and meet my colorist and tell him about my lighting approach for the film. On the day of the shoot, I sit with the director one last time and block the scene according to the location and placement of the characters. Before each scene we go back to our basic shot breakdown list and then improvise according to the location.

What kind of challenges have you encountered while shooting various feature films? Please elaborate a few instances from director Kabir Khan's film like Bajrangi Bhaijaan?

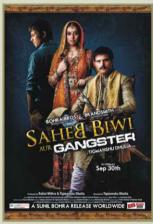
As I said before I don't consider them as challenges. I treat them as different interesting situations. Bajrangi Bhaijaan was a fairly simple film to shoot. I had a long discussion with director Kabir Khan about the look of the film and we decided that the treatment should also be simple since the story is simple. I rarely want the form to overtake the content. If you see my films from New York to Pan Singh Tomar to Band Baja Barat to Ek Tha Tiger to Bajrangi, the approach is very simple: one should stick to the content of the film. Dramatize only when it is required. I go by the emotion of the scene. My lighting depends on that. From a logistics perspective, shooting in the mountains is little difficult. Carrying lights and equipment etc becomes very















difficult. The cloud pattern also keeps changing rapidly in the mountains thus affecting the lighting. One has to be very careful while matching the light from a wide to a close up. A quick change in the ambient light is the only problem I faced in the shooting "Bajrangi Bhaijaan" in the mountains. This also happened in the climax scene of the film. The ambient light was changing every minute! From Cloudy to raining to bright sunlight! We were carrying small generators for fill in lights... also I got a lot of bounce light coming from the snow and I used them to my advantage. Shooting a film like "Bajrangi Bhaijaan" was an interesting experience.

From where did you draw your inspiration for doing the same thing again and again differently in terms of lighting?

Well, each situation is very different. It may all sound similar but once you go through the script they all look so different. As I said above I love my job. In fact, it becomes more interesting to light a similar scene differently. Most of the times the situations are very different. A coffeedrinking scene in "Phantom" is different

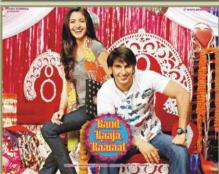
from a coffee-drinking scene in "Ek tha tiger"! Everything changes. The way actors look, time of the scene, context of the scene, the background, the foreground, the light source...everything changes! The lighting approach to a scene totally depends on the way the scene has been written. Even in the filming of a song in a similar location, two songs can look totally different going by the mood of the song. Whether it is a peppy number or a sad number. According to me no two situations can be identically be the same. In no way this is possible.

You have worked with a variety of directors. What does a director contribute to your lighting approach?

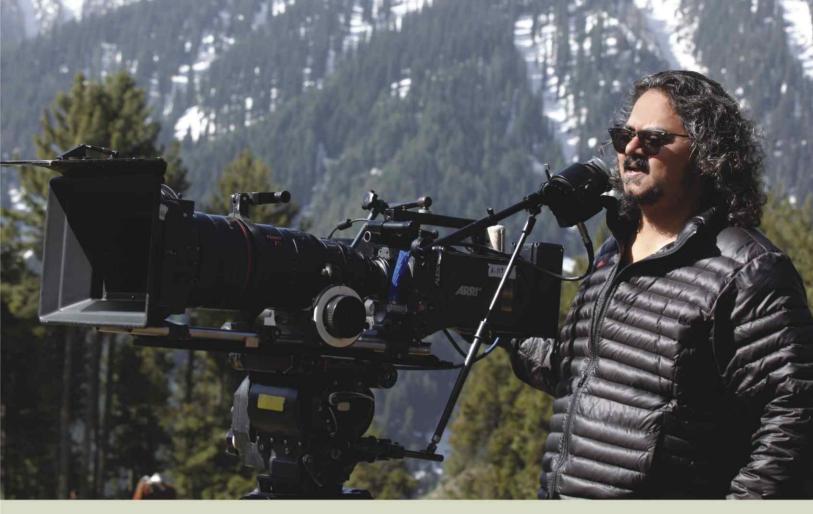
Yes I have worked with many directors in the past. I have shot a lot of my films with Kabir Khan; New York, Ek tha tiger, Bajrangi Bhaijaan and Phantom and may be the next one too. I think that as a director Kabir is extremely sensitive to lighting and compositions. He knows what a scene should look like after it is lit according to the mood of the film. Most of the times, we are on the same page. He knows exactly how a scene should look. There are a lot of times

when I sit with him and I explain him that this is exactly how I am going to light the scene. I also try and explain to him the logic behind lighting the scene in a certain way. This happened recently when I was shooting the scene when Pawan crosses the Indian border to the Pakistani side. I told him I am going to light this scene with a balloon light. And he agreed instantly. He understood and agreed to the logic behind using a balloon light. I enjoy working with directors who encourage you with your lighting approach and compositions. I like directors who sit with you on the monitor while shooting and discuss compositions. Little bit right pan and little bit of left pan...whether to include the foreground or not? All this helps in making an interesting frame, which ultimately works on the minds of the audience. You can tell so much by including or excluding an object from the frame. It can actually say so much. I had similar experiences shooting with directors like Ali Abbas Zafar, Milan









Lutharia, Tigmanshu Dhuliya, Maneesh Sharma etc.

If given the choice to choose a particular model between Arri-Red-Sony-Canon, which will be your 1st priority and why?

I would definitely go for Arri Alexa XT. I just feel comfortable may be because this was the first camera I used after shifting from film medium to digital. Saheb Biwi Gangster part-1 was the first feature film I shot on digital. It is not that I have certain bias or anything or I don't like the technical specifications of other cameras. It is like I have been shooting stills on Nikon since my film school days and I still keep shooting on Nikon. I love the images...I am familiar with that particular camera, also like most of my films I have shot with KODAK stock. It is just that my eyes have been trained on that since my film school days. There's a certain way your eye judges exposure, colors, depth of field etc. For me it's a habit thing. My films Sahib Biwi Gangster part-1, Bajrangi Bhaijaan, Phantom have all been shot on Arri Alexa. I have no problems with other cameras. I have used Red, Sony and I have used Canon too! I am pretty

ok with all of them. Finally what matters is your composition and the way you light a scene.

Have you ever encountered any technical problem due to specific camera failure, lighting mess up in laboratory?

No, not really. I am pretty clinical in my approach. I make sure that my first assistant and the focus puller go and check the equipment carefully just a day before the shoot. All the cameras and lenses are sent for testing much in advance. They are then rechecked just before the shoot to minimize any kind of error. We have shot a lot in international locations like Cuba, Ireland, England, United States, Canada, Lebanon, Turkey and many other locations but I don't remember having any communication gap anywhere. The movie language is pretty much the same everywhere.

What is your advice for the 'learning community'... any advice you would like to give to the aspiring cinematographers?

I don't think I am in a position to give any kind of advice.

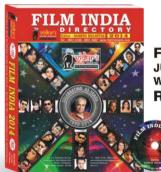
Ah it sounds too top to down!

Well, if you want to pursue cinematography as a career then please be ready to lead a tough life. It just looks glamorous from a distance, that's it! Waking up before sunrise, sleeping late in the nights, travelling a lot which means staying away from families, eating in irregular hours, shooting in sub zero temperatures to high as high as 49 degrees centigrade...life of a cinematographer is a little more than adventurous! It is hardly about rubbing shoulders with Katrina Kaif and Salman Khan! One is so busy that one hardly gets the time to say 'hello' to them from a distance; forget about having a chat with them. One shouldn't get blinded by the glamour quotient.

I would advise aspiring cinematographers to keep themselves abreast with changing technology and to be ready to face competition in the market. It is highly competitive. Hard work, willingness to experiment and a healthy attitude towards work and colleagues will keep one going.







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Interview with

Shanker Raman

You have worked on black and white film earlier in FTII, what were the challenges for you as the DOP for this black & white film?

Other than still photography, I had not shot black and white negative since graduating from FTII. When we decided to make "Frozen" there was a clear choice available to us at that time. Either we could shoot on black and white stock and make a photochemical print or shoot on color stock and take the Digital Intermediate route.

Of course, the deciding factor would be if black and white stock can withstand extreme weather conditions and gives us the result we wanted. So we tested both stocks side by side, on location in Ladakh. The challenge with black and white was processing, especially in India. We had an option of processing overseas but it seemed too tedious and risky to send something all the way from Ladakh to Singapore or wherever.

After graduating from Delhi University's St Stephens College, Shanker Raman joined FTII (Film and Television Institute of India) in 1992. He finished 3 years' full time diploma in cinema with specialization in cinematography. Renowned for his deft camera work, brilliant eye, and penchant for transforming the mundane into magical on screen, Shanker has also co-scripted and shot dazzling black and white visuals for "Frozen" which won him Rajat Kamal, National award for best cinematography in 2007. Film Critic Lalit Rao (FIPRESCI) explores the hidden treasures of experiences stored with Shanker Raman during the

So, we tested out these two labs, one was FTII and the other one is Rainbow lab, in Ramoji. I basically found few things missing that were important for me. One was consistency and the other was handling. Particularly handling. If you are going to strike a photochemical print then dust and scratches on the negative is not desirable.

Then there was the problem of ordering the stock itself. We had to preorder the raw stock 45 days in advance. For any production to shoot in Ladakh with a 45 days pre-order is not feasible. Especially if you're an independent film production. If you suddenly need more stock what will you do? Now the benefit of choosing color stock was that we had an expanded grey scale. So you shoot on color and just convert into grey scale which had a greater range of grey than you would get in the same lighting ratio with the black and white stock. There was better and more standardized color processing because the labs were functioning at that time. So, consistency was not such a problem and no preordering was required. And more importantly we had several kinds of stocks to choose from, in terms of speed, grain structure etc. Color stocks by that time had developed technologically because a lot of R & D had been done. Every six months or one year they would keep improving the colour Stock. The Remjet coating would get better, the grain structure would get better. Latitude would be more.

There was only one down side of shooting in color and that was the budget. Basically you can't do a photochemical black and white print from color negative. The print had to be made on black and white positive because even after color reduction there is always a color caste on color print stock. So, the black and white print was made in deluxe lab in LA, and it became a culmination of a long process with very fine minds working on it. And because we went on this route, I met a lot of people who contributed and helped the vision of the film.

I discovered not only the magic of grey scale but also that how people are wonderful and are willing to raise the



bar for you and your work, especially Deluxe Lab. I would say that the lab technician, who made the bath, would make minimum five hundred prints. But we stuck only two prints.

One of the main challenges during any film is connecting with people. And if I can connect with the people who can contribute to the vision then the vision part becomes very easy.

That is because then you know there are standards and there are people who have already done things and people who are already aware. This is the lesson I learnt in this respect.

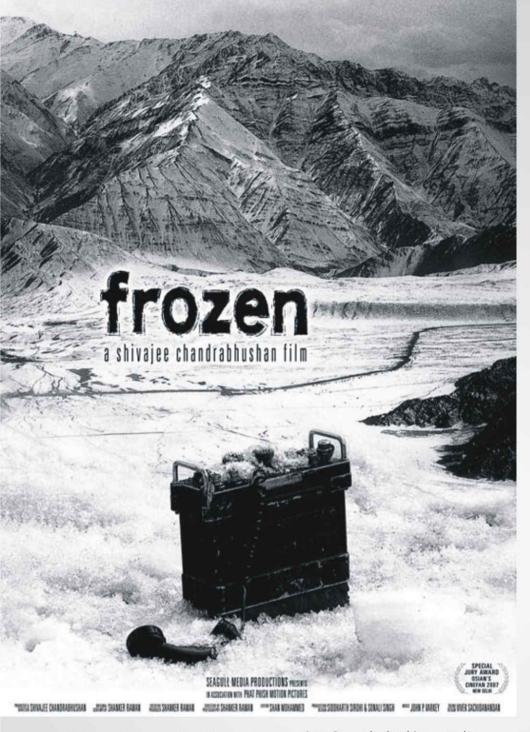
If one does not have the practice of shooting on black and white and shoots on color stock then there is this worry about how it would be produced in

black and white? How did you manage to resolve this?

I realized that I could not know for sure because I did not have a lab where I could watch the daily rushes, nor did I have a calibrated monitor like we have today with digital cameras. We did a lot of tests. I had a lot of experience by that time shooting digital. I already owned my first DSLR, Nikon D100.

During the recce, I had extensively shot the panoramic landscapes on my still camera. It was a 6.1 mega pixel camera. I got a sense of the color range and how it translates onto greyscale. But what was pleasantly surprising for me in





digital was the range of grey because I could manipulate them and I could modify them to a very large extent depending on the mood or the context. This gave me a good sense of what the DI process can offer. Even though we could not afford to do extensive tests on Color negative I was confident about taking it on.

So what were the other major challenges of shooting in Ladakh?

The biggest challenge was getting the equipment there. Everything had to be flown down at that time because the roads were closed. There were no silent generators available in Ladakh at that

time. So, we had to hire a regular marriage generator. Ladakh is so quiet that even if you kept the generator one kilometer away, you will still hear it. So, you have to put it behind the mountain. But the problem was that the cable becomes very long and hence the usable power drops. The 5k halogens were looking like candles and the cable case was breaking because of the cold. Tenny, FTII graduate, Sound Recordist and Siddharth Sirohi, our Production Designer, designed a sound proof housing. We dug a huge crater in the ground and placed the generator in it. Then built the housing around it taking care that it doesn't heat up. They

managed to muffle the sound by almost 90%. Digging was also a problem because the entire place was rocky.

Then of course the fact that the oxygen levels are much lower at high altitudes. So you can't pick up things and run as you get exhausted. This took the whole crew almost two weeks to get acclimatized. It takes a while before your hemoglobin level can come up to the optimum because of the lack of oxygen. We knew that the pace of working will be reduced so we just planned it very methodically. We used no artificial lights outdoors. Artificial lights were used only indoors. Except one shot which was shot in twilight. A sweeping wide shot of trucks entering the army camp. It was actually guite far from the main house. We used open face multi twenty rigged on poles. I think that was the most elaborate set up we had. The lights were used as practicals for this particular set up.

We did not use any lights outdoors for anything, not even skimmers or reflectors. Except occasionally we used some white bounce boards. There were a lot of lengthy takes. It would have been tough to use large skimmers and move them around on shot. Wherever possible I would use negative fill just to create contrast. So this is where I would say that our Art Department really did wonders. I personally believe 99% of the film is Art direction and costume. Since we were doing it in black and white, we were very methodical in selecting the right color for a costume.

I remember one incident where I requested Denny to wear a particular color and he refused to wear it because he felt he would look silly wearing a parrot green Pheran if the film was released in color. But, I told him that this parrot green represents the best shade of grey for this situation. Of course, I respected him as an actor because ultimately he has to perform and he has to be comfortable. We decided to not use parrot green after all. This was an example of, to what extent we went to, while choosing the color palate because everything was grey scale coordinated. I knew that I didn't have to spend too much time trying to flag light and cut light which is normally what we would



have done if shooting on black and white stock.

I knew that I could control a lot of things in DI. I didn't have to invest that much production time into it. I took greater care of things that needed to be highlighted like art direction.

There are some wonderful and carefully done 'out of focus shots'. What was the aesthetical consideration for these shots?

