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STAR - PORTRAIT

Intimate Life Stories Of Famous Film Stars

by

HARISH S. BOOCH

and

KARING DOYLE

Fine Arts
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New Revised Edition

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GIRGAON, BOMBAY
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First Published 1956
New Revised Edition 1962

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KARING DOYLE
KARING DOYLE

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Foreword



S. K. Patil

A "Star-Portrait" hardly needs any introduction. The star is popular and the portrait is in the mind's eye of the public.

I have gone through the life-sketches of the film stars prepared by Harish S. Booch and Karing Doyle and have found them very interesting. I am glad that these pen-portraits have been prepared authentically.

Film stars have come to occupy an important place in the artistic and social fabric of our country. Society has been unwilling to accord them the same status as a professional lawyer or doctor, probably because artistic talents have not received the same recognition from the State and the public in the past as the other learned professions. The day cannot be far off when those who use their artistic talents for the entertainment of the people will receive full recognition and credit, besides popularity.

To aspirants to stardom, these portraits should serve as an eye-opener that there is no royal road to the starry skies. Sweat, toil and tears is the medium of success to all and film stars are no exception to the rule. To the Society high-brows who may not be inclined to think high of the stars in the film firmament, this publication should serve as a revealing biographical document which is inspiring and fascinating. To the average cine-goer, this publication should meet a long-felt need.

I congratulate Harish S. Booch and Karing Doyle for the useful work they have taken up. I am confident that it will prove to be of great interest to the public and the film industry.

(S. K. PATIL)

PRESIDENT,

INDIAN MOTION PICTURE PRODUCERS' ASSOCIATION.

(Foreword to the first edition)

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To facilitate reference, the pen-portraits of film stars have been placed in the alphabetical order of their names.

PHOTOS: Rajdatt Arts, Studio Shangri-la, R. G. Shah, India Photos,
B. J. Panchal, Poonam Press Photos, Shiraz (Studio Highlight).

BLOCKS: Royal Blocks.

**PREFACE TO NEW
REVISED EDITION**

This new revised edition of "Star-Portrait" is a tribute to its unique popularity both in India and abroad.

Indeed, it has proved a much sought-after book at International Film Festivals, cine gatherings and get-togethers of film folks. It has been avidly read by people in far distant places, ranging from Karlovy Vary in Czechoslovakia to San Francisco in the United States; from Moscow in the U.S.S.R. to London in the U.K.; and from Nairobi in B. E. Africa to Bangkok in Thailand. A prominent newspaper in America took a special note of it. A delegate to a World Film Festival abroad revealed to me that it was in great demand among the foreign film critics gathered there. The stars themselves have lavished unstinted praise on it as the most authentic and informative among their biographies.

The reading public has given it a hearty welcome. This could be judged from the fact that the book was out of print within a year's time. Several editions in the Indian languages, including Hindi, have also been brought out.

All this is very heartening and inspiring, for what greater reward could an author expect than a realisation that the labours taken in research and collection of rare facts in a publication of this nature have been well appreciated? I am grateful both to the Press and the reading public for receiving this modest volume with such unanimous acclaim.

In the present revised edition, several new stars have been added, and the information about those, who were there in the first volume, has been made up-to-date. I trust "Star-Portrait" would be found equally appealing in the revised form.

My thanks are due to all those stars who have helped me to make this book a success by giving me exclusive and interesting facts about their career.

Bombay
1962

HARISH S. BOOCH



Several new stars have been added to this new revised edition of "Star Portrait". Here is Rajendra Kumar, the top-most among new stars, being interviewed by author Harish S. Booch for the present volume.

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Introduction

The rise and growth of the Indian film industry during the last four decades has been a glorious romance, a romance that is perhaps more exciting than all the synthetic thrills of the celluloid dramas put together. It has been a stirring saga of pioneering endeavours that triumphed against overwhelming odds. And even today, thanks to the Herculean endeavours of their present-day successors, this torch of unflinching human endeavour lit up by pioneers of old keeps burning with ever-increasing radiance.

Among those valiant campaigners of film-front, who have sweated and toiled ceaselessly to give our millions their favourite entertainment, are the stars of the silver screen and the story of their rise in the film firmament is no less thrilling.

Indeed, during recent years, our stars have achieved phenomenal popularity and it is no exaggeration to say that their names have almost become household words. Fortunately, today they no longer remain the mythical gods and goddesses of glamour they used to be considered once, nor are they thought to be some mysterious beings huddled far away from public gaze behind the "celluloid curtain"! In fact, during last five years, our stars have come closer and closer to our people and they have not hesitated to do their bit whenever a good cause needed their help and support. Their closer contact with the people has helped a lot towards removing several misgivings from the public mind and people, at large, have realised that above everything else our stars are human—intensely human.



Nalini Jaywant explains something interesting during a chat with co-author Karing Doyle.

No wonder then that an unprecedented curiosity has been witnessed among all sections of the people to know more about the lives of their celluloid idols, about their disappointments and successes, their joys and sorrows, and about their achievements in the domain of film-acting.

While there have been many attempts to record the contribution made by our stars towards the enrichment of the histrionic art on screen through the medium of film sections of daily newspapers and various film magazines, it is seldom that we find the stories of our stars' heroic struggles at the altar of film art presented to our people in a single volume. Publications of this nature are very rare. "Star-Portrait" is, therefore, designed to ful-



fill this long-felt need. It is a happy co-incident that it is being published on the eve of the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the "talkies" in India.

We are not unaware that the list of the leading stars in our country is not at all exhausted with those introduced in this volume. It was our ambition to include as many prominent stars as possible here, but we had to adjust our desires to the practical problems of this publication, the number of pages, the cost of production and a price within easy reach of the reading public. That meant reducing the number to the present lot. However, we hope to cover as many of the remaining stars as possible in the second volume.

Meantime, we express our sincere thanks to all the stars who have given us their unstinted co-operation in the preparation of this book by supplying us exclusive and interesting facts about their career through special interviews which, in many cases, had to be continued for more than one sitting.

We shall be failing in our duty if we do not record here our sense of gratitude to Shri S. K. Patil, M.P., President, B.P.C.C. who has rendered valuable services to the Indian film industry as the Chairman of the Film Enquiry Committee appointed by the Government of India and who still continues to serve this industry as President of the Indian Motion Picture Producers' Association. He has been kind enough to spare time from his multifarious activities to go through the manuscript and write the foreword for "Star-Portrait".

Our thanks are also due to Shri I. K. Menon, Secretary, I.M.P.P.A., Shri M. A. Mughni and Shri Ajit B. Merchant for the active interest they have taken in this publication and to Shri Rajdatt for supplying some of the exclusive photographs appearing in this volume.

Bombay,
1956.

HARISH S. BOOCH
KARING DOYLE

(Introduction to the first edition)



Author Harish S. Booch jots down an interesting point during an interview with Geeta Bali. Exclusive details about film stars' career were obtained for "Star-Portrait" through special interviews which, in many cases, had to be continued for more than one sitting.

PRESS COMMENTS ON "STAR- PORTRAIT "

"The authors have presented the life sketches of the artistes in an interesting and lucid style. . . . The publication should appeal to film fans, especially film aspirants, as Mr. S. K. Patil has expressed in the foreword."

— SCREEN

"A well documented and neatly got up volume. . . . readable anecdotes couched in a racy style make 'Star-Portrait' an illuminating publication. . . . provides interesting life sketches without indulging in saucy details about stars' private lives and romantic squabbles. . . . informative and welcome book."

— BHARAT JYOTI

"The authors have made a successful effort to satisfy a common curiosity . . . the book should prove to be of interest to the Industry and the cine-goer."

— JOURNAL OF THE FILM INDUSTRY

"The book, well got up, contains intimate and interesting life sketches of stars. . . . it is adequately illustrated."

— SPORT & PASTIME (Madras)

"'Star-Portrait' is a commendable effort at providing something the readers could treasure with pride."

— SUNDAY CHRONICLE

"These biographical sketches explore the personal drama behind each case with understanding, sympathy and rare frankness."

— EVE'S WEEKLY

"A unique book. . . . such publications help to raise the standard of film journalism."

— JANMABHOOMI-PRAVASI

"By presenting constructive facts about stars, this book provides very important data about stars. . . . A superb volume for which the authors deserve congratulations."

— BOMBAY SAMACHAR



PORTRAIT "

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ME . SAMACHAR

ASHOK KUMAR

ASHOK KUMAR is undoubtedly the ever-young, ever-successful hero of the Indian screen. Indeed, he appears to grow younger and younger with every new film. Fifty years young, he has reigned supreme over the nation's screen as the unfailing idol of the celluloid era for the past two decades. He has acted the hero against every important actress of the Indian screen beginning with the charming Devika Rani of the olden days to Meena Kumari of today.

He has been a perennial source of inspiration both to the rising youngsters and to the fading veterans of the screen. He has been a tower of strength to the star system whenever that institution was threatened with extinction as a result of failures of much fancied stars in much fancied films. While countless producers, directors, stars and heroines with whom he was associated sometime or the other have faded into obscurity, he has continued to shine with a blaze of glory in the film firmament.

BORN on October 13, 1911 at Bhagalpur, Bihar, Ashok Kumar Ganguly hails from a cultured Bengali family which had migrated from Nadia District in Bengal to Khandwa some hundred years ago. He was named Kumudlal. His father Kunjlal Ganguly is a renowned lawyer of Khandwa district in Madhya Pradesh. Though he is 80 today, this veteran of the Nagpur Bar has lost none of his legal brilliance and takes active interest in rendering free legal aid to the poor. He has the unique distinction of being a co-student of India's President Dr. Rajendra Prasad at the Presidency College, Calcutta, where they shared the same room in the hostel. And this old veteran treasures many an intimate story of the young days of the President.

Ashok Kumar is the eldest in the family of three brothers and one sister. As a child, he was rather shy and reserved. But he surprised everyone with his sharp intelligence. He had a brilliant educational career, and on his graduation with B.Sc. at Robertson College, Jubbulpore, Nagpur University, he was sent to the Presidency College, Calcutta, to study law. It was only natural that father Kunjlal wanted his eldest son to follow in daddy's footsteps, "so that grandpa's law books may be used," as Ashok Kumar jocularly puts it. Besides, the family astrologer had predicted that Ashok would become a judge. But Ganguly Junior had little attraction for law.

In his young days, he did not have the faintest idea of taking up a film career and never dreamt of achieving the stupendous fame that he has won today. When in school and later on in College, he had acquired a flair for photography. His experience as a science student developed in him a fasci-

nation for technical and laboratory work and his ambition was to become a technician. He used to visit the New Theatres studio quite often and took interest in the laboratory work. And one fine morning, in October 1934, he left the law College and came away to Bombay to meet Mr. Himansu Rai, the celebrated film pioneer, and procure a letter of recommendation from him to proceed to Germany to learn film technique. Himansu Rai had then just started the Bombay Talkies on the trail of the international renown that he won through his pioneering ventures *Light of Asia* and *Karma*. His studios at Malad had a batch of brilliant German technicians trained at the UFA studios and he advised Ashok Kumar to begin his career at the Malad studios before he went to Germany. Ashok's brother-in-law Shashadhar Mukerjee, that wizard of box office success, was already there at Bombay Talkies and he persuaded Ashok to accept Himansu Rai's advice. Thus Ashok began learning film photography under Josef Wirsching, the talented German cameraman. Then he was switched on to the laboratory where he acquired a practical knowledge of processing, developing, printing and editing films.

He tremendously enjoyed his work in the laboratory. He felt that he was on the right road of his career. Then something unexpected happened. Contented and happy, he used to hum some popular tunes in the laboratory. His soft musical voice attracted the attention of Himansu Rai and Kumudlal was told that he should play the male lead opposite Devika Rani in *Jeevan Naiya*. Of course, he had played a minor role in *Jwani ki Hawa*, the first picture of Bombay Talkies. But he did it for the mere fancy of it. Now faced with the serious question of becoming a regular actor, he was decidedly against it. He got his hair trimmed mercilessly in the close-crop pattern thinking that that would save him from becoming a film actor. Next day, when Himansu Rai saw it, he was taken aback. But he told Kumudlal that the hair would grow again and that he would wait for it. And after two months, Kumudlal faced the camera as Ashok Kumar along with Devika Rani. The scene depicted Devika Rani, the heroine, screaming for help to save herself from the clutches of the villain and Ashok was to jump on them through the window and rescue her. Lights were on, the cameras started cranking and came Ashok's turn to jump into the room. He did it with such a force that the villain, heroine and himself fell down. In the process, the villain's leg was broken and this mishap caused another four months' delay for Himansu Rai to proceed further with his shooting. As for Ashok, he felt that he should give up acting for ever.

