



PHOTO: TUHIN HOSSAIN

MILON IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Theatre and movie artist Anisur Rahman Milon talks about how he started in theatre, and how he made a footprint in the Bangladeshi film industry.

You have come from theatre. Working in television after having a long experience of performing in theatre was a privilege or a challenge?

I started performing in theatre in 1983. The name of my theatre group was *Artonad*. Back then becoming a professional television artist was unthinkable. Then again making a precarious living as a TV actor seemed very unconventional. I used to work in theatre more as an artist than as an actor. Performing in theatre is not all about performance; it's also about cultural activism. I saw through the fine differences between working in theatre and working in showbiz after I had embarked on television industry. One needs to be a saleable product to secure one's position in this industry. People will not only watch your performance, your work will be consumed. To be honest I rather enjoyed learning the tricks of acting in television dramas. Establishing life in the character is important. Perception of acting standard is a very necessary skill. You have high-profile films like *The Last Thakur* in your career. Tell us something about your experience of working in this film

Every artist dreams of working in a film that might not bring him overwhelming stardom but would add glory to his walk of life. *The Last Thakur* is the quintessence of such projects. It was an internationally

recognised film. The artists were selected through consecutive auditions. The discipline, training and preparation I experienced throughout the journey of this film is still unbeatable. This was my first international screening. Apart from the fame, this movie brought me the satisfaction of an artist. Also it was a star-studded movie hence I got the opportunity of working together with many brilliant actors.

You then appeared in absolutely commercial movies like *Dehorokkhi*, *Poramon*, *Onek Sadher Moyna* and *Rajneeti*. Tell us about your experience of working in all these commercial movies. *Dehorokkhi* was my first commercial cinema. When the young director Iftekhar Chowdhury came up to me with its script I loved the story at once. Iftekhar Chowdhury completed his studies about cinema making in New York. I had belief in him and his potentials. *Dehorokkhi* marked his debut as a director in the industry. Youngsters who were chronologically getting detached from mainstream cinemas, *Dehorokkhi* brought them back to cinema halls. This was actually an achievement. *Poramon*, *Oneksadher Moyna*, *Bhalobashargolpo* and my last release *Rajneeti* all these movies have genuine storylines. Viewers have taken pleasure in watching them. Who is your inspiration in Cinema? There is a common practice in showbiz.

Actors who switch up for big screen with a background of television industry face numerous obstacles to get accepted as heroes. If a name that comes to mind who was not only accepted despite coming from TV industry, who rather triumphed over all the difficulties and became the quintessential cinema actor is Humayun Faridi. I remember how he had prepared me for cinemas, both technically and psychologically. I don't know how I managed to work in 21 films in mere 5 years. People have warmly accepted me as the film star Milon. I did not have to return home empty handed. So yes, Humayun Faridi has been my inspiration. Take the names of work that you consider as benchmark of your career? *Ronger Manush* of Salauddin Labhlu brought me into limelight. My character Jhontu Mia who wore a shabby lungi and spoke in rustic local language had made a place in people's heart. I still get compliments for my performance in *Ronger Manush*, even after all these years. And another is *Dehorokkhi*. This one brought me recognition as a film actor. I am blessed to have worked in these projects.

It is said that this is an epoch of comedies. What do you think; do people actually relish watching comedies?

Have you ever seen Aly Zaker do comedy? He stays calm and effortless whereas the viewers fall about laughing. That is how

comedies should be, spontaneously ridiculous. The recent comedy dramas on television rather exasperate their watchers. Doing comedy is more difficult than acting sanely. The actor needs to know the tactic of making people laugh without making a fool of himself. I recently worked in a comedy-drama of Sokal Ahmed, *Otol Songsar*. The comedy scenes were very strategically constructed and viewers will not have to put up with retarded jokes.

What is your future plan regarding work?

I just want to persist in working. I work both in television and film industry. All of my future plans are about doing something better in my respective field and contributing a bit more to both the industries. Some of my films are waiting to be released. Some are under construction. My relentless endeavors of working for art and culture will continue.

Tell something for the readers

I am extremely grateful to everyone out there who found me capable of becoming a part of the industry. My one message to all the readers and fans, watch Bangla drama and cinema. We have no alternative but to watch Bangla drama and cinema to revamp the present situation of industry. Your support and cooperation can do wonders.

By Sharbani Datta