I would say while shooting you do something intuitively. The person who should really be credited for it is the editor. He is the one who has used it effectively. It was not about shooting them. Somehow he provided the right connect to them. While shooting, we had a few parameters like it should have some sense of a Visceral, other worldly feeling. There was an ice hockey scene where the team is coming towards the camera and we shot it in high speed. The idea was to see them like globules as they are slowly approaching the camera and the Puck comes into focus. Actually that shot was taken by Tanmay Agarwal, the B camera operator.

It was more about creating a point of view about who is watching this game. So, the central protagonist who finds herself amongst this crowd of people is watching ice hockey. We were trying to create a sort of context for her. So, out of focus and slow motions helped us in creating a sense that there is somebody in that crowd who is not a regular member of the crowd, who does not come here that often. She is the girl who sees the world in a slightly different way.

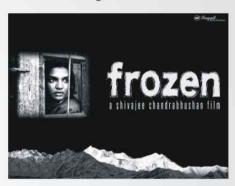


DOPs are considered technicians and not artists. How did you think of being a worthy part of the screen play and dialogues?

Writing of screenplay is like one of those things that you just take on in life and have fun with it and that's all I did. I wasn't a qualified or trained screenwriter but I knew that I have a grasp on the emotional quotient of this narrative. Cinematography is writing with composition, light and sensitometery. And the substance of visual writing is in the screenplay. So cinematography basically provides a context in which you see the content. Your point of view of the world, is simply what you are creating. That doesn't

mean this is the only point of view or the others point of views are invalid. It's one way to interpret. It's a search. It's commitment. It's actionable.

Screen play writing for me was fun because I could explore and develop the theme and the context while articulating it in words. For example, two people are talking, what are they going to say to each other? What are they really saving to each other? What are they not saying to each other? What is the sub text? Those are the things that I was always aware of as a cinematographer. So I was able to just write out the theme and explore through dialogues what I really wanted to say and what really was important for that scene. I think it was a very organic process. So, Shivajee and I felt that this is something that we both can do. To me a great director is one



who takes all the subtle decisions and lifts the scene and makes it a great scene. A good director is a good listener. He sees ideas and opportunities in everything. Shivajee is a great listener. I benefited from that. It made the collaborative process very easy.







Canon's cinema camera EOS C300 Mark II strikes the right balance between price and its overall ease of use. This compact 4K / Full HD camera is targeted to a broad range of shooters and is most suitable for independent filmmakers and documentarians looking for 4K recording and a "run-and-gun" form factor.

Even though 2K and Full HD are still the standards for the majority of digital productions, 4K has undergone a rapid growth. It was inevitable that at NAB 2015, Canon gave its signature digital motion picture camera a long-awaited upgrade with the aptly named EOS C300 Mark II.We are enlisting here the major technical features which makes the EOS C300 Mark Ilamong the Top Priority camera list of DOP's.

In order to capture 4K on board, Canon developed the XF-AVC codec, which is more efficient (using a bit more compression) than the EOSC300's: MPEG-2 codec while still giving you the same picture quality in 4K. Because of 4K's extra data requirements, Canon went with C Fast 2.0 cards that have a 3,000x speed at 410-Mbps.

- Since 4K is the EOS C300 Mark II's latest and greatest feature, it captures 4096×2160 UHD files at 24 fps set to Canon Log 2: BT 709 at the camera's native ISO (800), which provides an ideal balance between dynamic range and noise levels when recording with Canon Log.
- The Canon EOS C300 Mark II uses a CMOS Super 35mm sensor with twice the readout speed of its predecessor. New dual DIGIC DV 5 image processor with 8.85 effective pixels

while shooting cinema 4K (4096×2160) DCI cinematic and 8.29 megapixels in broadcast (3840×2160)UHD and lower. The upgraded sensor allows you to shoot 4K 10-bit 422 files up to 410Mbps and 30fps.

- Besides 4K, the EOS C300 Mark II has options for ((2K) 2048×1080) and (Full HD (1920×1080)). Other new specs and features on the Mark II include bit rates up to 410 Mbps, an improved dualpixel CMOS auto focus, simultaneous 4K and HD proxy recording and 2K/UHD frame rates up to 120 fps. You can record 10-bit 4:2:2 at all resolution settings, but if you don't need 4K, you can capture 2K or full HD at 12-bit 4:4:4 for better color reproduction, the same as with the Cinema EOS C500.
- Canon is also using a new XF-AVC/H.264 codec for their MXF file

wrapper, but you can also export 10-bit 4K/UHD RAW or 2K/HD via 3G-SDI to an external recorder. Only one thing to be kept in mind is that it can only export up to 30fps in RAW.

- One of the camera's biggest strengths, especially fordocumentary shooting, is its small size and adjustable handgrip for shooting at any angle. With a lightweight EF lens, you're able to grab the camera and quickly start shooting run-and-gun style.
- With the ability to record 10-bit 4:2:2 files internally at up to 410Mbps in 4K, or 10/12-bit 4:4:4 files in 2K/Full HD, with up to 15 stops of dynamic range, the EOS C300 Mark II provides footage suitable for extensive post-production work, producing crisper images across the full colour spectrum with reduced "colour bleed". The camera offers professional filmmakers and broadcasters alike the very best image quality, recording 4K in both (3840x2160) and DCI cinematic (4096x2160) resolutions.
- On the plus side, the camera is also the first Cinema EOS model to feature brand new Canon Log2 technology, which enables 15 stops of dynamic range, significantly wider than previous Cinema EOS cameras. Canon Log is basically a log gamma curve that gives you a neutral, or flat, color space that gives you more dynamic range for grading, as well as much smaller file sizes than raw or uncompressed files.
- In terms of the body, the camera comes with a removable handgrip with an improved low-angle camera handle. Canon also gives us a more robust top handle. They added more metal to its development so it's sturdier than the EOS C300 plastic version. The new build is held in place by socket screws which will take a tad longer to remove or install. The 4" LED that comes with the camera is now an OLED EVF so that the images will have a vibrant, clean look. It has 1.23 million dots and provides 100 percent field of view with a 16:9 aspect ratio. It also has a 60-degree tilting angle. The two propriety cables running from the camera to the LED will come in two lengths: 19" (48 cm) being the standard,



and a 29" (73 cm) option for longer runs. The programmable buttons on the camera are also back lighted now.

The C300 Mark II is offered with either a standard EF or PL lens mount, but it can be modified from EF to PL or vice versa and later by authorized Canon Cinema EOS service centers.

On the side of the camera, you have more access to different options like magnification, peaking, zebras, waveform monitor and vector scopes,





ISO/Gain, Shutter, and frame rates. The buttons are simple, self-explanatory and well placed.

- One improvement was the new dual rotary turret ND control system, which gives you up to 10 stops of ND rather than 6 stops on the EOS C300. Documentary shooters working in superbright exteriors are pretty much covered and won't have to carry extra ND filters for each individual lens. This is really a great feature.
- mative ISOs, it's probably a good time to mention that the ISOs range from 160 to 25600. When the sensitivity is expanded it can reach 100 and 102400. It has gain increments of -6dB, -2dB, 42dB and 54dB (when expanded). The ND filter provides up to 10 stops when the expansion is selected, 6 when it's not. Canon has also increased the color balance on the camera, exploring ranges from 2000K to 15000K which is great for underwater environments.
- Although most cinematographers would shun auto focus, Canon's dual-pixel CMOS AF is the one technology that might change the way you operate your camera, especially if you're a single shooter. Originally introduced on the EOS 70D DSLR, Canon also employed the technology on the

EOS C100 Mark II last year and now the EOS C300 Mark II, where it hits a focus range of 80% of the horizontal and vertical area of the image. With what Canon calls Dual Pixel CMOS Auto Focus, there are a lot of neat things happening inside the EOS C300 Mark II in terms of autofocusing powering. When using EF lenses with auto focus, you have a lot of helpful options. There are different mode types: continuous, AF-boosted MF, or one shot. You can then select your focus to be either center or selectable. Center is self-explanatory, while selectable allows you to select an area of the frame to focus. Right now, the software allows you to select about 80 percent of the total image area. There's also an option for Face AF (EF, STM lenses), which uses special facial recognition software to track and focus a face while it moves throughout the frame.Dual-pixel CMOS AF is the single shooter's secret weapon.

Canon has also added a feature to the EOS C300 Mark II that allows you to change the focus speed from one object to another. While you're focused on one object and tap to another, the rate at which the focus changes is already set, and you can't manipulate it in any way. But now you have the ability to change the speed, tracking sensitivity, and size/location of the focus area. Want

it slower/faster or bigger/smaller? No problem.

- In the new feature dubbed AFboosted MF, the Dual Pixel technology will try not to overshoot the image when finding focus, allowing operators to adjust the focus ring themselves.
- Operators can also turn on the Dual Pixel Focus Guide option. It's a visual aid that displays on your LED to help focus manual, cinema-style lenses. In this mode, three arrows appear around a box to show what direction to turn the focus ring to achieve the sharpest look. When it's reached, the box and arrows turn green.
- The Canon EOS C300 Mark II has a built-in mono microphone for scratch audio and features two improved XLR inputs that supports 4-channel audio recording in 16-bit or 24-bit and 48kHz.
- What's new to the EOS C300 Mark II is the ability to touch focus right on the browser window. So if you have an iOS or Android device, you'll be able to track a subject through the remote app which is a nice feature if you're using the camera for drone applications.
- Canon redesigned the menu by keeping the "important" options near the top of the menu trees which cuts down on time. They have also added a 'Favorite' section where you can assign specific menu items you access more frequently than others. This is an addition to the assignable buttons on the outside of the camera. There's also a variety of peaking and histogram options, but what's also nice is the ability to burn info right on the image. You can literally burn the settings of the camera to the image for reference, so be sure you have these selected appropriately to avoid any reshoots.

The Canon EOS C300 Mark II is a true professional camera, and with 4K capability, the camera joins the ranks of high-end camera systems. It is significantly more affordable than the high-end motion picture cameras. The camera's simplicity and compact size make it one of the best cameras out there for indie filmmakers and it packs enough of a punch for studio filmmakers as well.



View Point of the Product by Canon's Cinema EOS Platinum Associates

Bedi Brothers (Mr. Ajay Bedi and Mr. Vijay Bedi) are very known names in the Film and Videography and excel in wildlife film making. They are the youngest Asians to have won the Wild screen Awards known as Green Oscar for their films. They have worked on natural history documentaries, films with a social message and corporate films for some of the biggest international names in the industry. They are Canon's Cinema EOS Platinum Associate and have been associated with Canon products for more than a decade. They are presently the users of Canon Cinema EOS C500 camera. They were one of the selected first few testers of EOS C300 Mark II camera in India.

USAGE OF THE PRODUCT AND THERE FEEDBACK

Where and when was EOS C300 Mark II used and what was the purpose for using this product?

We have used this camera for

various documentary work which can be anything from social issues, stories culture, wildlife & nature and many more. The Canon new range of professional cinema camera can record 4k and helps us to film corporate films, advertisements / documentary and even helps us prepare feature films if needed.

What attracted you to use this product?

I think the size of the camera is amongst one thing which attracted the most to us. It is a camera in a compact size which allows to adapt in any environment of shooting work flow.

What all features were most exciting for you while using the product?

The latest Cinema EOS camera by Canon, the EOS C300 Mark II is very well adapted to our kind of work floor who are owning an independent production media house. We do various kinds of

work, from documentaries or studio base feature film shoots to many others and we need a camera which can handle those cushions while on the move as well. EOS C300 Mark II has internal 4K and Full HD recording. Also the low light capability is so good that it has reduced our power of lights on one of the location. I also like the LCD display which is much better now compared to previous model and also has a better resolution. The focus is much faster and helped us a lot during our field work. More importantly the size of the camera is very compact.

Overall experience and how do you see it complementing/adding value in your workflow?

We liked that this camera has EF mount so that we can use all our Canon EF lens range. Regarding the post production, the files can easily open in editing and 4K files does not stress the CPU speed of the machine. It has a very simple workflow from filming to post



Baylon Fonseca is among the few sound designers working in Indian film industry whose work has been rewarded year by year with various industry awards. Most recent among them is IRAA (Indian recording arts academy) award in 2016 for "Dil Dhadakne Do".

He has won national film award silver lotus for best audiography for Zindagi na milege dobara, filmfare award for Rock on and Zee cine award for Shootout at Lokhandwala. His best work includes, "Dil Dhadakne Do", Krrish-2, Fukrey, Bombay talkies, Wake up Sid and luck by chance, Happy New Year . Some of his forthcoming films are Raees, Baar Baar Dekho, Dishoom .

He has been working with the most respected directors of the industry such as Zoya Akhtar, Rahul Dholakia, Farah Khan etc to name a few.

Like a true Master, he doesn't hesitate when it comes to sharing his wisdom on sound design. Whenever he finds time from his hectic schedule, he conducts workshops at film schools where sound recording is taught as a specialized subject like SRFTII.

During his recent visit to CRAFT film school for doing a workshop on sound design, Naresh Sharma, interacted with him in detail to find out about the nuances and challenges related to his sound design work in 'Dil Dhakne do'. We bring you excerpts of this interaction.

You have already worked with Zoya Akhtar on feature films like, "Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara" and "Luck By Chance", what was your approach on "Dil Dhadkne Do"?

This is my third film with Zoya and she grows with every film. Zoya offers a very clear vision of the film. Zoya prefers to leave you with the script and wants you to come back with your reactions and opinions. She is amazing with her actors and can extract some of the most astounding performances from them. I enjoy prep on a film and for me work starts when a script is left on my table. I have to take what is on paper and breathe life into it extending the vision to screen. You are journeying into a world that was envisioned by someone else and attempting to internalize the content and find the sound scape beyond the writing.

What were the "challenges" you faced while shooting this particular film on a cruise ship?

On the surface "Dil Dhadakne Do" is a very unassuming film. When you watch it you can never guess the challenges we faced while shooting the film. To start with, you are saddled with a cruise liner



AUDIO

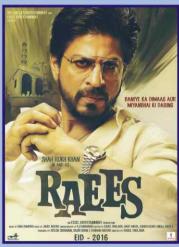
packed with 2500 holiday makers along with the 750 ship crew. You're expected to shoot around this without disturbing the liner's functioning or the people on holiday. The logistics planning in the background was immense. For us the cruise was a 6 week loop around the Mediterranean. At the start of every week 2500 people would get on and so there was never a point when a passenger got used to us and vice versa. Very good planning and prep ensured we stayed ahead of the problems at all times. And yes there were a ton of problems that pop up as is with every shoot. The size of the ship is huge. 11 floors, staterooms, cabins, numerous restaurants, entertainment zones, the pool area make it a mile wide island to traverse. Weather conditions, the sailing direction, sunlight, winds and a little friend you call RF Spectrum can throw at you the most unexpected surprises on a given day at shoot.

Unlike general opinion, on a ship that's this big – you don't suffer seasickness. A sailing ship out at sea is very steady and the roll and pitch is not much unless you are hit by heavy winds. You feel the effect of the roll and pitch when you are in a small room or a narrow corridor. When you sail you are hit by wind that is uncontrollable. I faced this problem on all the open decks of the ship. There was a lot of dependance on the wind jammers to help reduce the wind impact. I did spend a month post the recce prepping to much success at the shoot.

