

BOLLYWOOD & BEYOND

THE P I A N O

A JANE CAMPION FILM



WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS
BEST WRITING
ACADEMY
AWARDS



PALME D'OR
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

WINNER
BEST ACTRESS
FESTIVAL DE
CANNES

Theatre

Karna Gatha
Dr. Rita Ganguly

Katzelmacher
Dr. Jacqueline Roussety

Anth Se Aarambh
Dr. Abhilash Pillai

Kenchuli
Neelesh Deepak

Cinema

Karsten Stoter
International Co-production

Sreekar Prasad
Film Editor

Bishwadeep Chatterjee
Sound Designer



Cover Story

Piano And The Eternal Triangle
by Shrikant Prabhu

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Letter Dated: 14-08-2019

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Edited, Published & Printed by Naresh Sharma

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Editor's Desk



Season's Greetings!

If you carefully look around yourself, you will see either glossy magazines about film stars or data-driven business magazines. These magazines are more about shows and box office collections. Even the trade magazines leave out significant information about the film business like revenue generated from the film, music rights, VoD platform etc. Such information helps and encourages new film makers to plan out their films. They aspire to seek information that is subdued from mainstream media such as successful Indo-European collaborations. This kind of information is not readily available to them.

We intend to focus on several aspects of film making, such as editing, sound design, and production design. 'Bollywood and Beyond' aims to strike a balance between art and commerce of Indian film making.

In this current issue, we embark on a journey of bringing together crucial knowledge on several characteristics of film making. Our issue covers interviews of editor Sreekar Prasad, sound designer Bishwadeep Chatterjee on his art house film "Chintu ka Birthday", and a detailed cover story by Shrikant Prabhu, "Pianno and Eternal love Triangle". Despite this being our first issue, our tireless efforts and hard work will provide you with various sections of interesting and appropriate material.

For years, theatre has not been a primary subject of discussions. Our issue intends to bridge this gap by including 3 theatrical productions. You will get a chance to read about Rita Ganguly's 'Karna Gatha', Neelesh Deepak's 'Kenchuli', and Dr. Jacqueline Roussety's interview on working with 3rd year students of NSD on 'Katzelmacher'. Apart from that, you will be reading about Bornali Borah's experience of working in Dr. Abhilash Pillai's play 'Ant se Arabh'. On the international front, we bring to you an exclusive interview with Karsten Stöter, the German co-producer of the film 'Lunch Box'.

Regional cinema is of equal importance to us. This issue presents to you an interview with Mohini Gupta, producer of 'Mai Ghat: Crime No 103/2005', a film that won the award for 'Best Actress' in IFFI (2019).

The next few issues will shape this magazine, which you will await bi-monthly.

Cheers!!

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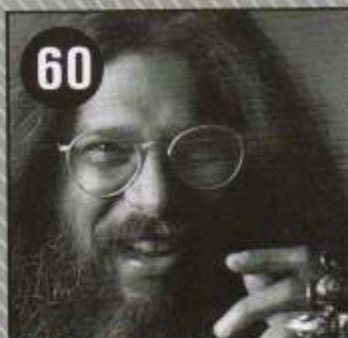
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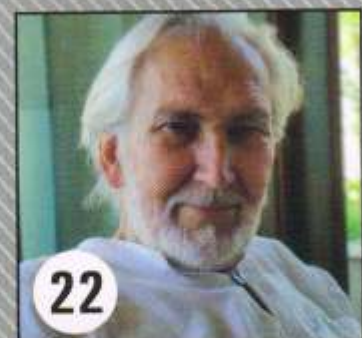
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PRO

When you have been chosen as the PR for doing a film, how do you plan the PR for it?

Sometimes, we get involved with a project from the very nascent stage where the process is for six to eight months, till the film's release. There we are involved in the announcement of the project, the cast being locked for the film and PR till the film releases and post depending on the response. Otherwise, we often get the projects when the film is ready and is just few months away from the release.

Therein, you do a smaller campaign. Now a days, because you have so many films releasing each week, the campaigns have become much shorter. So, even if it is a big film, you don't generally talk too much about the project till closer to release. Even if you, say, talk about a big film like Kalank---the trailer was launched just a month before the release. Producers want to do a controlled campaign wherein

you break the clutter, you get your film registered, you release the film and you move out.

When you organise publicity for a film, is it only the print and the television interviews or it also entails other things?

Today, you have a PR team, a digital team and a marketing team. There are also people who are specializing only in radio now. Though the roles are specified, the teams have to work together for a campaign. It's no more "you are a PR, I'm marketing person" kind of thought.

If I feel there is an idea which might work for the film, then I will give my input as a PR agency. Marketing will see whether it can be executed or not. If the whole team is excited about that idea, then we go ahead. We all now think of ideas. We think of how to do "out of the box content wherein more and more people get connected to the subject".

Due to Facebook, Twitter and a couple of more avenues, how much has the cost of Publicity of films reduced?

It has not reduced at all. In fact, in most of the cases, digital marketing increases the cost. It depends on the target audiences and how wide do you want to go. Digital has become really important simply because it caters to youth today. Most of the people are connected to the Internet through mobile phones. The cost that is involved only for digital campaigns is much more than outdoor activities.

Television is still the most expensive avenue, but apart from that, I think digital takes the cake. The reach is much more when you do a digital campaign because hoardings will be specified to certain locations or certain cities. For television, you do not get the data of what age bracket is watching the content. So, you know, you might be spending a lot of money but you don't know if your advertisements are reaching the correct people. But when it comes to digital campaign, there is data available. You know your trailer has reached so many people. Not only that, you can say that people between this age to this age have watched the maximum. Also, there are so many websites that cater to NRI audiences as well where the film you know will release.

Do people devise an innovative concept for the PR of a film?

You have to, most of the times. While you do the hygiene stuff, your regular interviews, events- whether it is trailer launch, music launch etc...Premiers have become very less nowadays, you have to think of innovation. Otherwise, it becomes boring. Say, a film called Blank, where you do not have a Shahrukh Khan or Salman Khan in the film, they decided to get a poster which was completely black.

A new actor stars in this film. It is a story of a boy whose memory goes blank hence the film is called Blank. Instead of saying there is a new boy from the industry who is being launched, they decided to give out a poster which is blank. It has no faces. Now, the idea might have been good, bad, might have worked for some people, might not have worked for some, but people at least spoke about it. We might do a very good campaign but if the content is not good, the film doesn't do well post the weekend. Hence it is very important that you do something that excites people. This awareness is important.

How difficult is it to get the main newspapers to write about films where they are more interested in having their advertisements and editorials, which is a paid affair?

There are certain publications where there are policies. Unless you pay a certain amount, they do not write about you. But those embargoes are only for 45 days closer to release. Having said that, if a film creates enough talking point, even through controversies, I feel people cover it. I will give you an example of a recent film on PM Narendra Modi, starring Vivek Oberoi. Now, because of the whole controversy of whether it will release or not, it was at least covered well. People decide by looking at a poster, trailer or the actor whether they want to watch the film or not.

I might have decided that I don't want to watch the film as I am not excited about it. But, at least, I am aware of the film. That awareness is being created because of the whole controversy. In that case, Publications veto those policies and they write about the film because it has become a debate, a news of national interest. So, while there are policies, wherein they don't write about films, but, if you create conversation, an interesting conversation around a film, there is no way a media house will not write about the film.

For smaller budgeted films like Paharganj, Blackboard, Whiteboard, No Fathers in Kashmir or Notebook, where the star cast is missing, how do you organise the PR?

We have worked on many smaller films. You need to figure a peg that is interesting enough for a film. If you fail to find anything interesting, then, you have to depend on your relationships with mediahouses. This is why we always get to know the film by hearing the script or watching them. Then, we figure out if it is interesting and would connect with people.

Notebook had smaller stars, but the budgets were not limited at all because it had a Salman Khan producing the film. So, they did everything they could do for promotion, but unfortunately it didn't create an interest.

We have worked on various smaller budget films, wherein they just didn't have any budget for marketing of the film. We were working on a film called Club 60, which had Farooq Sheikh and Sarika. Now, for us, the pairing of Farooq Sheikh and Sarika was a peg. The director had

made a beautiful film, very honest product, so we could create a conversation around the film. A very small film called Kya Dilli Kya Lahore directed by Vijay Raj presented by Gulzar Sahab was stuck for many years, and then, eventually released, but the subject was such that you could create a conversation. Gulzar Sahab presenting it in itself was a talking point.

How helpful is it when a big star like Amitabh Bachchan or Salman Khan tweet about a film? How does it help the people to go to the cinema hall?

It only helps in awareness. The audience knows it is a strategy. The only thing that people see to decide whether they want to watch the film or not is your trailer or the poster to a limited extent. The trailer gives you a feel. There have been so many films like Pyaar ka PUNCHNAAM for that matter Vicky Donor. These kinds of films do well without any names because the trailer connects with people.

My mother might see the trailer on television, I might see it in theatre and my colleague might watch it on YouTube. It doesn't matter where you have seen it. Yes, theatrical trailers work because you are showing it to an audience who watches films in cinema halls and is loyal to films. Having said that, the trailer on television or YouTube is equally important.

Also, there is the making of the film. What is the good timing of showing the making of the film because you don't want to leak the information in advance?

Earlier there was a set pattern. Now, we don't have set patterns anymore. There are a lot of films which do not release the

making at all. But, I think, behind the scenes are always interesting. What people do is they figure out a USP. For example, for Bombay Velvet, they spoke about How they created the Bombay of 1950's in Sri Lanka. That was interesting. A film having a decent star cast makes the audience keen on knowing what their favorite stars did behind the scenes. As audience, everybody wants a sneak peek into their favourite actor's life. There is no road map about showing the "making of films" before the release or after the release. It depends on the content.

Films having VFX if released before the main film, lose their magic. So, what do you do in that case?

After releasing the film, is there is a word of mouth? Are people liking your film or not? After 4-5 days of the release, if you feel the film is doing fine, then you will not release your making of content. But if see that there is a dip, you realise that you need to do something so that people come back to theatres, you can release that making then.

What happens is that people who have seen it start analysing. People who have not seen it, would want to see it. What is that people are talking about it, it all depends on that. For the film Zero, they released the making after a week or so. Now, the producer would have felt "Let's talk about VFX. Let's talk about how SRK looks so small". So, for those who saw it was nice, but for those who did not, it becomes a talking point.

Then, they want to talk about it after watching it. You know it also becomes part of your conversations when friends get together.

One needs to seek innovation. How to break the clutter. When I am saying innovation, you have to always see the relevance with the theme of the film. If it is not relevant then it doesn't matter what you did. Also, when I say innovation, it doesn't have to be an event all the time. Innovation can be a line that you speak that creates that spark; that creates that conversation. Not necessarily controversy but conversation around the film. So, while innovation can be anything, you just need to see that it connects with audience. Nobody knows what will really connect. But you need to figure few ideas that can connect. Out of those few, even if one connected, you are kind of sorted.



**INDIA
INTERNATIONAL
CO-PRODUCTION**

Interview with German Producer *Karsten Stoter*



'Lunchbox' was a successful Indian Film. As a partner from Germany, how did you decide to come aboard this project.

In Rome 2011, I met Ritesh and the Indian producer Ms. Guneet Monga at the market attached to "new cinema work". He was actually there for a different project when we met. I had a

goal in my mind that I wanted to meet and consider at least three projects. So, I met him and he told me about the 'Lunchbox' which I found very compelling. It was a high concept and I asked him to send me a script. I read the script and then something happened that normally never happens while reading a script, the emotional engagement with the script was overwhelming.

So, I gave him script comments and immediately said yes. I got involved into it early and by the time of the next market, this project became kind of a festival hopper. After Rome, which was in October, I met him in Goa in November and then Berlin, and I also met him in Rotterdam. By that time, there were lot of people already interested, including Match Factory and other German producers. Since, I already had a good relationship with Ritesh & the fact that I loved the script so much, the Indian side decided that this is the guy we want to work with & collaborate in the processes where the co-producer is involved.

After deciding to co-produce the project, what was your share of budget that you put into the production?

So, on paper it was a total of 20 percent. But in reality, we had to shift a

little because we had a French and a German co-producer. We brought the Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg in and of course, Arte which is the bilateral Franco-German cultural channel. So, we shifted a little bit of the Indian equity to the German side to make it also an eligible Indian-Franco-German co production under the treaty in which the minimum participation is 20percent. So it was somewhere in between 12-20 percent.

Talk about your rights as a co-producer in the film.

Our rights were the German territory and Austria as well. Since Arte was onboard, there was only theatrical and DVD. Television was not included. The film made 210,000 admission in Germany, which is a lot.

In Germany, how many cinema halls and shows were the film released in?

At the start it was about 70 prints and increased to 150-200 prints. This is considered a decent art house release in Germany. So, it was a success.

How long did the film continue in cinema halls in terms of weeks?

It depends. I think about 3 months, but you start with the premiere cinemas

where it stays maybe 3-4 weeks. Since the film had decent numbers, it began with 2-3 time slots and finally reducing to one time slot. After this we got out of the premiere cinemas.

There are also second run cinemas in small cities where you can start in the third or fourth week. Including the process of digital printing, I would say it continued for 3 months.

In Germany, there is a culture to prefer dubbed version of films over those with subtitles. What according to you was the ratio?

I cannot estimate the real numbers but I would guess that from about 100 prints, maybe 5 were with German subtitles. We like foreign films dubbed in German though I would personally watch foreign language films with subtitles. German audience don't want to read, but like to be entertained. This culture is prevalent in big European territories like Italy, Spain, France and we just have to adapt to this market. If you have a dubbed version of the film, you can reach a bigger audience. With subtitles you might get stuck with a 15-20 print releases. This is the reality.

As a co-producer, do you have to personally invest into the project or are there other ways of funding it?

We do not have private funds nor do we have companies that will provide that for such projects. The production was a debut film, which is another reason why there were no personal funds. We had the public film fund coming in, which is the regional film fund in Berlin.

The majority of production took place in India. Were there any challenges in terms of the allocation of German funds for you to be a part of this?

No, this project is an official film under the treaty. The co-production treaty exists since 2007 and only two films have been made under it - Qissa and Lunchbox. The Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg funding wouldn't have been possible without this treaty. There is a certain criterion you must meet in order to use these funds. As long as we spend the regional funds in the region of Berlin-Brandenburg, it's all fine. So, all the sound post production, and part of the editing was done here. Our sound recordists also went to Mumbai which was fine as long as we spend it on people or facilities that are taxed in Berlin. No matter the location of the film being shot, the language, or the nationality of the actors. So, we are entirely free about the content in a way as



ROHFILM FACTORY

Rohfilm was co-founded in 2005 by Karsten Stöter and has successfully produced 25 films until 2016, among others LORE by Cate Shortland, LUNCHBOX by Ritesh Batra and THE YOUNG KARL MARX by Raoul Peck. Rohfilm Factory was founded in 2016 as a boutique production entity for the development and production of feature films and serial formats. We try to adapt to the vibrant changes of the media market, while constantly improving the visibility of our films. No matter for which platform we produce we seek for the most difficult to reach: art in film.

The company has with offices in Leipzig and Berlin.

long as we reach a regional aspect. This is different from let's say France, where if you don't have a film central around French culture, you will hardly get any soft French money for it.

After your experience with working on an Indian film, do you see any interest in other people from Germany to co-produce an Indian film?

I'm not sure. I have noticed that the world in general has become difficult in terms of co-production. The market for debut films has become tougher. There is a decline in admissions in German cinemas and a new tendency is to allocate money on much bigger projects with German stars and bigger international co-productions. People try to eliminate risks and that's what is going on. So, I think the toughest thing about Indian film is to find a German distributor for it. But I see that challenge in line with European co-productions: Norwegian films, Portuguese films, Brazilian films would have the same situation for finding partners in Germany.

The cost of print has gone down since DCP. In terms of distribution and the money spent on P&A, what is the effect of it?

Yes, there have been some changes. As a producer you are much more flexible, to exhibit the film or to bring it to other platforms. For 30 years, German cinemas have supported and promoted releases that mainly have exposure in theatrical. Now there is a complete shift in the market with the emergence of other streaming platforms, where niche films and art house films will probably in the future have their exposure. Also, in terms of the platforms, we have to see how the funds would be coming in. If you always stick to the theatrical release, many of the films that we did would not have been possible to co-produce nowadays. So, we will see how the funds will adapt their regulations to this new tendency in the market and to the emergence of these streaming platforms.

The release of DVD was a huge in Germany. Now that there are new ways like Video-on-Demand, how do you think this affects the DVD market there?

The DVD market in Germany, I think was one important aspect for German distributors, which is still stable because Germans wanted to have it physically in their house like a book in their personal library at home.

Other markets like Norway, went digital and now enjoy transactional, streaming platforms and HBO in a more advanced way. We don't even have HBO because we have a strong TV market. Germany has a very particular culture in that sense. The sales for VOD, DVD, and Blu-ray are now probably 50 percent compared to 100 percent before. In fact, each year it declines by 20 percent less than its previous years. The other sales, of transactional, VODs and S-VOD streaming platforms, and the revenues you can get for licensing, are collectively not compensating for the other 50 percent. Eventually, the producer has less and the electronic forms of distributing the films don't match the money that DVD made 5-10 years back.

□□□

Feedback:-

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Tehzeeb Khurana: Founder & curriculum designer at Toon Club, Tehzeeb is a celebrated Animation Director with over 20 years of experience. Equipped with a commercial art background and a cartooning course by Mario Miranda, she has pioneered the way animation is taught to children in India.

Films created by kids under her creative supervision have received international acclaim & awards. Her pioneering efforts have culminated in appending animation as part of school curriculum across select premier schools in Mumbai, besides have conducted workshops for leading corporate.



You founded the 'Toon Club' 15 years ago. What made you interested in the idea of teaching children the basics of animation?

Since my college days I have been gravitating towards the creative arts. I did a year long commercial arts diploma and subsequently learnt cartooning under Mario Miranda. Subsequently, I was lucky to join Kireet's studio – Climb Films where I learnt the fine art of animation.

Later, as I got married to Kireet and we had a son - Kabeer, it was not possible for me to work. Kabeer was only 5 years old when I introduced him to flip books. He was able to grasp it quickly and seemed to enjoy this process a lot. It struck me, that if he could do it, other kids would enjoy this as well.

Around the same time (2001/2002), we had many fresh students visiting us

Interview with

Tehzeeb Khurana

Founder & curriculum designer at Toon Club,

seeking employment. However, the work they showcased on their show reel was essentially created with knowledge of animation software, with little or no knowledge of the art of animation. It was sad that they were not employable though they had spent a lot of money to learn these animation software.

I could see a very distinct gap. Children who wanted to pursue animation after high school or college didn't know how to go about it, didn't know the prerequisites to be in the profession. Thus

the idea of introducing children to animation at an early stage, especially at school level, became necessary. Thus was born Toon Club.

How did you approach schools and introduced them to the club? Was it difficult to convince them for making it a year long activity?

One of my diligent Toon Club students from my very first batch moved schools. She moved to Ecole Mondiale World School where she shared the film she created at Toon Club. The school invited

me to join as an animation teacher and made animation a part of the school curriculum, a first for India.

I have been working with Ecole Mondiale World School since 2004. I have come to understand through my experience that international schools are more receptive to art and creative programs than the others. International schools pay heed to STEAM and art integration in their curriculum. STEAM: science, technology, engineering, ART and Mathematics

It is still difficult to make an entry into Central Board and State Board schools. I have declined many schools as they want me to simply teach Computer Animation. Animation is a lot more than teaching software commands.

There is an integration of the fundamental concepts of Science, Mathematics and Storytelling. Children need to understand the art of animation frame-by-frame instead of simply focusing on the commands and menu of the software.

We are however hopeful that we are able to bridge this gap within a few years.

I do suggest children to play around with some animation apps that can facilitate their self-learning along with reading up on animation principles and principles of storytelling.

Once the students have a grasp on the basics of drawing, how do you encourage and decide for the students a topic which they would enjoy creating an effective output?

Though drawing is an integral part of our program, good drawing skills is not a prerequisite, nor are we focusing on improving the drawing skills of a child. We are teaching children the fundamentals and art of animation which will not only build their understanding of laws of physics and mathematics but will also enhance their creativity and develop their visual storytelling skills.

I usually give my students a theme with a sample story board. The theme is based on a socially relevant topic like environment or child rights. Sometimes I give them a character around which they have to create a scene/ story.

Each child creates a story board and then creates the character/s, props & background around this theme. Each child

animates one sequence of the film. Thus each child works on his/her own individual film. These individual films/sequences are then put together to create a film created by the entire group of students.

I try to be innovative with every batch of kids and try not to repeat anything that has been done before. This also helps me, as I grow as an individual and feel satisfied.

How are apps helpful for children to develop their drawing?

Some of the animation apps I have seen are fantastic! They're an amazing tool for children to experiment with on their own. One of the apps which I often recommend to my students has an interface similar to the animation light table.

You can switch on the light bulb to view your previous frame (onion skin), add frames and it has various shapes and sizes of pencils and sketch pens to animate frame by frame. Simply awesome!

One of my students figured how to create his own game using one such app. These apps are like sparks which open up various possibilities for the children. They can discover things on their own which instills in them a sense of confidence. They often share details of the new animation apps they discover, so I end up learning a lot from them too :)

Having said that, I would still like to emphasize the importance of understanding the principles of animation and applying the laws of physics and mathematics to your animations.

A common analogy which I often share is: what can you do with a software like photoshop if you don't know how to paint on a canvas?

Have you thought about expanding the reach of Toon Club to government schools?

I have wanted to take this program to all kinds of schools and reach out to as many students from all strata of the society. A couple of years ago we were approached by Salaam Bombay Foundation which has adopted four Government/ Municipal schools in Mumbai.

We had some preliminary talks but the idea did not materialize. I have however been successful in doing a small workshop for Aseema (an NGO) at a Municipal School near my house.

