

One-hit Wonders



For some actors, instant stardom peters out and they end up being remembered for just the first film. Here's a list taken from India's Bollywood.

Debut film being a smash hit at the turnstiles is what every actor dreams of. It is tragic when this aspiration doesn't translate into reality. More tragic when the launch vehicle delivers but the subsequent flicks do not garner similar commercial success or critical acclaim. To this category belong several Bollywood stars who created a storm with their first offering. But their subsequent releases bombed at the box office.

An apt example of this mishap is Kumar Gaurav whose maiden film, *Love Story* set new box office records in the early eighties. This teenybopper love yarn co-starring Vijeta Pandit ran successfully for several months and its songs remain popular even today.

Though this film didn't have much to offer as far as his trionics are concerned, yet it confirmed the lead actor a secured slot as the preferred choice in the 'candy-floss romance' genre. He acted in several romantic capers—with family melodrama thrown in for good measure—but he failed to repeat his enviable success. His cute image is cited as the key reason for his debacle, apart from the wrong choice of scripts and directors who wanted to replicate the success of his first venture and did not give a new dimension to his character. He was trapped in the web of his own success and couldn't come out of it. Needless to say, it cost him his career. And his sole claim to fame remains his debut film.

It is frustrating to be rejected by the masses after a sudden spell of stardom. It not only rankles the actor but also makes him doubt his own acting abilities to pull in large crowds, making him wonder why the audience is inscrutable in tastes and preferences. After a series of flops in a row, gumption directed the star son to quit the scene, as there were many new rising stars like Sunny Deol, Mithun Chakraborty, Sanjay Dutt and Jackie Shroff in the firmament who could essay a variety of roles with panache. Years later, he resurfaced to try his luck with meaningful character roles but that couldn't either bolster his career or swerve it in a new direction.

Young seductive champion who romanced intimately with ravishing. Rekha in *Utsav* got off to a flying start. Shekhar Suman is best remembered for his sensational debut in this offbeat movie and his ensuing cinematic (mis) adventures like *Pati Parmeshwar* and *Anubhav* attempted to cash in on his newly-acquired sexually bland image. The conservative audiences did not accept this earlier version of Emraan Hashmi. Eventually he lost out after a few duds and later anchored his career as a television host just as versatile Archana Puran Singh did.

Right from her jiving *Jalwa* days opposite Naseeruddin Shah when she rocked the box office, Archana Puran Singh was an actress to watch out for. Sadly, middle cinema hadn't emerged then. And art cinema was on the way out. She couldn't find a foothold in the industry as a full-fledged heroine prancing around trees and gyrating in diaphanous chiffon opposite any leading hero of her times. Her voice, her beauty not being conventional proved to be a major drawback and she featured as a comic prankster or a sidekick to survive in the industry. Her talent lay largely unexplored and now she's well past her prime to be offered lead roles though we find Bollywood in the cusp of change, with plenty of scope to try out new stuff.

Salma Agha lit up the silver screen with her ethereal charm. BR Chopra's *Nikaah*, a stark comment on marital discord, catapulted her to fame. Costarring Raj Babbar and Deepak Parasher, this socio-drama was a huge hit. Her unusual tonal quality and gorgeous looks appeared to take her career to dizzy heights. Much to the chagrin, her other films like *Salma* and *Oonche Log* found few takers. She tried to carve out a new image as a modern, Westernised heroine who could dance well and not just shed copious tears. *Kasam Paida Karne Wale*

Contd.

Cultural Calendar for November 2009

November 9

Film: *Sampoorn Ramayan* (In Hindi)
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m. Duration: 3 hrs

November 14

Painting, Drawing and Essay Competition for children to commemorate the birth anniversary of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Venue & Time: ICC 9.30 a.m.

November 20

Panel discussion on "Governing the Commons in South Asia: Implications of the work by Elinor Ostrom on resource governance in the region" by Mr. Athula Senaratne, Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka
Venue & Time: ICC 5.30 p.m.

November 25

Talk – World heritage site of Hampi, Karnataka by Dr. M. S. Nagraj Rao, Former Director General of Archaeological Survey of India
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m. (To be confirmed)

November 27

Bharatha Natyam Recital by Deepal Gunasena, Shanmuga Sharma Jayaprakash Sharma Dinuka Gunasekara & Thilini Dhanapala students of Ms. Vasugy Jegatheeswaran
Venue & Time: ICC 6.00 p.m.