There were the scenes on the zodiacs when the lead cast is trying to rescue Kabir after he jumps off the ship. Here the attempt is to be as close to the principal vehicles and get as much of the location sound. Thankfully I was assigned a really good stunt driver who ensured we never strayed from the line of sight no matter how fast they were going. Your also mindful

Important Upcoming Films of Baylon Fonseca as Sound Recordist









to use a lot of safety cover so water cant get into the equipment rig.

Finally you have to be aware the equipment will face salt water exposure for a good 6 weeks. So equipment wipe down and cleaning happened almost every day post wrap.

Coming to the film we have to remember there was a count of 23 actors of which most ensemble scenes had 11 or more actors at any given point in time. Part of the technical prep was to ensure we go 16 tracks at any point in time. Having worked with Zoya on her earlier films I knew she would add line into scene without changing its context. She loves performances to be organic and without scripted breaks. There were some ensemble scenes she wanted to shoot as one shot.

RF Spectrum available for a given frequency block in which I was recording turned out to be the biggest challenge. The spectrum changed on a daily basis depending on if you were sailing, the location / region through which you were sailing and if you were at port or if there was a defense / naval base in the vicinity. Normally when you prep for a film shoot you are on the ground at a fixed location for a day and so most of the issues are easily handled. Being on a sailing ship changes everything.

It was wonderful to be back on the

ground in Turkey. Having shot here before I was aware of the terrain and knew the key crew which made planning easy. We had some simple yet complex scenes to tackle like the cycling scene shot in different locations. There was the hot air balloon scene that isn't in the film and the complex pre-climax scenes at Antalya bay that had to be shot at the peak of the tourist season, without a forced lock down. However the most memorable scene was in the oldest hamman in Istanbul, Çemberlitaş Hamam. The temperature in the hamman is meant to be maintained at anything above 50C. In such conditions you cannot take equipment in and out of the room at will. Condensation will cause the equipment to fail. After much discussion and deliberation I decide that transmitters going onto the characters Ayesha and Neelam would have to be heated with hot air. Using a hair dryer we raised the temperature of the transmitter for over an hour. Once I felt they were hot enough we took them into the inner chamber and ensured they were never brought back out thanks to the cooperation and understanding of the actor's. What you end up seeing in the film is the original recorded track and it's a scene that I think will remain special for a while to come.

How did you cool down the equipment?

At the end of the shoot we had to cool the transmitter down so as to reverse the process. We had to start with blowing hot air onto the transmitters and slowly step down the heat for over an hour until the transmitters reached room temperature.

How much part in the film was dubbed?

We did ADR for probably around 10% of the film. Kamal and Prem on the factory floor was shot at a live factory location and hence needed clarity for content. The scene in which Imran appears to stop Ayesha as she appears to jump off the stern was an ADR because of the amount of noise from the engine bay. However the karaoke scene that occurs in the same location subsequently is sync. Dynamics of scene and difference in proximity to a noise source can change everything.

Kabir and Farah sitting on the outer deck and chatting was dubbed since the scene is meant to happen when the ship is docked at port. However the scene was shot when its out at sea and the wind / water is very audible.

What were the other problems you faced?

This isn't a problem as much as it is a challenge. Zoya Akhtar as a director, hates to ADR. She extracts the best

performance from her actors on set. ADR is never an option in her books.

Unconnected to this film, from a producer downwards there is the belief everything can be fixed in post. Given this attitude productions on the whole are beginning to become callous in their approach. Crew talking or moving in a take, cell phone activity, noisy generators which aren't sync sound friendly are all emerging issues on a film set. Software or a hardware unit cannot magically reduce noise on a track. If sync sound is the way forward for a film then its appropriate to understand the needs of the sound department and follow them just like it would be in the case of any other department.

Why can't it be dubbed when 90% of India is doing it?

90% of India is doing a lot they should not be doing. We are a herd that follows blindly.

Coming to the film – Zoya doesn't look at a performance only with sound in mind. A performance is visual coupled with the spoken word coming out of the mouth of the actor. The performance of an actor is understood from his / her intonation and expression. It takes shape once the film is edited. There are those scenes where we know for sure ADR is never going to have the same impact as the original sound. So our approach is never to try and fix a problem in sound post. An actors' best performance is when he or she is in character and in front of the camera.

Was there any special equipment like a particular microphone or a particular brand of "wind jammer" required in this kind of ambience?

I was aware the shoot for this would be tricky. The technical recce was the starting block to put space to frame and make a plan. Most important was the awareness of being out at sea, with no one a phone call away in the event of a technical issue.

The film required a lot of wireless units for actors apart from the booms. When I look back I feel I needed 3 operators for this film. When you are shooting with two cameras and coverage area is different, it adds a little bit of

pressure on sound to be ahead of the game. I guess the attempt is to be able to do a shot without having to say it cannot be done for whatever maybe the reason.

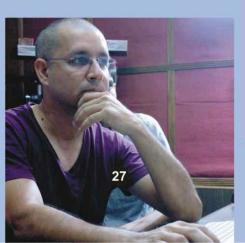
Wind being an element to contend with, I had to plan on the kinds of jammers I wanted to use on the boom microphones and also relook at the way I wanted to wire the actors. Having spent 2 weeks in London post the technical recce and with all the manufacturers or dealers in and around it was convenient to be able to walk in and pick gear off the shelf.

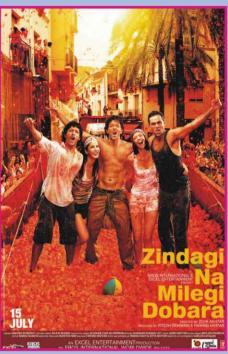
There are certain sound libraries of wind patterns. So, how helpful was the sound library while dubbing such scenes?

There are a number of good libraries that exist that can be useful for sound post. Nothing substitutes a well recorded ambience track. Since the ship was literally home for 6 weeks, you can't get off at will when you are sailing, you take a microphone and setup the recorder and let it roll. You end up 6 weeks later with a volume of sound that finally makes it to the sound sessions because it matches the tone and texture of the recorded dialogue track.

There are lots of things happening on the ship, like if you have to shoot around a swimming pool with people jumping into it and different kinds of sounds coming. How did you manage such scenes?

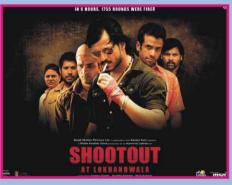
When you have 2500 holiday makers on the ship there will be many restrictions on what can be done and what can be said to the passengers. A wrong action on our part could lead to a legal case against the shipping company. So we start with first respecting the space we are in and understand the reality. The war room comprising the direction and production team aided with the delegates from the cruise liner ensured we made shoot plans around the cruise











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itinerary. Locations were normally blocked for shoot when passengers were out on day excursions once the ship had docked. Or we shot at night when the passengers were asleep. Easier said than done, some days the plans changed because the weather changed. If we had to shoot while all the passengers were aboard then it was done while maintaining the decorum and most often the passengers happily co-operated. After all how often do you see a bollywood crew shooting aboard a Mediterranean liner?

We shot a couple of scenes of deck 11 which had the swimming pool on the outer deck. The pool was tough to block off since people of all ages love to hang around the pool. So we requested the passengers to participate in the shoot and we ensured we never disturbed the peace of the surroundings. So while there were planted extra's in a scene, many such scenes have actual passengers in the background.

Which one do you prefer to use, the boom or the transmitter?

It has never been clear to me why a microphone needs to be choice between a boom and a lapel. Both microphones play a specific role in the sound being recorded. A lapel microphone is not a fall back. It's never a decision between boom and lapel, for me it's the amalgamation of both. The story is the crux of any film. There is always going to be a different approach for any one working on dialogue. I think my focus is on dialogue audibility, clarity and intelligibility and not the process of which microphone I used.

Why do they say that dialogue in your films sound like dubbed? Is it because it's too clear?

Dialogue is meant to be clear. Good masking can make it near to impossible to guess whether the dialogue track is dubbed or from the location.

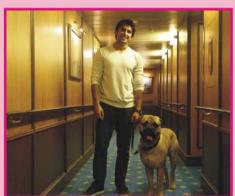
All of Zoya's films are dramas. The

whole film is centered on the characters and their interaction. Dialogue centered films have to keep you engaged with the clarity of the center track. The film experience is not going to be great if it's all soft and inaudible. I think the real discussion should be about how we can achieve a well-recorded dialogue track. I say this very often, an entire unit is aware of what's going on set because they get to view the shoot on a monitor but there is the director and continuity / dialogue supervisor hearing the fold back of the sound mix on their headphones. Neither of them are hearing sound from a microscopic point of view. So it comes down to the sound recordist to register all the nitty gritties of the sound. Good sound or bad sound we are relying on him to be the judge and decide how it might sound on screen eventually. I am extremely particular about achieving a good track and this comes at the expense of being enemy no.1 on a film set. Eventually if dialogue sounds good on

screen then I gather nothing else really matters. Right ?!

Recently I came across a new term which I never thought existed in sound. It's called "styling" the sound. One would think "styling" happens only with







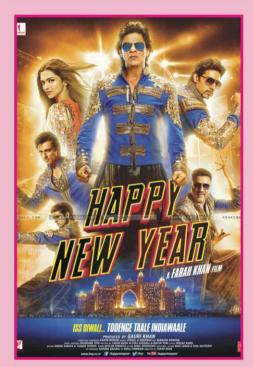
the visuals. Did you use any elements to stylize the sound in 'Dil Dhadakne Do'?

Every film has a 'style' and no two films will ever be the same. If you look at Pluto in 'DDD' or at Imran's poetry in 'ZNMD', there is a style that exists. The style is never always evident from the start. A style evolves and unfolds as you work on the film. It is sometimes an idea that comes from the script or from a day at shoot or while watching the edit. Sometimes it is influenced by an emotion or an action. There is no one single thing that you can put your finger on and say this is the answer to the question. How did Pluto need to sound in the film? How did Imran need to recite his poetry in the film? Imran's rendition of the poetry is sheer magic which comes from the mix of having Farhan, Javed saab and Zoya in the same room. I have no doubt it is one of the most beautiful pieces of sound I have created for a film.

The idea is to get you to be touched. It's sound, it's picture, It's everything. A sound designer has a delicate role to play. Style emerges when you can identify situations, with characters, and the story. There are times when I don't identify at all, I just cannot get there and that's acceptable, that's normal and it is not mandatory that you have to understand everything.

Once my edits are in place I like to bounce stuff off my directors. Once we know we are on the same page its open season for me to play with ideas and experiment. I don't go searching for an experience each time I do sound. I go through 'draft' and 'redraft' and let the film open itself to me on its own. If time permits I will probably have fifteen-sixteen revisions by the time I get to mix.

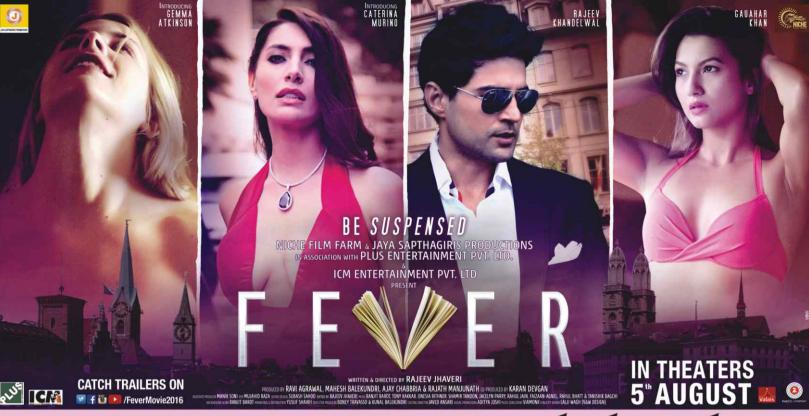












Interview with

Rajeev Kandelwal

First of all, my best wishes for your upcoming movie Fever. Your fans and I, personally was waiting for your movie as you always amuse the audience with your raw energy and different storyline.

Thanks, I will not disappoint you with this movie.

Rajeev, you always look so great, energetic & full of life... What's the secret behind this?

I try and stay positive all the time. I have not got everything served on a platter. I got everything the tough way. I was an outsider for industry, started out from Delhi, I went to Mumbai. Worked hard for screen tests and then auditions, I struggled hard. I really appreciate what I got, in terms of appreciation from people. But I think I stay positive and prepare to start from the scratch again. I don't try to play safe, I experiment with my films, because in my head I keep telling myself that I was the one who started from the scratch 10 year back and If I have the talent and capability, and I need to start again, I definitely will do. So, I think that positivity and approach really helps me. I am not insecure in way that if one of my films fails and audience rejects my character, as long as the movie is released properly and reached the audience right way, I will expect the decision of audience and will take it as lesson to not to experiment with that kind of role in future. I will try something different, something new next time. So far, the reactions from audience are good and very encouraging and that gives me strength also.

Your philosophy is brilliant. I've seen you as a versatile actor since beginning. Starting from 'Kya Hadsaa Kya Haqqeqat' to 'Sach Ka Saamna', a different thing and a totally different



genre each time. And then you played Dr. Aamir brilliantly in the movie Aamir and now you are now playing Aarmin, an assassin. You are completely a versatile actor, today when every actor wants to play safe and accept roles as per their image; you are comfortably challenging yourself in every new project. How do you prepare yourself for this?

I am still learning, to be very honest. I feel I am not a very good actor, and I still have a lot to learn. I have some shortcomings as an actor, and that's why I try to experiment and be different in my each project so, I can learn more. I appreciate it when people tell me that I am a good actor and like my work. I know I can act well, but, I still feel I have lot to learn and improve myself.

It's a good thing about an actor, if he wants to be different and keeps improving his skills. Let's talk about your movie Fever, its India's first thrillex. How will you define your character Aarmin in the movie?

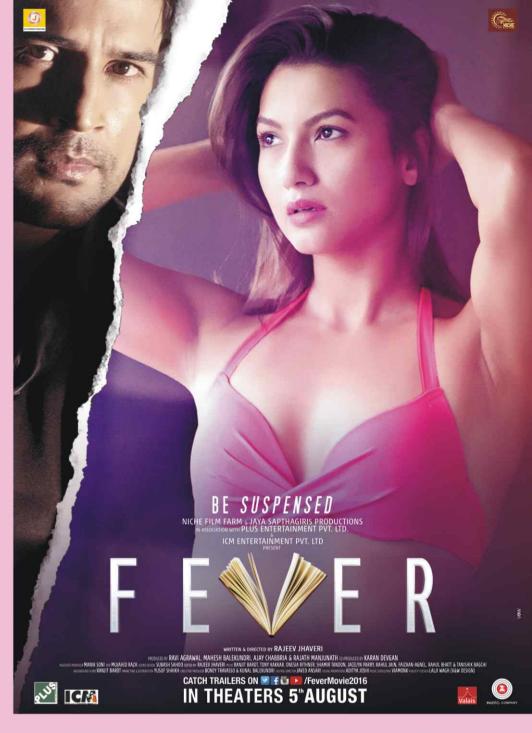
I can't define much about my character Aarmin as the film revolves around my character. It's a suspensethriller and all I can say is that he had a past and after the accident, he wakes up in a difficult situation, where he remember only his name that he know he had done something wrong in the past. Now to stick your life together and find out, who are you? You don't know who is your friend and who is enemy, so all this happens to the Aarmin and then finally how the story unfolds. It's a rollercoaster ride and there are different shades in the story. There are three sides of the story and three different women also in the film who are attached to past and present of the character. I hope the audience will enjoy it.