IN *Jeevan Naiya*, he proved to be no match for the accomplished Devika Rani. Nevertheless, Himansu Rai flung a surprise by casting him again as the hero in *Achhut Kanya* which proved a great hit in the annals of Indian films. While Devika Rani won the hearts of millions as the Harijan girl, Kasturi, Ashok succeeded in making the impression that he had at last come to stay in the films. The film ran for 20 successive weeks in Bombay's newly constructed Roxy and for 59 weeks at Calcutta, creating unprecedented box office records and name for the stars. In this film, he sang the memorable



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love-duet "*Banki chidiya banke bun bun bolu*" with Devika Rani. Those were the days when stars sang their songs. And his other songs "*Kise karta hai murahi pyar pyar*" and "*Peer peer kya karta hai*" proved equally popular.

With this newly acquired recognition and fame, his parents and relatives, who in the beginning vehemently opposed his joining the films, reconciled themselves. In fact, they found that there were enough people to praise them for Ashok's success. They saw the picture *Achhut Kanya* at a nearby theatre and father Kunjlal liked his son's performance very well.

Achhut Kanya was followed by a series of polished entertainers starring the Devika Rani-Ashok Kumar pair. *Janma Bhaomi*, *Izzat*, *Sacitri*, *Nirmala* and *Vachan* gave him the experience to acquire a new poise and his own distinctiveness as an actor. While acting in *Vachan* he was injured on the forehead during a sword fight—a faint mark of which is still there even today.

IMMEDIATELY after the completion of his work in *Vachan* in 1938, he went to Khandwa in response to a telegram from his father. At home he was told that it was time for him to get married and lead a settled life. He agreed to it and left the choice of the bride to his parents. Miss Shobha Bannerjee, daughter of Capt. Bannerjee I.M.S. of Calcutta, was chosen as the bride. And after marriage, they came away to Bombay. At the time, he was drawing a salary of Rs. 250 a month as against his original salary of Rs. 150. Here is something that would make our present-day stars gasp! Little did Ashok imagine then that he would be drawing six digit figures for a single role in the matter of another five or six years or so.

Marriage did not change the course of his career. He continued to work with Bombay Talkies. In the meantime, he had developed a sneaking desire to co-star with Leela Chitnis. And one day, just to tease him, Devika Rani presented him a specially taken photo of Leela Chitnis. In the short space of a year, by a peculiarly cinematic coincidence, he was cast opposite Leela Chitnis in *Kangan*. When the picture was half-way through, B.T. was overtaken by an irreparable tragedy in the death of its founder Himansu Rai. However, under the able guidance of Devika Rani and the team of workers trained by Himansu Rai, the B.T.-ship continued its journey to further glory. *Kangan* was completed and released in 1939. It ran for full six months in Bombay. Followed another jubilee hit, *Bandhan*, starring the same Ashok-Leela pair. Its theme song "*Chal chal re naujawan*" took fan-world by storm. Then came *Naya Sansar*, a story with a newspaper background, written by K. A. Abbas. Here Ashok had a new heroine, Renuka Devi, who had given a commendable performance in B.T.'s earlier hit *Bholi*.

NAYA SANSAR opened a new chapter in his career. For the first time, he portrayed a character different from the modest sweet-mannered young suitor. He became a dashing debonair youth. After *Naya Sansar* came *Jhoola* which won new laurels for the Ashok-Leela pair. Then came another smash



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hit, *Kismet* in which he portrayed the life of a lovable pick-pocket with Mumtaz Shanti playing the heroine. *Kismet* proved to be a picture with real *Kismet* as a money-spinner for B.T. It ran continuously for three years and eight months at Roxy, Calcutta, which is the longest record run for any picture produced anywhere in the world. And it was again *Kismet* which attracted Nargis, when she was a school girl, to sneak away to the Malud Studios to see Ashok and get his autograph. Little did they imagine then that they would be co-starring in a film within a few years!



Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani in the first major hit of Bombay Talkies "Achhut Kanya". The picture created box-office history by proving a phenomenal success.

After the formation of Filmistan Ltd. in January 1943, Ashok appeared in their very first picture entitled *Chal Chal Re Naujawan*, following the famous theme song of *Bandhan*. In this film, for the first time, he played a punch-packed rollicking role. He also realised another long standing desire—to star against Indian screen's beauty-queen Naseem who had impressed him tremendously by her captivating performance as Nurjehan in *Pukar*. In the wake of the success of CCRNJ he appeared in a chain of films for Filmistan: *Shikari*, *Sajjan*, *Eight Days*, etc.

He also began to free lance and appeared in Janak's *Angoothi*, Mehboob's *Humayun* and *Najma*, Debaki Bose's *Chandrasekhar* and many other films.

IN the meantime, Bombay Talkies, the institution where he began his career, was in doldrums. He decided to put it on its legs along with his friend Savak Vacha, the noted sound engineer. He totally gave up acting for some time and concentrated solely on B.T. Two successful films, *Majboor* and *Zideli*, stabilised the B.T. studio.

Now Filmistan persuaded him to act in their *Samadhi*, and he won universal acclaim for his performance in it. Not only that, the picture gave Nalini Jaywant the long-awaited break after a lapse of many years. This marked the beginning of Ashok-Nalini pairing in the films and they appeared in an impressive array of films.

He won new recognition in histrionics by breathing life into the role of the frustrated lover in Nitin Bose's *Mahal*, produced under the BT banner. This was followed by other acting triumphs in Gyan Mukherjee's *Sangram*, a breezy, action-packed role, and in *Mahal* where he played a fascinatingly eerie character. Roles came to him aplenty. And, at one time, he had as

many as twenty-two contracts in his pocket. Some of the notable films of this period are Kuldip's *Aalti Rast*, M & T's *Nishana*, Ahluwalia's *Nau-Bahar*, Nitin Bose's *Deedar*, S. K. Ojha's *Naaz*, Talwar's *Khilari*, Bali Sister's *Rang Rang*, Cyan Mukherjee's *Shamsheer*, Chopra's *Afsana* and *Shole*. In *Afsana*, he played a double role. In *Deedar* it was a rare sight to watch the histrionic battle between him and Dilip Kumar. In *Betab*, he and Raj Kapoor were pitted against each other. In *Betab*, he crossed histrionic swords with another great veteran, Motilal.

His other notable pictures include *Bandish*, *Bhai Bhai*, *Ek Hi Rasta*, *Sardar*, *Ragini*, *Karigar* and *Sitaron se Aage*. Among his recent outstanding films are *Sacera*, *Boop Bete*, *Chalti ka Nam Gadi*, *Anchal*, *Masoom*, *Kala Admi* and *Kanoon*. In *Be Juban*, he co-stars with his son Aroop. In *Chalti ka Nam Gadi*, he shared acting honours with his brothers, Anup and Kishore.

Ashok had been associated with Bombay Talkies right from its inception and served it with exemplary devotion. Beginning with photography and then in the laboratory, he played a small role in B.T.'s first picture *Jawani ki Hawa* and has since then acted in almost all the important pictures that have come out of B.T. Significantly enough, he gave an excellent performance in *Baad-baa*, produced on co-operative basis by the BT workers before the Malad studio closed down in 1954. It is also significant that every time B.T. faced crisis in its long career, he did his best to put it on its feet by providing financial aid and by producing successful films.

IN 1953 he started his own concern, Ashok Kumar Productions, and his first picture *Parineeta*, directed by Bimal Roy, was hailed as a masterpiece. In addition to giving AKP a flying start, it skyrocketed Meena Kumari as a front-rank star. In his second picture *Samaj*, he gave a brilliant performance as the tough but sympathetic truck-driver Dada.

In his subsequent independent productions, *Ragini* and *Kalpna*, also he gave likeable portrayals.

Thus whether it is the love-lorn youth or the gay intriguing pick-pocket as in *Kismet*; whether it is a fantastically dramatic character as in *Mahal* or the tough gangster as in *Samaj*, whether it is breezy comedy or a psychologically provocative theme, he has acquitted himself with distinction. And rightly, he has been applauded as India's top-most versatile hero and is unanimously accepted as one of the most dependable and finest actors of the Indian screen. Not only that, with his Midas touch, he lifts up co-artists acting with him to new heights of fame by imparting them all the confidence and encouragement. That is evident from the innumerable instances of artistes who have acquired top honours in films from Leela Chitnis to Nalini Jaywant and Meena Kumari.

There are hundreds of instances and ways in which he has given his colleagues the necessary confidence. To cite one, a new artiste who was playing the heroine against him kept on forgetting the dialogues due to nervousness arising from the fact that she was acting against one of India's top-most stars.

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ASHOK AT HOME



Ashok is a very cheerful person at home. Left: In this earlier picture, he shares a joke with his talented daughters Bharati and Roopa. Right: He lifts his mischievous son Aroop while his wife Shobha watches the jolly father-and-son duel with a smile of approval.

Realising the difficulty, he pretended that he too forgot the dialogues. "So you too forget dialogues?", she asked him with immense relief. "Oh yes", he replied with all the seriousness, and that instilled the necessary confidence into the newcomer. When sometime or other, he does forget the dialogue, he speaks his own words and these prove quite appropriate in keeping with the development of the situation. It is indeed a rare treat to watch him in action before the camera. The ease with which he renders many difficult situations is a tribute to his mastery over histrionics.

ONCE we discussed Ashok's various distinctive features as an artiste with the late Gyan Mukherjee. As an intimate friend of Ashok and as the director of *Jhoola*, *Kismet*, *Sangram*, and *Shamshere*, Gyan knew Ashok sufficiently well. According to him the most striking feature about Ashok was the fact that as an actor he has no mannerisms. "Most of the artistes have their peculiar mannerisms and it is a great distinction that Ashok has none," Gyan said. "His acting is absolutely modern . . . With him on the sets, it is easy and quick to shoot even extremely difficult scenes . . . He has more camera sense, more 'taking sense,' more acting sense and more story sense than many a director. Hence, he is one of our best directors."

Camera-wizard Josef Wirsching, under whom Ashok learnt his first lessons in cinematography, told us that as a cameraman he considered Ashok the best man on the sets. "He is very nice to work with, you know . . . The question of retakes seldom arises . . . Mr. Ganguly on the sets means better team spirit is created and better team work is seen everywhere. Even in the little things that he does, there is a personal touch . . . It is my ambition to shoot a picture directed by him," said Wirsching.

Thus Ashok, who was pushed into stardom much against his will, by his

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consistent success and rich experience in the various fields of movie-making stretched across two eventful decades, has become a glorious movie-institution that has thrived with the passage of time.

Personally, Ashok does not like historical roles and prefers light breezy ones. As for action-roles, "You see, I am a born gangster. So such roles come to me easily," he said with a smile. When asked how he has consistently given polished performances, he explained: "The next picture is always better because I gain experience by the previous ones."

Recalling some of his interesting experiences with his fans, he said that Nargis who came to B.T. for his autograph was later his heroine in *Hamayun*, *Adhi Raat*, and *Deedar*. Bina Rai, another ardent fan, was his heroine in *Shole* and *Sardar*. Dilip Kumar was another of his admirers and after he became a film star, both used to engage themselves in boxing.

Ashok loves boxing and cricket. He was the captain of the Nagpur University cricket team. Now, of course, he has no time to pursue cricket. But he does some boxing every morning to keep himself trim. He is very fond of painting and has a taste for landscapes.

He is a quiet, retiring type. Yet, he is a brilliant conversationalist, an amiable host and makes pleasant company. He is never moody. According to him, artistes can never complain of mood. He has a wonderful sense of humour. His laughter is free and infectious. All these qualities have won him admirers among his close associates and fellow workers on the sets.

At home, he is an obedient son, an affectionate father, a helpful and understanding brother and a loving and devoted husband. The Ashok-Shobhu pair has proved to be an ideal married couple and is among the rarities of our filmdom. His eldest daughter Bharati is a brilliant student of music and has passed her music examination with great distinction from the London School of Music. Recently, she married a brilliant, young doctor of Bombay, Dr. Virendra M. Patel. Ashok boxes, wrestles and does all types of gymnastics with his children, particularly Aroop who appears to be not a mere chip of the old block but the block itself. Nonetheless, as a price of his stardom, he has been compelled to miss his children because of continuous day and night shootings. His younger brothers, Anup and Kishore, who when young used to mimic Ashok's acting to amuse family audiences at Khandwa, have distinguished themselves though no one suspected then that they would follow in the footsteps of their illustrious brother.

Ashok takes interest in astrology and palm-reading in so far as it engages his friends. As for himself, he is no believer in it. "Lots of predictions have been made about me. Nothing has come true . . . Some predicted that I would become a judge. Now look, where I have landed! Nobody predicted my foreign tour—perhaps, because it was arranged all of a sudden!", he explains.

He has a fascination for new cars and likes driving immensely. A discri-

(Continued on page 28)



BALRAJ SAHNI

BALRAJ SAHNI is perhaps the only film star in India whose life and career have been directly influenced by such national celebrities as Mahatma Gandhi and Gurudev Tagore. He enjoys the unique distinction of having worked at Shantiniketan and Sevagram for years together. Later in his life, the writings of Marx and Lenin, which he studied at length, have also left an indelible mark on his outlook. After seeing his performance in *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Aulad* and *Garam Coat*, people hailed him as the most proletarian among all our artistes.