(Admission to all programmes is free and on first come first served basis except 14th November 2009 programme)

Ki sank without a trace instead of giving her sagging career a boost. She continued to act in some more run-of-the-mill films like *Pati Patni Aur Woh* before waking up to the reality that her tryst with Bollywood was over.

The late eighties and early nineties saw the emergence of two promising heroines. Bhagyashree—paired with Salman Khan—had a stupendous hit, *Maine Pyar Kiya*. She had everything going in her favour to become a topranking star. Then she started making unusual demands from producers.

After her sudden marriage, she expected directors to cast her opposite her husband Himalaya. It was a faux pas and she paid dearly for it by ruining her career. Professional heroines like Madhuri Dixit, Divya Bharti and Juhi Chawla were making their presence felt with moderate hits. Producers preferred these starlets and avoided her tantrums and litany of conditions.

Anu Agarwal, another leggie wonder who came in as a whiff of fresh air, reached a milestone with *Aashiqui*, a trendy musical love story starring another debutant, Rahul Roy, which was a blockbuster from director Mahesh Bhatt known for promoting young talent. Her dusky complexion, athletic build and largely unconventional looks made her a clear favourite long before the Bips phenomenon happened. She went on to act in insignificant, trashy flicks apart from a Mani Kaul film where the only achievement of hers was going nude.

The list cannot be rendered complete without mentioning Mandakini. Discovered and groomed by the late director Raj Kapoor, her innocent beauty, oomph and vulnerability struck the right chord with cine-goers. Rajeev Kapoor, just like Kumar Gaurav, can claim to have clicked in just this venture. Mandakini was flooded with offers and she featured in films like *Jeeva* and *Commando* which proved that only a mentor like Raj Kapoor could make her act. She couldn't repeat that magic. Finally, her alleged romantic liaison with an underworld kingpin brought her career to a premature end.

Quite like a meteor, these stars flashed for a while. Their entry in Bollywood was spectacular in terms of commercial accomplishment and that should have ensured for them a prime slot. Call it an act of destiny or human fallibility, the fact remains that these stars couldn't reign for long. Instant stardom petered out and they ended up being remembered for just the first film. One wonders.

Source: Devraj Singh Kalsi, *The Statesman*, *Asianews*

SANDESH

The monthly newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo



Dinkar Kowshik, *Circus*, oil on board, 46 x 62 cm, 1998



Indian Cultural Centre

133, Baudhaloka Mawatha,
Colombo 4, Sri Lanka
Telephone: 2500014, Fax: 2598674
E-mail: icc@sltnet.lk
ICCR Website: www.iccrindia.org

November 2009

Past Events

11th September

Karagam Kavadi troupe led by Ms. Nadirao Kamakshi



A 12-member Karagam Kavadi troupe from Tanjore visited Sri Lanka for the National Art & Literary Festival. The Troupe gave performance in Polonnuruwa on 4th & 5th September 2009. They also performed on 6th in Batticaloa, on 7th in Trincomalee and on 9th in Hatton.

The troupe's visit to Sri Lanka sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi & the ministry of Cultural Affairs & National Heritage, government of Sri Lanka.

11th September

Bharatha Natyam Recital by Mr. Nidheesh Kumar



Bharatha Kalakshetra trained Nidheesh Kumar, presented a brilliant Bharatha Natyam recital at the Centre which kept the audience spell bound. His recital consisted of a Slokam which was followed by Nandhi Chollu Varnam, Keerthanam, Ashtapathi & Thillana. The evening was very well enjoyed by the dance lovers gathered at

the Centre.

14th September

Hindi Day Celebrations



The Hindi students celebrated Hindi Day at the Centre. The evening included a

variety of items performed by the Hindi students of various ages, bringing forth their hidden talents. The evening was very well enjoyed by the students and their parents and well-wishers who attended the event.



16th September

Panel Discussion on Indian Cinema & Sri Lankan Cinema: Questions of Identity



The Indian Cultural Centre organised a panel discussion on Indian Cinema & Sri Lankan Cinema: Questions of Identity on 16th September at the Indian cultural Centre. The talk on the subject by Ms. Sumitra Peries, eminent film director. Mr. Dhramasiri

Bandaranaike & Mr. Boodee Keerthisena, well known film directors also further discussed on the subject. The seminar was followed by an interactive sessions in which the audience also shared the comments and views. The discussion was followed by a reception.