Audience will definitely enjoy the movie. Talking about the three women, You are romancing Gauahar Khan and then there is bond girl Caterina Murino and with them the gorgeous Gemma Atkinson, I am sure you must have enjoyed working with them in the movie.

I did have a good time but what you watch on screen is different from what we do while shooting. But both the International actresses, Caterina & Gemma are so professional and so good in their work. When you work at International level, you realise that the kind of professionalism, and ethics they follow and then on top of that they are really nice people. Of course Gauhar is great; we Indians are warm and helpful to each other. But I am very happy to work with these two girls, they made the whole team feel comfortable, we made them feel comfortable. We worked like a family together. We never felt that Caterina is an actress who worked in Casino Royale or Gemma is doing some big international projects. When we perform intimate scenes in Indian projects, we feel a bit hesitated, but with them everything was so nice, professional and wonderful experience. The thing is we all are still in touch and whole unit really had a good time. And at the end of the shooting, whole unit was sad as we all were departing. I will really like to work with them in future.

Another first for Fever is, this movie is entirely shot in Switzerland, How was the experience?

It was an outstanding experience. We shot in seventeen location and explored the whole country. Indian



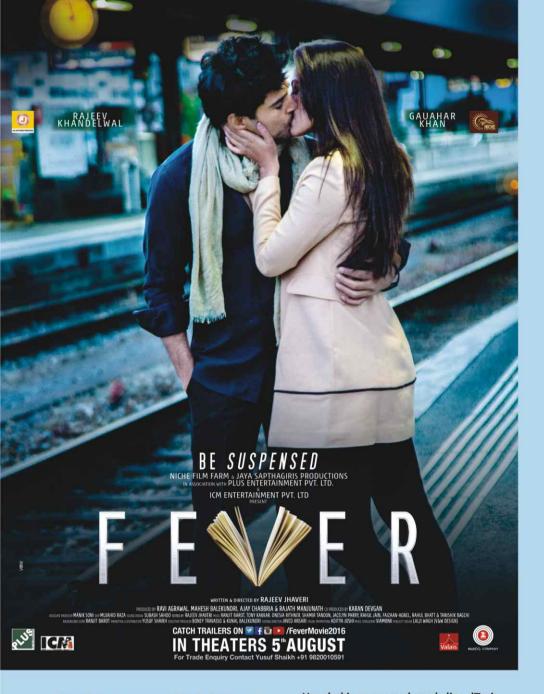
knows Switzerland for its Alps and mountains and as a most beautiful place in the world. But we shot in the small and remote towns of Switzerland also where there is the population of only fifteen people and the towns look really lonely and silent. Swiss people are very supportive and giving and helped us in every possible way., our crew was also highly professional and hard working. It was one of the unforgettable experiences.

So apart from everything, you will remember Switzerland for its hospitality also.

Yeah, for lot of reason, for the people, for the beauty and for the shoot we did. It was not an easy shoot but we pulled it off. So yes, Switzerland will remain very special to me.

From the behind the scenes, it seems the weather was quite cold. How did you managed in such extreme conditions?

It was really cold weather and sometimes we have to go through the ice covered roads to shoot for the scenes. It was a sub-zero temperature sometime and we have to shoot without Jackets or warm clothes in snow.



Everything was very difficult from our movement in the cold temperature to arrangement of food for the crew. We had to have food in the vehicles as even our vanity vans were also not available some times.

I can understand these things. Let's talk about your co-actresses again. What did you enjoyed most, Swiss Alps with cool weather or hot co-stars?

I think it will be hot women in Swiss Alps, the combination of everything and the amazing script. The three things together were brilliant, great company, great location and great script.

This is the one perfect statement for my question. Songs from the movie are quite touching, 'Mile Ho Tum Humko' is on every lover's lips, 'Teri Yaad' is another beautiful song. Which one is your favourite?

Youngsters love 'Mile Ho Tum Humko' it's a catchy song that grips you with its lyrics as soon as you listen to it first time. I was shooting in Lucknow few days back and crew members told me that they are regularly playing this song while driving and also using it as the ringtone for their phones also.

The whole album is very good and has song for every mood. I love the song 'Nahi Nahi.. You Give Me Fever', another song 'Kharaa Kharaa' is also a sweet song and the song 'Bas Ek Baar' sung by Arijit Singh is a soulful, emotional and touching song.

Fever, promises a spectacular show, it has car chases, a strong and thrilling story, the most romantic locations, what was the one thing you loved most while shooting for Fever?

The shoot in Bern city was a memorable experience. We did most of the shooting in small towns and countries. But Bern is a lively city, with full of activity. Although shooting at each and every location was enjoyable but as most of the locations were quiet and peaceful, Bern was full of life and modern facilities, we enjoyed shooting there.

Fever is co-produced by Karan
Devgan, and according to him the
reason behind his involvement with
Fever is your superb portrayal of Armin,
What's your take on it?

I think, Karan is a wonderful person. I met him and instantly got attached to him. He is one of those personalities whom you think you just like him. He gel very well and a genuinely nice person. He is what he is. I'm very happy he is onboard as a co-producer for Fever, And I'm glad; that we became friends after he came on board. As it was not our friendship, for which he came forward to co-produce the movie. I'm happy that he is excited about the whole thing. And of course the portrait of Aarmin is not a routine portrayal. When the movie releases, you will see how different is the storyline and the character of Aarmin.

As a person, Karan Devgan, seems to be really impressed with your capabilities of handling work & personal life together. How do you manage everything perfectly?

I know, what Karan is mentioning here. I'm in touch with him on regular basis and we have similarities in our personalities also. I don't want my life to be dictated by my work. For me, work is one part of my life and there are other important things also. When I'm not working, I am busy in other aspects of my life. I love gardening and have interest in organic farming too. I travel a lot. So, even if I'm not working, I'm enjoying my life in other ways.

Ok, when we are talking about Travelling, which place in India does you like most? The one destination, you

love to visit again and again.

Leh Ladakh is my favourite destination where I love to spend my time. I've been to Ladakh atleast fifteen or sixteen times and I know every nook and corner of Ladakh. Still, every year, I yearn to visit Ladakh as I have never visited Ladakh in my life. I think, it's the one place in India that keeps calling me and I keep going back. I've visited Ladakh in every possible way, by air and by road too. I've driven to Ladakh from Manali and Kashmir. And even this year, I will be visiting Ladakh in the month of August.

That's great, driving to Ladakh is quite adventurous.

I love camping and I have a dedicated camping vehicle with all the camping accessories in it.

Great! And, which is your favourite destination abroad?

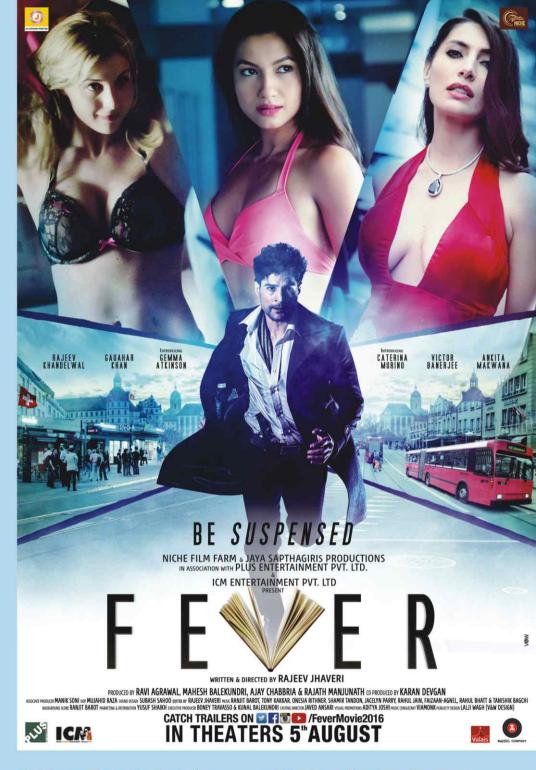
I love Europe. European civilization and traditions are similar to our own civilization. They are very friendly people. I have travelled to US, Australia and Middle East too but Europe is close to my heart when we talk about travelling foreign destinations. Europe is one place which I love to visit again and again. I recently, visited Scotland and it's a beautiful place. I will love to visit Scotland again in the future.

Karan Devgan is planning to shift his focus to be a producer in his next venture. What are your thoughts on it? Will you like to be a part of his project?

I don't know right now! I can't say right now if we are going to work together or not in the future. All I want to say is, I want Karan to be very successful as a producer. I believe films are like destiny, if you have to come together then you will come together. You work on it. As a friend, I will wish him all the best. Otherwise, if we are destined to work together, script is good and everything else works out well, we will work together. I wish the very best for him in future and wish him to be a very successful producer. And I wish he collaborate with the very best people in the film industry.

Last Question! What's next?

After Fever, a short holiday, after that a movie and then again a movie. I



don't have any T.V. project in pipeline. Generally, I don't plan for longer period. I like to keep my hands free, as if I receive an interesting script, I move forward toward it. For this year, my time is booked.

Do you want to give any message to your fans?

Thank you so much for being supportive all the time. I really wish for you to be very happy in your lives. And if work good, I will earn your appreciation and if I don't work well, I will earn your

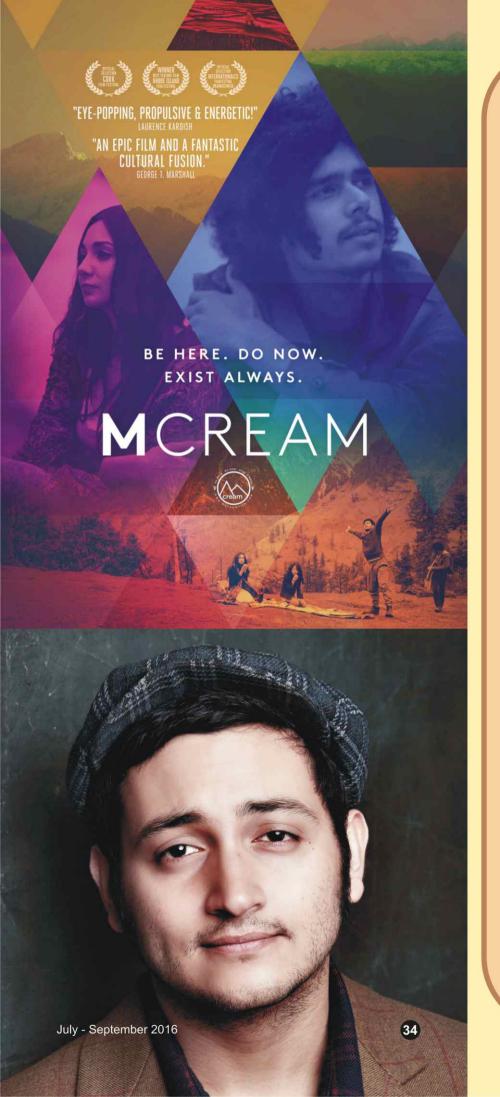
criticism. Everything depends on me. I don't expect that you come to watch a movie for me only, if you feel excited to come and watch the film and you should definitely watch the film.

It's an honest statement from an actor, and I'm sure your fans will enjoy your upcoming movie Fever. My best wishes are with you Rajeev for your upcoming project and your future projects too.

Thank you too.







The term auteur has been coined for those directors who listen to their heart and choose the subject to leave their impact in the world of cinema. Agneya Singh falls under this category of rare people. Without caring for the commercial elements. he chose a subject which remains close to his heart. He made a wonderful film which will appeal to the sensibilities of audience who have eclectic taste. His film "M-CREAM" was selected in more than 30 international film festivals. Among various awards, it also won the best cinematography award at Madrid film festival. It is releasing in India by PVR pictures. Lalit Rao, film critics FIPRESCI finds out about the process of making of M-CREAM.



When you wrote the script, how did you decide to go for the casting of the film?

We actually felt that since the film was a bit controversial and had a risky subject and a low budget, we didn't want to get stars. This is because I think for us the film is really about its story. Of course, the actors are an integral part of the story. Inadvertently, if you have a film with a big star it becomes more about the star and the film takes a back seat. Hence, it was very important to get character actors who could bring out the subtext and who were willing to take a challenging role. Of course, we had considered bigger stars and established actors but we realized that wouldn't really have worked for this kind of film, which is in itself is a brave, a radical, and an a bit off beat subject. After taking this decision it was more of finding the actors who will suit the role.

How did you go about doing audition and what was your criterion to decide this person will suit for this kind of a role?

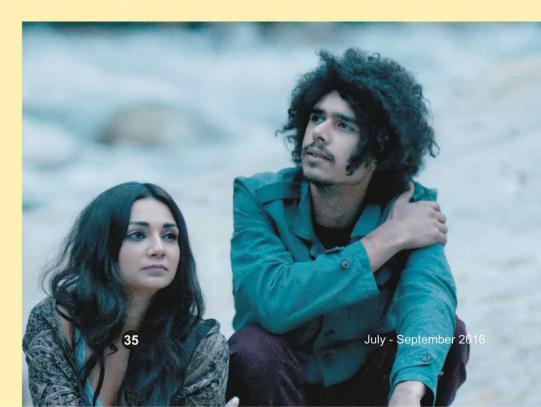
For the four lead characters, we have Imaad shah who is the son of Naseeruddin Shah and he is also a musician. The character is kind of a quintessential rebel who is, you know like a lot of young people, a bit lost, a bit of an escapist, into drugs, rebelling and Imaad kind of you know, he really does fit that vibe. We screened it at over 30 film festivals and a lot of audiences and critics really applauded his acting. I really feel that a lot of the time he is just being

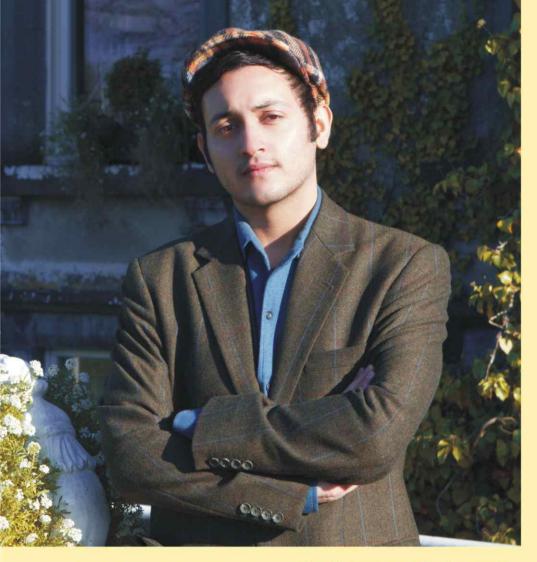
himself. For this reason, I think the character and the actor were very close and it was just very good casting in his case. And then of course "Ira Dubey" who has done some really good work in theater. She is also a fan of off beat films and of course belongs to a traditional lineage of acting. She is very different from who she is but we had actually taken her audition and we were very impressed. We took two other actors who are Auritra Ghosh and Raaghav Chanana. Auritra is a dancer and Raagav has done a few films, even the new 24 series as well. For them too we kind of did a screen test and we felt that they fit

Since the film is more on the move or kind of a travelogue, what were the challenges you encountered while

directing such film?