Proletarian or whatever name one may give to his performance, the capacity to depict characters naturally and realistically has come to Balraj through his varied experience. He has been, in turn, a businessman, journalist, short-story writer, teacher, radio-announcer, chronicler to the Indian National Congress Sessions, amateur theatre enthusiast and finally, a film actor. "This variegated experience in different spheres of life has helped me tremendously in my histrionic career," he revealed to us. That is perhaps why he could play with ease and rare understanding such diverse human characters on screen as the struggling peasant Shambhu of *Do Bigha Zamin*, the blue-blooded Englishman of *Rahi* and the faithful domestic servant of *Aulad*. When young, Balraj did not have the slightest notion that he would ever become a film star. Born at Rawalpindi on May 1, 1913, he was educated in the best traditions of an orthodox Hindu family, as his father, Mr. Harbans Lal Sahni, was a staunch Arya Samajist. Seeing dramas and movies was not only discouraged but frowned upon.

LIKE all children, Balraj was interested in those juvenile circus acrobatics performed within the walls of one's own house. "They were my first lessons in acting," he proudly says. Once together with his brother, he 'made' a little victoria and got an old stuffed deer to pull it. And when a talented archer visited their town, the brothers were fascinated by his feats and tried their hand at archery also. These playful antics provided lot of fun and laughter for the family. But all the same, Balraj was an extremely shy child. When he was once called up to chant *mantras* or recite a little hymn on the stage at school, he trembled with stage-fright.

Only on one occasion in his early student days did he happen to see a drama. It was something about the Jalianwala Bagh massacre. Young Balraj was fascinated by the spectacle and he felt transported into a world of magic. He vividly remembers the first thrill that the stage gave him.

But it was at the D.A.V. College at Rawalpindi that he began to get his training for a modern way of life. Professor Jaswant Rai, (he was later the Principal of Gandhi Memorial College, Ambala) took personal interest in him. He encouraged Balraj to shed his narrow conservative outlook.

After passing his intermediate at Rawalpindi, Balraj joined the Government College at Lahore. There he received remarkable guidance from stage-lovers like G. D. Sondhi and A. S. Bokhari. The college boasted of a first-rate amateur theatre group where well-known plays of foreign authors were performed in Hindustani translation. Those were the days when girls did not come forward to act on stage and men played "beauty queens". Being quite handsome, the honour of playing some female roles in these dramas fell on Balraj. Thus, strange as it may seem, the popular proletarian hero of the Indian screen began his histrionic career as a stage-heroine!

Even at this period he had no real ambition for an acting career. Nonetheless, he carefully studied the technique of acting modern plays. He realised the basic difference between the traditional artificiality of the professional stage and the true-to-life realistic character of the amateur theatre.

After passing his M.A. with literature, Balraj was advised to join the flourishing family business. From 1935 to 1937, he travelled to every nook and corner of Kashmir and North West Frontier. But his interest was more in literature and other fine arts. In the meantime, he married Damayanti, the daughter of his college professor Jaswant Rai, who as we have mentioned, was the first to take him out of his conservative shell. Talented Damayanti was among the first few girls who came forward to play feminine roles on the Government College stage in Lahore. Naturally, a businessman's life could not have any attraction for such a couple.

"But the experience I gained here by coming in contact with an amazing variety of human types has helped me a great deal in my work as an actor", Balraj declares.

DURING his tours, whenever he came to Delhi, he stayed with his cousin, the famous journalist and columnist, J. N. Sahni. The association with J. N. influenced him considerably and Balraj started a weekly, *Monday Morning*, with his colleagues B. P. L. Bedi and Jag Parvesh with a small capital. The journal, however, did not become a commercial success and had to be closed down within six months.

Undeterred by the failure in his initial attempt in the journalistic field, he continued to write and gradually won recognition as a good short story writer in Hindi.

But short story writing and journalism alone could not answer economic needs. So he went away with his wife to Calcutta in search of new avenues of life. His father was upset at the news and knowing his son's financial position too well sent him a hundred rupees by T.M.O. and wired him to return immediately to Rawalpindi, failing which he himself would run down to



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Calcutta. Balraj was completely confused at the receipt of the telegram and did not know what to do. He had a brain-wave. He wrote out in the reply telegram that he had secured a job at Tagore's Shantiniketan and would return home during the Pooja holidays.

It was easy to wire that he had landed a job at Shantiniketan, but to secure one was a problem. Anyway, the couple decided to go to Shantiniketan and try. While they were pleading their case with Krishna Kripalani, who was in charge of the institution, Gurudev Tagore happened to come there to see his grand-daughter, who was married to Kripalani. Balraj then turned to Gurudev and requested that he and his wife should be allowed to stay there to justify their telegram home and that they would maintain themselves on the hundred rupees they had. Gurudev was moved at his story. He smiled and said: "Well, young man, you are richer than me. At least, you have got hundred rupees with you. I haven't got even that amount. But you need not spend that money for staying here. You will be given a job."

These words settled the problem for Balraj. From 1937 to 1939, he worked at Shantiniketan as a teacher of Hindi and English. Here also he had a chance to take active interest in play-production. In the meantime, Damayanti, who had completed her intermediate at Rawalpindi, did her B.A. there. During his stay in Shantiniketan, Balraj came in contact with celebrities like Nandlal Bose, Kshitimohan Sen, Gurudial Mullick and others.

TOWARDS the end of 1939, Shrimati Ashadevi Aryanyakam, a crusader for Gandhiji's scheme of Basic Education, happened to visit Shantiniketan. She picked up Balraj as one of the translators for the Basic Education Scheme, and Balraj and Damayanti shifted to Wardha. Here he was assigned the task of collecting the reports in English and Hindi for the Ramgarh Session of the Indian National Congress, which he also attended.

He had spent nearly nine months at Wardha when one day he was informed to his utter surprise that a foreign visitor, who had come to Gandhiji, wanted to meet him. He rushed to Gandhiji and found him conversing with Lionel Fielden, who was then the Controller of Broadcasting in India. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was also there. Fielden had tremendous respect for Gandhiji. Now that he was going to London to join the BBC, he wanted a Hindi announcer for BBC and was discussing whether Balraj could take up the job. Balraj had already some experience in India in broadcasting. Pointing towards Gandhiji, he said: "Here is my employer. You may ask him". Rather unwillingly, Gandhiji gave his consent. Soon Balraj and Damayanti flew to England. That was in May, 1940.

Balraj proved to be quite popular with the BBC by looking after the Hindi Section, relaying radio plays and interviews in Hindi. In the meantime, Hitler had let loose his blitz. Damayanti stayed at Stratford-on-Avon for a year and a half, and took a course in acting. Later she too joined the BBC. After four years stay in England, the Sahnis returned to India in 1944.



Balraj met one of his old friends Chetan Anand in Bombay, who revealed to him that he had clucked his teacher's job at the Doon School and had already played the hero in two pictures, *Meena* and *Anban*. Balraj was fascinated by the stories of his friend.

Balraj and Damayanti went away to Kashmir to meet their families. Chetan followed them and said that he had finalised plans for the production of *Neecha Nagar* with the co-operation of W. Z. Ahmed and that Balraj and Damayanti should play the lead. They accepted the offer, came away to Bombay immediately. Soon they realised that Chetan's plans had fallen through and with that came the problem of finding out a living. They found that they were almost stranded in Bombay.

Luckily, Prithviraj Kapoor gave an important role to Damayanti in his stage-play *Deecar*. As the scheming foreign vamp, Damayanti's role proved a sensational success which brought her some film roles as well.

AS for Balraj, he joined the Indian People's Theatre Association. He directed a popular play *Zubeida* written by K. A. Abbas. It had a distinguished cast headed by Dev Anand, Chetan Anand, Uzra Mumtaz, Hamid Butt and Abbas himself. Working in IPTA was a new experience for Balraj. He came to know the close link between the people and the open air dramas performed by the IPTA and realised the necessity for such a live contact if ever a really people's theatre was to develop in India.

In between, he played minor roles in Phani Mazumdar's *Justice* and *Dur Cholen*. Meanwhile, he got a new break as the associate director of IPTA's co-operative film, *Dharti-Ke-Lal*. He played a leading role with Damayanti in this moving saga of the Bengal famine.

In 1947, however, he faced calamities from many sides. He lost his life partner Damayanti who passed away after a brief illness. Came the historic Partition and his entire family was uprooted from their home in Rawalpindi. Towards the year-end, he got a role as the hero opposite Nalini Jaywant in Virendra Desai's *Gunjan* which completely flopped. 1948 was a critical year for him. By 1949, he was in jail for five months for taking part in a procession and had to attend his shooting for *Hulchul* under police escort.

Slowly things changed. Chetan Anand entrusted him with the work of writing the screenplay and dialogue for *Baazi*. By a peculiar coincidence, Zia Sarhady, who was then busy with the script of *Hum Log*, was staying in a hotel next-door to Balraj's place. Both became friends and used to discuss their respective scripts. The mutual understanding that developed between them led Zia to cast him in the main role in *Hum Log*.

Both *Baazi* and *Hum Log* proved very successful and Balraj's trying period appeared to be at an end. *Hum Log* gave him a good break as an actor and he secured important roles in Filmistan's *Badnam*, Manmohan's *Akash*, Abbas's *Rahi* and Asha Biswas's *Bazooband*. But it was the role of the ever-struggling peasant who yearns for a piece of land in *Do Bigha Zamin*

that sky-rocketed Balraj as a front rank star. Right in the wake of this success came his memorable portrayals in *Aulad*, *Garam Coat* and *Seema*.

Among his other noteworthy pictures are *Kathputli*, *Pardeshi*, *Bhabhi*, *Lajcanti*, *Chhoti Bahen*, *Satta Bazaar*, and *Heera Moti*. His recent outstanding films include *Bindiya*, *Nai Maa*, *Anuradha*, *Kabuliwala* and *Bhabhi ki Chudiyon*.

He tried his hand at film direction in *Lal Batti*.

BALRAJ likes to play all sorts of roles rather than being typed for a particular pattern of characters. He believes that to play any role to perfection the artist must know and understand the people. He must sympathise with their aspirations. It is only when an artist identifies himself with the type of people whom he portrays on screen that he will be able to deliver the goods.

Balraj is a prolific reader and his favourite authors make a formidable list. The notable among them are Tagore, Shakespeare, Premchand, Iqbal, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Krishan Chander etc. Among Punjabi writers, he adores Nanak Singh, Prof. Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam. He devotes a considerable amount of his time to read current Indian and foreign literature.

In spite of his extremely busy work connected with his work in the films, he makes it a point to spend as much time as possible with his wife and children. His son Parikshit has already acted in Nitin Bose's *Deedar* while his daughters Shabnam and Sanober, who is from his second wife Santosh, make a likeable family. The Sahnis stay in a quiet bungalow at Juhu and enjoy nothing more than a hearty swim in the sea.

Balraj enjoyed his tour of the Soviet Union as a member of the film delegation during the Indian Film Festival held there. His superb performance in *Do Bigha Zamin* gave him this opportunity. According to him, he has been able to learn a great deal from the Soviet Union. On his return, he serialised his diary of the tour in a Bombay film weekly. It made very interesting reading. Lately he has visited Russia and other countries several times to take part in film festivals and youth conferences. Thus learning from his own experience, from the lives of our people and the experiences of other countries, Balraj seeks ever-greater heights as an artist.



BHARAT BHOOSHAN

HAVING scaled the dizzy heights of nation-wide fame at their very first screen-appearance, few stars have struggled as hard as Bharat Bhooshan to stick to film acting till getting another break years later. In any other country a star, who took the film-world by storm through his masterly acting like Bharat Bhooshan's in *Bhakt Kabir*, would have ensured for him a top-rank among the higher-ups of screen-histrionics. But thanks to a paradox peculiar to the Indian film industry, after his sensationally successful film debut, Bharat had literally to starve in order to remain in the topsy-turvy profession of film acting. "But for the encouragement and inspiration I got from my wife, who stood by me as the sole companion in those trying times, I would have left the film-world with a broken heart," Bharat admits.

The fact that Bharat Bhooshan stood like a rock amidst those vicissitudes till he reached the top rung of the ladder again, is as much a tribute to his devotion to film art as the love and affection of his wife who proved a tower of strength to him when everything seemed to have been lost.

BHARAT had a craving for an artistic career since his childhood. Born on June 14, 1923, he is the younger of the two sons of Rai Bahadur Motilal of Meerut. The family had a unique tradition in the legal field. His uncle was Legal Remembrancer to the U.P. Government and then, for sometime, the Chief Justice of Malwa States. With such a background, Bharat was naturally expected to take up the legal career. He studied at Dharma Samaj Intermediate College, Aligarh, and obtained his B.A. at Meerut. Father had already prepared the professional ground for Bharat and as he was about to groom Bharat for a legal job in the Government, Bharat expressed a preference for an art career and against parental advice and opposition, he went to Calcutta, to seek a job. He had a flair for music and was a good singer himself at school and college.

After the usual initial disappointments, someone introduced Bharat to Director Kidar Sharma who gave him the minor role of a disciple in an Ashram in his *Chitralekha*. But this was hardly a stable beginning for one who yearned for a permanent art-career.