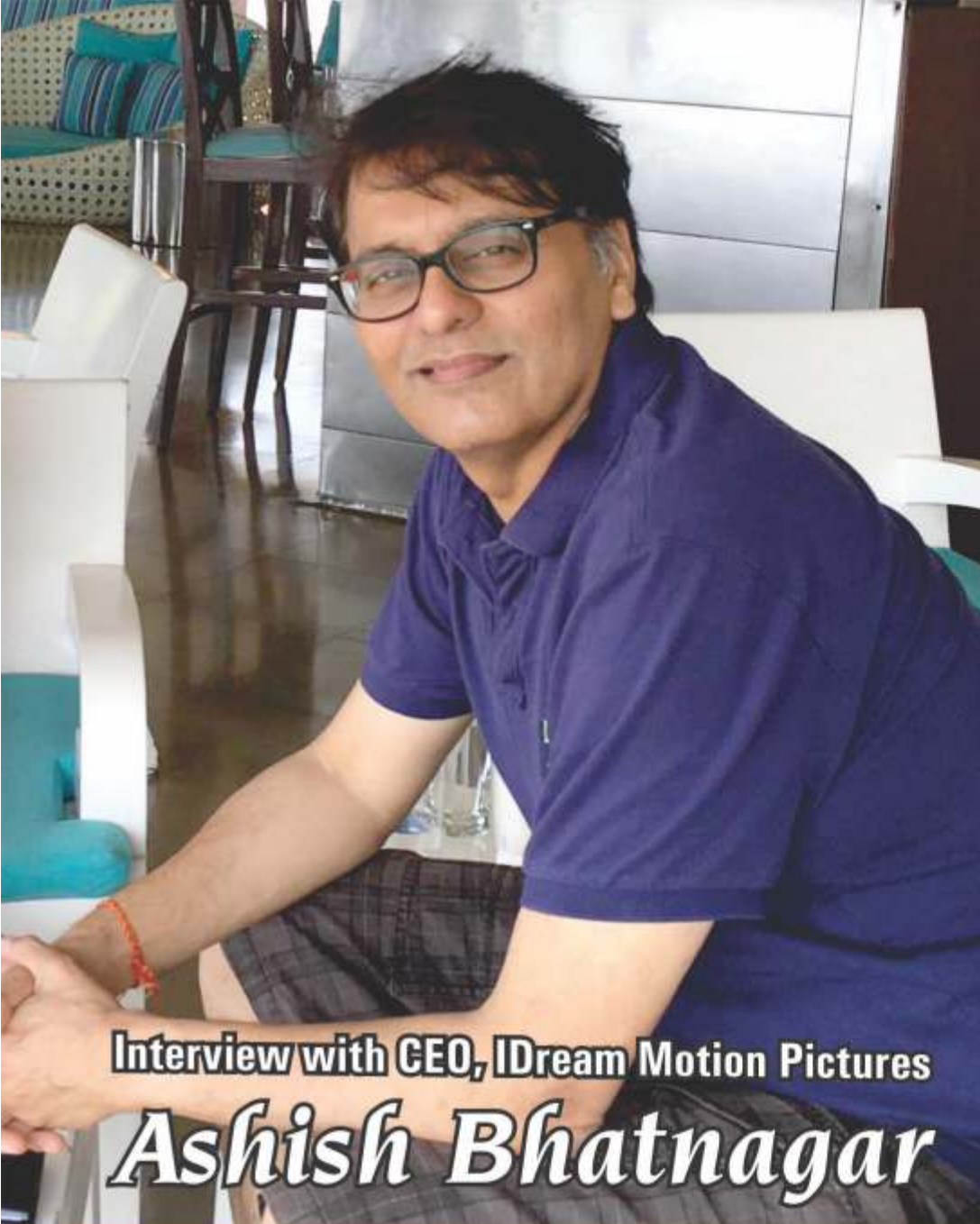
The biggest challenge hindering this process is that animation is an expensive art form. We require funding to take it to underprivileged children studying in Government or Municipal Schools.

There are a lot of channels that focus and cater to children like Cartoon Network. Have you ever thought of creating a program that could educate children on basics of animation?

Yes. Kireet and I have also presented this idea to a couple of channels recently. Channels have shown interest in our proposal. The talks are currently on and we are hoping something materializes. Fingers crossed.

□□□





Interview with CEO, IDream Motion Pictures *Ashish Bhatnagar*

You graduated as a chartered accountant. How did you get into film distribution, and later, production business?

It has been a long journey. I joined a finance group called SSKI as an Equity Research Analyst. This was in early '90s. We were one of the first analyst team to start advising funds on investing in Indian equity market when Dr. Manmohan Singh opened the economy. Interestingly, I started covering media stocks especially as Zee TV had just got listed. So from then on, the interest grew to understand broadcasting and other aspects of media and entertainment.

We published the first sectorial report on Media and Entertainment in 1994. However, my company decided that my

talent would be better used in investment banking where I started advising corporates on fund raising. Initial days were heady- we advised and advertising agency, to a gaming company- Galaxy, to a music channel- ETC to a TV content company – Creative Eye, and many more.

The domain knowledge grew further when we started working on a large transaction - restructuring UTV group wherein we not only advised them on restructuring and provided an exit to an investor for \$30 mn we also raised another \$30mn for the Company.

Another interesting assignment which we worked on was for a leading US TV broadcaster. We raised \$ 250 million which was one of the largest deals at that point of time.

We were also engaged to raise funds for producing films but this deal didn't materialize as the film market was very unorganized at that point of time. But the business itself evoked the interest with the group that led to us investing in the business ourselves. That started my tryst in the film business.

We had already invested in 16 December and Jajantaram Mamantaram to kick start the business but lacked a showcase value to get distributors excited. So we waited.

You distributed Monsoon Wedding. How did you get to distribute that important film in India?

As we waited for the right break, we acquired the rights of Monsoon Wedding, which had just won Venice festival's Golden Bear award. In November 2001, we launched Monsoon Wedding backed by a hyper aggressive marketing strategy. Though our distributors advised not to go beyond 40 prints and not to expect business beyond Rs 60-70 lakhs business. However our aggressive marketing led us to launch 100 prints which led us doing Rs 3 crore plus business which just changed the dynamics of the business. We ended up creating a market for such niche films.

That started the journey of IDream Production. I had to, of course, resign as an investment banker and begin a new job as the CEO for IDream Production.

Did I Dream just distribute films or it also produced films?

We produced and distributed films such as Monsoon Wedding, Bend It Like Beckham, Bollywood Hollywood, Mittr, 16 December, Jajantaram Mamantaram, Samay, King of Bollywood, Naina, Tahaan, etc. The distribution allowed us to understand the dynamic of audience taste besides giving us insight of distributors functioning. This learning helped us when we started producing films to understand the kind of content audience expect from us.

What was also interesting is that our "niche" or "indie" films helped the growth of multiplex business and also create a demand for such kind of multiplex films. Incidentally, we were also the first investment banker to help PVR raise money so we understood their business model well. Earlier, it was a star-driven

film, now concept-driven film started become popular and viable.

How did the video on demand platforms, for example, Netflix, help to bring profit for a film producer?

Netflix, Amazon or Hot Star are some of the important digital platforms that are bringing a revolution of quality cinema. The platforms are buying all kind of good cinema – they are buying commercial films as well as indie films. This is a huge revenue booster and we all hope that this revolution lasts for a lifetime!!

These platforms have given birth to new kind of script writing in the country, which has never happened before. This is, I would say, looks undoubtedly the biggest game changer to the entertainment business right now. At present, there are hundreds of writers in Mumbai, and in regional cinema writing web series only.

Do you feel that writing for a web series is different from writing for films?

There is a huge difference. You cannot compare films to web series at all. A film has a straight structure of the setup, the conflict and the resolution; in a series structure, what is most crucial is the ending of every episode[like in television]. So one has to begin with an interesting catch line and close it with an interesting catch line. The whole structure of writing for a series is hugely different from a film.

When you were with IDream, you also started an innovative project where you developed some of the screenplay projects . How did that idea evolve and did it work out?

We were very fortunate to have Anuj Rajabali to guide us and mentor us. He is quite a pioneer and together we did various innovative steps such as conducting a script workshop where we invited leading writers as well as budding writers to participate. We were happy to have more than a hundred writers wherein we explained our philosophy and our requirements like release form, the script agreement, new format and templates, etc.

In many ways, we helped create a script writing culture and develop a formal script writing process. So, every time a script writer would come to us, we would insist on release form which today have become a de-facto norm which we started

at that point of time. We also invested in the script writing course in FTII Pune and provided job opportunities for fresh talent coming out of the course for a good 2-3 years.

A couple of years ago shooting abroad caught up with producers as there were film incentives involved given by various countries which is also imbibed by Indian states. Do you think that this phenomena of giving incentive by the state will help film producers?

The film business is a risk-prone business. There is no guarantee that you will ever recover money on a particular project until you obviously have a star, then, there is a sales opportunity even before starting a film. A star film would account for only 20% of all films being made at any point of time. About 80% of the films are being made by passionate filmmakers. When there is no leverage – this means ability sell any rights upfront to minimise risk – than any subsidy that comes to you from anywhere in the world is most welcome as long as it is fitting into the creative aspect of the film. Of course, this strategy will not work when we shoot

a film when there is no subsidy and then take the risk 100% upfront.

You can ask why in UK and why not in France? Because we have a lot of Indians living in UK which lends to the cultural ethos of the scripting.

In addition, we get a better quality of production value which attracts audiences. Fortunately, some of the states like UP and Jharkhand, are now following suit. They are giving, but a very token amount, that is, let's say maximum two crores . It is nice, but it is a small amount of money. We made an indie film called Death in the Gunj in Jharkhand and were the first to actually receive the subsidy. I do strongly believe that Producers should resort to de risking their films at the utmost. Every rupee saved is your actual revenue.

As told to **Naresh Sharma**, Editor
Bollywood & Beyond

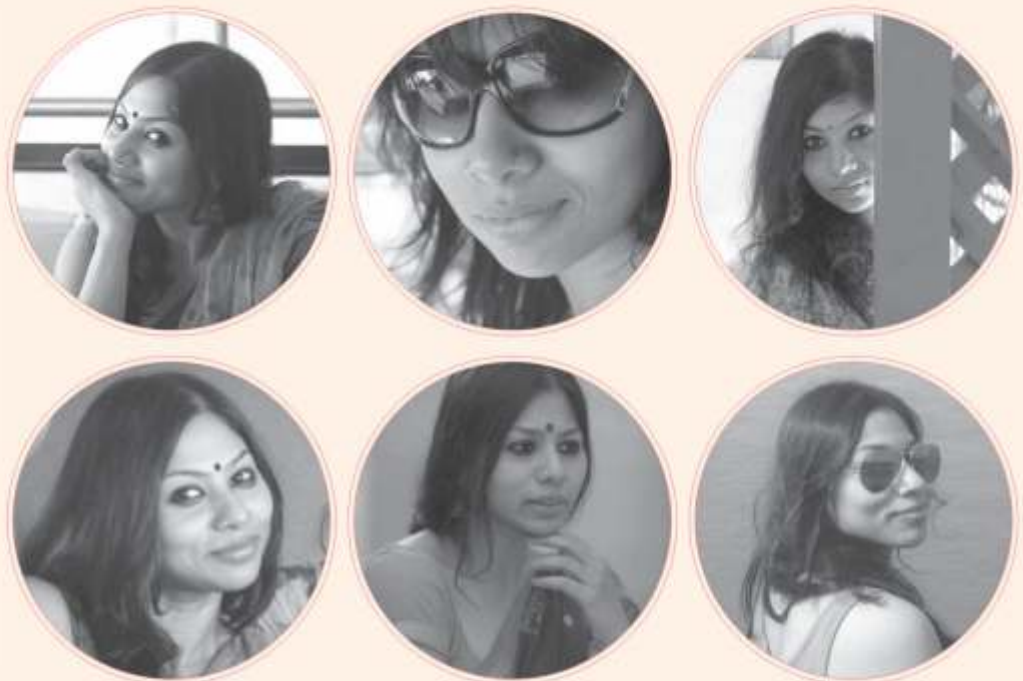
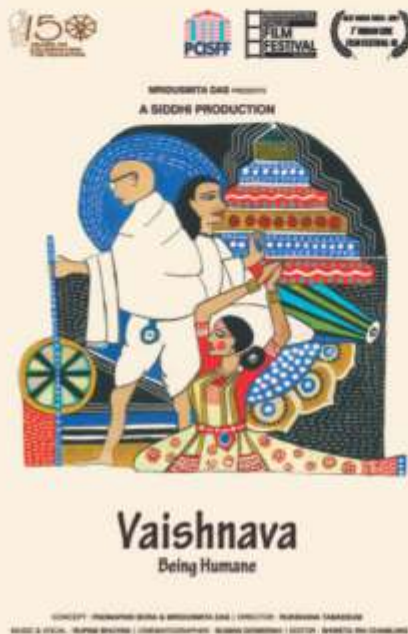
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Ashish Bhatnagar
ashish@idreammotionpictures.com

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Interview with **Rukshana Tabassum** on Directing (Vaishnava - Being Humane)



Rukshana Tabassum comes from the beautiful state of Assam. She specialized in direction from FTII Pune and has been working in various capacities in the Film Industry in Mumbai. She has shot digital ads for prestigious brands like Asian Paints, Godrej, Reliance Unlimit and Odisha Tourism. Her short films 'Apples and Oranges' and 'Mission Sunday' have been a part of many prestigious film festivals in India and abroad. 'One of her short films The Cake Story' produced by the Children's Film Society of India won the 'Special Mention' at the 65th National Awards in 2018.

Rukshana loves travelling and has acute interest in Mythology and Culinary arts. She is also a painter and trained classical dancer. Currently she lives in Mumbai and works out of here.

What motivated you to direct this short film based on the passage from Holy Kirtana based on the teachings of Srimanta Sankardeva and 'Vaishnav Jan Toh' bhajan by Narsi Mehta?

There are many reasons for this. Firstly, I love dance and have trained in Bharatnatyam for more than a decade. Indian classical dance and Folk dance have a rich heritage, but not many people explore it. So being a professional filmmaker it has been a dream to document different dance forms through my films.

My fascination for dance films was initiated when I watched Bhavantan by Kumara Shahani as a student in FTII. And later when I assisted Kumar on his last film 'Priye Charusheele' it really helped me to understand how one could capture the essence of dance through the lense.

Also I fell in love with the concept as soon I heard it from Mridusmita Bora who is my childhood friend and a renowned Sattriya dancer (Ustaad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar Awardee) from Assam.

What I found really unique is how through the passages from the Holy Kirtana based on the teachings of Srimanta Sankardeva and 'Vaishnav Jan Toh' bhajan by Narsi Mehta the film wanted to remind people the power of

simple values like empathy, humility, purity of mind, truth and morality

As you mentioned you are a Bharatanatyam dancer, why you decided to choose this particular style?

Being a classical dancer myself I love dance irrespective of which form it is. However in this case Mridusmita Das approached me to do this film with the concept who is a renowned Sattriya dancer from Assam as I mentioned earlier.

It was while doing research Mridusmita and Padmapani Bora (IRS officer and author) noticed the similarity of the texts written by the two Saints in two different parts of the country and came up with this concept.

They wanted to offer their Sharddhanjali to Mahatma Gandhi the father of our nation on his 150 th death anniversary. I came on board after the song was composed.

How did you execute the task of visualisation of the film, in terms of imagery and background?

Mridusmita and I were very clear that we wanted the audience to understand what we were trying to communicate through her choreography and the way I film it. So we had to balance a good amount of nritta (pure dance) and

abhinaya (art of expression) while working with the concept to make it easily comprehensible. And based on our discussions Mridusmita decided to dramatize certain paras of the song to make them more relatable. Sumon Dowerah our cinematographer was included in our discussions right from the beginning and it helped us to design the visual style of the film.

Once we knew how we were looking at each segment we started looking for locations accordingly. Satra, Namghar, the banks of the Bramhaputra became some of the obvious choices for locations since the origin of the dance form is rooted in these spaces.

We also shot at Kasturba Gandhi Ashram a place which preserves the essence of Gandhian principles and connects the bhajan 'Vaishnava jantoh' which was Gandhiji's favourite.

Tell us a little about Sattras, What is it?

Sattras are the result of Vaishnava movement of Assam and they have been preserving and propagating the Vaishnavite culture since the 15 th century. The Vaishnava movement or socio-cultural revolution was initiated throughout the whole of Assam during the 16th century



under the spiritual leadership of Srimanta Sankardeva and Madhabdeva.

Sattras are the chief centre of Assamese culture. In carrying out the various Vaishnavite activities within the Sattras was interwoven the various dance pieces which were performed on a spiritual basis. These dances later came out under the umbrella of Sattriya dance. Later with help of scholars and research Sattriya dance became popular in the outside world (beyond Sattras). With much academic enquiry into the dance form it was later on acknowledged as a Classical dance on 15 th November 2000.

There is a particular scene with a lotus in the foreground and dancers in the background that is particularly alluring. Take us through the idea behind it.

Since we were exploring narratives that included Vishnu and Krishna, and the particular song that plays in this scene is a Vaishnava song. We wanted to portray how the essence of a universal spirit is at the centre of our soul.

Vishnu and Krishna represent this sense of universal spirit. Lotus symbolises 'purity' in many cultures. The dancers around the lotus set the tone of ecstasy that is seen around the universe. The whole scene depicts this thought.

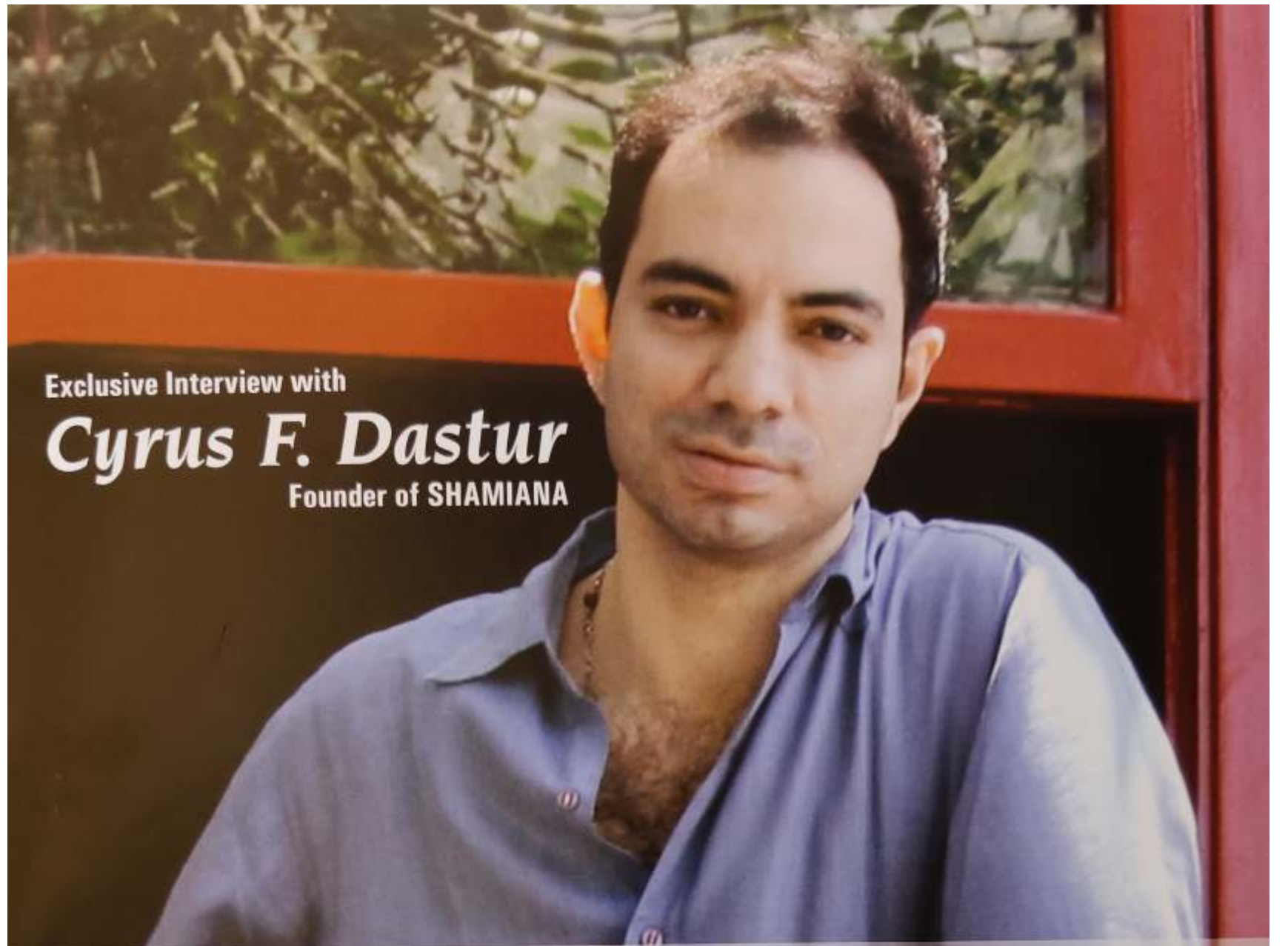
The film is now completed. How do you plan to attract a wider audience?

The film has been a part of several film festivals in India like Brahmaputra Valley Film Festival and has won awards at Delhi Shorts International Film Festival, 7th Indian Cine Film Festival and Pink City International Short Film Festival.

We would like to send this film to several dance film festivals next year and finally release it on some OTT platform to reach the maximum number of people.

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A portrait of Cyrus F. Dastur, a man with dark, curly hair and a light beard, wearing a blue button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage and a red structure.

Exclusive Interview with

Cyrus F. Dastur

Founder of SHAMIANA

Cyrus F. Dastur is the Founder of SHAMIANA - Asia's Largest Short Film company that screens the finest short films from all over the world including Exclusive Oscar winners over the last 10 years. SHAMIANA today is synonymous with short films and is recognized as the last word when it comes to Independent cinema.

Cyrus has single handedly created a market for short films across over 25 Indian cities and believes the best is yet to come.

How did you get into creating SHAMIANA?

SHAMIANA is a Short Film Screening company that screens short films in various cities across India. Our reach has so far been in Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, Bangalore, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Chennai, Goa, Bhopal, Jaipur and Gurgaon among other cities. We deal and screen with a variety of interesting entities and brands like Levi's, (our latest collaboration), Taj Hotels, Raheja, Rustomjee, YES Bank, ITC, etc.

You started off with SHAMIANA since you were passionate about shorts and films. How did you come to realise that this could actually be a profitable venture, especially for the filmmakers involved?

Shamiana started off as a passion project but it is true that all interesting ideas that exist, as big as FaceBook, Google are products of some person's passion.