Actually, there were a lot of challenges. It was also my first feature film which in itself was a daunting task and I think we had a very big crew. I feel like we should have actually shot it with a smaller crew. One more thing is that when you are travelling with them around Himachal Pradesh because we were shooting in various nooks and crannies, high up in the mountain also sometimes deep in the valley, it was hard to get the equipments there. To my mind, this was the major challenge. We didn't also really know how the film would turn out and in fact we shot the film in between there were many gaps. I was actually lucky enough to have an editor like Hemanti Sarkar on board because she really paved the film and





we also had these great musicians who did the sound track. Honestly, it had all been a very chaotic shoot and a lot of us were worried if the film could be pieced together and she actually managed to do it. Thus, I do give a lot of credit to her in the making of the film.

While you were shooting the film, were you also editing on the move or was it later on that you edited the film?

It was at a later stage that we edited the film. I think that we should have actually done it. It would have been a wiser decision to have done it by daily rushes sent to the editor, which is what a lot of people are doing. But in our case, we did not do that and I think it was a mistake. Hemanti was very talented that she was able to piece it together later on.

What is your style of handling the actors?

The way I was actually trained as a film maker was that you should never give a result to an actor. You should give

the adjustments and allow the actor to arise to the point on their own. I was trying that technique but I feel lot of time it doesn't work because I think for that technique to work the director and the actor need to be on the same page. In our case we did not get the time really to work on that so I didn't try that. I did try to organically bring them to where I wanted them to be most of the times. Sometimes it was just too frustrating, we actually had to get some result. Hence, it was a mix of both techniques: allowing the actor to understand the character, to live that character and bring to the table what they can. From our side correcting that and directing. Ultimately, it was a very organic and collaborative spirit in which we were working.

This film doesn't have Bollywood style songs and dance sequences. Do you think whether it will affect the foot falls as songs are catalysts for promoting a film besides it has a territory which will fetch you a good revenue?

Actually, we did not go in for the song and dance numbers, but there is a lot of music in the film and there are a lot of songs in the film which, for instance, we have these very talented young musicians from the Parikrama band and The Circus and the other rock bands, Srijan Mahajanand Arsh Sharma and Nikhil Malik. Three of them founded a music studio called "Studio Fuzz". They were able to bring people like Shubha Mudgal on board who very graciously did a track for us. The urban folk singer from Calcutta Susmit Bose, I.P. Singh from the band faridkot, Shantanu Pandit the folk singer. All these wonderful musicians came on board and it's a brilliant sound track. The feedback even from other film festivals has been great. I think that even though we don't have the song numbers that a typical Bollywood film has, our sound track is even more exciting. I would say this because it's very relatable, it's the kind of music that young people like to listen to, it's very diverse. It has a mix of western rock, Indian folk and it is very unique. Of course, I feel that it is an experiment and risk to have a sound track like this and not to have any typical music numbers with actors dancing around the trees and singing. Honestly, it did not fit with the kind of vision we had for the film. Music plays a huge role in our culture and in our films, for this reason, we wanted music to be a central part of the film but in a different and a more intelligent way.

Recently there was controversy about "Udta Punjab" and the drugs were one of the reason for that particular film to get into controversy. How much will it affect in terms of getting more people to watch your film? It is just destiny that both these films are being clubbed together today and I think "Udta Punjab" film features big actors and a big production studio backing it. It does deal with a similar concept which is drug culture. Honestly, I think that for us it's good that they have actually started the work because you know penetrating the mainstream consciousness with these kind of so called controversial subjects or sensitive subjects is a huge task and they have already done that and I think for us it has made it a lot easier to follow their footsteps in the sand. Both films

are a bit different because I think that the film shows the negative aspects of dealing with drugs like cocaine and heroin and the problem in Punjab whereas our film is neutral because we are dealing with drugs like Marijuana which a lot of people want to have decriminalized and which has been in fact a part and parcel of the Indian culture for many years. In a way our film perhaps is a little more controversial because we have taken neutral stand and in fact of anything we are for decriminalization of Marijuana. In a way it's a great blessing and I'm of course very thankful to the makers of that film Vikram, Anurag and others for having been brave enough to do a film like that in the mainstream space and I think that they are really paving the way that hopefully M CREAM can also take to another level. As they have been able to provoke the main stream consciousness they can only help us and hopefully it will show the people another side of the whole drug angle.

This film was ready in November 2014, when I saw it during IFFI Goa Film Bazaar. Why do you think it too so much time to find distributers?

We have been very busy with the film festivals because we were very clear that we wanted to do the festival circuit first and get as much international acclaim as we can. It was very well received by winning 10 awards [Indie Spirit Film Festival, US, Jaipur International Film Festival, Rhode Island International Film Festival, The Queen City Film Fest, US] and it went to 30 film festivals. Of course, for many of them,

this film was too much of a risk because it uses a risky subject, there are no stars, no big names attached and a large part of it is in English. It's in English and Hindi but much of the dialogue is in English as well. Hence, a lot of distributors liked the film. They really praised the film but at the end of the day it is about getting your return on investment and for a lot of them it wasn't guaranteed. This is also why the release took some time. Ultimately, PVR decided to distribute the film under their banner. Thus, we are very thankful to them for believing in the project

What is the P & A plan of your film, in terms of no of screens and shows you are getting for it?

We are planning a modest release of about 50 screen spread over may be four to six metros. It is because of the fact that it's a niche film we do fear that there is a big audience spread in the open centers. Hence, depending on the response of the first week we hope to expand if it does well. I also want to clarify that PVR is the distributer but it's also being released in all other chains like DT and many others.

Do you have any VOD plan to do the film/ international releases?

We really feel that this film should be seen on the big screen. For this reason, even after our actual release is done we are planning for a single hall screening in other cities like Lucknow and Bhopal and other places where the film hasn't been released. We are hoping to do some screening like that but of course once the actual release is done the film is going to be available on DVD and VOD. We are just working that out and we should have an update soon. The film will be available very soon digitally as well for everyone else who hasn't been given the opportunity to see it because of the limited release

Is there anything specific related to this film about which you may want to talk which I may not have asked?

I think I feel that it is a very unique film because it kind of fits the blend between main stream and art house. A lot of films from India deals with issues like poverty and the rural life which of course is a big part of the country but I think that it's very much true that the mainstream films are very escapist in their treatment and it's basically a dream factory. So it's two opposite streams and I think this kind of film takes the realistic element from both. The feedback that we received from international audiences is that they never believed that there could be youngpeople in India who are similar to young people in the USA or Europe or Singapore or any other country. It shows a very different side of the youth, urban youth and urban India as well which hasn't really been shown much on the silver screen. It's a very unique film in that way and it's a film that is a reality and it is not a pro-drug or an anti drug film but it's more about the contemporary youth's struggles. I can only hope that it can be inspiring to the people to wake up to the world around them and to take a stand for what they believe in.







How did you opt to make a film on Sufism rather than choosing any other topic?

My first subject was on Madrasahs in West Bengal. While doing this I was roaming around different villages and saw a lot of Mazars. There I met a woman, who told me to shoot these Mazars. I said that this was not my subject. She said that she had a lot of ailments that actually got cured and that she comes there every year. So, I thought, let's see. Basically it started from there and I decided to do a documentary on this subject.

What was your research and how did you go about it?

One of my senior partner Arnab Roy and me did this project. The subject

specialist is Arnab Roy and he did the research part of it. We bought some books and also went to the National Library in Kolkata. Initially we had a plan of 4 part series of one hour each and tried to raise funds from the government organizations but it did not happen.

How did you go about choosing the people you would be talking to? For example, Sadia Dehlvi is from Delhi, so



how did you decide upon interviewing her?

We researched a lot in terms of who can talk on the subject. In this case she helped a lot. We did interview a good number of people who are related to Sufism. But then we concentrated on some selected people later on. It was not planned to go directly to Sadia Dehlvi but

it happened on the way. We went to the history department of DU where we spoke to one Professor but, finally we could not keep him in the film. We have a lot of other interviews also. For example, interviews from people at the 'Kashmir University'.

What was your basic focus in the film?

The mass participation of Muslims in Sufism. Abut 80% of the world Muslims follow the Sufi path. It is the popular Islam. You will find a Dargah among two or three villages throughout India. People get kind of relief going to these Dargahs. Today some people are doing terrorism in the name of Islam. But Sufi Muslims do not want these fights and terrorism. They adopt the local culture. You see, the culture of Bengali



Muslims is very similar to that of Hindus but, you cannot say that they are not Muslims.

Since this subject involves a lot of music, did you have any advantages being a sound designer and recordist in terms of the sound design?

The subject is definitely very rich in terms of music and language. People are talking in Urdu, Hindi and in different languages and there are songs in these dialects. There are many songs and qawwalis that we recorded but could not use. For any sound designer, it's an advantage as it has different locations which have different ambiences with local flavors. So, you are mixing all kinds of devotional songs from Kashmir, Agra, Delhi, Bengal and Ajmer.

I remember one particular situation which begins with music and when it goes outside it is more of reverberation happening. So what was the idea?

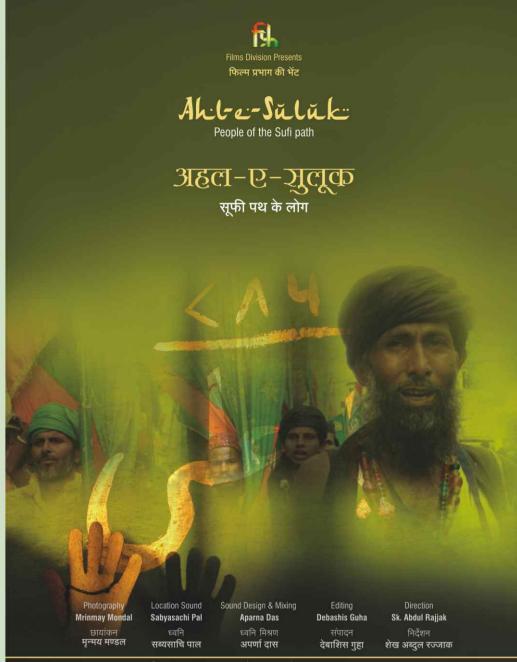
Sayeed Md. Sayeed Kamil, Sajjada-Nisin of Dragah Mirza Kamil Sahib in Srinagar was reciting Naats from a book sitting in the Dargah. When we come out, we see trees and vast mountains around. So, we thought of spreading the recitation all over the surround space by adding some reverberation.

What was the idea behind the last sequence where one boul singer is singing and dancing, being a continuous long take?

Basically, it was also my editor's choice. We decided upon this as it was not going well in cuts. Even the opening shot of the 'ghoda gadi wala' is single take. The camera was moving but we did not cut. So, we follow two kind of cutting designs for the film. Wherever we could we have tried to have a single take.

Is there anything else that you





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would like to say about this particular film which you think is important for people to know?

Actually through this film I wish people to understand Sufism and hence

promote Sufism. That is the only path for Muslims where you are accommodative. If you are a Sufi, you are accommodative. Let's be accommodative, let's be pluralistic in nature.









FTII Pune graduate writer-director Gurbir Grewal boasts of three decades of invaluable experience in the field of Indian cinema. He has more than 50 short films to his credit. In 1986, he won National Award 'Rajat Kamal' for a short film. He also served as a jury member to select films for Indian panorama section of International Film Festival of India 1992. Apart from having directed numerous TV serials, Gurbir has also helmed 4 feature length films in Punjabi language. They have been acclaimed both by audiences as well as journalists. A leading member of film writers' association, Gurbir has also taught at AMU and Jamia. As part of an Indian Pavilion entry, his short film "Coffee house' was selected for prestigious Cannes International Film Festival 2009. In this Interview film critics LALIT RAO finds out his approach and vision view on Punjabi Cinema.

Since the past three years there has been at least one big release in Punjabi language every year. What are the reasons for this recent change?

The change gradually started happening from the year, 2002. Technically there was not much awareness. Qualified film makers like Manmohan Singh shifted towards Punjabi cinema and started making films that qualitatively could be compared with Bollywood cinema. Of course, the scale of making can't be compared because both markets are different but quality wise Punjabi cinema improved alot. And the people, who had moved away from Punjabi cinema because of its content, slowly started coming back to cinema halls because after all it was their own language. They want to see their own cinema in their own language, which deals with their issues and their culture. Slowly it started picking up and

by 2010 it really picked up. I won't say content wise it was very good but, there were certainly good films being made of and on. It started with comedy films and this phase continued for about three years. I won't say these were the formative years of Punjabi cinema because Punjabi cinema started in 1930's. But, now it started evolving itself. Finally, the audiences are appreciating the content. Comedy is only one aspect. They really want to see varied content.

Do you think multiplexes also play an important role in the release phenomena?

My first Punjabi film Mannat was released in 2006, there were hardly any multiplexes then and getting your film released on single screens was a really tough job. The multiplexes have come up during 2006 to 2016, and that has really helped regional cinema. Also the international market that was not really explored earlier because of technically poor quality is being explored now, specifically in Canada, U.K. and now Australia. After all Punjabi people away from their home want to see their own language, home land, and culture.

Does the tax free status in Punjab for Punjabi language films really help?



Tax exemption has definitely helped because If the footfall increases because of lesser ticket price, it will definitely help the producer and director.

What according to you is a decent release in Punjabi films?

If you say that all the Punjabi films are making profits then this is not true. There is a mind set with the exhibitors and distributors that you need a

particular actor with a face value, only then you get more number of shows. This market is not as big as Hindi films so, you have to recover your money from overseas. We should get decent number of shows. Chandigarh is one place that gives you maximum shows. Despite the fact that Amritsar has more population than Chandigarh, Chandigarh has more multiplexes and that's why you get more shows and much better returns



as compared to other cities.

Which are the other important cities which can fetch good Money for Punjabi Film?

There are cities which have potential like Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Bathinda, and Patiala. But there is still a lot of scope for more theatres in these cities. Like Ludhiana and Amritsar each have almost double the population of Chandigarh but, number of multiplexes is much lesser than it has.

Is it the only the population or the gentry also matters in Punjabi cinema?

That affects the content oriented Hindi cinema and Hollywood cinema and they get a very good audience in Chandigarh. They may not get as good an audience in Ludhiana or Amritsar. That's because of the metropolitan culture of Chandigarh and its educational development. People like to watch English movies in English. While in other cities the dubbed versions of Hollywood films would do well. But, I don't think Punjabi cinema is affected because of that.

In Hindi cinema there is a term called satellite sale. Does that exist for the Punjabi territories, for Punjabi films?

So far, unfortunately, satellite rights don't get you a very decent amount. There are hardly one or two channels like PTC and MH1that show Punjabi movies. In case other cinema channels come forward and start accepting Punjabi movies dubbed in Hindi on lines of South Indian films.