Bharat Bhooshan could not secure any more contracts and, feeling frustrated, when he was about to return home, came an unexpected chance. Producer-director Sharma of Unity Productions, Calcutta, was on a look-out for a "saintly" face for his film-biography of Kabir. He had already made plans to cast that renowned singer of classical music, Pt. Omkarnath Thakur, for the title-role, but a meeting with the suave, soft-spoken Bharat made him change

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his mind. After seeing Bharat's well-chiselled, sublime face Sharma said to himself: "Here is the Kabir I have been waiting for". A test was soon arranged. The late Mazhar Khan, then an important star of Unity Productions, was also struck by Bharat's impressive personality and he himself prepared the make-up. Bharat appeared exactly as Director Sharma had visualised his Kabir for the screen.

DESPITE the fact that this was his first major appearance on screen, Bharat almost lived the role of Kabir. His moving performance was appreciated throughout the country. Those were the days of intense communal disharmony. The popular refrain of Bhakt Kabir's "bhajan"—"*Bhag man Ramo Rahim, Bhag man Krishna Karim*" and the stirring message of communal unity implicit in the film lent it a national significance. *Bhakt Kabir* was hailed as a memorable milestone in Indian film industry. A new star rose on the horizon of filmdom in Bharat Bhooshan. He won many plaudits for the role. The Mayor of Calcutta presented him with a silver souvenir as a token of appreciation.

In the wake of nationwide popularity, Producer-director W. Z. Ahmed of Shalimar Pictures signed up Bharat for two of his ambitious films, *Shree Krishna Bhagwan* and *Rangila Rajasthan*. Bharat migrated to Poona and was later joined by his wife. Then started the most critical period of his life. The affairs of Shalimar Pictures were soon in the doldrums and pictures announced with a big fanfare could not go on the sets. After months of uncertainty and chaos, W. Z. Ahmed left for Pakistan. Bharat Bhooshan, who had made a wonderful start with *Bhakt Kabir*, had to undergo a trying spell of obscurity and heart-breaks. His two films were kept half-finished. What was worse, hopeful of his contract with Shalimar, he had earlier refused an offer of a "saintly" role from Bengal's famous director Debaki Bose. The scuttling of the Shalimar ship left Bharat in mid-stream. He and his wife were at Poona. "There were not days but months when I had neither work nor money. But for my wife's sympathy and encouragement, I don't know what I would have done," he says remembering those critical days.

After a gruelling struggle, he started getting roles in films which were by no means noteworthy. As a newcomer to Bombay, he had to start his screen career almost all over again. It was during this period that Bharat Bhooshan, the celebrated Kabir of Indian screen, had to act in films like *Kisi ki Yad*, *Bhat Bahen*, *Sahag Raat*, *Bebus*, *Chakori*, *Uddhar*, *Chitwan*, *Ek Tha Raja*, *Thes*, *Ram Darshan*, etc. to keep the home fires burning.

HOWEVER, his performance in *Aakhen* impressed people. But it was Bombay Talkies' *Maa*, directed by Bimal Roy, that gave him the necessary lift. There was an intensely human background to Bharat's memorable portrayal in this picture. In life, he was deprived of mother's love at an early age. No wonder, in *Maa*, he breathed life into his character, opposite Leela Chitnis who acted the title-role.



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Followed *Anandmath*, *Paheli Shadi*, *Hamari Duniya*, *Farmaish* and *Ladki*. But the biggest break of his career came in Prakash Pictures' *Baiju Bawra*, directed by Vijay Bhatt. The film proved a roaring box office hit and established Bharat Bhooshan among the top stars. Followed the title-roles in Vijay Bhatt's *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*, which earned him the "Filmfare" Award for the best acting, and Sohrab Modi's *Mirza Ghalib*, the screen-biography of the celebrated Urdu poet, which won the President's Gold Medal in the State Awards. Bharat Bhooshan had staged a glorious comeback and how!

His impressive line-up of pictures includes *Pooja*, *Shabab*, *Meenar*, *Basant Bahar* and *Kavi*. In the last-named, he at last got the opportunity he had declined while working at Shalimar Pictures, Poona—to work in a Debaki Bose picture. Bharat's other notable pictures include *Amanat*, *Sohai Mahwal*, *Kat Hamara Hai*, *Gateway of India*, *Champakali*, *Teen Bhai* and *Chandrakanta*. His recent ones include *Rani Roopmati*, *Sawan*, in which he played a double role, *Mahakavi Kalidas*, *Barsaat ki Raat*, *Angulimala* and *Chunghat*.

DESPITE all his success, Bharat has remained unbelievably modest. Once a role has been assigned to him, he throws himself heart and soul into it. He makes a deep study of his characterisation. For *Chaitanya*, he spent considerable time in studying all the available literature to make the role a success. His wife also helped him a lot in doing that research.

When Bharat had realised almost all his dreams about an art-career and when he was riding high on the surging tide of screen-popularity, he got a terrible set-back in life. His wife, who had stood by him through all his trials, passed away on Nov. 12, 1954 after giving birth to a daughter. The loss proved unbearable for Bharat. Both of them had known each other since their childhood at Meerut. Their first child, also a girl, was born in 1953, ten years after their marriage. The responsibility of bringing up the two kids fell on Bharat and he has been discharging that duty admirably.

He spends most of his spare-time in reading books. He has a well-kept library and his favourite authors include Kahilil Gibran, Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill, Hemingway and James Joyce.

LIKE all stars, Bharat has many interesting experiences during his screen career. Among these he feelingly recalls an incident after the release of *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu*. He was taken to a 'math' of Chaitanya in Calcutta. Here the reception he got made him realise the potentiality of the film medium. People vied with one another in touching his feet. It brought tears to his eyes. It was a glorious tribute to his performance in the picture.

A young girl fan took a fancy for him after *Baiju Bawra* and expressed a desire to marry him, taking him to be a romantic type like Baiju. Bharat asked her to see *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* where he played an ascetic. That did the trick! The girl recovered her poise and got happily married to someone else.

As a child, Bharat's favourite hobby was horse-riding. Once he narrowly missed being crushed under a mare after the naughty creature had thrown him



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ries. Bharat has vivid memories of
his younger days, spent in the com-
pany of his elder brother Ramesh
Chandra, better known as R. Chan-
dra, who is today in film produc-
tion business and an important
active member of the I.M.P.A.,
and the Editor of the Journal of the
Film Industry.

ONE of Bharat's childhood
ambitions was to personally
meet Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. Once,
as a lad of nine, he had rushed to
have a glimpse of Panditji at All-
garh Station, but due to the stamp-
ede of people, he could not see
anything in the midst of the milling
crowds on the platform. Panditji's train passed away to his great disappoint-
ment.

Twenty-three years later he more than made up for this missed chance
when he was received by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at New Delhi in
1935 after the State Awards function in which his starring vehicle *Mirza Ghalib*
won the President's Gold Medal as the best feature-film.

From the run-away youth in search of an art-career to one of filmdom's top
stars, Bharat Bhooshan has made the grade in his characteristic modest way.
And what does this successful star say today about the film career?

Well, his reply is no less characteristic of the man: "I love this art-form and
also the people connected with it."

Mild-mannered and gentle to the core, Bharat Bhooshan is far from the
loud, back-thumping glamour-laden film idol of popular conception. Rather, he
strikes one as a self-effacing intellectual who has strayed into the tinsel world
of the movies.

There is a finesse about his manners which strikes one as a hallmark of
good breeding. His polished Urdu phonetics have a delicacy all their own. His
laughter is rare, but hearty.

In *Ghughhat*, his time-honoured reputation as "a costume hero" was hard
put to test and he has come out with flying colours in the intricate social role.
He has once again proved that his speciality is not only dreamy poets and devo-
tional saints. He is equally at home as an "earthy" social type.

No doubt, with his serious approach to work, Bharat Bhooshan seems to be
destined for still higher honours.



Bharat Bhooshan is a sombre type, and it is rare to find him bursting into a hilarious laughter. Here he is enjoying one such moment with star-friend Chandrashekhar.

ASHOK KUMAR *(Continued from page 16)*

minating film-goer, he makes it a point not to miss outstanding international films. He likes the acting of Ronald Colman and Spencer Tracy. He has read all the monumental works of Pudovkin on acting, direction and film technique. He has also gone through the full course of London Dramatic Arts. He enjoys nothing more than reading and re-reading Shakespeare.

Whenever he snatches some off moments from his heavy studio schedule, he goes to his favourite holiday haunt, Khandala. During the outdoor shooting of *Shamsher*, we had the opportunity to accompany him to Khandala and the pleasant time we spent in his company gave us vivid glimpses of his genius as a socially conscious artiste. His cheery disposition lends an air of disarming informality everywhere. Indeed, with Ashok on the set, the whole unit gives one the impression of one happy family.

As a child, Ashok was rather shy and reserved and did not mix easily with people, but his intelligence had taken people by surprise even then. His one great ambition was to travel and see far off countries.

HE treasures many a pleasant memory of his tour of Europe and the Soviet Union following his visit to London and Egypt for the location shooting of *S. K. Ojha's Naaz*. In London, he was given a special reception by India's then High Commissioner, Mr. Krishna Menon. The press boys were surprised at his modest remark: "I am no heart-throbber".

After finishing the shooting of *Naaz*, he had a hurried trip across Europe. He was much impressed by Prague, found Sweden to be a prosperous country, liked art treasures and marble curtains of Italy's St. Peter's Cathedral. Paris appeared to him no longer the gay Paree of yore. "There was no sparkle in the eyes of the people and the laughter was unreal." He was appalled by the destruction of Warsaw and other cities. He attended the film festival at Warsaw and made a speech though no Indian film was shown there.

His hectic tour of the Soviet Union which he visited in response to a special invitation has left vivid memories. The Soviet people were as simple as we in India. He flew over Leningrad and stayed in Moscow for eleven days. He was tremendously impressed by the Soviet stage-craft. The devices on stage for fade-in, fade-out and super-imposing were really wonderful. The plastic make-up which was in vogue there fascinated him. He regrets immensely that he did not have the time to go and see the great Pudovkin at that time though he heard the news on the radio that Pudovkin was ill. Pudovkin, he holds, was an outstanding genius of the film. He has read all his important works. And his pet ambition is to follow the path trailed by Pudovkin as best as he could.

It was in the fitness of things that his consistently good acting in his countless film assignments won him the Sangeet Natak Akademi's coveted annual Award in 1959 for best acting. The Award was presented by India's Vice-President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan at a special function at New Delhi.



BINA RAI

BIRTHDAYS have evidently brought many happy returns to Bina Rai, the smart and sweet-tempered charmer of the Indian screen. She was born on July 13, 1932, and since then many an important event in her life has taken place on her birthday. She got her first film contract on July 13, 1950 and her first film was released on her next birthday. Again, it was on her birthday in 1952 that she was engaged to the popular hero of the Indian screen, Premnath.

There are very few cases in the history of filmdom where enthusiastic screen-aspirants have risen to stardom by replying to advertisements calling for actors and actresses. Bina Rai happens to be one such rarity. In 1950, Producer-director Kishore Sahu offered Rs. 25,000 through *Filmindia* for an educated and cultured girl to play the heroine in his *Kalighata*. Hundreds replied to this advertisement and among the numerous candidates called for the screen-test, Bina Rai impressed Sahu with a couple of other girls and was assigned the feminine lead in *Kalighata*. And this event marked the turning point in ambitious Bina's life.

BORN in a respectable middle class family at Lahore, Krishna, (that is Bina's real name), evinced a great liking for films from childhood. She was a regular film-goer with her parents and collected photos of her favourite movie stars like all film fans. Thanks to her liking for music, that popular singing star of the Indian screen Khurshid was her idol. Her father Mr. Sarin, an official in the Western Railway, encouraged her in her pursuit of the fine arts and she learnt music and dancing. She had her education first at Lahore and on passing the matriculation, she joined the Isabella Thoburn College at Lucknow. She was quite popular at college dramatics and cultural gatherings.

All through her educational career, she continued to take a live interest in films. When she replied the *Filmindia* advertisement in her youthful fancy to become a film star, she never took it as a serious attempt to stardom. When the call came for the interview, she was busy with her intermediate examination and could meet Kishore Sahu only after a month. Her parents had not the slightest inkling about her efforts to join the films and, therefore, her selection to play the heroine in *Kalighata* came to them as a rude shock. They vehemently opposed the idea. But Krishna's threat to go on hunger-strike exerted just enough pressure on her parents to bring them round to her viewpoint. "But this should be your first and last film," they warned her. And when we met her on the sets of *Kalighata*, Bina appeared slightly nervous but excited at the sudden realisation of her dreams. To our query how she found the film-world and its people, she said: "The people with whom I am working have been



Bina Rai, Premnath and their son Premnath Jr. enjoy a musical interlude at home. The junior created a new record by appearing before the movie-camera within less than six hours of his birth.

nice and I enjoy working with them." When asked whether she disliked any particular aspect of film-making, she at once quipped: "I have never been used to hating things."