In India, the biggest problem has

been that every idea that is generated or the 'Unicorn' companies are started are derived from existing big names like Amazon, Google, Yelp or Uber.

The only way to become creative and have interesting projects is that if people don't venture into entrepreneurship with the idea of making money but because the idea excites them.

If you are able to get the masses to resonate with your idea or thought process, money is bound to come.

What is the revenue model for a short film in India if someone invests their money and directs it, probably on a smaller scale?

In the last four-five years, it has been a fortunate turn of events that a lot of people or companies are interested in buying short films. Liquor companies for example have opened up avenues and are looking to buy or sponsor good quality short films. Unlike popular perception, short films have guaranteed revenue provided they have good quality of content.

Obviously there is no structured platform present to buy your films but it would be incorrect to say that short films don't have a viable revenue model. A well made short film has certain kind of face value and the audience is able to find out the difference between a good and bad short film. You will recover your P & A cost if you are making good short film. Your content matters and not the scale of the content.

What are some of the platforms in India that buy short films and generate revenues for the producer, probably per view or download?

Some of the platforms primarily for short films in India are Large Short Film, Cheers and Ullu. Other platforms like Zee5 and Netflix are buying independent content as well. These platforms will pick up only quality content. It is therefore important for film makers to realise; they cannot do reckless shooting and feel that the platforms are obligated to buy their content. Once your content is of quality, you can generate revenues.

Feature films have begun this trend of compiling four or five short films, helmed by mainstream directors—like Bombay talkies—and create a feature length film. Do you think this a viable option and should be replicated to encourage short film making?

In my opinion I feel, a lot of even mainstream directors do not understand the meaning of making a short film. They have completely damaged this concept and their experimental style is at times unpleasant.

It is a general perception that a short film needs to make a stance or base itself on societal issues. They experiment on a subject and call it a short film.

The film makers have forgotten the basic premise as to why the audience views a short film – for entertainment purposes. There is more to short films than being made by a person with a 'big' name or on a societal topic. They don't always need to be dark and depressing. Someone needs to tell these directors the bitter truth and probably ask them to stay away from making short films.

You ventured into feature film distribution, could you elaborate on that?

Shamiana reaches to various cities across the country. We have managed to create a vast network and establish ourselves with a rather large audience. People have begun to believe in 'Shamiana' and the quality of content we provide. We seek collaboration with independent feature films and help releasing them, in multiple theatres across cities.

We have been extremely choosy with the films we distribute. For example we collaborated with Tumbbad and Pahuna. Tumbbad was an independent film and we helped it create a buzz with a pre-released screening with influential people like Radio Jockeys, Bloggers and Social Media Influencers who are well connected online. The film was released in various cities and was well received.

There are various big players in the film distribution business that may hinder the reach of your release, like the time slots you will get. How can you compete with or tackle them?

The films we are looking to distribute do not cater to a mass of theatres. We are content with having few slots as well. Rest assured we do have our connections and relationships which can bring in at least a medium release to the film-- unless, of course, there is a high-demand film like Avengers releasing at the same time.

Even if a film maker comes who has made a film in a regional language and is catering to a regional audience, we will map the theatres and help him successfully release. Similarly, if they are looking to release it on a VOD platform as well or only, we can do it. It entirely depends on the need of the film maker.

The VOD platforms do not negotiate with the producers themselves and instead involve a middle party like Karwan who filter the content they

receive. These middle parties make a profit margin of around 20%. What do you think about these third parties and the criteria set by them?

I personally think that most of these 'middle parties' have no prime understanding of the cinema. I am not even sure if these people have even directed a play or a film in their lives. I don't think they have the required creative understanding for the content some of the filmmakers have created. This in turn becomes the reason why a lot of bad quality content is shown on these platforms as they have zero idea of what they are doing. There needs to be a certain kind of 'Zehniyat' or morality and personal taste among the choice makers. This is the case with television as well and thus we have an overload of crappy content.

Do you see that in the near future, theatre productions—which may or may not have prominent faces—will pave their way into VOD or television content, where maybe a production house or VOD platforms would be interested in recording a live show (or an enactment) for the purpose of digital viewing?

I don't know about the future in VOD but the future for theatre per say looks quite promising. Having said that, I think people will love to go to watch theatre primarily from the point of it being a source of entertainment. I would not be in the favour of my production being recorded or telecasted live personally. People however need to plan in this direction and tap into the potential of the digital market.

Filmfare has introduced the Short Film Awards in 216. Do you think it will act as a catalyst or a force of drive for people to create and produce good content?

I really hope these awards do act as a catalyst. I wish the future participants well and hope Filmfare succeeds in encouraging quality content besides focusing on quantity.

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Interview with Founder Humara Movie

Vinay Mishra

Vinay is a graduate from the Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode and a serial entrepreneur. Born and brought up in Jamshedpur, he has worked extensively in India & North America. He was the co-founder of analytics firm Marketics, which was acquired by WNS Global in 2007-08. Prior to this he was in the founding team of Intercept Technologies, the leading web advertising & technology company from Asia (invested by West Bridge Capital). He has been involved as a co-founder for Humara Movie since 2012 and has been actively involved in all aspects of the firm.

How did this idea click that we should start Humara Movie as there are many YouTube channels out there?

You know, I am not from the film space. But this is something which I always wanted to do. So, when the three of us started it- Pallavi Rohatgi and Preeti Ali. Pallavi Rohatgi is also not from this space. Preeti Ali has been involved with films for around 20 years but had not done digital content. When we decided to start it, we could not work with big established names right away. We neither had the money nor the understanding to do something like this, so we wanted to work with young talented new age directors. And we felt the most economical, creative and fulfilling way would be short films. Over the course of time, we have learned a lot, but more than anything else, we really enjoyed ourselves.

We have worked with over 250 filmmakers and there is no one in India, and most likely worldwide, who has worked with so many filmmakers in their lives. Most of the content is produced by us and we have interacted with most of them, so there's a degree of comfort. We

are the largest incubator. It has taken more time than we thought it would, but now, we are in a position to make large revenue generating content.

How do you work out in terms of money? Do you fund short films?

Predominantly, we have been funding content ourselves. Our philosophy is, I know it seems very farfetched, that if what we hear we like and we feel the filmmaker is equally passionate, we go ahead.

Now, the best films we have on the channel have very few views but we are extremely proud. So, that's how we have consistently done. But if it comes from a different philosophy that we have. When you are watching a film in the theater then you have to make an appointment with the film. You have to go at a particular time, sit at a particular place and go with some particular people with whom you want to watch it.

So, the consumption on the Internet is happening in a different way. It is either happening opportunistically or you personally choose to watch something on your own. This consumption of entertainment is very personal. It may still

mean that you are going to watch a Salman Khan movie but this opportunity to go and watch something of our kind of content when that happened, all kind of content which is well made has an audience.

The Internet is very democratic that way. If you seek a particular kind of content, you will find it. Today, if you want to get content which is only horror, you can get it. India being such a large country, people are starving for different kinds of content and that is where we started off with a few thousand views.

Today, on a monthly basis, we get approximately 2 crore views. None of our content is frivolous or contextual. Our content is predominantly narrative which people feel personal about - which is sometimes dark but even that with time gets view provided it is well made.

So, we have a film by Gaurav Bakshi called "enough" which is loosely based on a true story which took place in Nagpur where the women were being harassed, molested and raped by this goon. One fine day, they went to the police station and actually killed him in the police station and that has become a landmark case.

How do you blame a mob as everyone said I killed him do whatever you can? So, it was a very dark film. We are very fortunate as we have got great support from the industry.

The bad man in the film was played by Mukesh Chhabra, the casting director. We had a talk on the phone and he did it. We never thought it would have views close to 70 lakhs. People have watched it and the comments that come are very encouraging.

When we started off, we didn't realize it would become such a big thing. We didn't know whether a lot of people would like to be associated with our content and watch our channel.

Today, we have the most exemplary young filmmaker. His name is Kabir Khurana. His content is being consumed by our channel. It is very eclectic. It is not something which is acceptable. He is experimenting with both form and content.

Within a couple of weeks, 20k-30k people had watched it. When we started, if we got 20k views, we would be proud. We are proud to know that we are a

destination for people who want to watch good new content.

We are working with extremely talented filmmakers who are pushing the boundary. You see, today there are lots of over-the-top platforms entering India, but they are working with established people. Sooner or later they will have to spread their wings and go to people who may be new but talented.

So tomorrow, if anyone wants to do an eclectic piece, which has international flavour in it, Kabir Khurana is the guy. We have a filmmaker called Aadish Keluskar. We made a film with him which won the MAMI critic award and was picked by Netflix (Jaaron Kahan Bata Ae Dil)

When it comes to selecting a subject, how do you decide that you are going to fund it?

Let me actually dispel one rumour. The independent short films space does not have money. We are not making money. YouTube gives you the views but does not give money. We are doing this as an investment and not as philanthropy. I am not doing this just for the love of art. This is my investment as I want to be a big player in this space. If someone has the foresight to see it, they will see that we are actually a valuable player.

No one really creates one piece of content every week. And for the last six

and a half years, we are doing just that and have created more than 450 pieces of content. Six feature films with avant-gardescripts. It is kind of foolish to think that everyone is going to like only a particular kind of romance. There are nuances to romance if well made for the Indian audience.

We just need to be patient as sooner or later we will be working with established people and we will be the large studio. So, we are not actually putting in money because I have money and I want to put it. We are putting it because we are good in it and we have done it for six and a half years.

In the beginning, you said 'We are doing it as an investment into it but then to survive for such a long period', then, how the economics have been working out even if it breaks even?

One thing we need to make sure is that our costs are extremely minimal and we have done some smart things for that. We have our own editing set up, set of editors and our own sound equipment. We also have a lot of equipment that is required for film making.

We have just moved out of our office into a new one but the older office had two studio rooms which could become anything. People have done it for the passion and we have also done for the





same. Filmmakers like Imtiaz come and do films with us for the passion because this is a space which allows him to do stuff which he couldn't have done otherwise.

We have a mentorship program in which professionals come as mentors. PVR comes on board free for us. It releases our films. We have releases on Amazon or Star TV where we make money which goes as an investment into short film projects.

There are in-flight programs particularly long distances(international). Did you explore those avenues about Indian films?

We had thought about it, but we haven't been successful. Our content is sometimes available on Sony Live, Hotstar and a lot of other partners.

We have been reluctant to give our content just like this. I don't really want to give my content to someone who doesn't value short films.

A person may have done his short film in a 10k budget, but they have put in three months as well. We have invested 3 to 6 months. So, we are interested in people who are transparent enough on a revenue share model.

Is the YouTube revenue sufficient to carry on the business?

One should not be looking at YouTube as a revenue generating model. It should be looked at as something which allows you to reach out to the largest possible audience.

Recently, the film Malota got nominated for Filmfare, but in Haryana. Another film called Udne Do, a nice film about child sexual abuse, got 600k views in one month's time.

So, the power is unimaginable and it's not like people come and run away. People watch 20-minute films on our channel.

Is there any clause like you sell your film to Netflix and if tomorrow some TV channel says they are interested to have the series of your films on their channel, does it hamper that possibility?

The first thing is that the video on demand platforms at this juncture don't take shorts- both Amazon and Netflix (unless and until it is a documentary). If you see documentaries on Netflix globally, a huge number of documentaries are happening.

If you have a documentary being picked up, there's money in that. Documentaries are being made in India, and quality documentaries- and people will watch

In Europe, some of the distributors would show 3-4 short films before the feature film starts so did you think something like that could happen before a feature film in India?

Europe is a place where everything is subsidized. In India, everything is monetized. The 10 minutes before the film is completely monetized by the exhibitor. So, if they were to give something like this to us, that essentially means it eats into their revenue.

There have been conversations about this. Some of them are very interested in this. We are thankful to PVR personally. We did a program called Shuruaat where we get mentored short films and it was only because of PVR's support that we have managed to release 3 editions of this.

So, the first year theme was 'Interval' mentored by Vikramaditya Motwane, Imtiaz Ali, Vikas Behl, etc. Eight Shorts was released on PVR all over India, and then, it went on Netflix Globally.

Then, we did it in a better way called 'Shor Se Shuruaat' again released by PVR which was mentored by Mira Nair, Shyam Benegal, Homi Adajania, Zoya Akhtar, Imtiaz Ali and Shreeram Raghwan which released through Amazon Prime and also through Star Gold.

This year, we shall release films based on the topic 'Twist' mentored by Amit V. Masurkar, Rajkumar Gupta, Vikramaditya Motwane and Raju Hirani as mentors. This is one space where we do make some money.

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Interview with the producer “Mai Ghat” *Mohini Gupta*

What made you move on from producing web-series to this film? What influenced to pick this particular film?

Initially, I started producing web-series, especially for Hotstar. But suddenly, I realized that I wanted to produce a quality Marathi film. Deep down, I always knew I wanted to produce Marathi films because I'm driven by true stories. So, when I met Anant Mahadevan, he told me his idea and I was so excited! The story was a feministic one, and as a woman it is my duty to empower other women. By producing 'Mai Ghat', my aim was to inspire women to not stay silent and to fight for themselves. Apart from that, I hoped that women fight for their own justice and don't tolerate prejudice.

When you were introduced to the story, was the screenplay prepared?

No, the screenplay was not ready. It was just an outline for me to understand. Anant told me about the incident and said I want to make a film on this.

Since the theme of the movie was so sensitive, how did you select the actress and the remaining cast of the film?

For the role of the actress it was primarily the decision of the director and I. We had a lot of options to pick from and we short listed many well know personalities from Marathi cinema. Anant then introduced me to Usha, and when we told her the story, she instantly got attached to it. We told her that this role was going to be challenging;



who is well known from this industry and he did it.

Did Anant Mahadevan create some kind of short video for a basic idea? How did the process start?

So, initially Anant and I decided we'll shoot the film in Kolapur. But then later on we switched the location to Mumbai. We asked our executive producer to go around Mumbai and take videos and stills of the possible shooting locations.

In the recent times, there has been a distinct change from run-off-the-mill kind of comedy films to serious films in Marathi cinema. For this kind of switch, are there enough Marathi distributors who are keen on working with such serious films?



It's slightly tough to make someone believe in such kinds of films as they're not commercial. Hopefully, more films like this will be made.

Another film like ours is 'The Court'. It did extremely well in the market due to the promotions. If big distributors like Zee and Eros do sincere promotions, then this effects marketing positively. The film then

is recognized by eminent personalities of the film industry.

Do you feel participating in international festivals helps to increase audience base?

The thing is, that the type of audience of film festivals is very different from the movie theater audience.

Is this film only for Marathi audience or non-Marathi speaking can also watch it?

The film is made for global cinema. I expect non-Marathi speakers to also watch it.

" seeing the kind of response of the normal cine going public in Kolkata, Goa and Kerala we are confident that MAI GHAT is that rare film which is both artistic and commercial "

When it comes to recovering the cost of the film, theatrical release is one method. But do you think VOD platforms will also be interested? What do you intend to do?

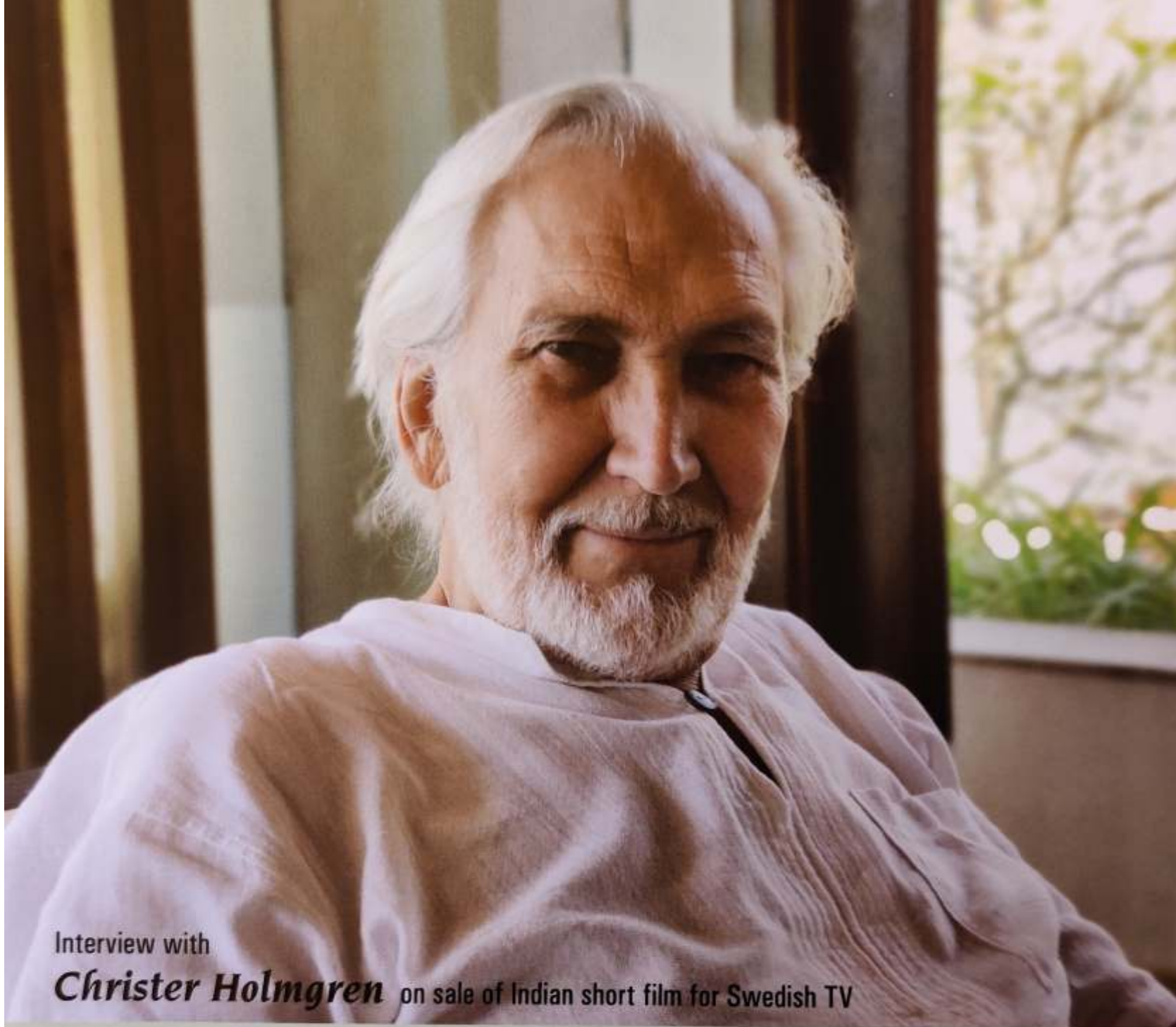
I feel like, digital release are very easy nowadays. Because Amazon, Apple are showing a lot of interest to take such kind of content . Especially in Netflix, there is one section called Award winning films . It is easy to sell digitally and is very difficult to sell theatrically.

Are there some negotiations for theatrical release in place or you're making efforts to meet people?

We are in the process of negotiation let's see what finally happens.

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Interview with

Christer Holmgren on sale of Indian short film for Swedish TV

What motivated you to seek the rights of Manisha Issrani Misra's short film 'Joy Ride'?

A few years back, I met Manisha at Film Bazaar in Goa. There she introduced me to her film 'Joy Ride' and I was keen on knowing more about it. Later, I watched it and I found it interesting, especially for the younger generation. The film showcased a couple of boys running a joy ride wheel on the Juhu Beach in Mumbai.

How did you approach and convince Swedish Television (SVT) to buy the rights of the film?

I contacted the buyer at SVT and offered them to see the film. Initially, they

seemed hesitant but after much encouragement, they agreed.

What is the film's duration and what was the price offered to you for it?

'Joy Ride' is a charming story of nine minutes. SVT contacted me several weeks later and offered 20,000 Swedish Crowns for two telecasts! Many young aspiring filmmakers give their content for free to gain some exposure, so I was surprised at the amount they offered me. There is a lot of competition for short films, but I will continue to look for inspiring stories at the Film Bazaar.

In the future, do you see similar deals taking place for short films?

Personally, I see a bright future for short films of different genres being aired on TV channels and OT platforms. I think a lot of feature films would gain a lot more if they are boiled down to a shorter format.

Do you intend on approaching directors of Indian films to sell their work to Swedish TV stations?

Presently, Kunnie Topden, the Associate Producer of 'Dear Molly'- directed by Gajendra Ahire- is working on releasing the Indo-Swedish co-production in Swedish theatres and on TV networks.

Feedback: Christer Holmgren - info@konferensteatern.se





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Interview with **Bishwadeep Chatterjee** on Sound Design of "Chintu Ka Birthday"

"Chintu Ka Birthday" is a very intimate film about an Indian family struggling in Baghdad in the state of war. As a Sound Designer, what was your brief?

The Director Satyanshu is extremely passionate as a writer and Director. He had been nurturing this subject for 12 years before he got to finally make the film. So when he narrated to me the story about an Indian family being stuck in Baghdad during the first gulf war, it was enough to stimulate my imagination..... and what added to the

quirkiness of the film was that it was a Bihari family in particular that was stuck in the middle of nowhere...!! What made it even more appealing to us was the fact that the lead actor Vinay Pathak, the Director Satyanshu, the Editor Charushree Roy and myself all happen to be from Bihar..!!

The brief given to me was that it would be a film driven mainly by Sound Design. So like all the films that I work on, I would read the script and make my notes.



What was your biggest challenge as a Sound Designer in the film?

I have never been to Iraq...let alone a war torn Iraq. It was a very big challenge to create a Soundscape of a foreign country which is under attack, as a backdrop to a very simple family situation revolving around children.

The story is about how Chintu was looking forward to his celebrating his birthday at school and subsequently inviting a long list of his friends home. Realising that schools had to shut down because of the bombings and air raids, his family decided to make up for it by at least baking a cake- and the obstacles that would arise as the story progressed.

The film was beautifully written and shot. Being a film of a very modest budget, shooting the film in Iraq or any middle eastern country was definitely not an option.... The "Iraq" that was depicted was in reality a small set erected in Film city, Mumbai. It was my job now to paint with sound, the war - torn city of Baghdad.

