

1. What attracted you towards making a musical like thoda sa roomani ho jayen.

MUSICAL AS A FORM HAS ALWAYS FASCINATED ME. I HAD TRIED IT EARLIER IN A TELE-SERIAL "KACHCHI DHOOP". I THOUGHT OF EXPLORING THIS FORM FURTHER IN "THODASA ROOMANI..."- WHERE A DIALOGUE WOULD GLIDE SMOOTHLY INTO A VERSE, A VERSE INTO A LYRIC, AND THEN BACK TO A DIALOGUE!

AN EQUALLY INVITING ASPECT OF A MUSICAL IS THAT ONE CAN ARGUE IN FREE-VERSE WHICH CAN LEAD TO A SONG WHILE FIGHTING AND THEN SLIDE BACK TO PROSE DIALOGUE.

IN INDIAN CONTEXT, WE OFTEN USE THE WORD 'MUSICAL' ONLY BECAUSE THERE ARE MANY SONGS IN A FILM; OR WHEN THE LEAD CHARACTER IS A MUSICIAN. (LIKE BAIJU BAWARAA).

MOSTLY SONGS ARE WEAVED IN AS SITUATIONAL ELEMENTS. FOR WEDDINGS, FOR BREK-UPS, FOR MONTAGES OR ITEM SONGS OF THESE DAYS!!! GOING BEYOND THAT, YOU HAVE TO THINK ABOUT THE WHOLE PLOT USING THE MUSICAL PARADIGM.

2. From what I have read, the film is inspired by the Hollywood film, Rainmaker (I haven't seen Rainmaker). If that is true, what aspects did you keep in mind while Indianising it.

IT WAS WAY BACK IN 1968, VETERAN FILMMAKER RAJA THAKUR HAD MENTIONED TO ME ABOUT THE PLAY 'ROMANCE OF RAINMAKER' AND ALSO THAT A FILM WAS MADE IN HOLLYWOOD ON THE SAME. LATER, THESE FACTS WERE MENTIONED ONCE AGAIN BY THE PRESS WHEN VIJAY TENDULKAR WROTE A PLAY 'ASHI PAKHARE YETI'.

I ALWAYS SAW THIS STORY FROM THE GIRL'S POINT OF VIEW AND NOT AS A RAINMAKER'S. I ALSO SAW IT MORE AS A FAIRY-TALE AND NOT AS A REALISTIC NARRATIVE. IF ONE CAN SEE THE DROUGHT BEING THE METAPHOR OF THE GIRL'S LIFE, EVERYTHING BECOMES DIFFERENT. THAT'S WHY I THOUGHT OF USING THE MUSICAL FORM TO CONVEY THE FAIRY-TALE QUALITY.

3. Were Anita Kanwar and nana patekar the first choice for their roles.

ANITA KANWAR WAS ALWAYS THE ONLY CHOICE. NANA WASN'T. NANA WAS AT THE PEAK OF HIS POPULARITY AS A VILLAIN IN 'PARINDA'. ONE FINE MORNING, HE CAME TO MY PLACE AND ASKED ME AS TO WHY I HAD NOT THOUGHT OF CASTING HIM IN "THODASA ROOMANI...". I GAVE HIM THE REASONS - THE RAINMAKER IS NOT THE ROUGH & TOUGH ROGUE THAT HE CLAIMS TO BE; IN FACT, HE IS A MAN WHO'S RUNNING AWAY FROM HIMSELF AND IS SCARED TO ADMIT IT. I ALSO TOLD HIM THAT HE IS

A FABULOUS ACTOR BUT THAT MAY NOT BE SUFFICIENT. I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE WAS READY TO CHANGE HIS CORE AS A HUMAN SINCE SUCH A COMPLEX ROLE PROBABLY DEMANDED METAMORPHOSIS. NANA ASKED ME IF I WOULD TRY HIM OUT IN REHEARSALS FOR A WEEK; HE ALSO PROMISED THAT IF I WASN'T HAPPY WITH HIM AFTER SEVEN DAYS, HE WOULD WALK AWAY WITHOUT PROTEST. YOU ALL HAVE SEEN HOW GREAT AN ACTOR HE IS – THE FILM WOULD HAVE BEEN INCOMPLETE WITHOUT HIM. REST IS HISTORY!