18th September

Talk – Sons of Rama & Vali-Yakun according to Ramayana & Vali-Yak Mangalaya



Mr. Sri Lal Perera, Secretary, Sub-committee on Intangible Heritage of the National Trust of Sri Lanka gave a talk on Sons of Rama & Vali-Yakun

according to Ramayana & Vali-Yak Mangalaya. He spoke about the Vali-Yak ritual which is hardly known even among Sri Lankans and is an annual ritual performed at the conclusion of the world famous Kandy Pererahara. He also explained that the word Yak is considered as divine being and not devil or demon in the Vali-Yak ritual and the Kohomba-Yak Kankariya.

25th September

Abhijñana Sakuntalam of Kalidasa - A musical dance drama



Abhijñana Sakuntalam of Kalidasa - A musical dance drama by the Aru Sri Art theatre was presented on 25th September at the Kularathne Hall. The dance drama was produced

and directed by Kalasuri Arunthathy Sri Ranganathan. Abhijñana Sakuntalam, a tale of love, cruel humiliation and suspicion, courage and sweet reunion. In the dance drama the episodes of the Abhijñana Sakuntalam were chosen so that the entire story could be portrayed as a dance drama comprising ten scenes and lasting about two hours. It was in Sinhala, and the lyrics for the singing were written by Dr. Praneeth Abeysundara. The event was presided over by the High Commissioner of India Shri Alok Prasad, Deputy Foreign Minister Hon. Hussein A. Bhaila & Mrs. Bhaila graced the occasion as Chief Guests. The dance drama by the Aru Sri Art Theatre received very good reviews from the press.

29th September

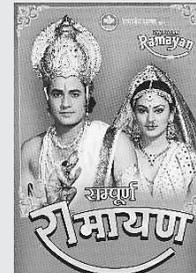
Kathak dance recital by Swati Subodh Siddhartha from India



at the Centre.

Swati Subodh Siddhartha from India, an upcoming and talented dancer presented a brilliant Kathak dance performance at the Centre. Some of the items presented by her were "Adhuram Madhuram, Thumri, Bhajan, Dasavtaar & Tarana. The evening was very well enjoyed by the audience gathered

Films in November



Sampurn Ramayan

Sampurn Ramayan was the first mythological serial shown on the Indian television, created by Dr. Ramanand Sagar. The serial portrays the story of Lord Ram in a most aesthetic manner and carried a lot of devotional value. Sampurn Ramayan gives a lesson on Deep rooted culture of India, traditions and the heritage of pure ethics and principles.

LIBRARY

Recent Library Accessions

Bahudha and the Post 9/11 World

Singh, Balmiki Prasad
(with a Foreword by His Holiness the Dalai Lama)
New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2008, 370p.

Indian Heritage

Sahai, Baldeo
New Delhi, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 2005, 93p.

Pioneer of Space Travel : Sunita Williams

Mahanti, Subodh
New Delhi, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, 2007, 116p.

Bitter Fruit

The very best of Saadat Hasan Manto
Edited & Translated by Khalid Hasan
New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2008, 708p.

The Illustrated History of the Freedom Struggle

Introduction by Pavan K. Varma
New Delhi, Penguin Studio, 2008, 143p.

Children's Day and the Shankar's International Children's Competition at the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo

To commemorate Children's Day, which falls on 14th November every year, coinciding with the birthday of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) will hold a painting, drawing and writing competition for children on Saturday, 14th November 2009 from 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m at its premises (133, Bauddhaloka Mw., Colombo 04).

The writings, drawings and paintings prepared by the children on that day would be sent to New Delhi as entries for the Shankar's International Children's Competition 2010. The Competition is open, in the categories of writing, painting and drawing, to children all over world born on or after January 1st, 1994.

The Shankar's International Children's Competition was started in 1949 by late Shri Shankar Pillai, a celebrated cartoonist and recipient of several awards including Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan. The international participation in the competition has increased greatly over the years with children from over 130 countries participating and winning prizes.

Children interested in participating may register their names with the Centre (Tel. 011-2500014, Telefax 2598674, e-mail icccolombo@gmail.com) and are requested to come to the Centre at 9.30 am on November 14th, 2009. The last date for receipt of entries in New Delhi for the Competition is 31st December 2009. For rules and further details, please contact the Centre.