Punjabi channel programs have grown in terms of content. But, what

are the reasons that Punjabi cinema is still not so lucrative in terms of revenue?

Well somewhere the government has to support the regional cinema. Doordarshan Punjabi is one channel that has a good reach then why are they not buying quality Punjabi films to show? They need to support good Punjabi films by giving them a decent price. Long back there used to be Punjab Film Cooperation that used to subsidize. But, wherever finances are involved many wrong practices also enter into that. So the best would be to make Punjab more shoot friendly and try to create the infrastructure in the state itself. Once the film has been made then a 'competent committee' that comprises of different people should rate the film so that there is no solo decision involved in that. Let them take the decision about what kind of help can be given to that film to promote it.

Why is there no state funded film school in Punjab?

It was announced to make a film city in Punjab. A film city should have a film school that is dedicated to films. It has been announced many times but it has not taken off.

What is critical for Punjabi Cinema at the moment?

Punjabi films are not getting sufficient release in terms of theatres and the number of shows. The promotion is so expensive that all producers can't afford it. So one needs to explore more online releases called VOD, which will definitely help cinema. Anybody from anywhere in the world can watch it by paying a certain amount.











Dadi Pudumjee needs no introduction to the puppetry lovers in India and abroad. He has single handedly been responsible for introducing Indian puppet theatre to the entire world. Being an accomplished artiste in the rare skill of puppetry, he was chosen by film director Vishal Bhardwaj to make relevant as well as visually stunning puppets for his song "Bismil" taken from the film "Haider". The Puppets not only enhanced the story telling but gave a new dimension to the picturization of songs in Bollywood. In this interview **NARESH SHARMA**, finds out more about the whole process and his vision about using puppetry in the songs.

How did the collaboration for the song 'Bismil' happen between you and the makers in terms of the design of the puppets and other elements?

The whole thing fell into place because we were all working as a group. More than a year before the film, The Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris was staging the opera created on a Karnatak folk tale, The Flowering Tree, composed by John Adams. Vishal Bhardwaj was invited to direct it. This was more minimalistic and modern in which Châtelet was very keen that we don't do a typical Indiana Jones India sort of thing

and it should be something different and minimal. As this was a folk tale Vishal was keen to use puppets in the same. I was introduced to Vishal by the theatre director Salim Arif. Vishal came to Delhi, met us and we decided what type of puppets we could use, we were dancer looking for a choreographer who could be very contemporary and not do what was always expected of Bollywood. I had worked ages ago with a dancer coreographer Sudesh Adhana who now lives and works in Norway. So, Sudesh came down and his work was liked and the choreography took shape for the opera. At that point Vishal mentioned that he would like to use puppets in a performance/dance piece, which is the play within a play in the film 'Haider'. I think the reason why Vishal wanted to use puppets-possibly the puppets give an objective nature to the two characters in the dance performance and also the choreography was very different from the normal Bollywood dance.

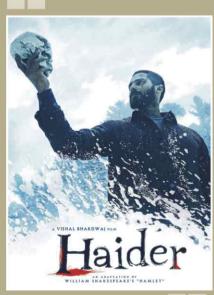
What was your contribution in terms of execution like where exactly the puppets will come in and how? I remember before the song starts, a ceremony is happening and Shahid is wearing a mask on his head, did you also contribute to such design

elements?

The idea came when Sudesh came down and we were doing long periods of rehearsals for the dance sequence. He wanted to create a space in that architectural setting, The Martand Temple, like a performance space. I gave an idea for the bird or the mask. I remember ages ago visiting Kashmir, in the snow, you had these big Ravens and they were very obvious, black against the white, with a big beak and their sound, and that is where this large bird like figure which then became a more ominous evil figure was born. I drew some sketches and these masks were put on poles. If you noticed, there is a semi circle of these masks in the dance area and also at the back with red hair. That then became the Leitmotif for the big character which is on top of the door of the monument, which was supposed to suggest the uncle, because that was like a domukhi/ double faced character, as the lawyer and when he turns around he becomes this evil face. So it was a slightly metaphoric figure. That same face was then used as this little mask and I think Vishal wanted to connect it with the Kashmiri folk theatre. 'Bhand Pather' who also use masks. Now all these things were rehearsed in Delhi and then taken and reworked thereon site.









The director or sometimes the choreographer thinks that this works with puppets, but the puppeteer knows the language and use of puppets, and that is where I came in and had to adapt and say, "No this is how it could be done or this is how it could be done better". That is how it was put together. So I would say it was a great collaborative group work.

I remember during this whole narrative the big puppet with two heads comes into the picture and the rotation of the mask begins. How did this idea of having two different masks rotating instead of a single one, came into being?

There are many puppet figures all over the world including Rajasthan, called 'Behrupiyas', trick figures or doppel gängers. They are male, female figures or transformation figures in puppet traditions all over the world. We were using this bird or this evil sort of a hawk like face that would be used continuously in the performance, this

was then connected with the human face of Haider's uncle character in the film that came from the design element that I presented and it was liked.

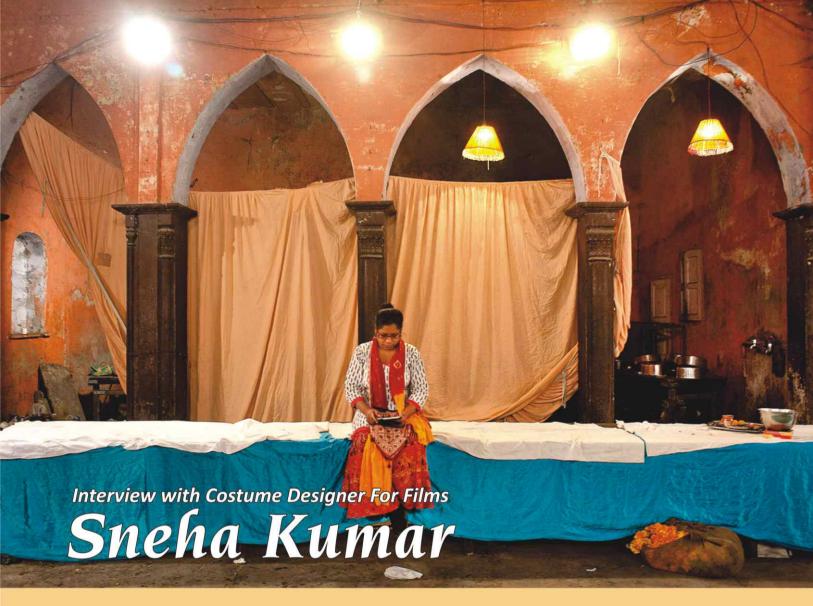
Why do you think that puppetry has not been integrated in Indian Cinema despite most films having huge budgets?

I really don't know what to say because we have used them even in ad films. In fact one or two very first Pepsi advertisements were done with muppet's, and also the BPL Vacuum Cleaner advertisement ages ago. But it all depends on the director who was aware of things and I'm sure all the directors today are also aware of puppets. So I'm not sure why it doesn't happen. Vishal in that way is very interested to look at different things. He took that risk and he got a choreographer who is totally different and who eventually won the National Award for the Best Choreographer for the song 'Bismil'. So that is I suppose the director's call, how he wants to deal

with it. In fact some years ago one was involved with a full scale puppet film, directed by Prakash Kovelamudi called" A Belly Full of Dreams"

Would you like to share anything specific related to 'Haider' and the use of puppets?

It was a fabulous teamwork I would say, which is of the director, camera man ,puppeteers and the dancers. The dancers were not Bollywood people. They all were from Delhi and Bangalore. There were long periods of rehearsals because often bollywood is very fixed and it's fast, you've got the music and it's done and they know what to do, but; in this case we were treading on very different ground. So this teamwork was very special. The way we would do things and then the incidents there, putting it together, working in minus degrees, getting up early morning at Pahalgam, and going to the site. All those things are memorable, but above all hats off to the director who believed in puppets.



As a design student of NSD where one also learns costume designing what is the primary difference in terms of costume design for theatre as well as for film?

In Haryana, when I was doing theatre our focus was to create

awareness through theatre. Obviously, our issues related to social inequality and injustice, our characters belonged to marginalized section of society like poor, dalit, labourer, farmers, children, women. Hence, the focus was on "subject" or "issue" or "agenda". We worked very minimal on the designing



part as we suffered due to lack of funds and guidance. But I got admission in National School of Drama (NSD) one of the epic institutions of its own. It was there only that as a student I learned the importance Of designing, I learnt how the crafts and techniques of designing could be the one of the "character" which enhances the quality of the production. For this reason during my NSD studies I saw lots of productions done by reputed companies of national and international quality. In second year, I opted for design and direction and while studying I learnt the importance of perspective as how perspective meaning "point of view" could change the meaning of an art. Madame Dolly Ahluwalia taught me costume designing by working with her only I learnt how designing for theatre differs than designing for 70mm screen. In theatre productions sitting arrangement or sight line decides what audience is expecting but in 70mm screen the "camera frame"

decides it. It means in theatre the visual distance is static but in films we can have different visual distances i.e. long shot, mid shot or close up and this distance decides what to emphasis(focus). In cinema through close up I could show the detailing and by giving detailing I could give my visual perspective which obviously will be specific and different. However, this is not possible in theatre.

You have worked in the film productions too. How do you design for a film which is more of art house in terms of the realism rather than the glamour factor?

Until now, I have worked for 3 films as an assistant costume designer. I have done films such as Well done Abba (modern social satire and a realistic film), love Aajkal (period & modern stylistic film) and Rockstar (fashion, style and modern film). I have also worked on 6 films as an independent costume designer which comprise of both extreme realistic and modern stylish glamour films where style is also an important factor. At this point I want to clarify that whatever might be the genre, the film will be "realistic", glamourous or fantasy but the process is always the same. But in periodic film production authenticity is very important. Hence the costume designer must have knowledge of period costumes, the history of costumes, style and its industrial progression. It is only then that the costume designer would understand and would be able to express the point of view of the director or the writer who first conceived "the



idea". In art/ documentary film where realism is the basis of director's surrealistic approach towards the film, the realism is the face of an psychological expression. For example the film "Ghodeko Jalebi Khilane Leja Riyahoon" directed by Anamika Haksar is about the city of old Delhi, its history, people and their stories which is wiped out by urban smog. Hence, the whole film is surrounded by almost four hundred characters living their lives on

streets of old Delhi like loaders, pick pockets, sweetmeat vendors, tourist guides etc. The description of the character itself draws the character's characteristics. I only do the visual translation by sketching it on the paper to keep the characteristics in my mind. Realistic film demands authenticity of period and its local background. Indeed, this film has larger landscape travels from reality to dream. When I design each character, I have to study character's social, economic back ground, psychology, survival instinct and conditions. In simple words his/her nature creates the look of the character and the look of the character that depends on the type of fabric (colour line texture)I am using, the character look should be the part of the location, part of street corner. When you are doing a realistic film Ageing is very important factor to represent the reality. This film is kind of a surrealistic film as the character goes from reality to the dream. When a character moves from reality to dream, the character looks different in reality and transforms in dream. Sometimes it is dressed logically,





realistically. There are times when it is dressed in fantastic costumes. Some other films on which I worked are "Point of view", a psycho horror thriller and "One last time H2SO4", on acid attack. Both are films set in urban milieu on revenge. The style is as important as the psychology. This is the reason why "Psychology" is one of the characteristics as it works as "motif" in costume as a form of pattern, colour, line ,texture etc. By watching motif, design again and again audience could easily relate to character's psychology. In totality, working for an commercial film needs the same attention and knowledge like an art film. The only difference is that the perspective and purpose changes.

The small property can also become a part of costume design which will showcase the whole character's attitude, nature and psychology. Can you just elaborate on that?

At this point, I would like to give an example of Hollywood director Robert Zemeckis's film Forrest Gump starring Tom Hanks. The film's frame starts by following a white feather which falls on the ground near a "shoe". The shoes of

Forrest Gump. He starts by narrating his story and this shoe makes its appearance on many occasions in the film telling Forrest Gump's story, the story of his childhood, his youth. This shoes changes his whole purpose of life. In this film the designer and the director have used one character's property to narrate the whole film very interestingly. In the same manner, I have also searched for things namely hand property, personal box etc which could describe character's psyche and narrate its characteristics which moves story one step ahead. It is as if in the film for one last time I have given hand ring to the protagonist of the film who could move it in circles right and left in many different ways. Whenever he thinks he moves this ring like a wheel. This one small element could portrait the psychology the character. Firstly, I always read the character described in the script than I talk to the director about what he thinks about the character. Later I see what are the possibilities to create and give a physical aspect to the psychology of the character.

Before you were doing costume drama film but let us assume for example that this is a period drama film. How much research is important for the period drama?

It is very important. For a period drama film the authenticity of time, location space is a must because the director wants to recreate the past. This is the responsibility of a production

designer or costume designer to know how to recreate it by reconstructing the idea. Through line, color, pattern, design motif and texture of the fabric a designer could represent the feel of the era. The designer should also know the cutting patterns, construction and draping style. Region, tradition, religion, caste and community, geographical condition, food ,language, art, music, dance, rituals, social behavior which are part of the specific period also have influenced the costumes. For this precise reason when one carries out the research, all these things come with period correctness. It is then only it can be portrayed with authenticity.

For example as Angark has worn post independence were different than those used in 1700-1800. If you are unaware of this how you will represent the correct period. The Rajasthan king's Angarkha is different from that of Mysore's king. Where the stitching will be different so will be the pattern or embellishments on it. Hence, the research work is very important. The other point to keep in mind is the selection of fabric for period play or the film.

Once you have heard the screenplay of any film, how do you go about choosing the fabric for a film which is set in contemporary times?

When we are studying the character, we need to know what is the nature of the character. Is he or she is soft or hard by nature or how do we





want to portray that character. Which part of her psychologically do we want to reflect?

Attitude of the characters describe the texture of the fabric. As I told you earlier, firstly I do sketch of the character on paper. Secondly I reassure who is doing that character because we design according to the actor's body. Every actor's body is different from the other. What is his/her height, shoulder and other measurements and what is the character's body (spine of the character) which we want to show big i.e. small, tall, fat, stout etc. Later, we will select

the type of fabric which will create the specific effect. It is obvious that we select a lot of options to keep in mind the look of the character. Choosing fabric is easy when one is designing for a modern contemporary film.

Stitching of the fabric is equally important because in a close up if the stitching is not proper it will be seen. For this reason, do you work with certain special kind of tailors?

I have my own team experts of cutting, master tailor, ladies tailor, Indian wear, ladies tailor for western wear, gents tailors for Indian Shervani, Gents tailor for Western coat. In our film industry the tailor works very fast. Indeed, they are experts in their work. This is why in cinema we have a specific tailor for every specific work.

You have worked with people like Dolly Ahluwalia. What distinguishes Dolly Ahluwalia as a designer from other people in the field?