WITH the release of *Kalighata*, Krishna Saria shot up into stardom as Bina Rai through her captivating performance. Thus, Bina Rai is one of those singularly fortunate to rise to stardom and fame without the inevitable struggles and heart-breaks. Parental opposition too cooled down with her successful debut. She got the main roles in *Sapna*, *Sangam*, *Aurat*, *Shole* and *Anarkali* and thus attained a maturer command over histrionics.

While on the sets of Varma's *Aurat*, Bina and her hero Premnath fell in love with each other, their romance leading to their engagement on July 13, 1952. Their marriage on September 2, proved a popular event of filmdom. Here it is interesting to recall a hearty tete-a-tete we had with Premnath in 1951 much before he was cast opposite Bina Rai.

"Will you marry a film star?" we casually asked.

"No, never," was Prem's quick reply.

"Are you opposed to marriage?"



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Premnath in 1951

BINA RAI

"Oh, no. I like children very much. But about getting married I am a bit confused to make up my mind. . . . An astrologer has told me that I will be getting married in October-November (1952). So I am waiting," he explained.

Well, the astrologer proved very nearly correct and Prem proved to be wrong—he did marry a film star after all. Their marriage was to take place on November 21, Prem's birthday. But as both were invited to America as members of the Indian Film Delegation, their wedding was arranged earlier to enable them to spend their honeymoon in the U.S.A.

After their marriage, Prem floated his independent film concern, P.N. Film Unit and produced *Shagufa* and *Prisoner of Golconda* (in Gevacolor) with Bina as the heroine. The release of *Shagufa* coincided with the birth of their first child, Premnath Junior. Incidentally, Prem Junior has the unique distinction of facing a movie-camera within six hours of his birth. Daddy Premnath wanted a few shots of a new-born babe for his *Prisoner of Golconda* and for this purpose the Gevacolor camera was specially taken to the maternity home.

More than any other film, it was *Anarkali* that stabilised Bina's reputation as an accomplished star. Her other important pictures include *Gauhar*, *Sardar*, *Madh Bhare Nais*, *Insoniyat*, *Durgesh Nawlini*, *Hamara Watan*, *Malika*, *Bandi*, *Chandrakantha* and *Talash*. She has staged a wonderful come-back by her memorable performance in *Ghungat*, which has won her the "Filmfare" Award.



DAVID

YOU and I can never forget John Chacha, because he is such a nice man. He is affectionate, affable and extremely honest although a boot-legger. We did not in the least hate the lame John Chacha for boot-legging. Life was like that. We saw John Chacha and life in the raw in R. K. Films' *Boot Polish*. David, a doyen among our character actors, won the "Filmfare" Clare Award for his masterly portrayal of this lovable character.

David Abraham is a splendid sportsman in life. He plays good cricket and is capable of playing the ball and holding the bat as the situation would warrant. This versatile adaptability David has acquired through years of experience in his multifarious activities. For David, life has been a series of struggles and battles.

Yes, David Abraham is versatile. Besides being an accomplished actor, he is a brilliant conversationalist, a gifted speaker, a sportsman, a gymnast, legal adviser and a Freemason. More, he writes poetry. He has written a collection of poems which he has titled "Little Dew Drops" and has characterised its ever-growing contents as "attempts at versification." He has acted as a referee at Asian Games, officiated as a judge at world olympics, given running commentaries at sports-meets. He is connected with many sports associations in Bombay in various capacities. He has served as a master of ceremonies at countless functions. His sparkling wit and devastating asides at parties and social get-togethers have unfailingly proved to be the life-giving nectar of all such occasions.

HAILING from a talented Jewish family that settled down in Kolaba District of Bombay State as early as the fifteenth century, David Abraham was born on June 21, 1909 at Bombay. Unfortunately, he lost his father at the age of five. His elder brother brought him up and he is full of gratitude to his brother who has been a friend, a guide and a great source of inspiration. Consequent of the continuous stay of many centuries in Maharashtra, his family has adopted some of the finer traits of Maharashtrian culture.

Rare, indeed, is a child who is at the same time, interested in such diverse subjects as physical culture, literature, dramatics and dancing. David, however, was such a kid. He began his education at the St. Joseph's School, Bombay. His interests varied from athletics to aesthetics. He prophetically chose his career at the age of eleven. It all happened thus. The elder brother was a gifted actor, a critic, a producer of amateur plays, a school teacher and a histrionic inspiration for young David. One day he took the youngster to the Coronation Theatre to witness a religious Jewish drama in Marathi written and staged by

DAVID

Joseph David, a maestro of dramatics in Bombay. After the first act, the elder brother took David back-stage and introduced him to Producer Joseph. "Well, what would you like to be when you grow up?", asked Producer Joseph David.

"An actor," replied teenager David Abraham instantaneously. But it took sixteen years of hazards for David to attain his aim.

His family wanted to groom him for a legal career and he was trained for the Bar. David's main interest in young days was physical culture and he was a regular visitor to the Akhadas. His family was physical-culture-minded and some of his elders excelled at athletic feats. "I managed to get every possible prize in the college except scholarship," David says with a smile. He used to write for various magazines and has won a number of prizes in elocution contests.

His main interests in college were sports, amateur dramatics and elocution. He was a student member of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee and worked in the early-thirties with that idol of nationalist youths in India, Yusuf Meherally. He graduated with literature from Wilson College in 1930. Followed a period of "glorious unemployment for seven years" as he puts it. Of course, he could have got a job in the Government Service. But being a staunch patriot, he did not care for it even under most critical circumstances. During this period, apart from political activities, he flirted with law, organised athletic clubs and indulged in amateur theatricals. As an amateur artist, David made an appearance before movie cameras in 1930 in a silent film called "Cyclone Girl." It was produced by Sagar Film Co. and directed by D. P. Mishra. To his great disappointment, actor Yakub discouraged him at that time and advised him "Vakil Kar" ("Be a lawyer"). This was a period of trial for David because despite all his intensive efforts, he failed to get a job to his liking and had to manage to live on a pocket expense of Rs. 10 per month.

HOWEVER, the famous character-actor S. B. Nayampally (who knew David from 1926 as both of them were the disciples of the same physical culture *ustad*) managed to sponsor David into the world of film-acting. With his bald head, Nayampally thought David would make an ideal professor on screen. He introduced him to Producer-director M. Bhavnani and at last David's jobless period came to an end. On January 18, 1937, he got the starting salary of Rs. 75 and made his debut in Bhavnani's *Zambo*. David vividly remembers his early days in films. "I was a beaten man when I joined the movies. Therefore, I had to start from a scratch and had to work, plod along and fight my way up inch by inch." In between playing roles in pictures, he acted as a clapper-boy, a continuity clerk, assistant director and production manager and acquired a thorough grasp over different branches of film-industry. The grooming that he got under Bhavnani proved very useful to him. He passed the L.L.B. in 1940 and in the same year came the first real break of his career. His role of Mr. Sharma in Bombay Talkies' *Naya Sansar* brought him into limelight though he received only Rs. 300 all told for it. Then came B.T.'s great hit *Kismet*. This



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picture brought him further credit as an artist but monetarily, he was none the better.

But by then, the name David had become a hall-mark for inspired acting and his versatile talent found good scope in the variegated pattern of his screen roles. He has acted in more than 75 pictures and given a number of outstanding performances but he says his best is yet to come. David has a dislike for those milk-and-water type of roles and prefers to portray rough, intricate characters. Of his earlier roles, he likes his performances in Kamu Dossai's *Geet Govind* and P. K. Atre's *Tasweer*. His portrayal of the machiavellian Shakuni in *Draupadi*, produced and directed by Baburao Patel, ranks amongst his best performances. His performances in *Boot Polish* and K. A. Abbas's *Munna* stand unexcelled. With all this, he is not a moneyed man. He would have been if he had insisted on strict payment from some of our producers. His other notable roles include *Panna*, *Naya Tarana*, *Dharti ke Lal*, *Nal Damayanti*, *Chandni Raat*, *Ladli*, *Samadhi*, *Sargam*, *Hamara Ghar* etc. Among his many recent performances, his portrayal of Munjal Mehta in Prakash's *Patraai* stands in a class by itself. His recent pictures include *Barkha*, *Bindhya*, *Pyar ki Pyas*, *Kanoon* and *Mem Didi*, in which he gave a topping performance.

HIS tastes and hobbies are varied. He is fond of ball-room dancing, sport is in his veins, books are amongst his best companions and athletics is still his craze. A man of punctuality and regular habits, everybody including our film producers have no occasion to complain about David.

In his flat at Parel, his well-kept library catches your eye at once with its impressive array of some of world's top-most and rarest authors and in the adjoining room are the imposing lezims, dumb-bells and other physical culture devices. David and all members of the Abraham family zealously care for the well-being of their mind and physique.

David is always a much-sought-after man whether it is a film-role, a social get-together or a sports-meet. He takes delight in describing himself as "a very normal, mail-paced individual with no strong likes or dislikes" and says the major portion of his time is still spent on the struggle for his existence and of those who depend on him.

Though belonging to the aging, over-fifty group, he still retains that juvenile enthusiasm and youthful zest for life.

*"A Dreamer, Poet, Painter,
A Singer and Lover wild,
I'd like to be but God's truth
I'd love to be a child."*

This is what he has written about himself in his *Devo Drops*. Nothing could be more true of David, the man.

A stalwart among our character actors, he modestly says, "I have still to give an outstanding performance." Fascinated and happy with life, David's ambition is to "portray real roles and to work till the last day of my life."

Mammohan (1)
Savitri (2)
Chota (3)
Kote (4)
Sheela (5)



DEV ANAND

NO ONE could have ever imagined that a boyish-looking censor clerk who could be seen hanging on to over-crowded tram-cars and trains and who sometimes joined the never-ending queue of office-goers from Churchgate Station to Ballard Estate would one day become one of the leading film stars of the country. To the thousands of screen-struck youths of the country, whose star dreams have ended in gutters, the story of Dev Anand should be a significant pointer.

Dev's film career actually begins with his literally gate-crashing into the sacrosanct chambers of a movie magnate and bagging a hero's role. But then the story of his entry into films has not been as smooth as it sounds.

SON of a nationalist-minded lawyer of Gurdaspur in East Punjab, Dev was born on September 26, 1923. His only assets before he got a break into the movies were his good educational background and his smiling face. He had his early training at a Convent School in Dalhousie and then joined the Government College at Lahore. "College life in Lahore in those days was really enjoyable. It was full of life, gaiety and fun. Compared to that, the college life in Bombay appears insipid," Dev recalls with nostalgic fervour.

On passing his B.A. with honours in 1942, Dev applied for a post in the Navy and was almost selected but for his father's strong nationalistic leanings which made Dev an undependable element for the officials of the British regime. This made Dev come down to Bombay in search of a job only to be confronted everywhere with that bug-bear of all unemployed men—the "No Vacancy" board. He met an important film producer and waited for the promised film role for months together in vain. In the circumstances, he was compelled to take up a job as a clerk in the Censor department. It was a war-time creation and the dull, unpleasant task of opening other people's letters got on Dev's nerves but he had to stick to it for his bread.

STILL dreaming of a film career, he used to regale his friends with his attractive rendering of Saigal's melodies. In the meantime, he took part in amateur theatricals and his acting in I.P.T.A.'s *Zubeida* and his brother Chetan Anand's *Gaan* gave him the necessary training and self-confidence. And soon, one day he took courage into both hands, and managed to land himself in the office of Mr. Baburao Pai, who was then the chief executive of Prabhat Film Co. of Poona. Mr. Pai was at first taken aback by the impudence of this youthful gate-crasher, but Dev's suave, gentle manner impressed him and he signed him up for a major role in Prabhat's *Hum Ek Hain* which was the maiden

directorial assignment for writer P. L. Santoshi. That was in July, 1945. Its theme advocated communal and national unity. *Hum Ek Hain* introduced four new faces—Dev Anand, Behana, Rehman and Ramsingh.

Acting before movie cameras did not turn out to be as easy as Dev had originally thought. Often, he felt terribly nervous on the sets, particularly while facing accomplished veterans like Durga Khote. His spells of fright at times unnerved other members of the production unit. For a moment, he felt he would have to bid an abrupt good-bye to the film world. But he gradually rallied, shed his initial nervousness, braved the glare of arc-lights and the entire array of bewildering clap-trap of a studio. He expresses deep gratitude to Durga Khote for the guidance and encouragement she gave him which instilled into him all the courage needed to become a film hero. "She was a tower of inspiration to me in those embarrassing moments," says Dev today. "But for her sympathy and understanding, I would have run away from studio sets and given up hopes for a film career."

Hum Ek Hain was released and among the new faces Dev appeared the most promising. His salary jumped from Rs. 400 to Rs. 1,500 a month. He also played the lead in Prabhat's *Age Badho*. But being the war boom era for the Indian film industry, Dev felt that it would be more advantageous for him if he took to free-lancing instead of sticking to one studio at a limited contract-figure. And the once censor-clerk, with a dreamy look in his eyes, launched himself into the prosperous world of film stars. He was very soon co-starred with the leading ladies of the filmdom.

