

"I am trying to break out of my 'Boy Next Door' image" ... Tawsif



FAHMIM FERDOUS

Tawsif Mahbub was going to engineering classes by day and playing bass with his band by evening, before he decided to do one tele-film that turned his life inside out. His mercurial rise over the last couple of years has seen him represent top brands as a model, as well as being arguably the most in-demand youngster on the small screen. In a recent conversation, Tawsif spoke to this correspondent about the limelight, his image, and the musician-turned-actor he gets compared to most.

When did it hit you that you're a star of sorts?
Tawsif: It happens to the fewest of people, but in my case it was with my very first work, the tele-film "@18". It was so big that the day after it aired, I could not walk around Dhanmondi without people pointing me out. Most artistes have to work for years to get that sort of recognition, but I got a shortcut of some kind. And then I was fortunate to work with some of the big brands – Grameenphone and Mirinda being a few, that it just grew on.

You are a kind of 'craze' among young people. How do you deal with it?
Tawsif: I feel very fortunate. From the very first day, I have always tried to reply to all the Facebook messages and keep all the requests for selfies. I consider the audience feedback the biggest indicator of my work performance, and I want to stay as connected to them as I can.

Do you think most roles you do are a little one-dimensional?
Tawsif: To be honest, I have done a lot of similar roles, of characters that are not very different from my real-life self. But it's got a lot to do with directors, too: they have sort of created a 'Boy Next Door' image for me, and I only get offered those kinds of roles. Since I do not have a theatrical background, I want to become better as an actor, so I'm trying to break out of it. I get compared to Tahsan bhai a lot (chuckles), but I don't want to be stuck to a type-cast. Recently, I've been trying different looks and persona, sometimes myself suggesting changes of my character to the director. I want to push the envelope, and see where it takes me.

Who is the best actress you have worked against?
Tawsif: Has to be Mou apa (Sadia Islam Mou). I was lucky enough to do a TV work named "Calling Bell" with her; she is a fantastic actress, and she is gorgeous, but most of all, she is the most helpful co-artist I have worked with, on and off-screen.

You started as a musician. Do you miss those days?
Tawsif: I do. I did over a hundred performances with my band, The Manager, and with some other projects as well. I used to organise concerts too. Recently, I met a model who said she loved my band's song "Natok", and that compliment made me feel better than any I have got for my work in actual 'natok' (TV plays). I still jump at any chance to play music.

PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

Dance has flowered as a profession in Bangladesh

SAURAV DEY

Shammy Akter is an emerging dancer who has taken to Bharatanatyam, Kathak and contemporary dance forms. Starting out with dance lessons at the age of seven, she has come a long way. She is now a regular face with dance organisation Shadhona, and plays the lead in Shadhona's much-acclaimed production "Champabati".

In a recent conversation the dancer talked about her journey and the dance scene in the country. Excerpts



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

Tell us about your journey as a dancer...

Shammy: I took dance lessons at home for a few years, after which I got into BAFA where I completed a five-year certificate course in Kathak. Later, I trained in Bharatanatyam under Amit Chowdhury, and have continued doing so for the last four years. I have been part of Shadhona since 2009 when they were scouting for dancers for upcoming productions. I also teach dance to children at Kolpotoru.

When and where should a child start taking dance lessons?

Shammy: Unlike the days when I started learning dance, there are now many institutions which offer elementary courses in dance, and these institutions are a great platform for starters. Classical dance is a good way to begin.

To what extent has dance become professionalized?

Shammy: Dance has flowered as a profession in Bangladesh. But there are no institutions that offer academic courses in dance. Talks are ongoing that Dhaka University will form a dedicated department for dance, and if the happens it will help dance turn into a profession. At the moment our leading dancers have obtained degrees from India.

Qualities a dancer must have...

Shammy: I think learning attentiveness is the first key. Also a dancer has to look carefully at every move and step of the guru to grasp it properly. He/she has to have a definite goal. I believe practice can make anyone perfect. When I was a child many people told me that since I was tall I

should learn Kathak rather Bharatanatyam since it is more challenging. But I opted for Bharatanatyam.

Why do you dance?

Shammy: I get freedom and it offers me space for mental relaxation. Dancing gives me joy. A dancer depicts a story through physical movements. Every dance form has a different languages and recounting a story through steps is an art.

Dreams you cherish as a dancer?

Shammy: I want to teach Bharatanatyam. If anyone learns classical dance from the beginning he/she will master it quickly. As an artiste I want to do something for the sake of creativity. Dance has the power to shape the mind.



Sabila Nur debuts as singer "Monkey BiZness" to re-telecast today

A CORRESPONDENT

The song "Jajabor Pakhna" from the recent tele-film featured in the tenth telefilm of Airtel, "Monkey BiZness", has become a big hit. An acoustic version of the song has been made where the lead actress of the tele-film, SabilaNur, has given voice. This version has also become a success among fans. The composition of the song was done by Arafat Mohsin, and it was produced by Studio 58.

"Monkey BiZness" was first telecasted on

February 13 on ntv, and has generated a buzz among young viewers. Due to its success and popular demand, the tele-film will be re-telecast at 2:35 pm today on ntv.

Although Sabila has been acting and modeling for the last five years, she had to sing for the first time for "Monkey BiZness". She said, "I was supposed to sing in the original 'Jajabor Pakhna' but it did not happen back then, but now I am absolutely delighted to be able to perform and I hope my fans appreciate this new singer side of me."



Sherlyn Chopra to play a double role

Sherlyn Chopra has been signed on to play a double role in Satellite Pictures' next venture. The film is slated to go on floors as soon as the actress wraps up the shooting of her bilingual film.

The movie, which is yet untitled, will be produced by Subhash Choudhary and Shaila. One might remember that the producer duo's earlier production "Filmistaan" bagged the National Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi in 2012.

In sharp contrast to the award-winning film that had debutant actors, the makers were keen to sign on an established actress for their next. "The premise of this film is much more challenging than that of 'Filmistaan'. We were aware that the lead role was a rather difficult one. So we thought that we would need a talented and established actress to play the protagonist," says Subhash.

The two add that while they were considering a few actresses, it was the film's casting director, DK Shroff, who recommended Sherlyn for the role. Says Shaila, "When we met her, we realised that there is more than meets the eye. Sherlyn's personality has multiple layers, which makes her very intriguing as an individual. And it is because of this very trait that we felt she would be able to add a new dimension to her characters. The film will be shot across India and shall hopefully be ready for release in 2016."

While they are excited about their second venture, the producers also state that they are still trying to find their footing in the industry. "Although our debut theatrical release bagged a National Award, we still consider ourselves new players in the business of filmmaking. We are willing to learn the ways and techniques of storytelling over time, and are always trying to give our best shot," concludes Subhash.

Source: TNN



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