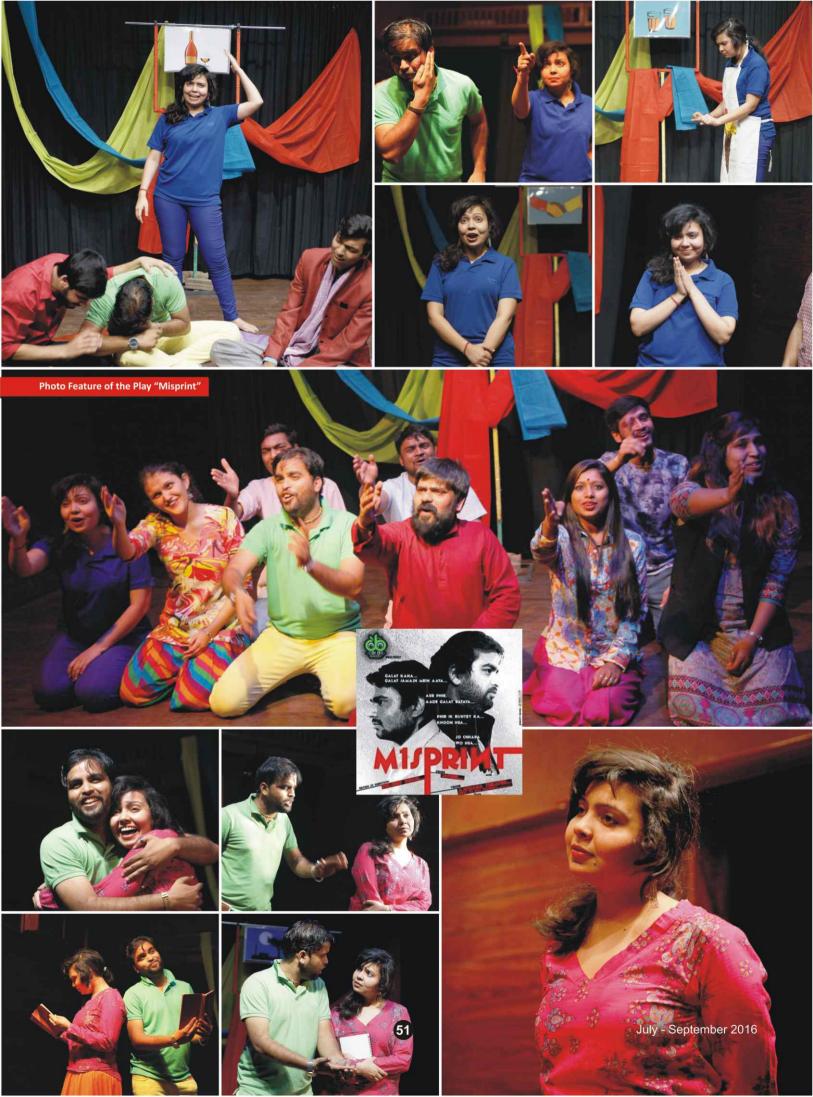
Dolly madam has huge experience in theatre and films. In theatre she worked in costume when theatre was in its golden period. She has worked with iconic directors namely Ibrahim Elkazi, B.V. Karanth, Mohan Maharishi etc.

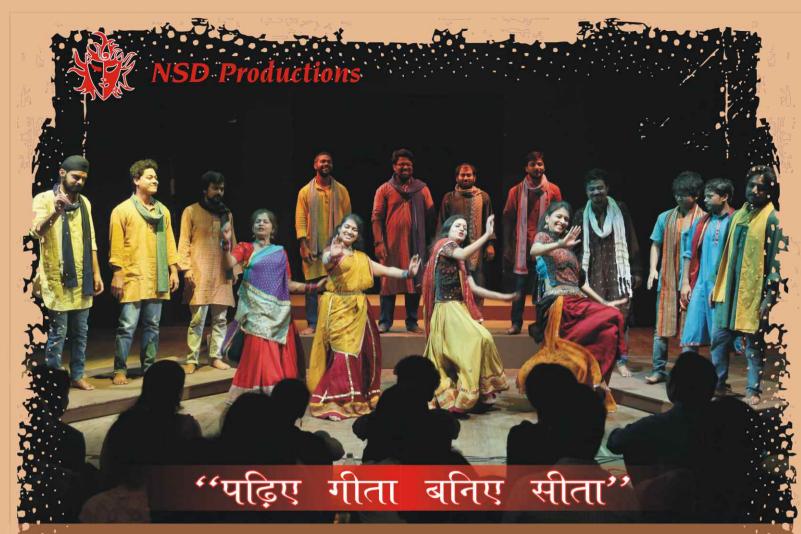
It is quite obvious that this huge experience separates her from other designers. As we all know she is also a very great actor. Hence, the actor inside her skin gives her more vulnerable thinking when she designs a character. The other big factor is she works very sensibly and intuitively. She is aesthetically so strong yet so practically knowledgeable. She openly welcomes the ideas that's why we can see freshness in her designing. She has great knowledge of period. We can see the authenticity in her period films. Films like "Bandit Queen" and "Water" are just some of the great examples.











Sometime the poetry may sound simple while reading and that's where the "composer" and performer comes in to the picture. Among various productions presented by NSD students, 1st year students performed poetry recital in Samaukh, under the able guidance of "Ajay Kumar". Among chosen pieces of poetry, Some of them were taken from the collection of "Raghuvir Sahay", a versatile Hindi poet.Most fascinating was the "पढ़िए गीता बनिए सीता". It was not just the composition of the poem but also innovative addition of numbers 1,2,3,4 which gave a certain feel of rhyme while doing the dancing enactment. The other composition performances were equally entertaining. The whole "Chorus performance" helped the students to understand the rich poetry tradition of Hindi literature. I am hopeful that it will inspire some design students to think about final year diploma productions in poetry manner. It reminds me of 90 mins Performance I saw last year called "Mukti" Directed by talented director

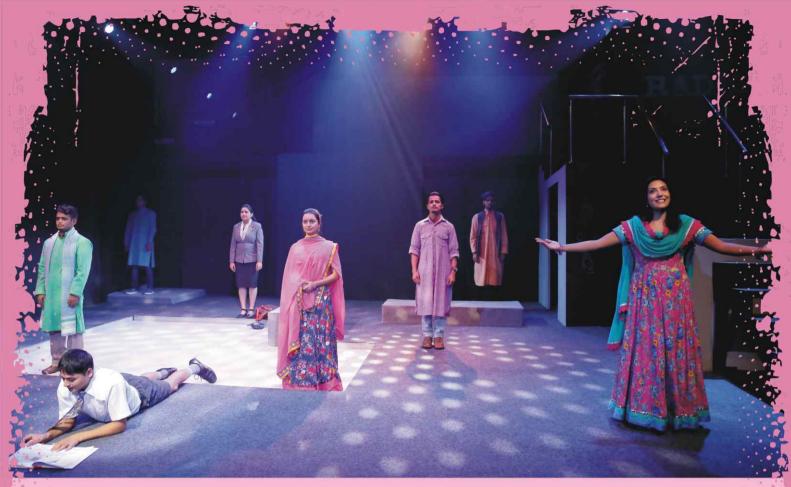
Kunal Kuldeep. It was based on the poetry of Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh and was showcased as a part of Theater Festival Organized by Bapi Bose.

The 2nd year students were equally fortunate as they got the opportunity to be trained under Bansi Kaul while preparing for " Khel Mandli Khel". The play was based on Hasya Chudamani, originally written by Vatsaraj. It had improvised text by "Ravidra Tripathy". The play offered enough space to learn acting as well as design for the students. One was engrossed for almost 2 hours of colorful comical drama which comments in very subtle way on contemporary practices going on in the society at the name of Religion. The play used the elements of mime, clowning to create the humor and offered enough opportunities for every acting student to showcase his or her talent. There were few occasions where ordinary properties like big "wood cutting" saw, oversized

shoes add a feel of Surrealism and helped in evoking humor. The play's brochure was the only minor disappointment as its designing should not have been left to some - "I Wanna Be A Warhol" kind of person.

"Radio-Freedom" directed by talented Prof Abhilash Pillai was another landmark student production done with the 3rd year. Abhilash didn't bank upon readymade text of a play but he evolved his productions and worked hard along with writer Rajesh Tailang. Radio premise was insightful decision to choose as music is its hemoglobin. The play aptly uses the multimedia to give a visual dimension to otherwise audio domain. Most of the characters are from today's FM word except the girl's family. The play investigates today's radio station politics, impact of radio on younger generation. It offered variety of characters to the acting students to showcase their best. At the sound level, one gets the proper audio perspective when the scene is inside





the RJ cabin. The most innovative scene was when family members rebel to girl's orthodox father wonderfully played by Chaitanya Solankar. They were wearing 'goggles" whose price tags were not removed. Among the

excellent cast, Chandan Kumar stole the show with his innocent child like character.

Virasat was another "text book" play which has been performed many

times in the past. NSD's 1styear students performed VIRASAT directed by ex NSD alumnus "Anirudha Kudwad". One of the most appealing images was the one created by Indira Tiwari as Bhauji when she adorns herself with a variety of jewels made for the women of the grand old family of Deshpand.

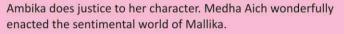
Performances of various characters like "Rachna Gupta" as chirpy daughter Ranju, Rahul kumar as Bhaskar and Ajay Khatri in the role Chandu were convincing.

Among supporting characters, Debashee Chakraborty as Dadi lends a heart rending performance in the end, whose otherwise vague and strident mumblings add to the morbid atmosphere prevailing in the house. The production offered intimate and engaging moments and uses the background music in appropriate manner to add value to the entire production.

There are plays which any actor would look forward to perform. One such production is "Ashadh Ka Ek Din" directed by Robin Das" and performed by 3rd year students. Bornali Borah as







Both Rahil Bhardwaj and Vivek Kumar (double cast) performanced the epic character of Kalidas with a remarkable conviction . Souti Chakraboty's lighting adds the visual appeal to the overall performance. Last but not the least is the soothing music composed by Jilmil Hajarika. It is so subtle that without being prominent, it enhances the performances by various actors.

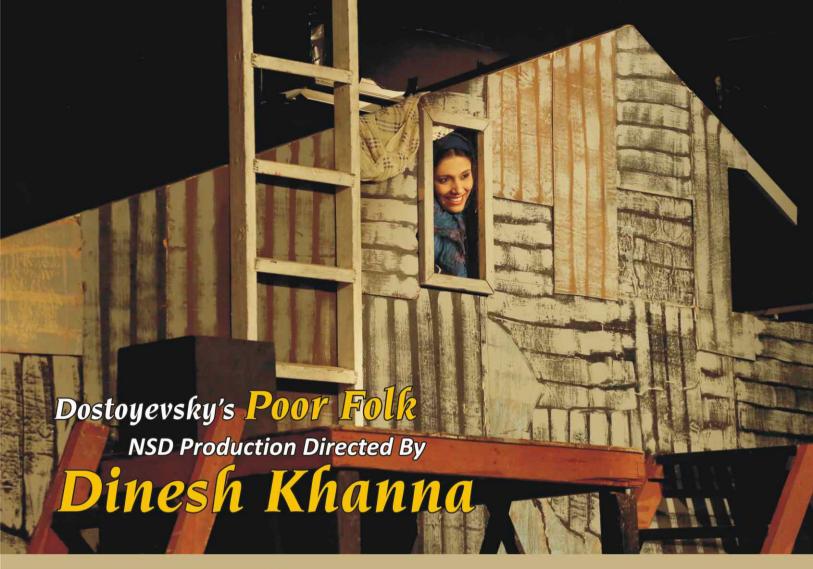














Dinesh Khanna, a veteran theater director as well as an actor showcases his magic again while working with 1st year NSD students. Though in officially terminology, it is called scene work, but it was complete production done professionally. Be it set design, music, selection of costumes, lighting or student's performance it was at par with any theatrical production which one gets to see in BRM. Dinesh Ji selected "Poor Folk" by Dostovasky to make you feel the life, dreams of ordinary people of St. Petersburg of 1923's Russia. Many talented students got the chance to perform the characters like Makar, Barbara, etc.

If the opening sequence was musically mesmerizing where you see one of the character playing Saxophone, it was equally hypnotizing in the end where all the characters come on the stage and make the ending memorable. Many a times words are not enough to describe the experience you go through while watching a performance like "poor folk" but to put it simply: throughout the ninety minutes Students' performances were so subtle that you feel as if you are watching a film instead of a play. In this interview, editor NARESH SHARMA finds out the process of making "Poor Folk".

What we saw is called scene work but for me it was like a complete play. How did you get this idea of using short novels as scene work for the students?

I feel an actor is a storyteller and he tells a story using emotions, imagination, and his thought process and he expresses himself via text. Basically this was an acting exercise and I was thinking of a writer whose novel describes an emotional life, thought process, feelings, and the internal and external atmosphere and these are the basic things we look into when we train an actor. That's why I selected this novel.

In the novel two people write letters to each other. Here is a man 'Makar Alekseyevich' who is 55, and an orphan girl 'Barbara' who is 25, and they share a friendship. They live in the same big house having many rooms, a big courtyard, windows, stairs, doors, and gardens. There is a big palace and between them this love story emerges.

The writing of 'Dostoyevsky' is the writing of self approach where characters talk with themselves and where the characters realize about themselves and take inspiration from his/her own experiences. When we give training to actors the first lesson is about self inspiration and self criticism.

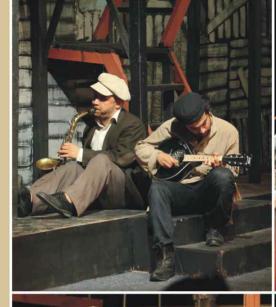
In the novel they write letters to each other, take care of each other and in this process they become very passionate about each other.

What was the innovative part that you evolved, which was not there in the novel?

The novel itself is a self expression and the main purpose was to explore themselves via their personal life, student life and childhood experiences. First the students explored themselves and realized what sort of a person they are and how much of love, compassion, and tolerance elements do they have.

My aim was to give an experience of two characters to the entire class. Makar who is a clerk living in St. Petersburg living in a big city like Mumbai, life is tough, survival is tough. Both are struggling for survival

First I converted the text of the novel into soliloquies, conversation, self

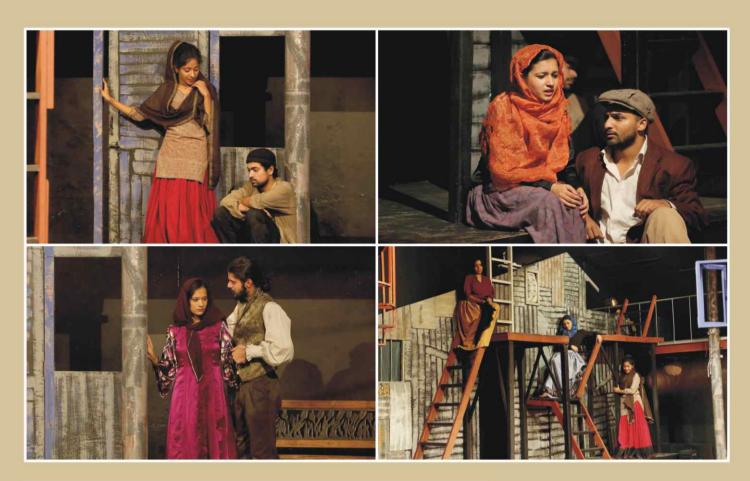


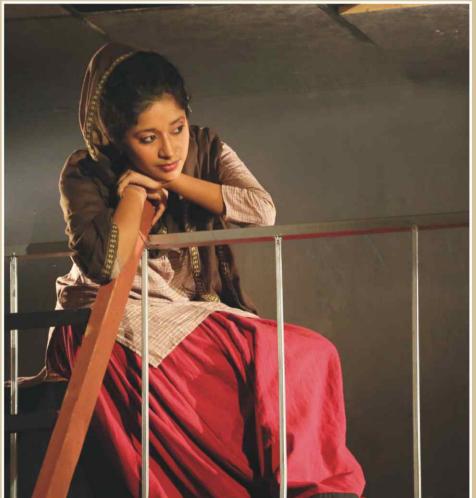












talks and in this way used the script more artistically and imaginatively. Not only the emotions but the atmosphere described is also illusionary.