DURING his hectic film career, he has played a number of versatile roles but his portrayals in Phani Majumdar's *Hum Bhi Insaan Hain*, Navketan's *Baazi*, *Afsar*, *Andhigan* and *Taxi Driver*, Guru Dutt's *Jaal*, Abbas's *Rahi*, Paul Zilla's *Zalzala*, B.T. Workers' *Badbaan* deserve special mention. It was the success of *Andhigan* that took him to the Soviet Union as a member of the Indian Film Delegation. His other notable films include *Insaaniyat*, *C.I.D.*, *Funtoosh*, *Paying Guest*, *Barish*, *Nau Do Gyarah*, *Solva Saal*, *Kalpana* and *Love Marriage*. His memorable performance in *Kalpana* won him the 1959 Filmfare Award. He had won the F.J.A. Critics' Award in 1956 for his work in *Manimjee*. His recent notable films include *Amar Deep*, *Manzil*, *Kala Bazar*, *Jali Note*, *Bambai ka Babu* and *Hum Dono* in which he acts a double role.

The popularity of his role as *Taxi Driver* in *Baazi* inspired his elder brother Chetan Anand to build up the plot of his production around the same character and the picture was titled *Taxi Driver*. He looked so realistic in the make-up that once during outdoor shooting near Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, he was mistaken for a real taxi-driver by a foreign visitor. The tourist hailed Dev in the usual manner and asked him to drive the taxi to Marine Drive. Dev obliged at once. Little did the occupant of the taxi know that the man at the wheel was not a professional chauffeur but Dev Anand, the well-known Indian film-star.



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Dev Anand and his star-wife Kalpana Kartik. Their wedding was as quiet an affair as Dev himself!

made-up for their respective roles in *Taxi Driver* for the night shooting. Suddenly they asked leave from Producer-director Chetan Anand and retired for some time to an adjoining apartment where the Registrar of Marriages and a few close friends were present. The ceremony was brief and solemn. The announcement about the wedding, however, was made months afterwards. With such a quiet untrumpeted marriage, he lived up to his reputation as one of film-land's unassuming and publicity-shy boys. Their residential bungalow "Iris Park" is situated in picturesque surroundings at Juhu. Their son Suneel accompanied them as "the youngest delegate" to the International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary in 1956. They have also a daughter whom they call Devina.

HE is soft-spoken and his good, gentle manners have earned him the title of the "softish one" from his studio-colleagues. During his off moments, he likes to go for a swim, read books and play tennis. He has a great regard for literary classics and their creators, and openly admits that he has been considerably influenced by at least two of them: Irving Stone's *Lust for Life* and Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe*. His reading taste is varied. He is equally at home with Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamozov*, Somerset Maugham's *Of Human Bondage* and Maupassant's intensely human short stories. He is an interesting conversationalist and despite all his modesty can rattle off a good speech as he did on several occasions after his return from Soviet Union as a member of the Indian Film Delegation. He takes an active part in the discussions about story and allied branches of Navketan's productions. He feels that the success of a picture depends on "how you treat and present the main theme." He believes that the Indian film-goers are interested in realistic films as is evident from the current trend of productions. He is very hopeful about the younger set of people who have entered the film-industry in its different branches and feels confident that the future of the film industry is in their hands.

(Continued on page 56)

AN important event of his life took place during the shooting of *Taxi Driver*. His romance with his leading lady Kalpana Kartik culminated into their secret marriage on January 3, 1954. Kalpana, who in private life is called Mona Sinha, belongs to a cultured family of Punjab and is a cousin of Chetan's wife, Uma. She made her first screen appearance in Navketan's *Baazi*. Many had hinted at the growing friendship between Dev and Kalpana then.

The Dev-Kalpana marriage was as quiet an affair as Dev himself. Both Dev and Kalpana were



DILIP KUMAR

HAILED at various times as the matinee idol of millions, the eternal lover of the silver screen and the heart-throb of countless feminine fans, Dilip Kumar, one of the top-most favourites among our stars, is unbelievably jovial in real life.

During the last one decade, he has blazed a new trail as film-world's tear-stained hero and has almost become a synonym for a frustrated lover of the Indian screen. Such a reputation is, of course, not without its advantages. "Fans are rather kind to me and don't harass me at all because they feel I am a grief-stricken person (*"Dukhi Admi"* in Dilip's own words) and, therefore, should be left alone", he told us.

He has created new cloth fashions among the youths in sartorial simplicity and the new vogue of the now famous Dilip Kumar hair-style. In spite of his nation-wide fame as film-dom's most popular glamour-boy, he appears to you more as a meditative philosopher and a sportsman than a swollen-headed celluloid celebrity.

Unlike that unruly tuft of hair on his head, he is both disciplined and calm. His manners at once strike a sympathetic chord in your heart and his gentle, dignified way of dealing with people makes you wonder whether he ever indulges in the luxury of losing his temper.

Though completely engrossed in his screen-work since more than a decade, he has not lost his interest in finer things of life like sports, music, poetry and literature. He can still admire Mushtaq Ali's delightful cover drives and C. K. Nayudu's sizzling sixers: he can go into raptures over Dhyanchand's hockey and Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's *thumris*; and he is in his heavens with the poetry of Omar Khayam, Ghalib and Faiz. Contrary to general belief, films were not at all a craze with him when he was young. Till he reached the age of 14 and came down to Bombay, he had not seen a single picture.

BORN at Peshawar on December 11, 1922, in a middle-class family, Dilip was brought up in Deolali from the age of six. His father Ghulam Sarwar Khan had extensive business associations with Central and Southern parts of India in connection with his fruit-trade. Dilip is the third in line in a family of six brothers and six sisters. His real name is Yusuf Khan.

While schooling in Deolali, young Yusuf had no particular fancy for motion pictures. In those days, he had great love for football and was the secretary of the school football club. His daily absence from home in the evening was not liked by his father who objected to his craze for football. Father desired that Yusuf should take more interest in Chess, which was the favourite

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game of the Khan family. Yusuf, therefore, found out a compromise formula. Early in the evening he would sit for Chess, then withdraw from the game putting his brothers in his place so as to reach the football ground in time for the game. On returning home, he would again join up the all-absorbing Chess-match at home.

During his stay at Deolali for eight full years, Yusuf did not see a single film, surely a record very few film-stars could claim.

On coming to Bombay, he joined the Anjuman-E-Islam High School at Bori Bunder and shone more on the sports-ground than in the class-room. He played cricket, hockey and football and did not miss any big sports event in the city. The sports-loving Yusuf was an average student at school and one of his school-mates used to prove quite useful when examination stared them in the face. By some peculiar method, that school-chum had mastered the art of getting solid tips on the eve of examinations. He used to pass on these to Yusuf and no wonder both of them got through examinations with comparative ease. It is still a mystery to Yusuf Khan how and from where those tips reached his friend.

On passing the matric examination, he joined Wilson College and studied science. "I was an inconspicuous boy at college and mostly kept aloof," he says recalling his under-graduate days. In fact, during his college career he had not a single girl friend, another unbelievable aspect of a person who was one day destined to become a matinee idol on the silver screen.

Besides taking part in college sports, (his top favourite was football) young Mr. Khan became known for his well-written essays in English. In one of his essays on "Christmas" preserved by one of his college classmates, Yusuf Khan, then the first year student at college, wrote: "In X'mas the special movie attractions help to remove the rest of the money from one's pocket." One wonders how the famous star now feels on re-reading this statement in his college essays written in 1941. At that time, he did not dream that later on he himself would be in some way instrumental in "removing the rest of that money" as a top-most film-star.

He often provided a target for some good humoured jokes from his colleagues and professors for his bashful nature. Dressed mostly in simple pyjamas, shirt, coat and a cap, he earned a reputation among his friends for forgetfulness. He used to invariably lose his cap and his college note-books in the class at regular intervals. He was also regular in filling the football in the class-room and the professor would say: "Mr. Khan, you can do better justice to it if you go to the sports-room."

"Yes, that was an easy way of getting me out," he admits.

From his college days onwards, he had the same peculiar hair-style as today. At the sight of his unruly tuft, his professor's usual remark was, "Will you young fellows raise a subscription so that Mr. Khan can have a hair-cut?"

Yusuf Khan was fond of Western films, and with couple of college friends,



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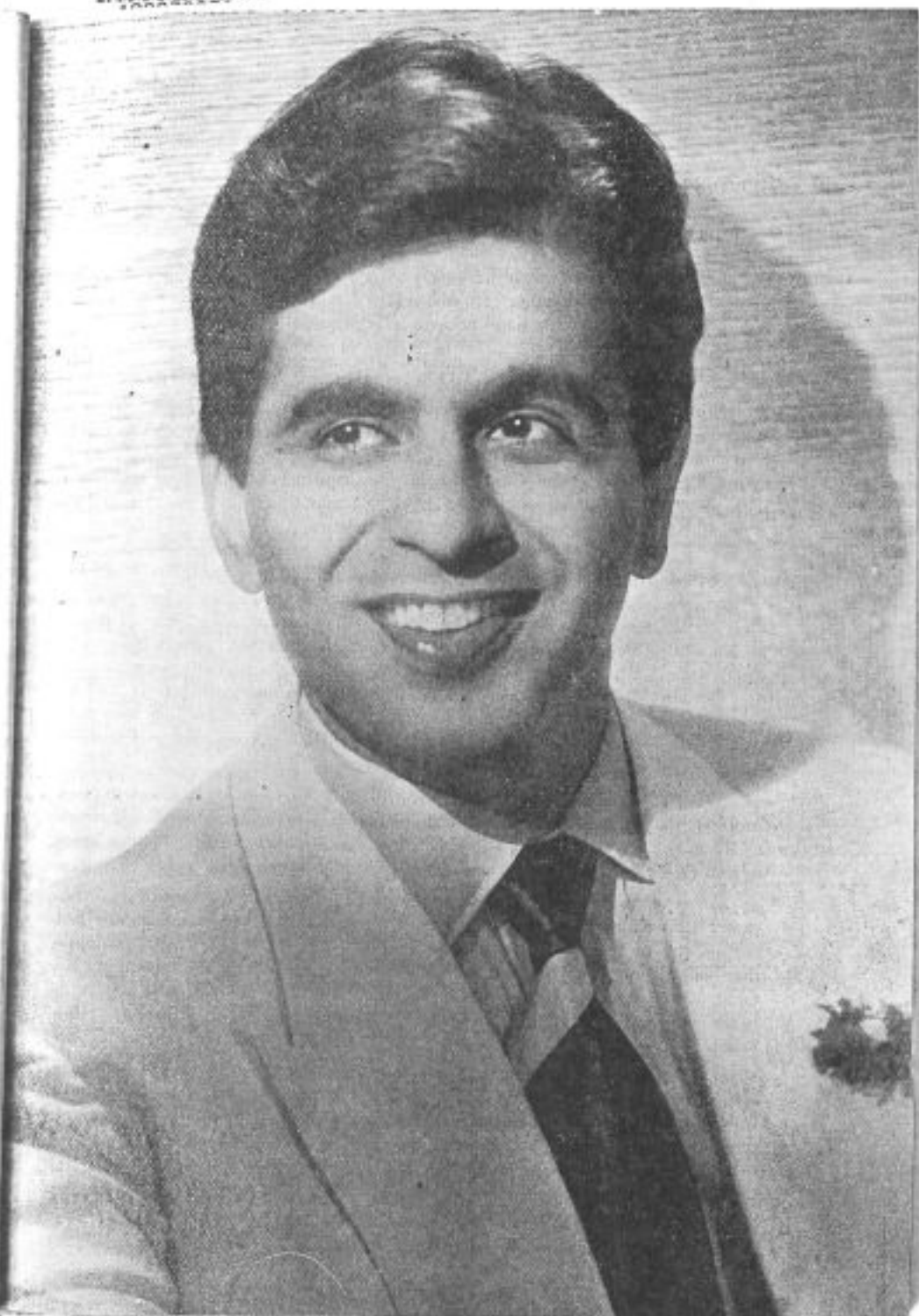
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he used to sneak into a cinema-hall during afternoons. His favourite seat in the theatre was the extreme left-hand corner and he felt that was the best angle to see a picture.

AFTER studying science at Wilson College and Khalsa College, Bombay, he decided to start earning. He thought he must not merely carry on the family business but try his hand at some other independent profession.

He left Bombay for Poona in search of pastures new and took up the job of a canteen manager with the British Army. Those were the days of war and life with soldiers partly satisfied his craving for an adventurous career. He was started on Rs. 35 a month, stuck to it and very soon he got a contract to run a refreshment room in the army mess. Business became brisk soon and he earned as much as Rs. 800 in the third month. The contract lasted a year and then with the Field Relations Scheme in force, it came to a close. He returned to good, old Bombay with a respectable bank balance.