4. what does the character of nana patekar represent in the movie.

OUTWARDLY HE'S A CON MAN BUT ACTUALLY A MAN WHO'S BEEN A FAILURE. HE IS RUNNING AWAY FROM TRUTH AS HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE IT.

INTERESTINGLY ON YET ANOTHER LEVEL, I ALSO SEE A LOT OF SIMILARITY IN THE GHOST IN 'PAHELI' AND THIS CHARACTER IN 'THODASA ROOMANI...'. BOTH OF THEM ARE WHAT A WOMAN DREAMS OF AND DESIRES IN THE HEART OF HER HEART – 'A VERY SENSITIVE, ROMANTIC, CARING MAN'!

5. where was the film shot. How was shooting it different from other films.

WE SHOT THE ENTIRE FILM FROM START TO FINISH IN PANCHMADHI, M.P. I HAD CHOSEN THE SEVERE WINTER AS THE PERIOD FOR SHOOTING SO AS TO CAPTURE THE DRY LANDSCAPE WITH BARE TREES WITHOUT LEAVES SINCE I WANTED TO CONVEY THE DRAUGHT WITHOUT SHOUTING FROM THE ROOF-TOP. IT WAS REALLY TOUGH TO PORTRAY THE HUMID, HOT ATMOSPHERE OF 40-C WHEN THE REAL TEMPERATURE WAS ACTUALLY AROUND 4-C.

I HAD ALSO CHOSEN TO TAKE LENGTHIER SHOTS AS OPPOSED TO A FAST, CUT TO CUT SHOTS. I WANTED THE VISUALS TO MATCH THE FLUID PROGRESSION OF MUSICAL FORM. SO THE SHOTS HAD TO BE REHEARSED MANY TIMES WITH FOCUS SHIFTING CAMERA MOVEMENTS BEFORE THE ACTUAL TAKE. OF COURSE, MAJORITY OF THE ACTORS BEING FROM THE THEATRE, THEY MADE IT EASY FOR ME AND THE DOP.

6. do you remember any interesting anecdotes from the making of the film.

THE FILM HAD MANY NIGHT SEQUENCES WHICH MADE IT NECESSARY FOR THE ENTIRE UNIT TO CHANGE ITS BODY CLOCKS FOR THE LAST 15 DAYS OF THE SCHEDULE - WE WOULD START SHOOTING AT 7 PM AND PACK UP AT 6 AM; TRY TO SLEEP DURING THE DAY AND BE ON ONE'S FEET AGAIN FOR SHOOTING IN THE NIGHTS. WELL, IT WAS A NIGHTMARISH EXPERIENCE FOR MANY TO SAY THE LEAST!

7. Bhaskar Chandawarkar's music is one of the film's highlights. What do you remember of him and the songs?

THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF 'THODASA ROOMANI...' MUSIC WAS VERY ENRICHING. BHASKAR CAME AND STAYED WITH ME IN MUMBAI FOR SOME TIME; WE'D EAT, DRINK & SLEEP THE VARIOUS SITUATIONS IN THE FILM AND THEN FINALISE THE MELODY ONE BY ONE. FROM SELECTING THE VOICE OF CHHAYA GANGULY FOR ANITA AND VINOD RATHOD FOR NANA TO HAVING A RIGHT BALANCE OF MAIN MELODY IN INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND THE ENTIRE ORCHESTRATION IN WESTERN MUSIC WAS ALSO A LONG PROCESS. BUT BHASKAR WAS SO ACCOMPLISHED IN BOTH THESE SPHERES THAT SOON I WAS RELAXED.