Subtle sounds of choppers and aircraft flying overhead lead us into the city after a brief animation narrative. A car bomb in the neighbour hood shakes them out of a happy moment the family shared, followed by sounds of screaming

and despair... the sounds of gunshots, humans screaming, choppers, rumbling of heavy vehicles etc got louder as the main door of the house opened to let in two American soldiers who were briefly caught in a firefight.

The crackle of their wireless systems and their talks added texture to the grim realities of war. There would be American Humvies fitted with loudspeakers or megaphones barking continuously at the civilians to stay indoors.

I created that effect by processing the voice of an Iraqi student we found from Pune, thanks to my dubbing co-ordinator. There were long moments of "silence" punctuated with the hum or buzz of distant sounds of war...

How did you imagine and implement things like the announcements made over the megaphone?

I remember the year 1990, when satellite television opened up in India and we were able to follow the live coverage of the first gulf war, thanks to CNN. I think it was the first time in the world that we experienced the war up close and personal with a new kind of journalism... I was a keen follower of the events taking place in Iraq- the Americans are great at sensationalizing such things.

It wasn't conventional war, there was huge attempt by the allied forces to keep the civilian casualties at a minimum. They wanted to tell the world that "Look we are taking precautions to ensure safety of civilians".

So they would flash these on their news bulletins continuously. My research also included recalling these events from news videos.

There are many sad and happy moments in the film. How did you decide a background soundtrack for a moment that would help lift the visuals?

As in most films, emotions were punctuated with music. In this film, music was very subtle. We were careful about not overdoing the music bits. The composer Naren Chandravarkar did a fantastic job. As a film score composer its important to understand when not to give music- in this film, any more music



than what was composed, would be intrusive to the story.

Would you like to mention anything about production sound in "Chintu ka Birthday"?

Yes, I would like to compliment the Production Sound mixer Prabal Pradhan on the wonderful job he did of capturing

the right tones of the various actors' dialogues. We don't realize that the work in post production gets minimized when the source material is rich and clean.

Its very important for me to extensively discuss with my production sound team about the execution and logistics involved in any shoot.

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Important Films of Bishwadeep as Sound Designer







create a signature style for yourself that only you are known for. These styles can be projected on social media platforms like Instagram where a large audience can be reached in less time. It is also a good way to network and collaborate with colleagues. While styling make seem like an easy profession, it really isn't.

Since there is no such styling course, where can one learn from?

Recently, few courses have emerged. Once someone has completed their schooling, they can enroll in colleges like NIFT and Pearl Institute of Fashion where courses like Fashion Communication are offered. This is a specialized programme that enables students to acquire communication skills pertinent to the fashion and lifestyle industry. After this, several exit levels are envisaged- Graphic Designing, Visual Merchandising, Retail Space, Design, Styling and Photography, Fashion Journalism and Public Relations. After picking a specific line, a budding stylist can always intern with a leading stylist to gain more exposure in the industry and receive more experience. In places like these young stylists always learn more as it gives them more hands on experience which aids their personal development for the career.

What are the different kinds of styles?

Fashion is extremely subjective and is continuously evolving due to the influence of different races, ethnicities, cultures etc. Due to this, there are many categories and sub-categories that have formed under the large umbrella of fashion. Some of these categories are- business casual, sportswear, athleisure, street wear, office wear, casual-chic, military, cowgirl, bohemian, rave, kawaii, Ankara and many more.

Ideally, how much is a stylist's salary?

It primarily depends on the experience the individual has, and then on their aesthetic. But they can be paid anywhere from Rs. 5000 to 2 Lakhs per day. Our main job is to satisfy our clients with our ideas and styling; that is usually the basis of our payments.

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Piano And The Eternal Triangle

Piano's of the world have a unique charm. Created sometime during 1700 in Italy, it modified some of the qualities of the older harpsichord to give the musician more control over the notes being played. The musician releases hammers, using keys, to hit the strings and achieves variations in pitch and velocity. Melodies are created with the hammers hitting at various speeds and accentuation. Hammers here are only wooden pieces, not of any metaphorical kind. Music is the flowing stream that came down to us as memory in all its abstractness. On the way it made us create unique instruments so that music keeps flooding us forever on its way to infinity. The way they are constructed the Piano's are grand, classic, and elegant. Above all, they are full of romance. The sound they produce is mesmerizing and unique. In comparison, cinema is a younger art form. The way the Piano caters to the needs of the film makers is very interesting and the potential is immense. Anything to do with heartburn, passion, conflict, and romance, and pure music, the Piano is ever present.

Whenever the film maker is trying to make a statement about human passion and conflict, it is one fail safe instrument to fall back upon. Piano is not just used as an orchestral instrument in film music, songs or the background score. That unique contribution and identify in itself is independently a vast subject. The older grand pianos are made of wood, have exquisite polish, timbre and mostly, are with three legs. As a unique branded instrument, they have occupied a major space in the film industry for long. Even now you find Piano's in various forms on the film sets. It has become a phenomenal symbol played upon with sweet, out of the world tunes in almost all languages of the world. The way a big piano is built one can see that it is most suitable for romantic songs. If and when it is a triangular love story, the director can simply opt for this adorable ally of his again and again. By default its size makes you choose a large space to accommodate it. For that reason alone the cameraman would love its presence on the set. Obviously the house that keeps a Piano in the hall must be rich and lives in a palatial mansion. Or at least an independent room is allotted to it in the script. Large space is available around it to maneuver the camera on a trolley, track, crane, and whatnot.

It is a perfect setting for a rich boy, poor girl or poor girl rich man kind of story. Heartbreak is bound to happen when three romantically blind individuals cross lines and there is tension all around. The Piano holds all that stress and the emerging fireworks that keep surfacing in the scenes. Raaj Kapoor made us bleed for (his) love when Rajendrakumar, Vyjayantimala and the eternal lover RK himself overstepped on each other's love interest. Larger than life, impossible conflicts come up in the narrative. Who can forget that Dost Dost Na Raha wail of a lover unable to let it go? As we take a look at the Indian film scene limiting it to Hindi, one can see a definite pattern emerging.

This is true of all Indian languages. Due to space constraint and other limitations only Hindi films are chosen. That does not exclude films from other Indian languages which are most of the time clones of the mainstream Hindi cinema. Piano has been

one of the main witnesses in many a love triangle. Again and again we come back to the hero sitting at the center of the triangle and the other two pivotal points of the triangle hover around him making way for beautifully framed triangles. "Dost dost na raha" (Am betrayed by friend and my love), has Rajendrakumar drinking whisky, tense Vyjayantimala staring blankly, worried. Raj Kapoor faces the camera emoting agonizingly to the hilt. Sangam made the triangle acutely tragic without giving any breathing space for the other two characters who are also victims of the circumstances. The man goes on and on about his own version of lost love and the triangle gets overrun lopsided.



Another classic is the song "Chalo ek baar phir se ajanabi ban jaayen" (come let us become strangers here afterwards) from the film Gumrah starring Sunil Dutt, Ashok Kumar, Mala Sinha. The impossible lover comes to his married ex lover's house and sings in chaste Hindi. We become gullible accomplices believing that the husband won't understand a word of what is being said. The seemingly gallant man Ashok Kumar is so cleverly dumb. He keeps smiling, darting meaningful glances at the lady adding to her discomfort. The lover boy in plain Hindi goes on and on about the affair and even the nights they spent together. He now expects her to maintain perfect demeanor not reveal the secret! He pontificates about how love has to be forgotten, overlooked etc when it is not worth carrying on. The two men are so misogynistic. One has let loose his personal secretary as a spy on the hapless woman to blackmail her and the other comes to her home to preach about the futilities of carrying on an illicit relationship. At least he should have the decency to advise her in private. Not in front of a husband who clearly understands what is being said. The intentions are clear-haunt the woman for her slip ups, extra marital affair and sex to bring her into the "family" fold. The Piano seen in the song has huge space to frame the lady in all her agony. The camera again and again makes us realize the triangle and the woman's guilt. Relatively both the men are chummy, clear headed on the surface and remain calm. The song has withstood the test of time. It is a hit even today.



The same triangle is seen in several films with slight variations. "Dil Ke Zharakon me tujhko bitha kar" (I have seated you in my heart, decorated with memories and shall always keep you near my heart) sang Bhramchaari Shammi Kapoor to yet another love triangle with a difference. Shammi is agonizing over the Piano as the eternal villain Pran tries his best to woo Rajashree who is creating a mythical character who would go to any length to make the lover boy jealous. The triangular frame is beautifully composed despite hordes of dancers flitting around in a chorus formation.



Pyar Diwana Hota Hai (love is madness, blissful) from Kati Ptang (Kite with broken strings) takes yet another Piano route. The woman Asha Parekh is supposed to be a widow by accident and the man Rajesh Khanna desperately wants to tie up with the coy, vulnerable Kati Patang Asha Parekh. She keeps eluding him as she is supposed to mourn the death of a husband who entered her life literally by accident. The third element of the triangle here has exited the world. A large gathering surrounds the Piano and the camera is constantly on the move with tracks in, out and all around. As can be seen it is obvious that the Piano playing man does not know a thing about playing it. Who cares!! The instrument itself is full of romance.



The theory seems to be that when hurt in love rush to the Piano to lean on. Dilip Kumar did it in Raam Aur Shyaam singing Aaj ki raat mere dil ki salaami lele, (my last song for the night as I take leave of you) Monoj Kumar did it singing the title song "Pathar ke sanam tujhe hamne kyaa samjha" (You are made of stone, my love, what I thought of you and what you turned out) Piano being a western musical instrument one cannot expect us to be familiar with its usage and the kind of music it produces. In that sense it excludes itself from being part of the regular Indian scene. But as an exotic property on the set it has all the charm and grandeur. This also limits its usage. If at all it has to be in the center of the theme, the musician and the character has to be well versed in it. The musical form demands a special place and identifiable personality in the narrative. Andhadhun (the blind tune) uses the Piano extensively where a fake blind musician is the protagonist. That makes it easy to use Piano on the set and also its music in the theme prominently. Ayushman Khurana is seen playing the instrument faking as a blind musician. Probably one of the best use of the instrument as it goes well with the narrative. The suspense and the ensuing tension are perfectly justified. Everything is perfectly in character. The high point of the film is the way Ayushman Khurana goes on playing as the bamboozled killer couple desperately tries to hide the dead body in a suitcase. Our beloved eternal triangle is present again. The witness happens to be the hapless Piano player who has to act out his blindness or get killed. The player, the dead body in the suitcase and the tense fumbling criminals make it an enjoyable caper to relish. As the scene unfolds the Piano goes on and on. Hilariously no one seems to notice that the fellow is just hammering away!! It was inspired by a French short film The Piano Tuner.



It is possible that the Indian mind sees and accepts it more as a "western" entity from an alien culture. That makes it easier to associate it with "irregular" ideas that we do not consider ours. However hypocritical that may sound, the Piano somehow has remained witness to many such narratives when it was chosen to be placed right in the middle of the set.

When we look at the way Piano is used as a property and also as story element in films across the world, we notice its complete integration in the narrative of some films. Marx brothers are the finest example of musicians turned comedians or vice versa. The buffoonery has music built into the gags they performed in many films. The image from The Big Store, shows Chico and Harpo playing the instrument together. Those were the days when it had to be done in real time. The spontaneity of the gathered crowd and that of the performers looks every bit genuine. The scene is available on YouTube. They are perfect in the music they produce, note by note and the comic act that goes with it. They keep the smiles and the laughter together as they hammer out classical tunes.



Hitchcock was the master of suspense. How can we forget the song "Que Sera Sera" from *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. The song is introduced somewhere in the earlier part of the film. Later it is repeated at a crucial juncture when the parents reach the embassy where the kidnapped child is held hostage.

The mother sits on the Piano and sings the song (as loud as possible) so that it reaches the child hidden within. It is a beautifully rendered song, perfect for the suspense. As it is conceived, the sequence needed her to be seated at the Piano to keep the dignitaries and the villains around her.

The boy responds by whistling the tune. The husband goes about snooping for the child as she continues singing. Before this Hitchcock prepares us for the climax very well.

It is preceded by the suspenseful scene where the Prime Minister is saved from the killer's bullet at the Royal Albert Hall. The scene is a musical extravaganza keeping the audience spell bound. Perfect editing adds to the suspense. Compared to the orchestral piece at the Hall the last rendering on the Piano is subdued. The Director knows his music very well so that he can keep the viewer's anxiety levels, the way he wants. Great mastery.



Casablanca is the ultimate love story. Broken hearts, treachery, villainy, suspense all rolled into one. Pulling at your heart strings is the Piano player Sam at the club. Bogart has prohibited him from singing it anywhere, any time as it reminds him of his lost love. Sam goes soft and sings as the ravishing

Ingrid Bergman cajoles him to sing the forbidden song for the old times' sake.

Her lines have become part of mythical cinema history now. She says "play it Sam for old times' sake". When he hesitates she beseeches him saying "sing it Sam I will sing with you". Later in the film Sam plays it again at the request of his desperate boss who is hitting the bottle as he waits for her to visit him in the night. The sequences could sound little mushy and melodramatic by today's standards. But that is a debate for a history lesson. Till such time it is Sam on the Piano to keep us tuned forever.



Truffaut the French master introduced us to the shy, withdrawn Pianist Charlie who is not able to handle the practical world around him. He is a loner unable to express himself boldly as a man to the girl he loves. Goes through several situations where his shyness handicaps him.

He somehow manages to win the girl but his past catches up with him. He was once a famous Piano player who went into hiding after his wife's suicide. His brother is involved with some criminals. Trying to save the brother from the criminals, Charlie ends up a victim. The film is titled "Shoot The Piano Player". A sweet and sour narrative from the master.



Two noteworthy films by reputed masters revolving around the Piano come from Roman Polanski and Michael Haneke. Polanski's "Piano Player" is based on a real life Piano player from Poland who survived the Nazi occupation of Poland.

He loves to play the instrument even in hiding but doing so will give away his hiding. Till the end of the war he was helped by

a German captain and remained hidden safely.

The outside world keeps erupting around him and he craves to play the Piano. Even when there is one available in front of him, he has to content himself by playing imaginary tunes without touching the keys.

As the story goes the last tune broadcast over radio Poland was a classical piece played on the Piano and its reopening after the war was done with him playing the instrument.



Michael Haneke is a master. His films take you through the intricacies of emotional conflicts. "The Piano Teacher" is the simple title for a complex film. In a restrained performance Isabella Huppert plays the teachers role. She is on the verge of mental collapse. She is aware of her deteriorating condition and is helplessly slipping into the painful chaotic darkness of her own psyche. In desperation, she drags her student through an agonizing journey. References to musicians from the past are deftly woven in the narrative. The reflection of their genius and the agony manifest in their works is subtly linked to the plight of the teacher. Some fabulous pieces are played on the Piano as the tragic narrative unfolds.



Musical instruments of the world remain the same with slight variations depending on the culture. Piano gives us a perfect visual display of the 12 notes that govern the world of music. We have our SA Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni SA with their relevant hrasva, (sharp) mandra (flat) subdivisions. The Western

music has the same seven notes that correspond with our own note labels. They are white notes C D E F G A B. (Piano keyboard shown for illustration). The black keys are either sharp and/or flats of the white keys. This visual representation is a prominent feature of the Piano. A black analyst pointed out that the black keys in the scale form the backbone of the "Blues music" associated with the colored people.

As they were shipped from their native countries the slaves imprisoned for months in the dungeons, chose to create music as a salvation and freedom of sorts. Hence the "Blues", always has pathos associated with it. They are also called "Negro" keys. Even otherwise almost all "minor scales" invariably have black keys present in it. Only one white note "A" on the keyboard has all white notes for its "minor scale". That part of music history and theory needs to be explored further. Piano gives us a nice representation of the "notes" to understand at one glance with a neat display of keys.

On the piano keyboard, groups of two black notes alternate between groups of three.



Piano helps to create music that will keep mesmerizing the world. A wonderful instrument for the background and an elegant co conspirator at stealing hearts when placed in a film set. If only our film makers and the musicians can come out of their love story trap, they can see the wonderful possibilities.

Till that time we will keep singing and crying "Mat ho meri jaan udaas" (Don't be sad my love). There is no dearth of talent and one keeps hoping that something fresh will emerge and startle us.

□□□



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Detailed Analysis of Short Film "Bypass" Directed by **Amit Kumar**

Bypass is a short film released in 2003, directed by Amit KUMAR and produced by Academy Award and BAFTA winner Asif Kapadia and Trevor Ingman. The film stars Nawazuddin Siddiqui (in, one could argue, his debut) Irrfan Khan and Sundar Dan Detha.

The script won the production grant in the Film 4 and UK Film Council's Cinema extreme competition. The Bypass won the Kodak BAFTA Showcase for Shorts and was runner up at the Turner Classic Movies Shorts award at the London Film Festival. It was also screened at the Kodak European Showcase for New Talent at Cannes.

Bypass has no dialogue and solely consists of sounds and playback music. Ironically, the mute character of Sundar has been giving dialogues despite being speechless, and hence he only delivers sounds.

It is set in rural Rajasthan and explores the themes of money and violence using dacoit-like characters. Bypass has now become a benchmark for directors and other short films due to the usage of imagery and thematic innuendos. The name of the film itself describes what the film consists of, shortcuts. This is shown in a both literal sense and a metaphorical sense; bypass literally means diversion off the main road that's a shortcut, and in the movie, it implies the extreme detours the characters take to earn money, or to loot. The rich visuals



have been brought to life by ace cinematographer Rajeev Ravi, Amit's FTII Batchmate.

The film opens with a shot of a scavenging bird and it closes with the same, and this establishes the idea of 'what goes around comes around' in the first scene itself. This once again can be taken in both the literal and metaphorical depiction where the literal meaning shows it opening and closing with birds, while the metaphorical one is explored through the characters of Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Sundar Dan Detha. This is further reiterated by the killings that take place as the movie progresses.

In the first few scenes the Nawaz and Sundar Characters brutally murder the young couple on the bypass road, and by the end of the film, they are killed and discarded on the same path. While this is

one instance of the irony, many more satirical instances are shown in this 16-minute film.

The music score, by Academy Award winner Dario Marianelli, is very apt for the kind of scene that is shown and is used to depict the kind of mood that is trying to be instigated within the audience. When the young couple is shown, a catchy, energetic song is blasting on the radio which is then suddenly cut short to show Nawaz sitting on the sand dunes. This abrupt ending of the song suggests the sudden death of the couple that will be shown in the upcoming scenes. As the car approaches the Nawaz and Sundar characters, the tune in the background is eerie and sets the dark mood for the rest of the film, and also indicates bad omen. Along with that tune, there is a palpitating beat that plays adjacent to the eerie tune and creates some sort of excitement within the audience as to what is going to happen next. Apart from that, after throwing the rock a long, high pitched horn sound can be heard that resembles a heart monitor post the death of a patient.

Subtle methods are used to show strong ideas such as Nawaz's illiteracy is shown using the simple action of blankly looking at credit cards and tossing them into the sand without understanding what they are. This also throws light on the rurality and naivety of the character that Nawaz is depicting. Another nuance is the way the death of the couple is shown even before explicitly showing it. This is

shown through the action of Nawaz tearing the photo of the couple which implies the potential death of the couple in the car. Furthermore, each murder scene is abruptly ended followed by the introduction of a new character. The film is directed in a stylized manner where abrupt scene ending suggest characters dying, however it is done in a way so as to not reveal the complete story. As Nawaz empties the wallet of the newly-wed man, he notices the man's watch. Instead of unclasping it from the Man's wrist, he attempts to chop off his hand.

However this action is unsuccessful as the corrupt police officer reaches the crime scene. This, then throws light on the impatience of Nawaz and his callous methods to attain wealth, and also shows the insensibility and lack of exposure. The hand chopping scene transitions to the next scene where meat is being chopped by the dhaba owner. Once, again, sounds are used in a cautious manner. The hand chopping noise is followed by the sound of butchering meat where the first strike is amplified compared to the other strikes, this is done to put an emphasis on the murders that are taking place.

Irrfan's character is introduced in an absolute way- he is shown on the crime scene and is completely unfazed by the wrongdoings, as this is a regular exercise in the area. We are told he is a corrupt police officer as instead of reporting the murders he casually picks up the wallet to check for cash. The next shot focuses on the golden watch that initially Nawaz tried to steal but was unable to do so. The symbolism of the watch is extremely high in the movie and plays a key role in helping the film to progress. The watch is shown to have bad omen associated with it; whoever wears it eventually dies, first the groom, then the police officer, and then Nawazzudin.

The prop has been used in a clever manner which also symbolizes the bad luck and time for the individual who is wearing it. We then travel with Irrfan to the dhaba where a broken matka is on the ground, this once again hints at the negativity which is filled in the air. In this scene, he is offered food which he declines and instead takes the key to a chicken coop where a woman is sitting in the dark. This throws light on the treatment of women and the kind of lust men have towards women and by keeping her in a dark enclosure with chicken shows her value being equated to an animal. This lust is also depicted in the

opening scene where Nawaz tears up the couple's photo and only keeps the lady's who he was initially about to kiss in the photo.

Apart from this, the use of satire is extremely vital in the film. It can be seen that Sundar behaves in a distorted manner when he sees women, and eventually murders them, but ironically, at the end of the movie he is indeed killed by a woman. This elucidates the idea of female empowerment and sheds light on the 'Bharat Mata' ideology. The woman who ultimately kills Sundar resembles goddess Kali who is an alter ego of goddess Durga, resemblant of Bharat Mata.

The whole film revolves around the power dynamics that is associated with money and eventually the respect that is gained. This is clearly shown in the scene where Nawaz lifts the plate to reveal the contents of the metal container, but the dhaba owner snatches the plate for him. However, when he flashes the 500 rupees note, the owner's eyes light up and he very respectfully sets two places for them and serves them with gratitude. This is then followed by the screams of the girl who is being sexually assaulted in the chicken coop, and both Nawaz and Sundar look up however are not jolted by them and eventually resume eating. It is safe to say that none of the characters in the film are shown to be righteous or have a sense of morality, from killing people to ignoring screams of a girl who is being sexually assaulted.