IN those days, the executives of Bombay Talkies were on the look-out for new faces and Devika Rani, the chief executive head of B.T., happened to meet the handsome, well-built Yusuf through the courtesy of a common friend at Nainital. She was impressed by him and engaged him even without the usual screen-test. He was cast as the hero in B.T.'s *Jwar Bhata*, opposite the new heroine Mridula. He accepted the offer with hesitation because he had no pretensions at any time for a film-career. According to him, he had seen only two Indian pictures, Mehboob's *Ek Hi Rasta* and B.T.'s *Basant* before he joined the screen.

What screen-name should be given to this new film recruit was another problem that faced the Bombay Talkies' bosses. Three names were suggested in the beginning: Jehangir, Vasudev and Dilip Kumar. Devika Rani's choice fell on Dilip Kumar though Yusuf Khan preferred either of the other two.

Anyway, the final choice was made and the shy, modest Yusuf Khan became Dilip Kumar, the celluloid hero. "When I faced the camera on the first day on sets of *Jwar Bhata*, I felt like a student who had come to the examination-hall without any preparations whatsoever," he confessed recounting his maiden appearance before a movie camera. And, moreover, there was no advance information here like those eye-of-exam tips at Anjuman-E-Islam High School!

Devika Rani felt that this newcomer had a lot to learn in the matter of acting and he too realised that she was not quite wrong. Director Aruya Chakrabarty encouraged him to pick up the rudiments of acting by his patient, sympathetic handling.

When *Jwar Bhata* was released, remarks of critics were not particularly kind. "Stick to your hockey, Yusuf," a college friend of his said while reviewing his debut in a film-magazine. "A camera-shy youngster," wailed another film-critic. But those in film-acting gave him all the encouragement. After the pre-



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miere of *Jwar Bhata*, veteran Moti-
lal went so far as to pat him up and
said: "You are quite good. Stick to
it." And Dilip stuck to it. He was
on a two-year contract with Bom-
bay Talkies on a monthly salary of
Rs. 625.

The break that the late Amiya
Chakrabarty gave him through this
film has not been forgotten by
Dilip even today. Nearly eight
years after *Jwar Bhata* when we
met him on the sets of *Daag* which
was being produced and directed
by Chakrabarty, Dilip recalled his
early days before the film-camera.
"There goes the man who picked
me up. He helped me a lot and he
has been kind to me always," he
told us pointing his finger towards
Director Amiya Chakrabarty who
was busy arranging a shot at the
other end of the set. Dilip has
great respect for Amiya Chakrahar-
ty whom he affectionately called
"Bhaiya" (brother).

Jwar Bhata was followed by
Pratima directed by Jairaj for
B.T. Then came *Milan* directed by
the veteran maestro of megaphone,
Nitin Bose. The story of *Milan* was
adapted from Gurudev Rabindra-
nath Tagore's literary master-
piece "The Wreck." It was indeed
an education for Dilip to act in
Milan. "Working under Nitin Bose gave me a new conception about acting.
From him I learnt the basic essentials of histrionics. Before that my idea of film-
acting was 'turn this side,' 'smile' and 'heave a sigh of relief' and such trite ex-
pressions. It was in *Milan* that I realised the subtleties of little gestures and
nuances and I am grateful to Nitin Bose for his extremely useful grooming," he
recalls.

MILAN established Dilip as a star who could really act and it proved the
turning point in his life as an actor. Then he waited patiently for a really
worthwhile role and finally played the patriot martyr in Filmistan's *Shaheed* di-
rected by Ramesh Saigal. His performance in *Shaheed* won him universal
praise and people felt Dilip Kumar had come to stay on the silver screen.
Came Wadia's *Mela* and Shaukat Hussain's *Jugnu* and established him as a po-



Despite the make-up and grease-paint, Dilip Kumar enjoys nothing more than a merry game of cricket along the studio compound in between the "takes" of his pictures. Here he is seen batting on the improvised studio-pitch during a shooting interval with comedian Mukri serving as an unrehearsed wicket-keeper.

pular hero with a box-office pull. The combination of Kamini Kaushal and Dilip Kumar in *Shaheed*, *Nadiya Ke Paar*, *Shabnam* and *Arzoo* made them a very popular romantic team of Indian screen.

With more acting successes like Dharamsey's *Anokha Pyar*, Mehboob's *Andaz*, Nitin Bose's *Deedar*, and Asif's *Hulchul*, he became the rage of film-audiences. With his intensely moving facial expressions and with overwhelming pathos highlighting his roles, he touched the very core of people's hearts. With his tear-jerking portrayals, he was acknowledged as the unrivalled master of the tragic touch.

He was not only acclaimed as a people's Hamlet; he was accepted as someone who approximated to people's ideal of a lovable hero: sad, dreamy, delicate and yet far from being a celluloid sissy. People who came to see him had the unique experience of shedding tears and yet yearning to see more of his inspired acting. Audiences went home emotionally shaken but satisfied and keenly aware that Dilip Kumar reflected in himself so much of the social character in a little world of their own.

He rose to newer heights of sublime tragedy in Ranjit's *Jagan*. In a self-effacing role that required him to act with the maximum restraint, he literally breathed life by his sensitive portrayal. Mehboob's colour picture *Aan* brought him international laurels and he further consolidated his reputation as Indian screen's top favourite through *Babul*, *Footpath*, *Tarana*, *Sangili*, *Daag*, *Shikast*, *Amar*, *Azaad*, *Uran Khatola* and *Insaniyat*.

His performances as a blindman in *Deedar* and as a liquor-addict in *Daag* were veritable gems of acting. In fact, his portrayal in *Daag* earned for him the Clare Award. No less outstanding were his performances in Zia Sakhadi's *Footpath* and Duryani's *Tarana*. In *Azaad*, he surprised all by his pleasant portrayal of a comedy role.

His other notable films include *Devdas*, *Musafir*, *Yahudi*, *Naya Daur*, *Madhumati* and *Paigham*. Among his recent acting triumphs are *Mughal-E-Azam*, *Kohinoor* and his own independent production *Guano-Jumna*. He has also won the Filmfare Awards for his acting in *Devdas*, *Azaad*, *Naya Daur* and *Kohinoor*.

DESPITE his heavy pre-occupation with studio-life, he is very much attached to his family. After the death of his parents in 1949, he shares the burden of looking after family affairs. He lost his elder brother Ayooob in 1953 and now they are six sisters and five brothers. According to Dilip, one seldom feels lonely with a big family and such a nice company gives one the sense of social solidarity. His younger brother Nasir Khan is the only member of the family to follow in the footsteps of the elder brother.

His residence at Pali Road in Bandra, where he has shifted from the old family house situated nearby at Mala, is always full of friends and visitors. This, though a glowing tribute to his popularity, gravely upsets his daily schedule. He has a tender heart with a sneaking regard for the suffering and the less privileged. He, therefore, gives equal attention to everyone who calls on him whether it is a top-rank film-star or a poor chaprassi. A common



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Ranjit's Jogan. In a maximum restraint, Mehboob's colour picture related his reputation, Tarana, Saugandh,

...as a liquor-addict in Daag earned for his performances in Zia Sarwar pleased all by his plea-

...di, Naya Daur, Maa, see Mughal-E-Azam, etc. He has also won Daur and Kohinoor.

...is very much attached to the film industry since 1949, he shares the same fate as other stars. Dilip, one seldom sees the sense of humour in any of the only member of the

...has shifted from a life full of friends and family to a life where he is gravely upset by the suffering of everyone who is poor. A common

friend told us that on the quiet he arranges free medical aid for many poor people in the neighbourhood.

His dress is very simple. Mostly he puts on a white or cream shirt and light-coloured trousers. It is a rare sight to see Dilip Kumar wrapped up in a close-fitting coat and neck-tie.

There is certainly a method about the alleged madness of his thick, overgrown tufts of hair and his specialised way of keeping them in a peculiar position. "The much-maligned Dilip Kumar hair-style is more a creation of necessity than any new fangled vogue of fashion," he started us with his low-down on his much imitated hair-style.

To illustrate the point, he combed his hair in different styles—standing before the mirror in the studio make-up room. While demonstrating his difficulty in doing so, he explained that though he would very much like to have different hair-styles in different pictures, it was not possible because the moment he starts acting, his stiff hair comes down easily in the same ruffled, unruly pattern over his face. And if he tries to keep it in any new fashion, he has to restrain his movements in acting to keep the hair in that way. As this would seriously affect his mobility of action, he has stuck to the present style. It is, of course, not his fault if film-fans try to imagine themselves as Chhota Dilip Kumar by not only taking it as a hair-style but also by imitating it on a mass scale.

In 1954, when film-stars in Bombay took out a procession for the relief of flood victims and moved about in the main thoroughfares of Bombay, Dilip Kumar, who stood in a truck shouting for help (not for himself but for the flood-victims), was richer by at least one hundred combs at the end of the day. His fans had presented him these combs to keep his unruly hair in respectable shape!

He gets a huge fan-mail but has neither the time nor the inclination to reply to all. Once in a way, he scribbles a few lines in reply to sensible fan-letters. Once he appointed his younger sister to look after his fan-mail on Rs. 100 a month, but she got engrossed in her own work and chucked up the job.

Dilip Kumar may be a hero to the rest of the world but his younger sister cares two hoots for his stardom and makes big fun of the elder brother which, of course, is a privilege of every little sister.



Dilip, one of the top tragedians of Indian screen, is unbelievably jovial in real life. He helps Raj Kapoor in picking Ashok's pocket at a happy get-together of film personalities.

At home, Dilip is a very informal, very generous soul and does not rule the domestic roost like an elderly Fuehrer. The same air of cordiality and disarming informality characterises his behaviour on the sets.

HE brings warmth and a new life to the humdrum studio-atmosphere with his abundant sense of humour. Cricket is a game after his heart and in between "takes" he plays cricket with a tennis ball in the studio compound with those present. It's a sight for the gods to watch Dilip Kumar in his grease-paint and make-up batting on an improvised pitch in the studio compound with a gusto that even Mushtaq, Imtiaz, Umrigars and Nayudus will envy. Besides his unorthodox batting and bowling with the tennis ball, his impromptu cricket commentary is a treat for the ears.

It sometimes runs in a La Talyarkhan manner: "Here's Bedser bowling in the Test match to Yusuf Khan now 94 not out . . . only six runs short for his century . . . well done India against England. Yusuf Khan plays cautiously . . . a delightful innings . . . Bedser bowls and another glorious four . . . Haji Malang Bawa . . . two runs short of century, now here's a big hit and . . ."

"Come on Dilip, be ready for the take," comes the voice from the director and Yusuf Khan, the Test player of his imagination, again becomes Dilip Kumar, the film hero, back on the sets.

To outside observers, his tennis ball variety of cricket in between 'takes' appears some inconsequential fun, but he does so for a very legitimate reason. As he took pains to explain it to us, besides giving him some diversion from the monotony of the studio routine, this merry game of cricket helps him a lot in relieving the emotional tension of acting and after loosening both his limbs and his nerves in an easy game of cricket, he faces the next shot with renewed vigour and freshness. Once during outdoor shooting for a picture at Indore, he had a very enjoyable cricket practice with such stalwarts of the game as the great C. K. Nayudu, Mushtaq and Sarwate.

HE loves classical music and admires the concerts of celebrated *ustads* like Faiyaz Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali, Wilayat Hussain etc. He tried to learn violin but gave it up for want of time. At home he prefers to listen to symphonies. He believes that he would be able to give a more-inspired performance on the sets provided there is background music in tune with the situation. Of course, he realises it as impossible in the present circumstances, as it involves serious technical problems. He has a flair for singing. He sang his own lines, in a duet with Lata Mangeshkar, in *Musafir*.

He likes lawns, fresh flowers and the lush greenery of the countryside. The garden in his compound is his haven of escape. During off days, he likes to go to Poona. The place has some nostalgic memories for him of his pre-film career. Unlike other stars, he has no particular fascination for pets.



He likes company, but one or two at a time and that too select friends. He just abhors a crowd which would merely sit around and gossip for hours together about nothing particular or which would keep glued to its seat discussing anything from social scandals to the latest model of electric cooker. "I like solitude and can stand it for months together, but with books and an occasional choice friend," he claims.

At college, Dilip's favourite poet was Shelley and during his spare-time now, he reads plenty of English, Urdu and Persian literature. His pet authors range from Thomas Hardy to Bernard Shaw and Somerset Maugham to Maupassant. He takes scholarly interest in current literary trends and it is an unforgettable experience to hear him reciting some memorable bits of Urdu poetry from Faiz and Ghalib in his gayer moments.

He is an interesting conversationalist and could discuss with equal ease subjects varying from war and peace, and growth and development of different civilisations to oriental philosophy and problems of film-industry.

He surprised the members of the World Press at Karlovy Vary Festival in 1956 by ably putting forward the case of the Indian film industry with authentic facts and figures at a press conference.

"Yes, I do believe artists should mix with people, study and understand things properly," he said answering our question. "The company you keep, books you read, the things you discuss—all these go to give you that temperament of an accomplished artist."

"I have not achieved that temperament", he modestly added, "I have to put more effort and I realise that it is a difficult and a most strenuous job."