So I gave many boys students the role of Makar and many girl students the role of Barbara. I selected groups of two actors. They first started working as single, then two, and then three actor combinations. The third character is a person, Shriman Bykov, who is involved with Barbara and she was the maid servant in a house where she was exploited and she ran away. Three different actors played these and each actor focused on one aspect of the characters.

What are the three aspects which are displayed by the three different characters?

When Shriman Bykov enters he starts forcing Barbra to come back to his house. There he requests her, brain washes and convinces her that she is wasting her life and this is another force which is pulling Barbara.

Makar is trying that Barbara should stay here as she is safe here. Shriman Bykov is a healthy man, has power and wants Barbara to live with him.
Psychologically she is not in a condition to stay and Makar can only support her for sometime but not for the whole life.
So, in between this tragedy happens and at last she goes.

How did you devise the last scene which is very touching and visually very powerful?

The last scene of the novel is set in the rainy season which is cold and foggy. In fact the atmosphere plays an important role. It is raining and the rain is also saying something. It is also a character. The last point is when the weather is totally against their destiny. I visualized it this way that the girl lives upstairs and Makar lives somewhere downstairs in one of the rooms. They have never entered each other's rooms earlier. But at the last point she comes in his room and Makar goes in her room. Both the things happen simultaneously when it's raining.

She is setting the room for the first time, the letters, the shoes, the coat and the overall room position. She is setting the things very emotionally and he is upstairs in her room. He sees the bed, the almirah and the window from where she peeps every time. At the same time a horse cart is approaching. So the

whole atmosphere was very emotionally charged. Actors are saying many things and asking each other to not go. This is a very tragic scene and I utilized the stairs and made many actors stand on it at various heights.

How did you work out the dialogue part from the novel?

Dialogues are the most important part of the scene work exercise because this is the last phase of our acting exercise for the 1st year students. The dialogues have been written in a detailed manner not only from the acting point of view but also in terms of the description of the atmosphere and instructions etc. The entire combination constitutes the super text which means it has everything in it.

The novel is written in the letter format. I selected a few things and took the liberty of converting them into independent dialogues so that it can become an interesting episodic structure. I divided it into small episodes so that every actor gets some good dialogues and interesting situations to enact the text. So, the idea behind taking this novel was to show how a strong love story can be divided amongst twenty five students and give the same experience.

There is a scene where one of the characters plays a saxophone. Where did this idea come from?

Fortunately, one of the students comes from a family that runs a marriage band as their family business. He can play many instruments. I felt that the saxophone is an instrument which gives the idea of dreaminess and imagination.

He was playing the role of one of the Makars so I thought why not start the play with a one minute piece of music where the audience can feel the atmosphere and through this lyrical atmosphere the play begins and slowly it captures the whole atmosphere and the events start unfolding.

The background music was the most important aspect in the entire play. So, how did you select the music?

The music was pre-recorded. We heard a variety of music like atmosphere music and signature music and we selected the piece according to the theme. At what point should which piece come was the main decision. We selected Western and Indian and it could be a lyrical song. The music should touch the audience and enhance the scene.

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Interview with

Chittaranjan

Tripathy

Chittaranjan Tripathi revives his best known production "Taj Mahal ka tender" with fresh and a different lot of talented actors of NSD repertory. Those who have seen last year's play "Chor Machaye Shor" with NSD's 2nd year students, know for sure that there will be something to carry home after the show. Besides adding value to the script, he tries to inculcate elements which only a visionary director can bring in. Be it music, choosing the actor working on their body language to portrait a specific character, every aspect gets due attention which will make his production memorable. His production convey complexities of life in a convincing manner without making them abstract. In this interview NARESH SHARMA, tries to explore his vision about "TAJ MAHAL KA TENDER".

Almost eighteen years ago you did the same production 'Taj Mahal ka Tender' with the NSD repertory. So what was the basic difference in the current script and the previous script you worked on?

There is hardly any difference as far as the content is concerned. But yes we tried to make it more topical, more contemporary, keeping the soul of the play undisturbed.

You have given some of the characters a particular stylized body language. So how did you work out the body gestures for characters in this play?

TMKD is a satire on the corrupt babus and the political class. The obscenity of the exploiter and the helplessness of the exploited are depicted through the psychological gestures of the characters.

If you take the case of the lady political leader in your play, you have taken shades of various politicians and given your characters stylish loud expression. How did you devise such characters in terms of the way they will speak?

A director brings in his emotional memory to the world he creates. This character is a mirror image of the uncouth, loud mouthed, corrupt lady politicians of our times.

You have also used other languages like for Vipin's character who is a Punjabi speaking contractor. Was there any agenda behind choosing a particular language?

The issue of corruption is not parochial, rather it's national. Hence there is a combination of lingos and languages in the play spoken by various characters.

Please comment on the 'Men in Black' characters around the Emperor. Was it an inspiration from that film used in this context?

It has nothing to do with the film. They represent the inner babudom of the ruling class. They are indifferent and shrewd.

There was one particular dialogue in a scene in which Sudhir's assistant plays around with the word 'Kuch Kuch'. How was this evolved?

Many a times we say 'Yaar kuch karde, kuch soch le, us ladke mei kuch hai', etc. This very word 'kuch' has a lot of connotations, carrying contradictions and confusions.

Coming back to other elements like the 'red beacon with flasher' which is used on the ambulance and the VIP cars, but you have put it on the coffin. It was also used in your last production 'Chor Machaye Shor'. Do you have certain elements that you like to work around for an image in theatrical productions?

It is a surrealistic-satirical image of the vvip culture of the ruling class.

Art has its beauty in the multiple meanings derived by various spectators. I recollect there was a scene in which a kite is stuck to a pole and later towards the end of the play a puppet dog appears on stage. Please comment.

Yes, I am that kite and you are that kite. We are like 'Trishanku'- limbo between one's goals or desires and one's



current state or possessions. We lack our stand and the power to raise our voice against the ongoing developments which are unjust.

Now coming to the second part of your question, a yelling dog is considered as bad omen. At the end of the play I wanted to say that worse is yet to happen.

In your production I felt that some actors who otherwise hardly get a chance to showcase their talent were given the opportunity to perform their best. How did you choose the artists for playing the various characters?

The process of casting in my case is very fair and transparent. I appeal to all the actors to come prepared for whatever role they are interested in performing and perform it on the floor, in front of all. Whosoever fairs, he gets the opportunity to emote the character. However, I do not ignore the imagery of the character created in my mind while going through this process.

Would you like to say something else about 'Taj Mahal ka Tender'?

In 1998 I was given this opportunity by the then director of NSD, Prof. Ram Gopal Bajaj. So I owe all my success, in general and the success of the play in particular to him. I have an emotional attachment to this play as this is the play which got me recognition in theater and through it I discovered my strength as a director. This play gave me the courage to explore my creative vision. It ran for almost a decade before it got stalled. After so many years The NSD Rep Co wanted to revive it and we did justice to such a noble decision. For this I am grateful to the director of NSD Mr. Waman Kendre and Mr. Suresh Sharma, the present Repertory Chief.



Suggest Few Tips On Course Content For Short Terms Acting Course

There are certain basic Fundamentals which need to be definitely covered for any short term acting course.

- An actor, I believe most importantly should know his or her body as his instrument for acting. How exactly it moves, whether it's flexible or not. How to get full potential out of his it, in terms of body line, spine, and centre. To acquire that, an actor should indulge in all kinds of warm ups, flexibility exercises like stretching, yoga, running and jogging can help. These workouts are basically meant to activate the body. Apart from the class activities, an actor has to continue the workouts outside the class also. Running and stretching can be done in the morning, etc.
- The next phase embraces understanding of the 'Breathing'. An actor should know exactly how to breathe and how to have control over it. Breathing pattern of character helps a

performer to comprehend its different characteristics, which can help to make or break a performance. An actor should know how to activate body parts using Breathing. They can attain so by doing 'pranayama'. This knowledge can help them to use their breath in activating and exercising the areas of their body which till now they considered immovable.

Another important aspect for actors is the 'Voice and Speech'. Though they sound like synonyms but they are not. Voice is the sound, produced through the movement of the vocal chords and breathes whereas speech is the figures of pronunciation. Voice can be generated using five resonators present in the body. Usually an actor should know about the kind of resonator which he/she is using to disseminate their voices. Speech is the dialogues and languages used. Actors should know to change the timbers because accordingly we have to change our voice with the kind of character we are playing. As an actor, one should be able to classify the

voices with qualities of base, nasal or stammer with distinguishing tones of characters. One must listen to more dialogues; more of the surrounding sounds, dialect patterns, so that we can develop the speech accordingly.

- An actor should develop voice modulation. He should understand the pitch and tonal quality during the training process. He must learn about the levels of his voice i.e., till what point he can shout and what is the lower value of the voice. He can use 'word stretch' exercise using different modulations. He must learn to pronounce alphabets and vowels clearly. How slow, fast, and randomly you can speak and whether you can elaborate without a language or not.
- It is important for an actor to check his improvement, so he should follow a performance module in small intervals of time. An actor should take one piece of text and should record the performance. He should see that later and will be able to derive whether he

performed fully or not. Actors should repeat this after a certain intervals to understand deficient factors.

- Along with voice and speech an actor should understand the 'Rhythm'. Rhythm includes sound patterns, music beats, environmental rhymes, designed music, songs etc. Rhythm leads to an expression moving through the sound. So, basically whatever we speak, whatever we think, there is a rhythm in it. Rhythm has pace with movement and expression, slow rhythm, fast rhythm, rhythm for happiness, sadness, anxiety etc. An actor should be acquainted with the rhythm of the character that he's going to perform. So, once you are familiar with rhythm than come practice. The actor should perform in the presence of a piece of music again and again. After a point the actor will understand that the rhythm is affecting his monologue. The rhythm locates all kinds of pauses in the texts and expressions in the monologue. Performer can also change the genre of rhythm that's been playing. It can be a sad, melodious or jolly in nature. We can make out how a character's whole body rhythm changes with the music and the surroundings. Like if we are in traffic, the traffic actually makes us shout a lot because we have to project ourselves so that the other person can listen to us. So in that way an actor should definitely know about the rhythm of his body.
- An actor usually stuck to perform its own regional training which bounds them to limited performance. So, while been in the training process an

- actor should emerge as an open learner with wide area of interest and rather being on the safe side, he should accept challenges like speaking in the dialects of other languages, understanding the dimensions of the observations of different characters. An actor should take dialogues and languages of other regions, so that he can explore about the kind of endurance and flexibility he has while performing. He should not be a bound actor with a limited scope of performance. Self awareness for an actor is very important.
- I would most importantly add about Natya Shastra. The Natya Shastra identifies nine 'rasas' with nine corresponding 'Bhava' (mood). It describes all kind of acting, what an actor should know and how it can be emerged. I think that Natva Shastra can embrace an important training module for a contemporary actor. Natya Shastra is absolutely useful in the present time because training comprises of certain things which we have to fabricate in a sequence. Natya Shastra fabricates it before the training itself. When we go through Natya Shastra, we can understand an overview of what an actor should have, what kind of 'bhava' and 'rasa' he should work upon, and what kind of things will affect him. Like a space affects him a lot, like what is the performing area where he is performing. So, Natya Shastra tells this beforehand. When you are acting, the space is very important. Whether is it a 'mud' space or it's a 'built' space or it's a 'forest', where exactly are you performing? So directly

- or indirectly replicate the space present in the frame. Natya Shastra somehow elaborates all kinds of possibility of today's time.
- I think that an actor should be taught about acting in the frame and they should be more self aware about the presence of frame and how to act within it. Frame ought not to include the whole body but can use small bodily movements. If scene include long shot than facial expressions will be less visible. While during close-ups small expressions and details will be captured more. So the actor must understand the act and acting requirements. Along with the dream, they need to learn how to stand and react in front of the camera. They have to concentrate and learn the concepts, shots, frame division for acting in film or Television. How to establish eye contact with the camera, how to coordinate with the co-actor present in the sequence, and how exactly the camera moves around, these questions he have to search during the training process. To gain the confidence with the camera, he should do camera facing exercise again and again, which I think is very important for an actor during the training process.
- Though we cannot fasten a learning process, it is quite immense and wide in nature. An actor must keep his observation process always on. He should see, listen and observe as much as possible. As human beings we are full of possibilities, so we can learn by analyzing from outside.













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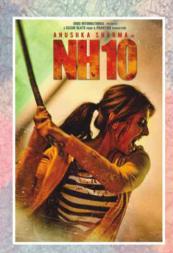
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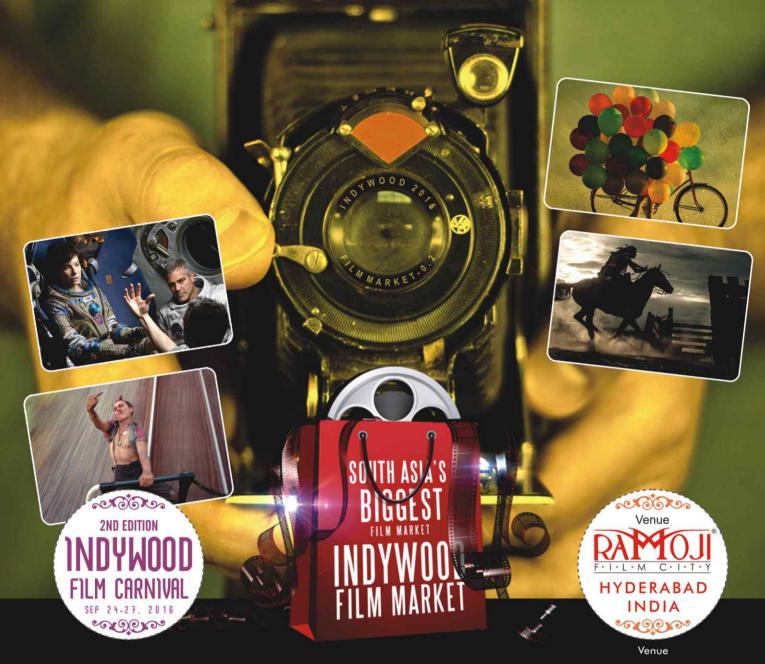
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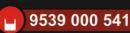




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