It comes as a shock to the audience that Sundar attacks Irrfan from the back and initially when we see the money slipping from his hand, we don't understand what is happening. As Sundar strikes him again, the scene instantly changes we are given a glimpse of two new characters, and special focus is put on the wrench. While in the moment, it is hard to understand the significance, the audience later finds out that it will be used to kill both Nawaz and Sundar. Small signs like these that are later explored in the course of the film make Bypass and extremely engrossing as it instantly catches viewer attention. The watch is reintroduced to by showing it on Nawaz's wrist. It is exhibited like a trophy and like money, it also has power dynamics associated with it. However, while it is used to show the transferring of power from one individual to another, it has a negative connotation as it symbolizes death.

Once the dhaba owner is dead, Nawaz picks up his brightly colored pagadi and gently places it on his head and gives a sly authoritative look. The color usage is very smartly done in this film. Since it's set in Rajasthan, the colors used are dull and monotonous, but to emphasize on certain commodities the color red has been used for example- the pagadi, the sari of the woman in the coop, the bangles of the newly wed woman. Each pairing in the movie has been giving one red item, for the couple it's the bangles, for Irrfan and the dhaba owner it's the pagadi which eventually goes to Nawaz. This signifies blood and the people who will be killed. The last pair who kills Nawaz and his partner don't have a red item signifying that death doesn't fall upon them.

The final scene of the movie can be linked with Hindu connotations of Yamraj and this association is made as death approaches them due to their bad deeds. The jeep arriving closer and closer to them portrays their death and Yamraj himself has come to pick them up. There is some sort of unknown factor to the jeep which makes it mysterious and dark. Furthermore, the same kind of eerie music is playing that was to be heard in the beginning of the film. The film comes to an end similarly like other scenes ended, abruptly. Two scavenging birds are again shown like they were shown in the opening, depicting the circle of life which eventually creates a parallel between the beginning and ending. Largely, the film explores Darwin's famous theory of 'Survival of the Fittest' where in an archaic world such actions would have been justifiable. However, in a modern world such extreme measures to earn money seem improper and illegitimate.

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Reviewed by:
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Naresh Sharma

An Interview with

Dr. Jacquelin Roussety

on Fassbinder's play "Katzelmacher"



The German Director, **RAINER WERNER FASSBINDER**, comes in the league of Werner Herzog and Wim Wenders. His film, "*Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*" is amongst my favorites. It was pleasant to see that somebody decided to work on "*Katzelmacher*" which, compared to his other lesser known creations later, it was adapted by the German Theater. Dr. Jacqueline Roussety from Germany was invited to NSD, where she did the Hindi adaptation of this film with the students. It is difficult to work in a foreign language when someone is not familiar with it, but she managed to mount an impressive production. It was bold according to the Indian standard but at the same time had values and issues which are universal. There are many layers to the play which gives a variety of opportunities for actors and designers to learn from.

In this interview, Editor & Publisher, **Naresh Sharma** tries to find out her vision and process of working with students.





Dr. Jacqueline Roussety grew up in London and Hastings and studied acting and directing in England. She completed her doctorate from Humboldt-Universität Berlin on Staged Geniuses and Muses in Theatre and Film.

Over 17 years, she is working as an actress in Germany and has lectured in the Staatliche Schauspielschule München (Munich State Drama School). She also worked for 5 years as director at the "Theater und so fort." in Munich.

She is Co-founder of Netseries Berlin Creative Factory. (www.netseries.de)

In October 2019, She was invited as Guest lecturer at the National School of Drama for Directing 3rd Students and She chose "Katzelmacher" by Rainer Werner Fassbinder for training students and had public shows. In this interview, Editor and Publisher, **Naresh sharma** Explores the process of Making this play.



Among multiple choices of text, what motivated you to particularly select Fassbinder's play "Katzelmacher" which is also made into a film in 1969, and translate it into a theatrical production with Indian artists?

I wanted to direct a play which not just had a German relevance, but which also had an international appeal. Already worked as a journalist with the content of Indian society, especially when it all comes to the position of women in Indian Society, raping, domestic violence and foreigners as a guest worker, all that gave me the idea of combining the idea of combining the film script of "Katzelmacher" and the theatre piece. Taking the German element I started reconstructing it in India. Such fusion of screenplay and theatre play had never happened before. I decided to keep the original German name which describes the fear of a society, when a foreigner turns up. All they think about is that this stranger will destroy their life, their habits, rituals and only keeps on reproducing himself. With 12 great actors and

actresses, I worked for 3 weeks in English and later switched to Hindi.

What was your process of assigning roles to your cast and how did you make that choice?

This has a lot to do with the archetype of characters, which was the main thing. I trained and inspected the kind of archetype that was in front of me and then appointed an actor or actress to the character of the play, that fitted this archetype. I wanted to see their abilities. I had a very special technique of emotional training through which I worked with them. I basically had let them talk in Hindi. Even though I couldn't understand a word it was interesting to know how open the person is. It also allowed me to speculate their sense of humor. Physical presentation was also taken care of. If I had the character of a great guy supposedly a leader of the party, with the ability to lead like a king, a good-looking man would definitely succeed in persuading the girls to listen to him and eventually respect him. To be honest, I believe the cast chose me. I must say, I had a cast of twelve great actors and actresses.

The character of Elizabeth and her husband, Peter is quite interesting to watch. While Elizabeth is dominating, Peter is submissive and follows her. How did you manage to fit such elements in theatre?

People these days want a realistic show or a realistic movie, but theatrical concepts are never realistic because it is an art. I took this chance to tell a very simple story. I wanted to show not just patriarchal violence but also give a blow of violence over a man inflicted by a woman, thus giving it a different purview. The scene where Elizabeth is sitting like a queen up there holding her little dog on her chair gives her an authoritative. When



she says, 'Come on take me down, take me down', I really wanted to show the capacity of a woman to dominate the male member. So, with the help of Peter's submissive character I tried to present his inner desire to possess the position that Elizabeth was physically holding, his willingness to take over all the tribulations in order to achieve that seat someday. This puts light on the fact that some people even today wish to take over the trouble over them in the hope of some light in the end.

Sexuality, from the Indian perspective is seen very differently compared to how Fassbinder in his play portrayed. His play explored both heterosexuality and homosexuality. Given the fact, that your production is based in India, were there any challenges that you faced in keeping up with the original narrative?

Fassbinder didn't mention Homosexuality at all! That was my idea and concept. But he surely would have been proud of me, as he was bisexual. My technique of direction is a little different from that of Fassbinder. I was deeply affected by the documentary film India's daughter. We all are familiar with the horrifying rape case of Nirbhaya. It had a grave impact over the Europeans' perception of, be it Yoga, the retro culture or food. It is a terrifying memory of what happened to the girl nine years ago in Delhi. I am politically aware person, and this was the reason behind my necessity to understand the country I was living in at that time. I was happy to come to India for the first time considering the great opportunities it grants to one. But I knew the serious issues pertaining to domestic violence, resistance to homosexuality, and its conservative nature towards sex education.

I was aware that our topic of work was not a matter of major concern in Germany now. But I have seen how we treat the maid, the poor Uber driver, and people who belong to lower caste. This is an interesting aspect which I combined as well.

The character of "Gunda", played by Devika, sings a song in the play. Was her casting for this role primary based on her talent or did you want to present a Bollywood number that would support the script of the play?



Well the thing is that, singing is one of the most important aspects in a film. I did my PhD on Filming and am very aware of music's power to deliver emotions to the audience in a special way. So, I use this for the character of "Gunda" who gets a chance to reveal her true feelings. She is a plain girl, and nobody desires her. To communicate her inner feeling of being lost, loneliness and longing, she sings

because she finds is no better way to express it. She sings out her inner monologue and this indeed is a very special moment for me as well.

The character of "Yorgos", played by Tribuwhan Nath, who is an outsider, has a very impressive entry, with a dramatic silhouette effect. How did you visualize this?





I focus more on the psychology of images which basically talks about symbolism. I gave Yorgos this impressive entry because of the meaning it brings out. What is interesting here is that he is the only person who comes inside. Although, all of them present inside have desires to go somewhere, do something and prosper, nobody wishes to leave and continues to remain stuck inside. Infact, even Yorgos takes his entry as the moment of stepping into 'paradise' and hopes to have a better life. However, in the end, it is him who questions the existence of 'paradise'.

There is another scene where he is seen making a painting on the wall. Why did you choose this particular scene for him?

He is a nice, handsome guy who too had dreams. He is an artist and even though he was working as a guest worker he is liked by quite a few from the gang. He is an optimistic person who is ready to show his work to the whole world but sadly nobody recognizes it. I wanted to show that he was not just a dumb worker but a very talented and intelligent man. It is interesting to see that the moment he meets the girl, who is suggested to be his future mistress, he is confidently able to show his ability.

We were all together as a great team, with a wonderful directing assistant Anirban Banik, which was important for me. After two weeks I stopped the normal rehearsal and then had solo rehearsals with each character and worked on their movement, feelings, positions, and aim of the character.

When I took the solo class, an

interesting thing happened; I stated using the highlighting technique to understand what the character wanted, what his/her prime desire was throughout the play and the former's relationship with the other characters. I wanted each character to ponder over the other characters on their actions, feeling, thoughts and work. We went through the psychological analysis of the characters together. It was very interesting and that's how we got involved, step by step, in the whole play.



The colour "Red" is visibly dominant in the play. Why is that?

Yes, but also blue and black, typical symbols for men and women. We think that because we live in the 21st century we can talk much about gender and sexuality, but I personally believe that 'men and women are different'.

This can be a challenge and a problem. For me it was very important to show that most of the times women in this play think and behave in a very stereo typically gendered manner. In Katzmacher, people are not able to talk and flag their opinion over issues pertaining to gender and sexuality.

Their speech is somehow bounded, and the colors are symbolic of their muted speech. The girls are seen wearing red or pink and the boys wearing black and blue which again relates to the colors associated with genders given by the society. The men are presented in cold colors – blue and black while the women are in bold colors – red symbolizing love and blood, and pink again being a girlish color.

Colours help us understand their inability to take off the clichés which is represented by dialogues like "I want to have a child", "I want to have a nice husband", "I want to own a lot of money", "I want a good wife", etc. With these costumes I was able to show both the challenges and the problems faced.

As this production was also a huge learning experience not just for the actors and actresses but everyone involved, how did you keep this factor in mind?

The whole thing was a very interesting process because of course I used different techniques. The most important task for me was to find a good text which could incorporate my twelve talented young actors and actresses whom I had selected from the National School of Drama (NSD). It was essential for them to have a wonderful learning experience. I am not an enthusiast when it comes to the typical situation in so many theatre companies, when only two leading roles dominate the play and all the others get the feeling not being able to show their abilities.

Therefore, I wanted to make sure on my part that all the cast members selected by me had a substantial role play through which they could present themselves at the fullest. For two days, I worked with each character very separately because I think it is very important in any drama school that the



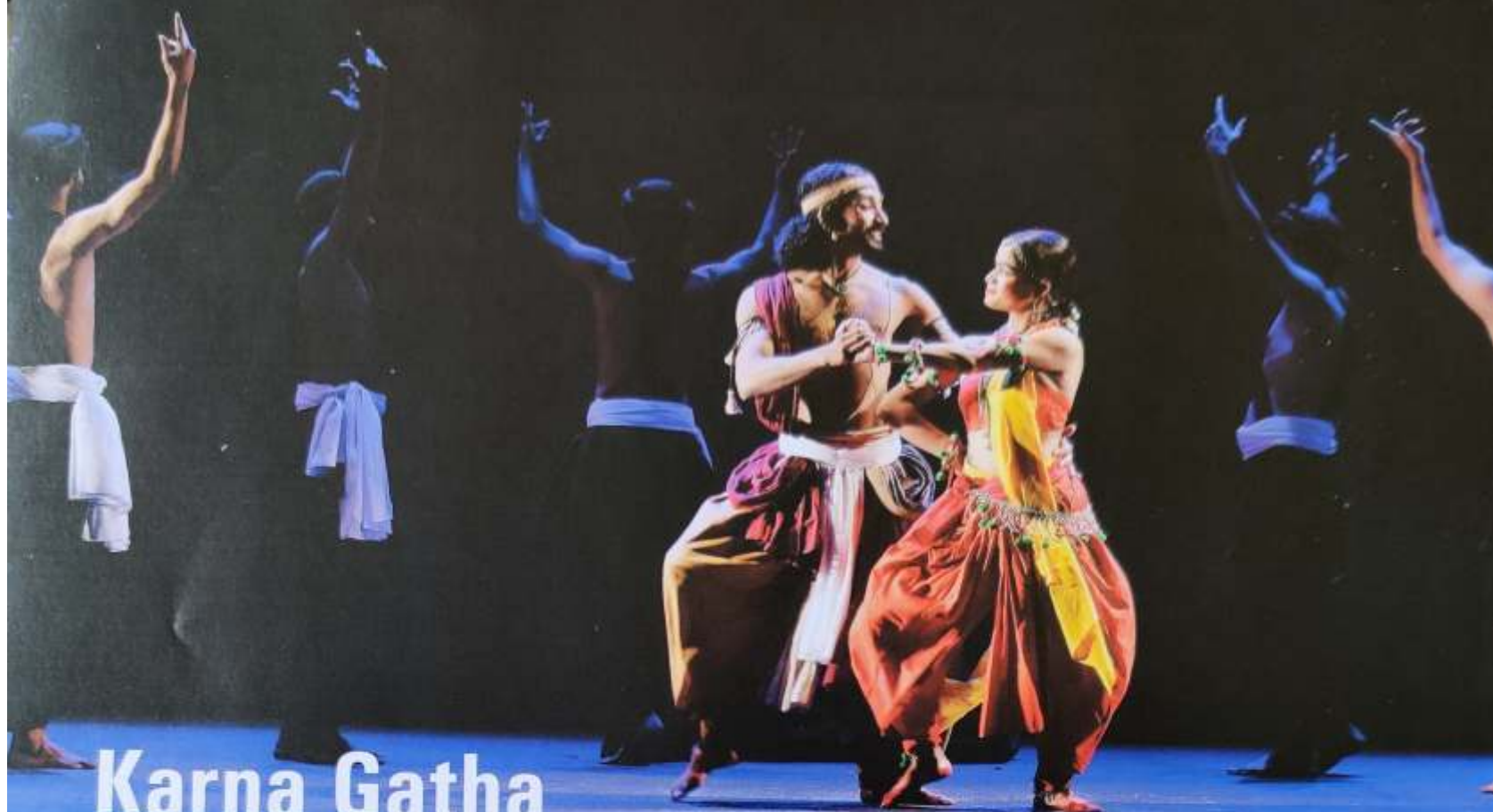
young next generation of actors and actresses get a chance to showcase their talent.

Is there anything that you would like to add about the play which I may not have asked?

About the play, I think lots of people admire the fact that I am a foreigner who has come to India to talk about problems whose existence have become so common today and still does not get spoken about. But for me, these problems that we have are not personal to only one nation but are universal and is an important matter of discussion

And next year, 2020 it is the Fassbinder Year. He would have turned 75 and his work is going to be celebrated. What a pity that the NSD is not able to show this production in this for us in Germany very special Fassbinder Year.





Karna Gatha

Music, Design & Direction : *Rita Ganguly*

PLAY WRIGHT: ASIF ALI HAIDER KHAN



Experts are invited to provide inputs for the NSD students. The primary agenda is to train them as well as to present the final output to the audience. Rita Kothari is someone who does not need an introduction. She always comes out with a play which is gripping and stands apart on its own. In October, the second year NSD students showcased 'Karna Gatha'. It was brilliantly scripted by Asif Ali Haider Khan, seeking inspiration from various texts on

the subject written by Rabindra Nath Tagore, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's 'Rashmirathi' and Shivaji Sawant's 'Mrityunjaya'. It was not an easy task to integrate such a material and evolve a play around it. During the workshop, students were given the understanding of classical drama and mudras, called Rasaswadan.

Those who have seen Rita Kothari's earlier work three years ago with the second year students, where she directed 'Abhigyan Shakuntalam', will find many similarities in terms of costumes, set design, music and the overall ambience of the auditorium. Despite retaining the primary elements in terms of format, she has the talent to evolve a new production which has its own freshness and charm.

The story of Karna is not new to an Indian audience but where to focus in the script is equally important. After the initial episode to set up the tone and mood, the story picks up momentum. The two characters which form the backbone of the entire play are Karna and Kunti. Parth Pratim Hazarika brilliantly enacted the role of Karna. While preparing for his role, he says "For me, Rita

ji training was like becoming a total artist—where I could integrate elements of Satvik Abhinay with gesture and other body movements and could concentrate on the dialogue delivery as well. We should be able to connect body movements with rhythm, gesture and emotions. The most difficult thing was how to enact along with mudra. Initially, I was not able to catch the essence of Karna as a character. For me, though Karna is generous, he doesn't glorify himself and throw his weight around. He is sober and down-to-earth in many ways. To bring this in performance was a tough task. Since I come from Assam, diction was another barrier to overcome. In this aspect, Madam Newton was very helpful in giving inputs on my diction. To speak Hindi in a correct manner and emote properly was a difficult task for me. Since I belong to a traditional background where I had some training of body movements, the input of Chhau during the training was easy to absorb. I could do it with more confidence. And I enjoy it so I hardly got tired. For me, it was effortless. Had I been from a Hindi-speaking background, I would

have done many times better than what I did."

In the script, a substantial part is devoted to show two stages of Karna as a child—one where he is hardly 4-5 years old and another where he is around 6-8 years old. His affection for playing the musical instrument khol added another dimension to his character. The audience clapped wholeheartedly when the child artist played the khol live. Miss Tsering Lhamo was the appropriate choice to cast for Baal Karna. She modulated her voice perfectly to fit into that role.

To play mother to Karna is equally tough for an actress, where you will be growing from a young mother along with little Karna to an older Karna, the warrior.

Radha, who is Karna's surrogate mother, was enacted with conviction by Shalini Kundu. There are interesting childhood scenes where she shows her bonding with child Karna while she is playing and chasing him. These scenes are carefully crafted where you feel the softness of a mother towards her child. On preparing for her role, Shalini says "I played the character of Radha who was a simple, poor lady in a village busy with her routine life along with her husband. There is boredom in her life. But she had an inner strength is something I had to concentrate more on as an actress.

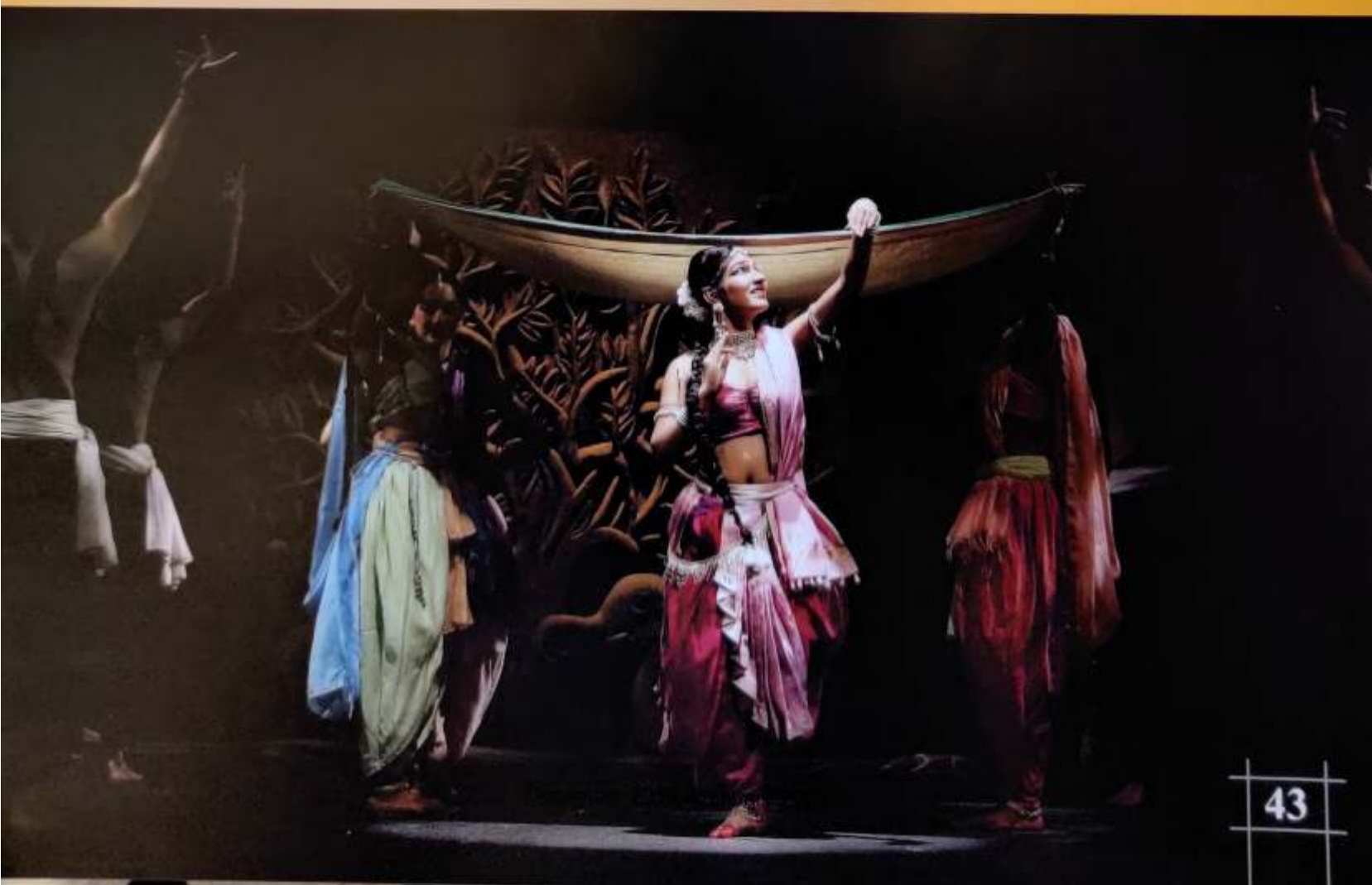
While I was enacting as a mother for child

Karna which was played by Tsering Lhamo, we had developed a chemistry and I started feeling like her mom and enjoyed playing that part. When he is a child, I kind of remained perturbed. But when Karna grows up to be a man, is married and comes with his wife Vrishali and a crown on his head, it changes the atmosphere at home. To play age was another challenge for sure. But there was not much interaction with Karna as he goes to war."

In the play, the character of Vidushak was marvellously played by Alok Ranjan. His enactment added the humour element from time to time.

