



FILM REVIEW

AYNABAJI: A gripping story told well

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Amitabh Reza's directorial debut "Aynabaji" has been at the epicenter of the Bangladeshi showbiz in the first week of its release, with a torrential flow of people rushing to the cinema halls. Backed by strong endorsement from the film and media fraternity, it has generated largely positive reviews among the audience as well. So what's the big deal about "Aynabaji"?

"Aynabaji" is essentially the story of Sharafat Karim Ayna (played by Chanchal Chowdhury), a human chameleon serving as body doubles for convicted criminals, operating in the dark underbelly of Dhaka's criminal and judiciary system. His mystery is being chased by an inquisitive, stubborn crime reporter Saber (Partha Barua), while Hridy (Masuma Rahman Nabila), a girl-next-door develops a connection with Ayna. But like every cocky-confident 'professional', Ayna gets in too deep and finds himself not having the control over proceedings he is so used to. Will he be able to pull out one final trick out of his bag?

There is plenty to praise about the film. The story is an excellent, gripping thriller with ample twists and surprises, paced rather well and cinematographically impeccable. Rashed Zaman portrays Old Dhaka in all its romanticism, and his camerawork constantly breathes life into the narrative. Chanchal Chowdhury delivers an unforgettable performance as he effortlessly sails through multiple characters folded in one complex, nuanced role. Partha Barua plays a strong second fiddle, and there are no weak links in the supporting cast of Nabila, Gousul Alam Shaon, Lutfar Rahman George and Bridaban Das,



among others. The romantic dynamics of Nabila and Chanchal are subtle yet believable, the dialogues and the screenplay (by Anam Biswas) are punchy and entertaining, and the overall excellent packaging of the film justifies the commercial success it is enjoying.

But is it flawless? Not by far. There are minor plot holes missed opportunities, albeit being far outweighed by the positives. The characters of Hridy, her father and Gousul (played by Shaon, who also wrote the film) are not established nearly as well as Ayna and Saber's. The prison sequences

(especially the early ones) are heavily airbrushed, and Amitabh misses the chance to bring some of the potential emotionally-intense sequences to boil, most remarkably during a conjugal visit between Ayna and Hridy. The music, which promised so much leading up to the film, disappoints a little bit; Shaan's version of "Alu Peyajer Kabbo" is replaced by an Arnob version, and Habib-Annesha's "Dhire Dhire Jaw Na Somoy", arguably the least impressive of the songs, is used most prominently. And lastly, the ending of the film remains a little undercooked, especially for the anti-

climax and suspense it builds up. In a nutshell, "Aynabaji" is a good movie; a really good one. But it is not a great movie, and it does not try to achieve that either. A good movie aims to entertain the audience and be worth the ticket money, maybe even for a second trip to the cinemas, and "Aynabaji" does that to perfection. A great movie is one that stays with the audience and makes them think, question and reflect on it long after they have left the halls, and this film does not do that. And that's fine, as long as the makers and the audience both accept it for what it is.

THE WEEKENDER

I love travelling alone



ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

Sania Sultana Liza's musical career has bloomed since her win at Closeup 1. Recently the singer has traveled all over the world to perform in shows, and has earned accolades along the way. The star has also earned a reputation in other branches of show business, and is an excellent television host who now anchors two television programmes. Today, the singer opens up with The Daily Star and shares some tidbits about her life.

You have recently been to Canada. How have you spent your time there and what were some of the highlights from your trip?

Liza: I have done two shows in Canada, one in Montreal and the other in Toronto. I was there for twelve days and did not have the opportunity travel much. But there were a few special places that I managed to find time to visit, such as the capital city Ottawa and the parliament building there. I was also able to visit some historical sites that are popular with tourists. I also visited the tulip gardens, but unfortunately they are not in bloom during this time of the year. I also took a day to explore Mont-Tremblant, and that was the highlight of my trip due to the beautiful landscapes and rivers.

What are you currently working on?
Liza: At the moment I am busy working on some singles and a solo song, and within this month or the next I hope to release a music video. At the moment we are choosing what song to work on for the video. I am also anchoring two tele-

... Sania Sultana Liza

vision programmes which are aired live every week. One programme is aired by Boishakhi TV on Saturdays and the other on Rtv is aired on Thursdays.

What do you love most about traveling?
Liza: I love traveling alone. I have visited many countries, but what makes every trip enjoyable is finding some time to yourself in between shows to do some exploring. Working in Bangladesh doesn't present this opportunity as we are always quite busy here.

How do you spend your weekends?
Liza: During weekends I try to sleep well. I am so busy that to me sleep is the biggest luxury in my life at the moment! Other than that, I love listening to music.

If you could have one magic power, what would it be and why?
Liza: I wish I had more than one! But if I did have one, I would eradicate pollution and ensure a cleaner, greener and healthier Bangladesh.

Do you have other passions outside singing?
Liza: I love badminton!
What is your favourite book?
Liza: I haven't had time to read in a long time, but I love anything written by Humayun Ahmed.

If you were stranded on a deserted island, what items would you like to have with you?
Liza: I would love to have a mobile phone to talk to other people and feel less alone! Other than that I would love to have a pair of headphones, a nice chair and place to be able to sit in and contemplate the view, and some books.



"I had to learn to fight really early"

... Michelle Rodriguez

Michelle Rodriguez plays a schoolteacher lifting the spirits of a young boy bullied by fellow students in her latest movie, the "Milton's Secret" film adaptation.

The "Fast & Furious" franchise star said she was inspired to join Donald Sutherland and William Ainscough in the light family drama, based on the children's novel by pop-spirituality author Eckhart Tolle and Robert S Friedman, because she, herself, was bullied as a child.

Growing up in Jersey City, New Jersey (USA), Rodriguez was horribly tormented by other kids, she told The Hollywood Reporter as "Milton's Secret" had its world premiere at the Vancouver Film Festival.

"I was bullied as a kid, but I dealt with it a lot differently because I was at a different level growing up in Jersey City," said Rodriguez. "If you didn't adapt, you die, or parts of your soul would be crushed. People were just really mean in Jersey City. I had to learn to fight really early," she added.

"Milton's Secret" follows a boy (Ainscough) who discovers that his fearful obsessions prevent him from finding true happiness. The ensemble cast includes David Sutcliffe, Mia Kirshner and Hays Wellford.

Barnet Bain directed the film, which is produced by Buck Productions, Riverside Entertainment and Hulo Films.

Source: Hollywood Reporter

Autumn fest on the banks of Dhaleshwari

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Munshiganj

An autumn festival was held recently on the banks of river Dhaleshwari. The performance of Tagore songs such as "Kon Khela Je Khelbo Kokhon" and "Amra Notun Jouboner-i Doot" intertwined with the autumnal sight of clouds floating on the blue sky. The arrangement also marked the fresher's reception of 220 students of Class XI of the President Professor Iajuddin Ahmed Model School and College.

The event featured elements of traditional culture, patriotism, love for nature, the ethos of the Liberation War and history of Bangladesh.

Deputy Commissioner Sayla Farzana graced the occasion as chief guest. Professor Mir Mahfuzul Haque, Principal of Govt. Haraganga College; civil surgeon Dr. Shahidul Islam; senior ASP Abu Bakar Siddique and district education officer Shariful Islam spoke at the event. Major Gazi Md. Tawhiduzzaman, principal of the college, presided over the programme.