FOR THE SITUATIONS WHICH HAD VERSES, WE HAD PRE-RECORDED THE BEATS FOR THE ACTORS. THEY HAD TO DELIVER THE DIALOGUE WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK!

8. what drew you towards making a film in verse?

I THINK I'VE ANSWERED IT EARLIER.

9. The film did not fare very well at the theatres. How disappointing was that for you?

WE COULD NOT TELL PEOPLE IN ADVANCE THAT IT'S A DIFFERENT NANA; SEE HIS FANTASTIC PERFORMANCE. THAT IT'S A MUSICAL LIKE 'SOUND OF MUSIC'; COME WITH YOUR FAMILY AND ENJOY IT! WE DID NOT HAVE EVEN A RUPEE FOR THE PROMOTION!

IT'S A MAJOR PROBLEM THAT A FILMMAKER LIKE ME FACES EVEN TODAY. WHILE MAKING A NON-MAINSTREAM FILM, WE'RE COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED FINANCIALLY IN ITS PRODUCTION. THERE'S NO BUDGET LEFT FOR ITS PROMOTION. HOW CAN ONE COMPETE WITH A BIG-BUDGET 'MASALA' FILM WHICH HAS A PROMOTIONAL BUDGET WHICH IS FIVE TIMES MORE COMPARED TO THE BUDGET OF MY PRODUCTION? HOW DOES ONE EVEN MAKE THE AUDIENCE AWARE OF A SMALL FILM'S EXISTANCE WHICH CAN NOT BE BOMBARDED THROUGH TV PROMOS, ITEM SONGS AND OTHER EVENTS?

AND UNFORTUNATELY THE SUCCESS OF THE FILM IS WEIGHED ONLY THROUGH BOX OFFICE COLLECTION IN COMPARISON WITH THE BIGGEST BLOCK-BUSTER. SO ABSOLUTELY NO REGRETS FOR MAKING THE FILM!

10. how did you prepare and interpret your role in khamosh, especially the climax scene?

IT'S A SUBTLE DEPICTION OF JUNG'S ARCHTYPES! EACH ONE OF US HAS 'GOOD' AND THE 'BAD'; IRRESPECTIVE OF THE GENDER, EACH ONE OF US HAVE THE FEMININE QUALITIES AS WELL AS THE "MALE" INSTINCTS. THE INTERPLAY OF BOTH IS WHAT MAKES THE CHARACTER INTERESTING. 'KHAMOSH' OFFERED THAT OPPORTUNITY TO ME – TO PLAY 'THE ROMANTIC ACTOR AMOL PALEKAR' WHILE PORTRYING THE FICTITIOUS 'MURDERER AMOL PALEKAR'!

ONCE DURING THE PREPERATORY SESSION OF 'KHAMOSH', WE WERE DISCUSSING THE CLIMAX. ORIGINALLY, IT WAS A DIFFERENT CLIMAX WITH AN ACTION-ORIENTED SCENE ON A GOLF COURSE AND NOT THE ONE WHICH IS NOW IN THE FILM. I DEMONSTRATED AS TO HOW A SOFT, WHISPERING TONE CAN HAVE MUCH MORE BLOOD-CHILLING EFFECT THAN THE CLICHED LOUD, VOCAL EXPRESSION. I ALSO EXPRESSED MY DOUBTS WHETHER PEOPLE WOULD BE ABLE TO RELATE TO AN ELITE SPORT LIKE GOLF. VINOD CHOPRA SUDDENLY JUMPED TO HIS FEET AND STARTED NARRATING A NEW SCENE IN THE WARD-ROBE ROOM. SOON HIS LATE EDITOR WIFE RENU SALUJA AND HIS CHIEF ASSISTANT SUDHIR MISHRA JOINED HIM TO CHANGE AND RECONSTRUCT THE CLIMAX.