Another imaginary character added in the script was that of the 'horse'. In the text, it may appear frivolous and this is where Rita Kothari as a director distinguishes herself from the run-of-the-mill theatre directors. She will give dimensions to even trivial characters like the horse. Mr. Bhushan Sanjay Patil, who played the role of the horse, says:

He was not just standing there as a horse but also had to make his presence felt without overpowering Karna. This was challenging for me. It was important that he should not just be a property but also showcase the bonding he has with his master. Initially, I had only one scene where I get introduced. I touch Vrishali's hair when Karna goes to meet Vrishali. It was





difficult as I had to believe in myself that I am a horse and also convince the audience the sprite of a horse not just by gestures but to create an overall impression of a horse. As Karna gets evolved, so does the horse. It also becomes important over time. Satvik Abhinay of horse was something I needed to incorporate. Also, I had to perform Indra in between as an important character and come back to my earlier role as the horse.

In Satvik Abhinay, you have to emote a lot. I did not have much action to perform. And, as a horse, I had no dialogue and I had to bring something from inside which shows some expression on my face. I saw many videos of horses on YouTube. How they run, how they look around, their suppleness and body movements. I did not want to become a full horse but I had to maintain myself to emote the animal. I incorporated all

relevant observations and emoted them in sync with my master Karna. If Karna is crying, I also had to cry without thinking that I am an animal. I had a zero mind."

On asking whether the audience would have noticed subtle nuances of his performance as a horse, as it was not cinema where there is a closeup, Bhushan reacts, "I believe you create an aura when you incorporate such things in your performance where your Satvik Abhinay gets in your body subconsciously which the audience notices. Also, I didn't have to overact so that people will only notice the horse and not Karna. If you have seen the play carefully, you would have noticed that sometimes only my legs are moving while sometimes when I am eating, only my neck is moving. So, that's how I performed and created my presence in the scene.

It becomes difficult for an actor when he has to switch between two characters on stage. But Bhushan did this shifting effortlessly. When he comes in the getup of Indra, you seem to forget that a few minutes back, the same person was playing the character of the horse."

On asking what traits he has to concentrate upon while portraying Indra, Bhushan says:





"Indra, for me, is the God of 'chicanery'. How one would showcase his attitude is a big question where I also had the enactment along with mudra but only in the end. In the text, all other characters are from earth and you come from heaven as Indra. Also, due to my body movements and Indra's attitude of larger than life, I was not given mudras too while performing till the very end. I am also trying to trap Karna. When he agrees to give away his kavach kundal, my level goes down as he won me over by giving to the one who has everything. That was also something I need to reflect in subtle way.

The role of Kunti was performed with ease by the very talented actress Kote Pratiksha Shivaji."

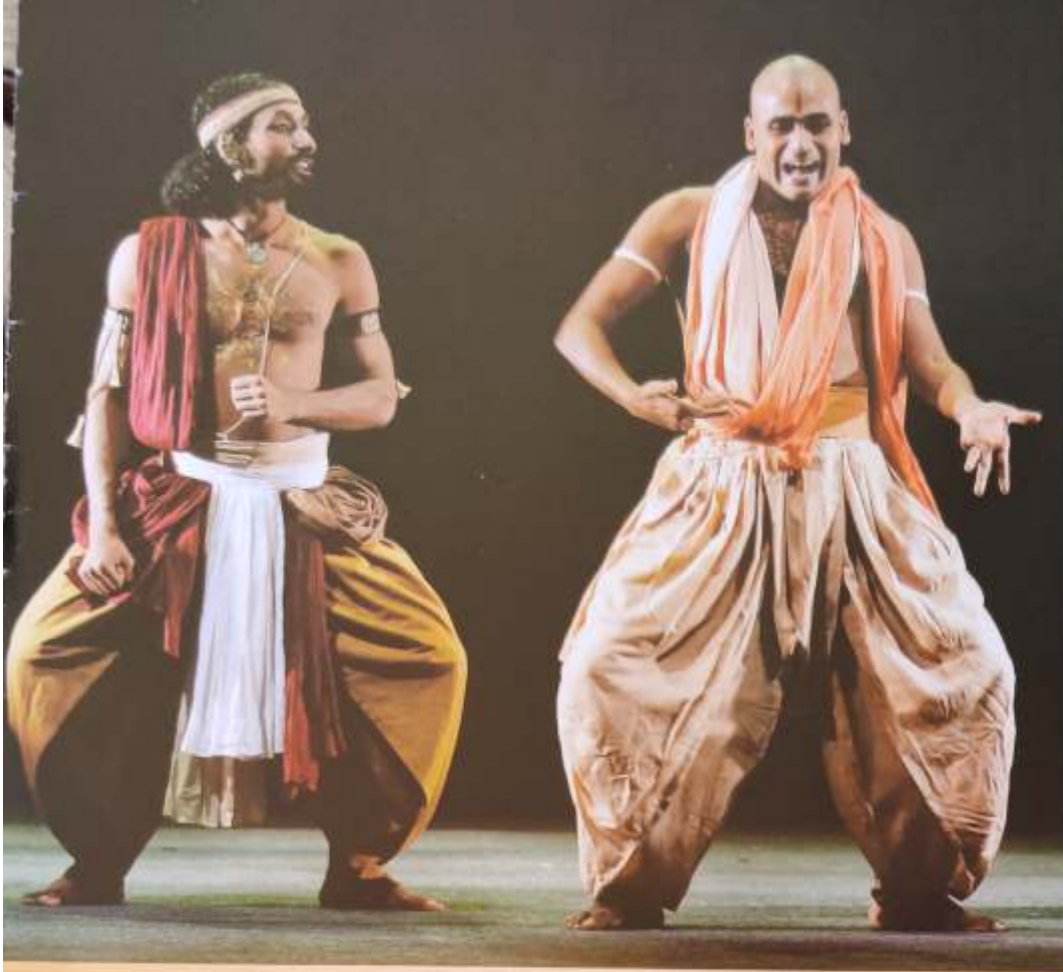
About her understanding of Kunti as a character, she says: "Graphically, when I

looked at the character, she has come from different places---Mathura to Bhojpur--- where she is being given away. She has adopted a new environment and is being sent to serve Sage Durvasa. Things are happening randomly in her life. She is confused and is just 14 years old. Yet, she is mature to handle things. She has a group of friends from whom she tries to understand what exactly Durvasa meant. She listens to her heart. She has no idea of conceiving a child. And when she tries and finds an infant in her hands, it reminds her about how her parents would have brought it up. As this baby is part of her body, she is attached to it but she has to give it away in the water, because she belongs to the Kshatriya caste. She has that responsibility too. Though she is not keen on it, this total conflict has made her mature, and later, she cannot be what

she was before the birth of Karna."

Her reaction on how difficult it was for her as an actress in the interaction scene with Karna at the end, where she is trying to bring him back while crying and delivering the lines, she says "I think when you enter in a new process, Rasaswadan plays an important part in it. How the music is affecting us takes us towards Satvik Abhinay. Rita ji also said that how the lyrics and music sung by Shubha Mudgal is creating an impact on me as Kunti, keep that with me. Do not get it out in one go. When I am searching in the night, I hear that poetry 'Kitni dooriyo se kitne baar...'--- there is a long struggle in it. I had an agenda that I have to take him with me. Else, it is confirmed that one of them will die. So, I have to choose. Though I want both of them to live as the conversation progresses,





Vrishali's is practical. She is as strong as Karna. Initially, when she meets Karna, she is Soot Putri. She is very intelligent and that reflects during her conversation with her friends. Also, in the dream sequence with Karna was a realization for the Karna that now he is love, which he doubts as he is a warrior, which is also used in the "Khol" which is his kind of friends. Kabhi Kabhi by Hariharan adds to the scene.

For me, the main sequence was the kavach kundal scene. You see a different part of her graph and she is strong now. She has a child now. As a wife, how she protects Karna in front of Indra is something I need to bring out. How she talks in an angry tone, how she explains to Karna. It was difficult for me

to bring out that chemistry between us which is as a lover, and later, as a wife.

Krishna is a difficult character to enact as people have seen and respected many shades and dimensions was wonderfully played by Abhishek Koushal. On asking how he prepared himself for such a profound character, he says: "I am playing a character which is not human. But since he is on earth, he is a kind of superhuman. So, to understand this thin line was difficult for me to bring out. When I asked Rita madam why she cast me in this role, she said I looked like 'Krishna'. First, I worked on the speech to get comfortable with the words. Then, when I incorporated the mudra, it was kind of stagnate. So, slowly, I understood that

despite having all superhuman qualities, I have to be with the others who were not superhuman and I had to brainwash Karna, which is very much required as I knew this yug is going to end. I came to coax him to come back to the Pandavas, that is my desire of Krishna as a human. But being a Divine Superhuman, I also knew that he will not come. So, when I knew the character of Karna bound by his commitment, whatever I had to say was with a smile on my face.

Watching Karna Gatha was a treat which only fortunate audience could relish.

Reviewed by:
Editor & Publisher:
Naresh Sharma



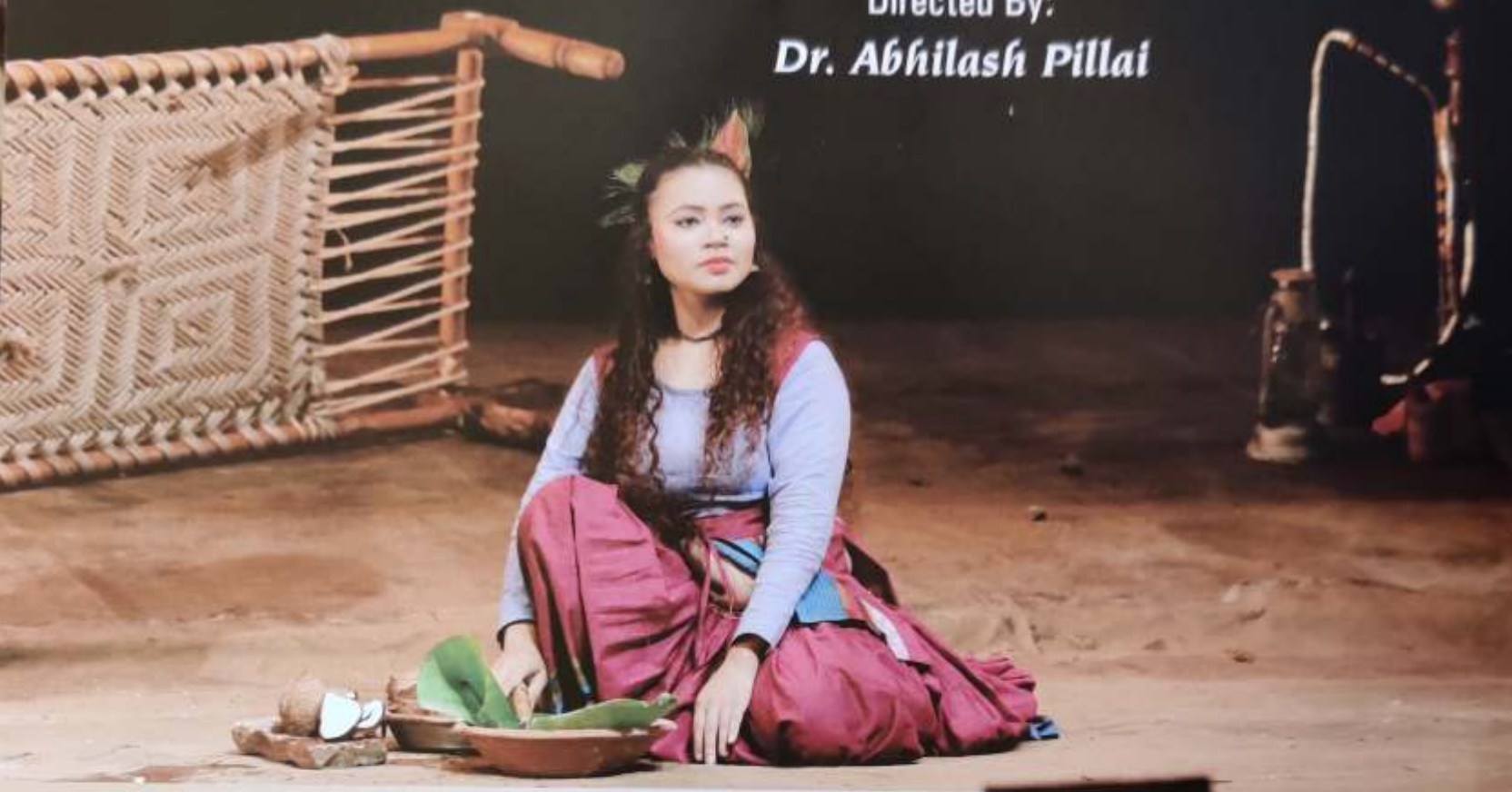
December 2019 - January 2020

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"Anth Se Aarambh"

Directed By:

Dr. Abhilash Pillai



DR. ABHILASH PILLAI is amongst the highly respected theatre directors of India. For the last five years I have been consistently watching his plays and he always leaves audience to meditate over the many layers of his work. His plays contain nuances that are in no way forced. His work contain innovations in terms of designs, be it set or costume wise. It's always a treat to watch his production. He was invited to direct the awarded play "*Anth Se Aarambh*" for Sahitya Kala Parishad, an annual theater festival that was recognized by *Mohan Rakesh Samaan* for writing on theatre. The other three awarded plays were also performed by other invited reputed directors like, Sanjay Upadhyay, Danish Iqbal and Bharti Sharma. NSD graduate Bornali Bohra is one of the most talented actresses from Assam, who has delivered brilliant performances one after the other. In this small interview, she narrates her experiences of working in "*Anth Se Aarambh*".



While I was in Drama School at NSD, I always dreamt of working with Dr. Abhilash Pillai; but I didn't get an opportunity at that point. After graduating from NSD, I started working with the Repertory Company which I later quit after receiving a call from Ms. Jhilmil Hajarika. She gave me an opportunity to play a major character's role in "*Anth Se Aarambh*" and I was overwhelmed to find out I would be working with Dr. Abhilash Pillai. As I read the script, I was truly amazed with the precision it was written with.

Initially, I assumed that we will be more focused on a technology-oriented production. Later, to my realization, I found out that we will concentrate more on the script, deeper subtexts, the psychological space of a character, and the poetic sense of the text.

The play "Anth se Arambh" has eight characters. My character, 'Mohini', was very different from the other characters I've played in the past, such as 'Lysistrata' by Aristophanes, 'Beyan' by Mahashweta Devi, 'Eliza Doolittle' in Pygmalion by G.B Shaw. They are known to be historic and warrior like characters. On the contrary, the character of Mohini, her thoughts, energy, knowledge, ideologies were very different and challenging. Her purity, intensity, and values to protect 'Jal, Jungle and Jammin' were identifiable. As an actor, I felt this role was exciting and challenging at the same time. Her traditions, culture, passion as well as her love and respect for Manav Das, her mother, and society makes her similar to a modern version of 'Mallika' (Ashad ka Ek Din).

There are many things going on in Mohini's life, and she has the courage to deal with it which makes her so impacting and powerful. Her power is her words, ideas and principles. Apart from this, working with Abhilash Pillai sir will always demand more energy and focus from an actor. The director's deeper vision also brings out a completely new aesthetic in the play and require you to step out of boundaries.

I received the script just eleven days before the show. I needed some time to develop the script and the character's concepts and subtexts. This was quite difficult for me as I am a non-Hindi speaker (Assamese). The script was written by Ravi Kant Misra, who has been

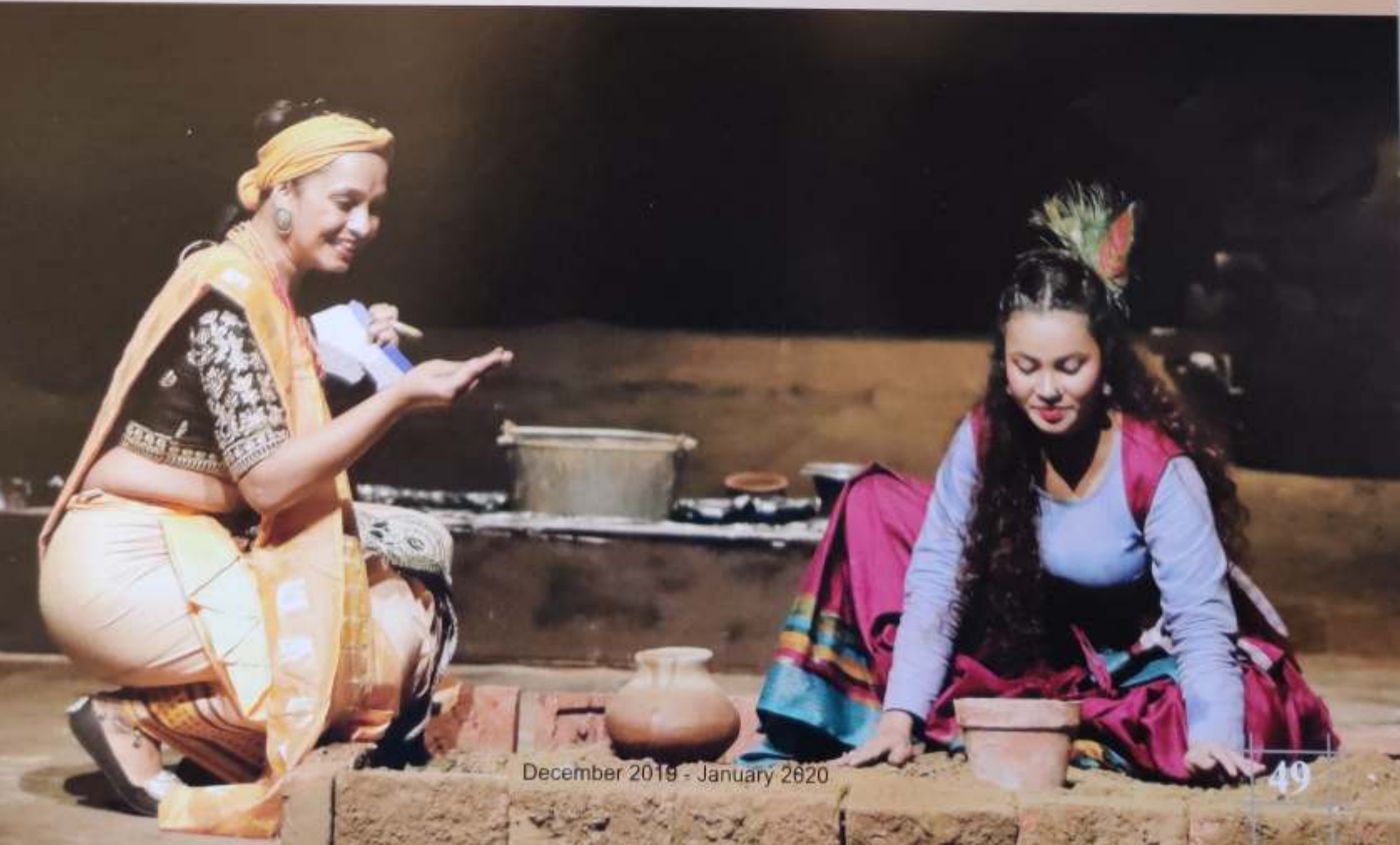


awarded by Sahitya Kala Parishad. Pillai sir and my co-stars especially Mahesh Saini, helped me a lot in my dialogue, pronunciation, and my overall development of the character of 'Mohini'.

For our next show, I have decided to invest more time to further explore my

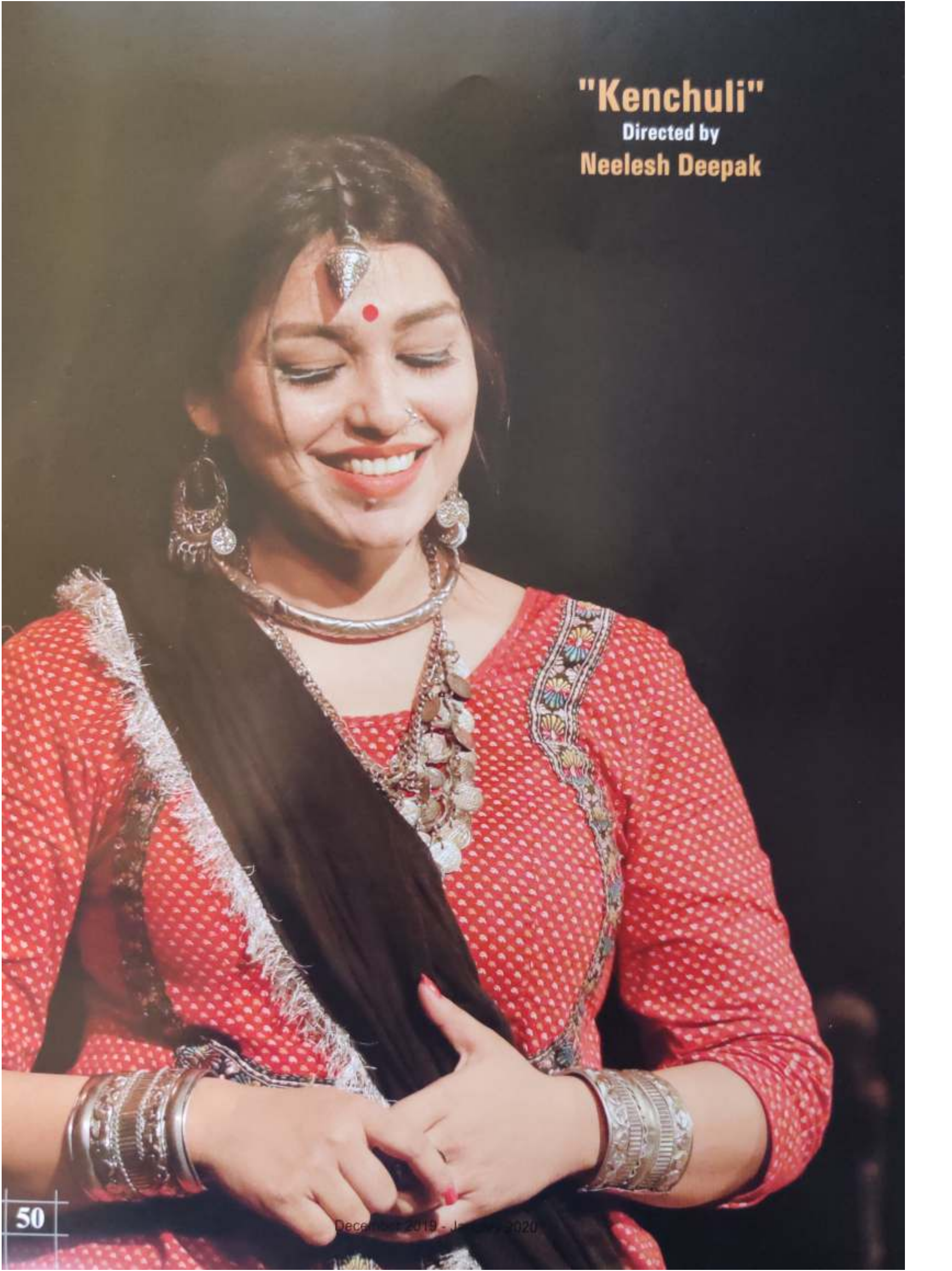
character. I want to dig deeper in the characterization and develop new dimensions. At the end, I would like to thank Dr. Abhilash Pillai for giving me such a wonderful opportunity, and it is my pleasure to be part of this brilliant work.

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"Kenchuli"

Directed by
Neelesh Deepak



It was a long time ago when I met Raisa Padamsee in Paris who was married to a French producer. I heard the name of Vijayadan Detha for the first time from her. She played the role of a bride in "Duvidha" which was directed by Mani Kaul, and was based on Vijayadan Detha's story. In 2005, Amol Palekar made *Paheli*, based on the same story of Vijayadan Detha's starring Shah Rukh Khan and Rani Mukerji.

The title of the Vijaydan Detha's story, "*Kenchuli*", literally means 'the remains of the snake', or a serpent's sloughed-off skin after molding. In one of the pivotal sequences, the story's pregnant protagonist Lachchi sheds trappings of her modesty. The play *Kenchuli*, directed by Neelesh Deepak was performed recently in the Hindi Academy's annual festival, "*Lak Sahitya*".

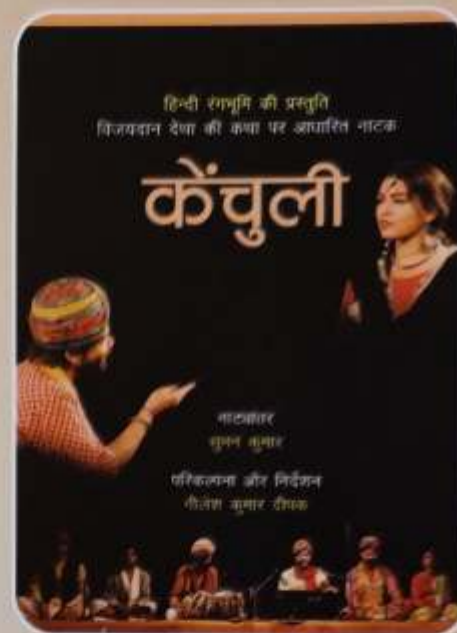
Kenchuli, opened with a musical composition of the bhajan- '*Guru bin kaise laage paar*'. Followed by which, the two narrators, Sandeep Kumar Rajeev and Dipali in a connotative manner introduced the essence of the play. As anchors they shared a wonderful chemistry and added value to the play. Dipali has an effortless way of delivering her dialogues. She introduces Goojar by saying "*Majboothai!*" and this taunting remark says everything about Goojar's character. Soon we realize Goojar's actual strength when he surrenders to the Thakur's advances being fully aware of his malicious intent. Goojar's character was well played by Dhananjay who was able to show his helpless attitude and naivety on several occasions. At a design level, it was

an innovative idea to have two narrators.

When Lachchi creates an opportunity for him to suspect Bhoja's intention, he always seems to be convinced with the excuses offered by Bhoja. Amarjeet Ray fits perfectly well in the mold of Bhoja, who is fascinated by the good-looking women of the village. Furthermore, Ganesh Gaurav as Thakur very naturally fits in the old man's role who is lustful for Lachchi. Somehow, he managed to bring that lust on stage in such a manner that it creates an interest among the audience. As the play comes to an end, Lachchi is disillusioned with her husband and mistakenly takes Bhoja as her true lover who has risked his life for her.

At the design level, it was an innovative idea to use two anchors as Bhoja's house door, where an anonymous woman inside his house says "How come you remember me today, you were mad about Lachchi?". To this Bhoja reacts that Lachchi is an arrogant prostitute and he does not care for her. After hearing this she realizes his true character which shatters her. Paribhasha Mishra as shattered Lachchi effectively brings upon the emotions using deep breaths and wet eyes.

Her feelings and decisions are made symbolically clear as she throws two small earthen pots hanging on bamboo sticks on the ground. The aura created in this scene heightens when the chorus begins chanting "*Rehna nahin desh virana hai*" by Kabir. This leaves the audience empathizing with Lachchi as they exit the auditorium. Paribhasha Mishra does full justice to her character. She was the



perfect cast for this role with her pleasing voice and seamless acting. She was able to bring out many sensitive moments of the play through her facial expressions and tonal variations.

MPSD graduate, Lakhan Singh Ahirwar's usual compositions were enjoyable and they maintained the momentum of the play. The *Kenchuli* has potential to become more powerful, provided there be authentic Rajasthani music and backdrop set which will help create a cultural impact on the audience.

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Reviewed by:
Editor & Publisher:
Naresh Sharma



Interview with Lead Actress "Kenchuli"

Paribhasha Mishra

When you got the lead role in 'Kenchuli', what kind of preparation did you do for your role of 'Lachi'?

I tried to put myself in the shoes of this character to understand her slightly better. Visualised her background, her upbringing, her mental models that shaped her thought process. Although it is a very different context : rural setting where patriarchy is explicitly accepted and females don't have much power or say, it is still relatable in contemporary urban context - of course, the form changes. So, relating few scenarios around also helped me understand the character better.

What were the instructions you received from the director for this role?

There were many suggestions and Neelsh Deepak Ji continuously held conversations about the story, it's interpretations. He gave few real examples from his own village where he has seen such power play and women succumbing to it. He asked me to think more about this female, visualise her background, where she comes from, who were her parents, how her life must be before marriage, what changes she must have gone through post marriage, what must be her expectations from this marriage etc etc. He did suggest to use my own life experiences to better understand the pain (that really worked well for me, haha).

What sort of improvisations did you do while enacting various scenes during rehearsal?

After becoming comfortable with the story, the script, I tried to not become some other character but play Lachi as part of my own personality. I tried to live Lachi instead of becoming Lachi.

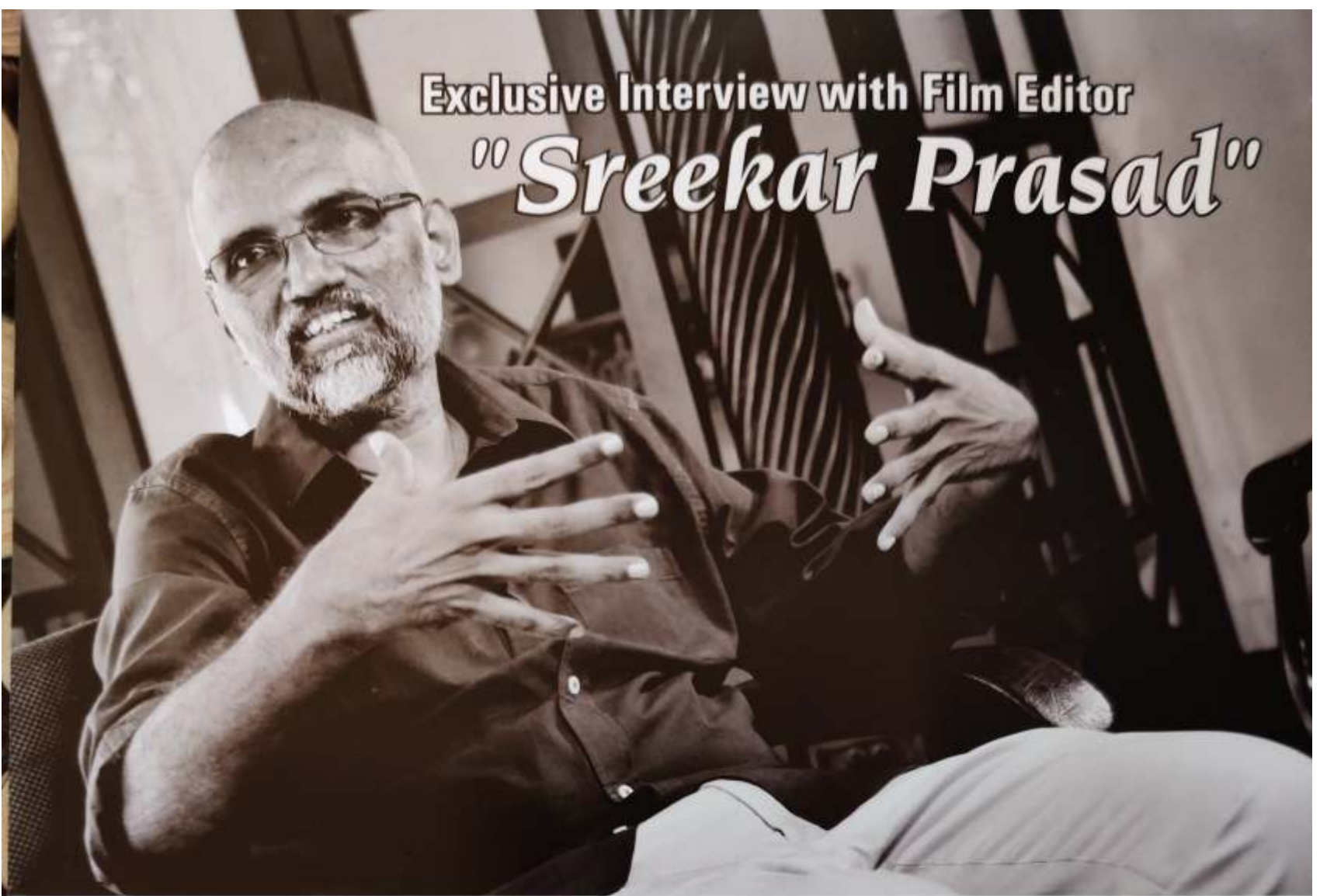
Four shows have already been performed. What kind of improvements did you make in the character's role by the last show?

It was more on the emotions and feel aspect. By the last show, the way I could feel Lachi's inner conflict, pain and hope was quite intense and that was probably reflecting as well that made the last show quite different from the first show. This stands true for all characters who were part of this play as well.





Exclusive Interview with Film Editor *"Sreekar Prasad"*



SREEKAR PRASAD is one of the most sought-after editors in India. Prasad was a literature graduate from the University of Madras, who inherited his interest in editing from his father, Akkineni Sanjeevi. He started with Telugu films but expanded to Hindi, English, Malayalam, and Tamil films. As Mani Ratnam's go-to-editor, they have worked together for two decades on films like 'OK Kanmani', 'Chekka Chivantha Vaanam' and 'Raavan'. The shooting for their upcoming historical drama, 'Ponniyin Selvan' has already begun in Thailand. Prasad has also worked with various directors like Vikas Bahl on 'Super 30', Meghana Gulzar on 'Talvar', Vishal Bharadwaj on '7 Khoon Maaf', and many others. He won the National Film Award for his work in movies Raakh, Vaanaprastham, Kannathil Muthamittal, Firaq and his first Hindi film, Raakh, Filmfare Awards for Dil Chahta Hai, Firaq and Talvar, Kerala State Film Awards for Yodha, and Anandabhadram. Some of his recent works are 'Super 30', 'Saaho', 'Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy'. As of now, he is working on multiple projects set to release in 2020 like 'Indian 2' and 'Angrezi Medium'.

Pace' and 'Rhythm' are considered significant and commonly used terms in the field of editing.

Please elaborate on the primary difference between the terms.

'Pace' can be defined as the tone pertaining to a particular genre. This can be fast or slow, intense or mild. Pace is often defined by the genres of a particular film. For example, in a horror film, the presence of pauses and silences creates the effect of a scary or mysterious moment. While, in an action movie, the pace would be very different in terms of unfolding the story. Rhythm is slightly different in comparison to pace. It is to do with the interaction between two characters in a particular scene and the rhythm with which that particular emotion or interaction happens. It can also be defined as the duration of emotion or space in a particular shot or the scene itself. Both, pace and rhythm are combined in symmetry in the process of film editing, ultimately reflecting in the outcome of the film experience.

Is it possible to regulate the rhythm while shooting as well as at the time of editing? According to you, what is the ideal approach?

It is possible to regulate the rhythm at both the stages though it is much easier to control the rhythm of two characters at the time of shoot. Otherwise, we have to artificially create it. Consider two characters, A and B, who are having a conversation. There has to be a certain rhythm where A says something and B listens to it and absorbs the impact of what A said which means a space or pause needs to be there while in shooting, this can help in using a single take for that conversation but if it is not done during the shoot I would cut that moment in two shots and add necessary pause in between the two shots to get the necessary impact as it is this same impact which the audience also absorb as much as character B. So, it can be done either way.

Is there any sort of difference between editing a comedy sequence and a romantic sequence?

Definitely there will be a difference. To give a very basic example, in a comedy sequence, body language, gestures, and dialogues convey the idea of comedy. So, the hold on the shot is important to convey that particular feeling. Also when there is a funny moment in the film, we have to give the audience some time to enjoy and laugh before moving on to the next act, it would kill the humorous moment if I move to another scene without the hold on that moment. Romance on the other hand is a personal affair. This is shown via close moments and proximity. If two people are sitting across each other in love, chemistry between them is created by moving from one face to the other by cutting close shots as action and reaction of love. Instead of creating a single, long moment, we add more of interaction. As far as Indian cinema is concerned, background music plays a major role in such scenes. To emphasize on the feeling of love, there will always be a song or music in the background. As an editor I need to judge how much space and length is required for music in such a moment and keep the length accordingly. On the other hand, a comedy scene does not require this thought process.

After editing is done, music is added later, so how do you comprehend the need of pauses and space?

It's a matter of intuition. If there are two people looking are interacting in silence and there is some emotional tussle present between them; you have to judge it and decide what is the appropriate length for that interaction. Also it depends on the actors performance the amount of length I could hold onto in a particular scene or moment, so that I can hold the attention of the audience without feeling bored or distracted. First I watch the scene in silence and imagine the music that will work for the scenario, this is primarily done by instinct. I always try to end the scene before it gets redundant, whether it is a tragic scene or a romantic scene.

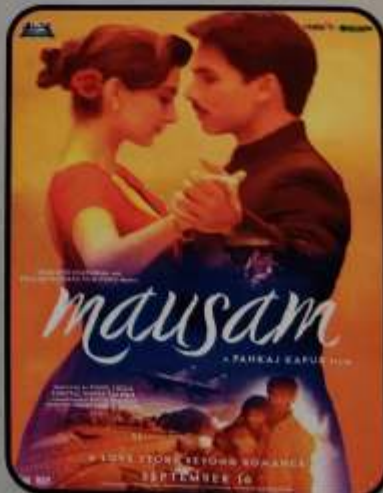
Was there an instance where you planned a scene with specific music, but during editing it didn't compliment it?

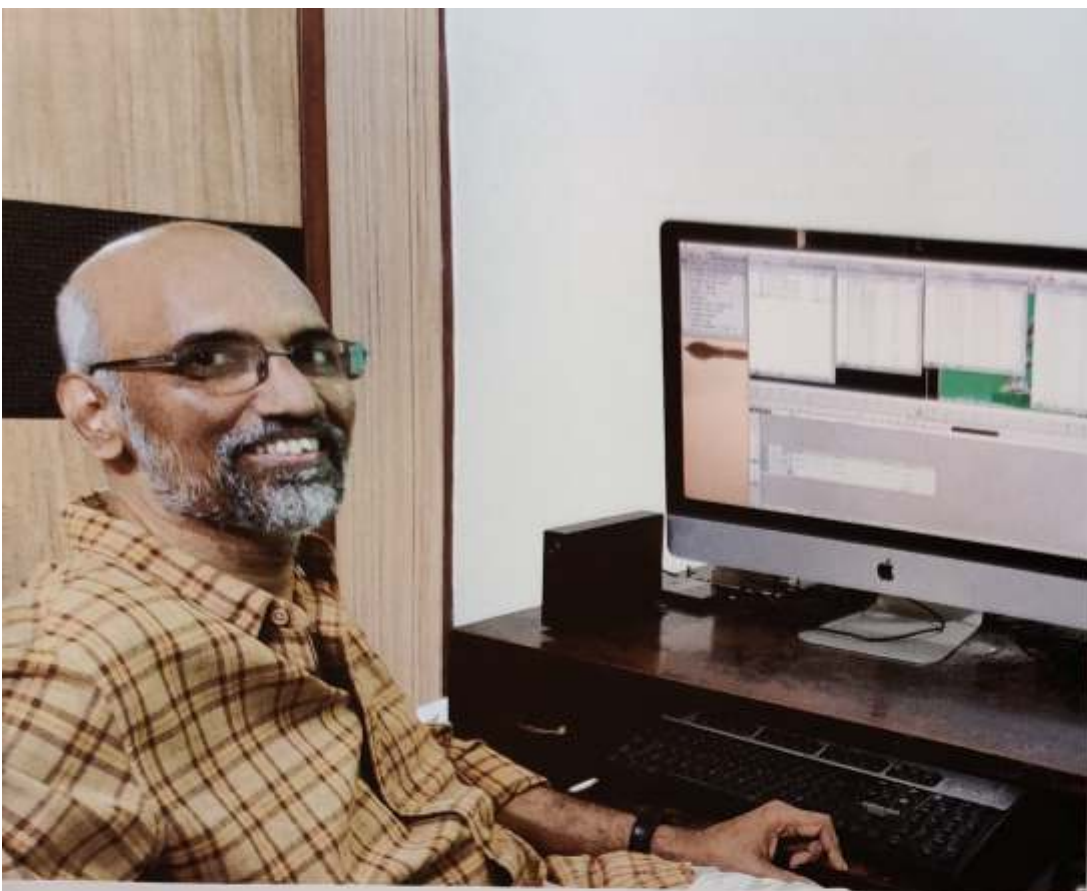
It has happened. Sometimes what happens is that there are big montages, a term we use in Indian cinema for the passage of time or a process. In the script, montage is when there is a long time frame, for example it can be a few months or few years. In some stories, it is important to show the hardships of a character in those 3 years, which can take too much screen time and also hinder the pace of the film. So, in such situations we create montages where you show a lot of visuals depicting time passage. These three years sometimes we are able to depict in one or two minutes with help of music. One such example is the pregnancy scene in the Malayalam movie 'Vanaprastham'. The movie doesn't talk about the pregnancy but as the story unfolds in a montage of shots, different aspects of her life is shown and at the end of that montage we reveal her to be fully pregnant. Sometimes it has happened that I had to re-cut the sequence after the music director composes his music for this sort of scene, so that it is in rhythm with the music he has composed after seeing our edit.

Music videos has become an independent industry even in India. Is there any primary difference between editing a song which is part of a feature film and an independent music video?

For me there is definitely a difference. If I am editing a dance number, then we cut the sequence according to the rhythm of the song. But for a theatrical film, the rhythm of shots cut in a song can be a little longer in length as it is projected on a big screen and it would take that much

Important Film of Sreekar Prasad as Editor





time to register. But in a music video I aim to cut faster and that's because it is seen on a smaller tv screen where even shot durations of half a second are registered easily then. Unfortunately, for a film song, the editing takes place on a 21 inches screen, so u need to constantly remind yourself how it would look on a huge big theatre screen. This is a problem that new and inexperienced editors face and sometimes they tend to overcut and it leaves a not so good experience on big screen. For example if there is a character standing in the middle of a wide shot, registering it for an audience on a widescreen takes more time than on a small screen so the hold on that shot has to be more for wide screen. So, this is the primary difference in editing a feature film song and a tv music video.

During the editing of a dance sequence, do you prefer doing it with the choreographer or do you think the choreographer should assist the director only?

I use both methods because i deal with many types of people. There are some directors who prefer to take the route of the choreographer. They like to believe that the dance is a product of the choreographer's mind so they do not interfere with that and so allow choreographers freedom in shooting and editing songs. But I have also worked with directors who are totally involved with

shooting and editing of the song and the choreographer has no participation in the editing of it. Usually I like to edit the song myself and once the edit is done, we all sit together and analyze it and look into the possible improvements if any. The primary concern for me would always to continue the story of the film how much ever distracting a song can be in a storyline. Anyways nowadays thankfully songs are becoming less of dances and more of story narration in todays cinema.

In the case of action sequences, there are multi-camera setup shoots. As an editor, how helpful is it to use multi-camera setup in film and dance sequences in terms of footage?

For me, working with extra footage is never tiresome. In fact, it is helpful because more the merrier. But it's all about making the right choice. Often directors take four cameras because they can afford it, not because it is necessary. The wiser ones get the exact shots. As an editor I have to use my discretion in choosing the right angle for that particular moment. Sometimes they use multi cameras for situations which cannot have a second take for example bomb blasts etc. It is something that cannot be re-performed so it is shot it in 3-4 angles. The first thought of every editor will be to put every angle into his edit but it is not so for me as i have to be objective, and see which angle gives the scene the most

impact. It has happened many times that they have shot a scene with multiple cameras but I end up using only one camera angle because the impact that one camera provided was much better than all the other camera angles.

Earlier, the trailers were released in cinema halls. But as TVs have become more prevalent, we now see promos being aired. Editors are now specializing in this. According to you, should the promo editing be done by a separate editor and film by someone else?

Actually, it all depends on the discretion of the editor and director in each film. Promo making has become a specialised job because there is a lot of work which happens as a film is being edited and the editor cannot handle trailer work also because of the volume of promotional materials that have to be delivered in the last few weeks before the release of the film. According to me, the editor will be in the best position to know how to take the film forward as a trailer because they have an idea about it as they have edited the film. So, for the films I'm working on, I try working on the trailers if my director insists on me doing it. Some directors like Mani Ratnam give me a free hand in making the trailer so I do it for them. A trailer I feel has to convey the ethos of the film and make u want to see the film. Today trailers and promos have to be made very carefully as they make-or-break the film. This is due to the short shelf life of films nowadays with multiple films releasing every week. This means the promos have to be so impact ful that the target is achieved in the first week itself. A decade ago, we used to hide content in the promo so that people have the full experience while seeing the actual film as it used to run for many weeks and films used to grow on word of mouth but now it is different as huge number of theatres are used to release a film nowadays to recover cost very quickly so it needs to be hyped up with a barrage of promos to get necessary numbers in a week itself.

Also, I've heard that sometimes the rough cut is four hours and the final cut is two hours or two and a half hours, so why does it happen? What should the ideal length difference between the rough cut and final? Lagan was 5-6 hours at rough cut?

Yeah it is true .In some case like Lagaan they were so confident that the

released it and it worked too. At one time Mughal-e-Azam and Mera Naam Joker were big length films and they had an audience. But that era is gone now I feel.

With advent of television and different platforms for viewing features and web series and serials and so much content online audience is getting used to seeing content which is much shorter. Unless the content is so good or has such a hype or star casting it is very difficult to have a lengthy film now.

So basically, over the years, the script has come down in the number of pages. But what has happened is that in Hollywood films they do a script and they time it correctly. Indian cinema is a little verbose so because of that you tend to say a lot and also we have a tendency here of having a number of subplots and we try to give a lot of items in a single film.

They still have not figured a scientific way of seeing the length of the script. Hardly very few films are precise in length of script and many directors feel "let's shoot and then sort it at the edit table". But crunching or squeezing during editing is a problem because it could kill the effect in the scene as u tend to say things quickly and u tend to lose the nuances and also clarity. What I do with my films is that i try to cut down the story by removing scenes and not crunch every scene to the point of being ineffective. Also when we cut down the story, the nuances of the scenes which remain will not go, But it is a very common problem, as I face this in many films.

How important is the presence of

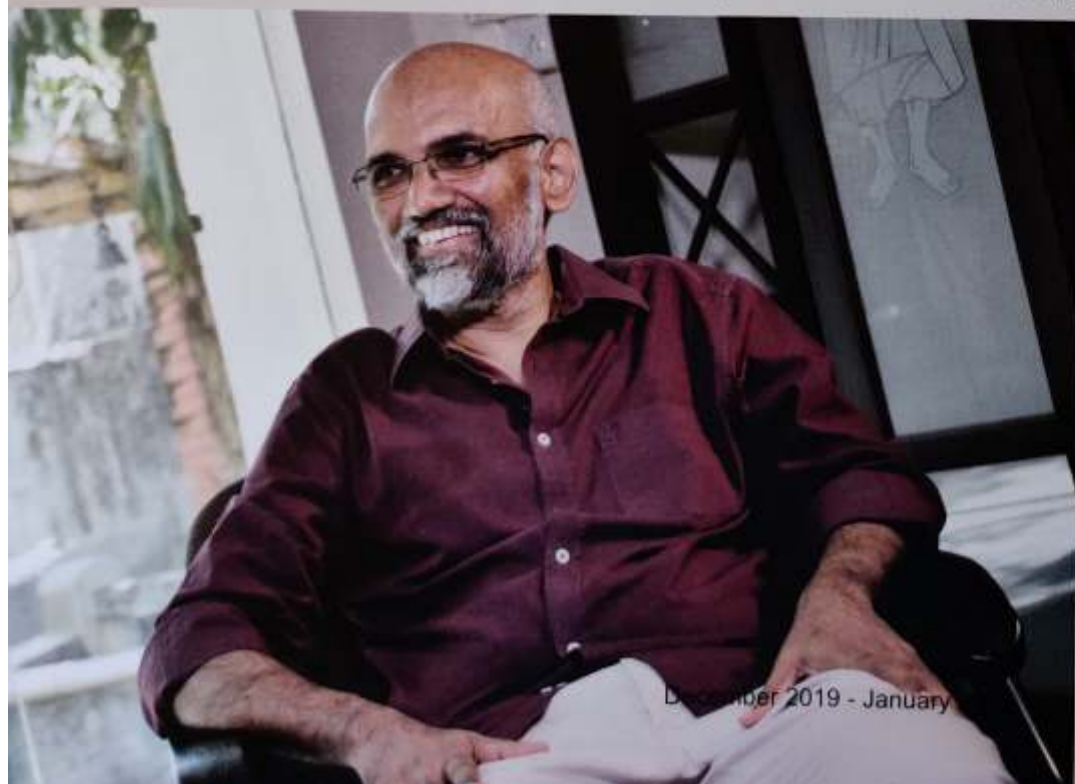
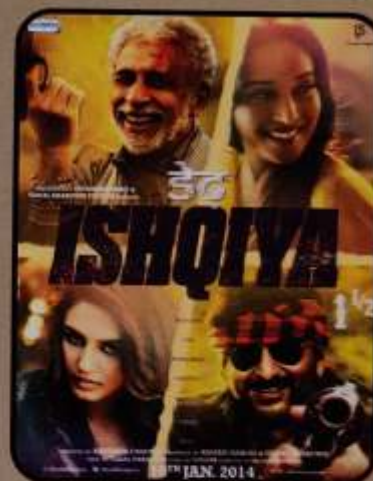
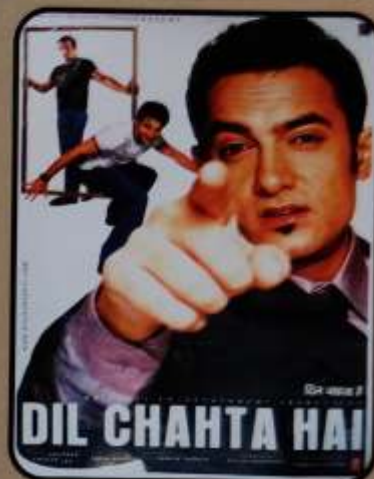
the editor on the set while the shooting of the film, because then you've seen the footage and sometimes people prefer to edit in the evening and the next day, they know what has to be redone. Do you think that is a good idea or let the director do it completely and then do the editing later?

I think both have its advantages and disadvantages. For a newer director as he is not used to shooting or editing it will be advantageous to see an edit immediately on location to judge if he is missing any shots or details or if there any continuity errors. The most important thing for a director is that he knows how the shots are cut together, joined together, and at which point he can join them. That makes his shot taking easier. But for an experienced director, and who has preplanned a lot, it is not a mandatory thing, so many senior directors don't do this. What they do is send rushes to me on a regular basis to my edit office and I edit and see and give him the feedback. Also I don't go to the location and edit, because I think if I get involved in the whole process of shooting I may not be objective enough to judge the rushes from a new perspective.

Also, a very basic question that is different from person to person, how do you go about with the process of editing? Do you prefer doing it in the presence of a director or you get the footage and first work alone or you give your assistant the rough cut and then you fine tune it? How do you go about it?

Most of the time I get the rushes and continuity reports which tells you how many takes have been shot etc during

Important Film of Sreekar Prasad as Editor



December 2019 - January



the process of shoot in a delay of 48 hrs or so after the shoot. Then the assistant will sit through and order the whole rushes. Once it has been ordered sequence wise then I'll sit and start editing the scene. I decide and take which is the best take, the best performance and start assembling the scenes. I'm editing parallelly as the shoot goes on. So at any point the director wants to see the edit, i just send it to him to see. Also it helps me in giving feedback on the rushes ,the way the edit is shaping up ,how good the performances are and if I am missing any shots etc

The coordination with the director will happen after the shoot, by the time we would have a rough cut of the most of the film and then we sit and then the director may come around and say that take number three was okay and you've taken take number two and then I would explain to him that take number two was better because of so and so reasons. Then we take calls to freeze the edit.

There have been instances where the film has been edited by a particular editor, but the director or producer is not happy with the outcome. So, to overcome this hurdle, he may introduce a new editor to reedit certain parts. Do you think it is appropriate to get a new editor once the film is being edited and if the producer is not happy to re-edit the movie?

See, this is definitely not the ideal situation to happen with anybody but if it is happening, then there is a valid reason for it to happen. At the end of the day, the producer has invested lot of money, so if

he feels that he is not able to get the best out of it, so it is up to him to engage someone else. But he should give the editor a chance to rework on it and see if it improves. See this happens sometimes because at the core level they are not satisfied with the film. It may not have turned out in the way they expected it or the way it was edited. And then they start over editing it so much they lose objectivity. That can easily happen because you've been editing the same thing for over a year, and you correct something to your satisfaction and then there will be other people who will see, and they will say it is not working. For the production to come to a conclusion is very difficult at that point so they may require another eye who will be objective, So it can be an editor or someone who can help them out. Sometimes it could be excess length and they could be confused what to drop out of the film, or it could be a story structure which needs to be fixed so they go to an experienced editor to solve the problem. Many a film screenplay changes on the edit table.

Also how does an editor contribute creatively, particularly in a dialogue sequence which has kind of a fixed pattern. So where does an editor come to contribute to the overall where one can say that this is a good edit and this is a bad edit?

There is going to be a number of dialogues in a scene and a few actors too, for example lets call them X and Y and Z. While editing the scene according to the situation of the scene in the script, you have to take a call on whom the dialogue should be played, in normal circumstances

it would the character who speaks the line, lets assume it is X, taking the situation of the story in the scene sometimes I have to use Y 's shot on the dialogue of X or Z' shot on dialogue of X to make the scene more impactful ,for me at the point is on whom these lines make an impact in the context of the story So, these sorts of calls editor has to make, so if you look it as a script paper it will look like- x spoke, y spoke, z spoke, three lines. Suppose x is not a great performer, y and z are very good performers then the whole thing changes too. And sometimes silences and pauses in the editing of a dialogue scene elevate it very much. So, once the footage comes you can interpret it in the best possible way for the script.

Also, very often we use the term timing. Timing particularly in the case of comedy sequence that the timing of the actor is very important. So how we implement this timing thing, which is there at the time of performance, but if it is not taken care at the time of editing and then it may not give the proper impact. So, what is your interpretation of timing while editing?

Basically timing has to be compared to reality in terms of reaction. See every action has a reaction. But it is different in every situation. The thing with comedy is that it is instantaneous so that is the timing what we are talking about. See, if I'm going to say a dialogue, in a situation where it is something that I'm saying is very rude and the other guy has to react then ideally, he will not allow me to finish the sentence also. That is how it is has to be edited too. In another instance, if I'm telling someone that your uncle is dead, then that guys timing instantly will be of shock which means he has to absorb the shock and then reply which means u give an expression or pause there before replying ,this is dialogue timing. Basically it has to be as realistic as how we do it in our daily life to get a sense of believability. On the other hand in comedy when the timing is instantaneous it makes you laugh better. If this happens in between the cuts between two shots, then we have to make it as real as it can be. In different situations there will be different timings.

You've worked with a variety of people, Did you also work with directors that makes your job easier or more challenging?

There are some directors you look forward to. Taking Mani Ratnam's name, so he is somebody I would look forward to.

For example, even if it is a simple scene of brother coming to see his sister, though it would have happen in many films, what excites me is how he interprets it and how he opens the scene is always a revelation, he will never do it the conventional way. Because he's always trying to look the another way for it, which is very interesting. Then I've worked with some directors like Homi Adajania. He has a very whacky sense of looking at things, so it suddenly excites you to be in that zone when he's narrating the script and making that film. There is Shaji N. Karun whom I have edited some films. With him he has so many layers that he is been thinking off and he's not an expressive person to tell you everything. So, In the whole process of editing I'll be realizing many things like he's put an image back and it was in the 8th minute and a similar image is back in a different context on the 108th minute which is sort of a revelation. It opens up the possibility of cinema because we are trying to balance between making money and working, what you want to really do is cinema which you hope it is still preserved as an art. When you see some cinema, you get really inspired because the amount of time they've taken or painstaking effort they've put into it, in terms of all the things, visuals, backgrounds, emotions, everything. It feels so overwhelming.

In documentary editing there is no fixed pattern, there is a footage, there is an idea there are sequences that director has shot but how does an editor really make final cut of the documentary where a fixed pattern is not there?

I think documentary editing is something that is far more difficult in terms of getting to the perfect flow than a feature because it doesn't have a story line. But again, when I'm editing a documentary or I'm seeing a documentary it is a story you're telling. When you're telling a story it's about how you unravel the story, that's very important.

Though it may be very simple what a person is narrating, what he says in the beginning and what he says in the middle and what he says in end makes a difference for the documentary to be interesting. It's like a story telling book. So, we keep revealing as the film progresses to get to a climatic high of revelation and satisfaction at the end of it when the topic or idea hits you and affects you in the end.

Also, since there are so many films that you've edited, would you like to narrate any interesting from edit point of view of a particular section from a particular film which you can recollect immediately?

In the process of editing, the screenplay actually changes. Though it's not necessary that it has to change but there is a possibility that the screenplay may change because reading a script and seeing it on a screen are two different things as it involves a lot of variables like acting, production values, shooting time which sometimes are beyond control of the director. Sometime, it may not work the way we have planned so the screenplay has changed in some films which has made it better as an experience. For example I remember one film called "With you, Without You". Initially it was a non-linear sort of narrative, the film starts with the death of the girl and then we slowly go through the flashbacks. And as you go on towards the end of the film you what happened to her and all that. But when I was editing with Mr. Prasanna Vithanage, the director, I realized that somehow the end part of the film is not holding because you already know she is dead, and then showing her struggle was not working as I knew she was inevitably going to die, had it been a murder mystery where you're trying to investigate, then it could have worked. But for this film I was convinced a linear story telling would work better. I managed to convince the director to do a new structure and after seeing he too agreed.

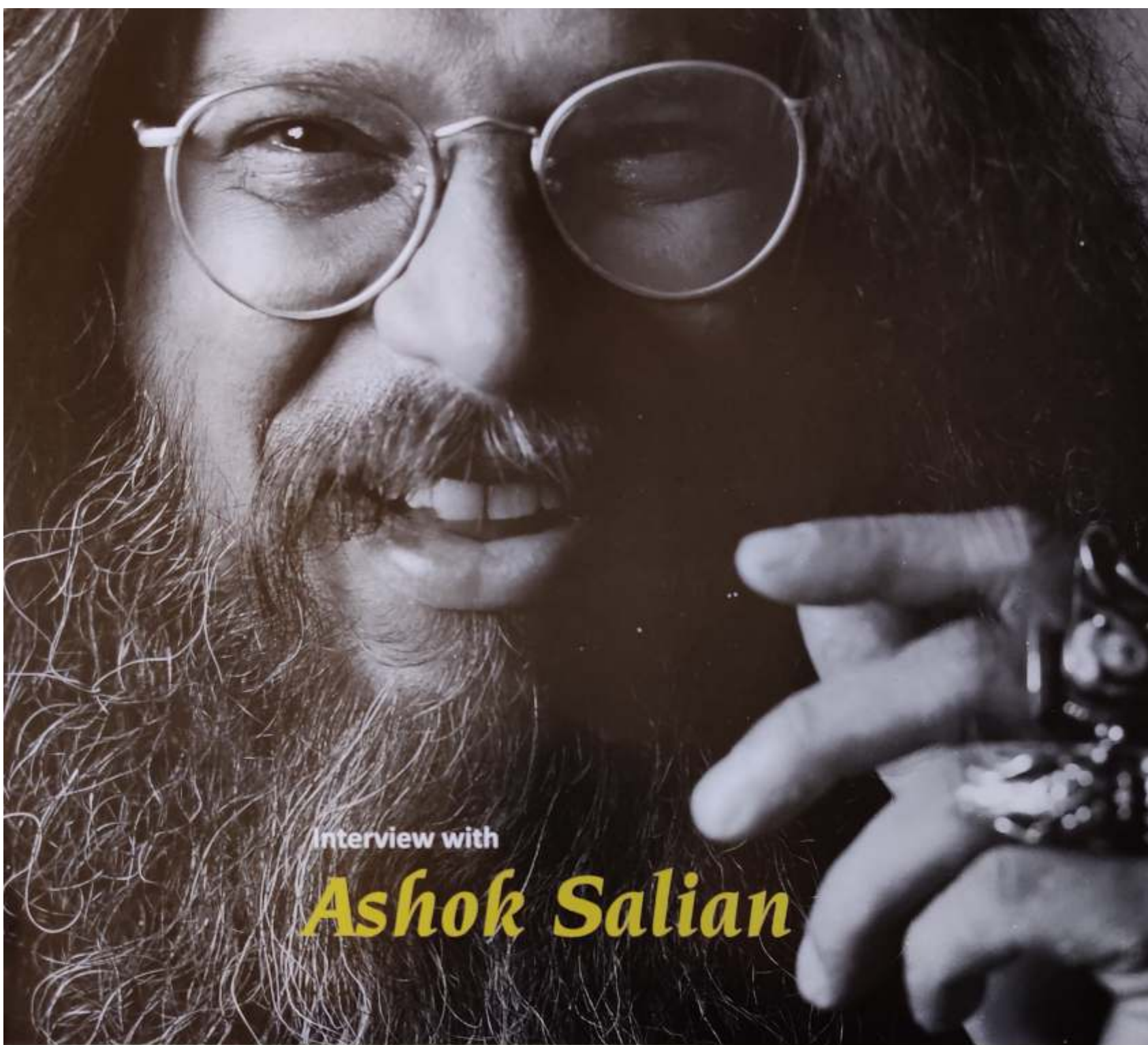
Another film which immediately comes to my mind is Kaminey where the structure had to modified in such a way, as it was a parallel story between two brothers and one story was romantic and the another was a very hardcore action. So, what happened initially when they cut it, they were not every satisfied and I stepped in later. I found that the problem was the balance between the two stories coming parallelly. One story had so much action in it and then the next was a love story which inherently looked slower than the other story. So, we had to restructure it parallelly in a way that it was that you're spending similar time on two stories and so you don't get distracted. And then we came to whatever is there finally and it worked.

Feedback: sreekar3@gmail.com



Important Film of Sreekar Prasad as Editor





Interview with
Ashok Salian

The idea behind the photograph is more important than the machine, so when you think of any series of pictures, what is the idea behind the process of creating such brilliant work?

It's a very difficult to give an answer when someone asks you about how the entire creative process works. There are certain aspects that work before the shoot and certain others that happen on the shoot, for example you might decide to do a whole series of monochromatic shots which means you work with the

designer, different colors, muted colors and muted backgrounds. That according to me is easy. But you might also want a certain looklet's say a royal look in a photo, so you start with monochromatic and then work on the look, the princely look. How will you get the royal look? One is of course through the attire then through period hair styles, so you work on those. Most of the still shoots don't have budgets, so then you have to be very innovative when you organize a backdrop which is economical yet it accentuates the look of the picture, for

example the photograph you talked about with Dimple. Infact those were a series of pictures that I did for Abuljani and Sandip Khosla way back in the nineties. You know photography is a solo process but you have to co-ordinate with people and somewhere you should be open to ideas and the backdrop of those pictures were thought out by Abu and Sandeep. I've known Abu for years so there is this comfort of being with somebody you know and so you are able to throw up ideas even if they are



stupid, you don't mind it and you brush it off if it doesn't sound good and it does not become an ego trip. We worked on very simple things. They were just cushions and curtains in the background, very simple but somehow with the lighting and the treatment it gave the look of a palace. So the creativity comes there, how you make things look better with less funding. We are not in films where we would spend a lot of money. Also, there are feature films in which a lot of money was spent but they end up looking terrible because they were not sensibly spent. I think enough work hadn't gone into it or you need a certain brain and an evolved aesthetic sense to make the different elements come together and create a heightened effect. You might be a great director but might be very low on aesthetics. A director has to be rounded or should have the good sense to select people who have the aesthetic sense who'll make him look better as a director.

A lot of pictures like the art pictures that I've done don't come as a thought process. You want to do something different. Most of my ideas have come on my long walks in the morning, that's when you are fresh. I have been pushing my brain to think, so the germ of an idea comes and then you build on it. A lot of these ideas have come from nowhere actually. A lot of people ask me but how did they come, I mean these are images that have just happened. In films you can't do that, everything has to be pre structured but in a still you can take a last minute decision and change the whole thing. So, it depends on the aesthetics of the photographer or the director or an artist and how well he or she gets along with his/her team that would initiate the creative process. In fact, make it even better. You could have decided a certain concept but it just gets better when people throw in their own ideas too and then the final visual picture you take care of, in terms of the lighting, the color and the darkroom treatment. My pictures looked different also because I had my own darkroom and I had a fairly good control over darkroom techniques.

The visual art of other artists is widely available on the internet which makes it easy to get inspired to take elements from here and there. Does that make generating original ideas difficult?

The thing is that there were people who would copy straight away from a black book or some international fashion magazines. I am talking about the late eighties and the nineties when exposure to material was not as rampant as it is today. Today one can sit on the net and get about hundred pictures that you want to do. A lot of pictures today are not original but are too inspired. Original imagery is very rare. You can make out that a particular picture has been structured and taken from ten places and put together. It's not to say that they aren't people who're doing good work. There are lots of people who're doing very good work today but they are very few people in India who do original work these days or even when I practiced photography. You're bound to be affected by images as a starter when you look at magazines and that is the reason I never looked at magazines when I was into photography. I used to stay away from magazines because I knew that once you looked there you're going to be inspired by something. It was either by accident that I got

certain processes or because I wanted to do things very differently. I didn't want to do the regular stuff. Unless you have that kind of integrity and passion, original work can't happen. If you are not ashamed of copying initially, it's fine. Initially, if you copy images and build on it technically and in terms of content it's fine but then at some stage you've got to throw all that away and produce something original. Whatever images you see are at the back of your mind somewhere, but some people actually hold it in front of them and copy. I don't know how good or bad that is and I don't want to pass judgment on it. I think the amount of images and information at people's disposal today is maddening. You can access just about any photographer anywhere in the world, that is a huge plus for people but I wish people didn't use it lazily. It should be used as information and then they should get on with your own stuff and give it your own touch. Come out with something original. That I don't see, and even the retouching is so terribly done.

I personally detest it actually. There should be a difference between a painting and a photograph. Otherwise where's the point? A lot of them look like illustrations really, like the close ups, so much touch up. In the international magazines at least you see the pores of the skin in a close up. You see Vogue or any other magazine you'll still see the pores but, in Indian magazines, including the Indian Vogue, you don't, it's all cleaned up. Women love it. They'll hate me for saying this, though. But pictures lie!!! □□□



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