He believes that people who have made good in film-industry are those who have actually done floor work and he cited the examples of Shantaram, Chandulal Shah, Mehboob, Kardar and S. Mukerjee. Many people belonging to royal families have at different times approached him for film-production and he has always advised them to invest in business they knew.

ON the much-discussed question of his marriage, his remarks are no less illuminating. When pressed to give his opinion about the matter, he told us with a dreamy look in his eyes that his conception of a wife was "somebody who would give solace and peace, a soothing company when one returns home after a day's hard work...someone to look forward to when you work...I may look conservative but I prefer such a person to a film-star. However, I don't know how it is all going to shape up for me..."

We told him that he was far too reserved to take any initiative. When he is reminded how shy he was at the time of his first picture *Jwar Bhata*, his ready reply is: "Even now I am not so terribly gullant."

Thanks to his reputation as a *dukhni admi*, fans don't trouble him much but still he has some memorable experiences. Once, while he was getting into a car from Cricket Club of India, a small crowd collected and tore up bits of

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his shirt as souvenirs. His fans belong to all sections and all ages. Not long ago, audiences at a local variety entertainment show were surprised to see an old lady of 50 approaching Dilip and asking for an autograph. When the perturbed Dilip politely asked her why she had taken the trouble of walking up to him instead of sending the child who wanted the autograph, she blushing confessed that she had no children and that the autograph book belonged to her.

FAR from making him swollen-headed or self-complacent, success and fame have mellowed his personality and he still takes enormous pains to bring life and realism in his acting.

In *Daag* there was a scene where the drink-addicted hero rushes to the closed liquor shop in a frantic, breathless manner. Before facing the camera for this shot, Dilip started running round the sets. His behaviour intrigued us. He ran about for some time and then entered the set panting and heaving. And cameras started cranking. When we saw the performance on the set and later on, this scene on the screen, we were struck by the natural effect of breathlessness he had succeeded in creating by actually running before the 'take'. Far from taking the trouble of actually sprinting before the shot, any self-complacent actor would have remained content by creating an artificial gasp before the camera, but Dilip's sincere effort to portray the scene realistically gave us some inkling about the secret of his success as one of filmdom's most talented actors.



DURGA KHOTE

POPULARLY acclaimed as the first lady of the Indian screen, Mrs. Durga Khote has reigned supreme as one of the most versatile and most accomplished stars of filmdom. For over twenty five years now, she has kept up her unique position as silver-screen's unfailing Thespian by her consistently good performances in all her pictures.

Hailing from a well-known cultured family of Bombay, Durgabai, as she is affectionately known in film circles, was the first among that brave brigade of educated girls from high society who broke the taboo-ridden conventions of a reactionary and orthodox social order by joining the profession of acting. In those days, the stigma against the stage and screen was so great that young hopefuls who secretly nursed ambitions for a histrionic career trembled at the very thought of courting the displeasure of the all-powerful votaries of orthodoxy. But there is an air of a rebel about Durgabai. She had yearned for a stage career ever since her school days.

DAUGHTER of the late Mr. Pandurang Shamrao Laud, an eminent solicitor of Bombay, Durgabai was born in 1900 and was educated at Cathedral High School and at St. Xavier's College, Bombay. Her parents were very fond of the theatre and her father was considered to be a great patron of the Marathi drama. As a child, Durgabai was taken to see Marathi plays and she developed a special fascination for the stage personalities of that time. Those were the days when that celebrated idol of the Marathi stage, Bal Gandharva, a gifted actor with rare musical and histrionic talent, held powerful sway over the heart of all stage-lovers. It was a common sight to find the entire Laud family occupying front seats at almost every Gandharva drama.

Among the playmates of her childhood days, Durgabai always wanted to be the queen and lord over other children who were awe-struck by the speeches she had learnt by heart from Marathi dramas. "Of course, they were all wrong and terribly mixed up little bits from every drama", she confesses today with characteristic modesty and adds: "But it gave me some importance to holly my playmates."

In school and college, she figured as one of the most enthusiastic amateur stage producers. "The terminal theatrical socials had much more fascination for me than my terminal examination", she declares with pride.

AT one time, Durgabai seriously thought of taking up the stage as a career but her mother thought it better to have her safely married. Durgabai had no idea whatsoever of joining the screen. In fact, before she actually

played her first film role, she had hardly seen a dozen pictures and no one ever fancied her for a screen star.

"Things in my life have always happened unexpected," Durgabai insists and her accidental entry in films confirms her statement. The well-known producer-director Mohan Bhavnani was searching for a smart girl to play a small role in his first talkie *Forebî Jaul* and he sent Mr. J. B. H. Wadia, who later on became a leading producer, to Durgabai's sister. Her sister told Mr. Wadia: "I am not interested but I have a sister who is just crazy about histrionics." And that did the trick.

"When Mr. Bhavnani asked me to play that bit role, my enthusiasm and excitement were absurdly childish," observed Durgabai, describing her first screen-role. "I accepted the opportunity without the least hesitation or realising the gravity of the issue. It was to me just a bit of excitement like any amateur show that society ladies put up. I never thought of the enormous possibilities of the screen as a career."

HER subsequent success in Prabhat's *King of Ayodhya* made her reconsider her approach to films. Directed by V. Shantaram, this picture proved a sensational box-office hit in the early days of talkies and Durgabai's acting as the suffering Taramati brought tears to many eyes. Durgabai decided to take up screen as a career. In this resolve she was lucky enough to get the encouragement and support from her family. Both her father and her husband were her biggest fans and most candid critics.

After *King of Ayodhya* came Prabhat's epoch-making *Maya Machhindra* and *Amar Jyoti*. Both the hits brought new laurels for Durgabai.

Durgabai's success on screen had become the talk of town and thanks to the minor storm it raised in the dovecoats of orthodox puritans, she could not walk along freely near her ancestral home at Girgaum, a stronghold of Maharashtrian orthodoxy in Bombay. "All Maharashtra seemed up in arms against me," she says striking a reminiscent strain.

In her early career, Durgabai had the unique opportunity to work under Indian filmdom's most famous directors Shantaram and Debaki Bose. After securing a flying start at Prabhat, she went to Calcutta and played a leading role in East India's *Seeta* and *New Theatres' After the Earthquake* both directed by Debaki Bose. Her superb portrayal of Seeta remains unsurpassed even today in the annals of Indian screen. Her performance as Mira in D. K. Bose's *Mirabai* was equally memorable; so also was the case with her semi-modern semi-ancient role in Jayant Pictures' *Life is a Stage*, D. K.'s first picture in Bombay.

The roles that she portrayed brought her out vividly as a bold and brave personality. This was but part and parcel of her real character. In 1935, during the outdoor shooting of *Life is a Stage* at Kolhapur State, the aid of State lions was summoned for a fighting interlude. Suddenly, one of the lions got out of control and pounced upon Maruti Rao, one of the actors. With remarkable



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Durga Khote visited the Soviet Union in 1951 at the special invitation of the Ministry of Cinematography. Here she is sharing a happy moment with a Russian child during her tour.

says in film acting while her association with Debaki Bose for four successive pictures was a period of hard schooling for her. He taught Durgabai the spontaneity of acting and the inflections of the voice to convey emotion in dialogues.

DURING last two decades, Durgabai has played such an amazing variety of roles that it is difficult to keep count. Among her memorable screen portrayals are Prabhat's *Amar Jyoti* and *Maya Machhindra*, East India's *Seeta*, Prakash's *Bharat Milep*, Atre's *Charno-ki Dasi* and Ranjit's *Hum Log*. She has won several gold medals and academy awards for outstanding performances of the respective years.

Her other important pictures include *Sathi*, *Patti Pawan*, *Geeta*, *Narsi Bhagat*, *Mahasati Anasuya*, *Phool*, *Mahatma Vidur*, *Hum Ek Hain*, *Prithvi Vallabh*, *Lakharani*, *Har Har Mahadeg*, *Aakh Niranjan*, *Aaram* and *Saza*. She played a comedy role in Atre's *Dil ki Baat*. In Prakash's *Mahaprabhu Chaitanya*, she literally lived the role of Chaitanya's mother and brought tears to the eyes of the audience by her poignant acting. Her roles in *Parivar*, *Musafir*, *Patrani* and *Bhabhi* have been equally outstanding. Her recent ones include *Mughal-E-Azam*, *Love in Simla*, *Usne Kaha Tha* and *Bhabhi ki Chudiyen*.

The 1958 Award for best film acting from Sangeet Natak Akademi provided an appropriate recognition of her consistently good acting in pictures.

Despite working ceaselessly for more than twenty-five years on screen and stage, Durgabai retains her zest for work and looks a picture of youthful exuberance.

She still maintains her active association with the Marathi stage and also takes part in a number of social and historical dramas. Her acting in a hila-

presence of mind and courage, Durgabai caught hold of the lion's mane and pulled it back. Maruti Rao was saved from the lion's grip but the beast suddenly turned its attack on her and bruised her forearm. However, the timely intervention of the trainer averted further catastrophe and next morning papers paid glowing tributes to the courage of Durgabai.

Shantaram with his unlimited patience and characteristic cheerfulness was a source of great encouragement to her in her initial es-



rious stage-satire on present political problems *Patangachi Dori* was welcomed as an important landmark in her career. "It was a strange experience to appear on stage before a live audience," she says reminiscing over her early essays in stage-histrionics and adds with a smile: "Even now I get cold feet as I first go on the stage."

Her dynamic performance in the Marathi Sahitya Sangh's drama *Bhau-bandhi* was widely acclaimed. It won the first prize for the best drama in the National Drama Festival and Durgabai received the Award from President Rajendra Prasad in Delhi at a special function arranged for the purpose.

Durgabai used to sing her own songs in her earlier pictures and she has learnt both classical and ball-room dancing. She is a polished conversationalist and speaks English and Hindi with a pleasing diction. She knows a bit of French as well. Asked about her fans, she chirps: "They have been very kind to me to tolerate me for over 25 years." That's a typical remark, typical of Durgabai's modesty and sense of humour. Indeed, she has a wonderful gift of repartee.

"What are your dislikes?", we asked.

"Well, sometimes myself when I see a bad performance from me."

"And what are your likes?"

"Myself again when I see a good performance," she admitted with surprising frankness.

"I feel rather lucky as things have happened to me the right way," she claims referring to some of the outstanding events of her career. She has travelled extensively over Asia and Europe and visited practically every studio in Europe and the Middle East. She was a special guest at the Film Festivals at Venice and Czechoslovakia in 1948. She visited the Soviet Union at the special invitation of the Ministry of Cinematography in 1951 and cherishes some vivid memories of her enjoyable tour. She has been tremendously impressed by the wonderful reception the Soviet people and leaders accorded to her. She was particularly fascinated by the oriental aspect of the Soviet culture and the amazing progress made by the different Republics in every walk of life. "Every Republic there has its own film-studio and in spite of the difference in languages and culture, the basic unity of the Soviet Republics is, indeed, most remarkable. This is something we in India with our varied provincial cultures and languages could well emulate", she declares with an air of confidence.

She was one of the three non-official members of the Indian Women's Delegation which visited China in 1954 at the invitation of the Chinese Women's Democratic Organisation and Madam Sun Yat Sen. The visit was on Government of India level.

presence of mind and courage, Durgabai caught hold of the lion's mane and pulled it back. Maruti Rao was saved from the lion's grip but the lion suddenly turned its attack on her and bruised her ear. However, the timely intervention of the trained actor averted further catastrophe. The next morning, papers and glowing tributes to the rage of Durgabai.

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through an amazing variety of memorable screen portraits. In East India's *Seeta*, in *Hum Log*. She has given outstanding performances of

Pawan, Ceeta, Narsi, Hum Ek Hain, Prithvi, Viranjan, Aaram, and *Prakash's Mahatma*. In *Prakash's Mahatma* she played Mahatma's mother and acted. Her roles are really outstanding. Her recent pictures are *Kaha Tha* and *Bha*

which Akademi provided her with a picture of youthful

stage and also in a picture. Her acting in a hila-

DURGA KHOTE

From Bhavnani's *Farebi Jaal* and Prabhat's *King of Ayodhya* down to her latest acting vehicle, Durgabai continues to remain the First lady of the Indian screen by her glorious career. She has breathed life into her roles in every picture.

With the charming dimples always associated with her face, she has earned for herself the affectionate nick-name "Dimps". And after a hectic career stretched across more than two eventful decades, Durgabai still remains the ever-youthful, ever-adorable "Dimps" of the silver screen and the idol of country's film-going millions.



DEV ANAND (Continued from page 40)

He deprecates the intrusion of cheap foreign jazz stuff in Indian film-tunes and pleads that more and more indigenous music and musical instruments should be used in Indian film-melodies. In Navketan's *Andhayan* he and Chetan tried the novel experiment of entrusting the entire musical score to the famous classical Sarod player of India, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, and the result was a pleasant surprise for all.

"Do you yourself sing now?", we asked, trying to trip him up by extracting a negative reply.

"Of course, I do", Dev replied with a challenging voice and then added with a mischievous twinkle in his eyes, "but only in the bathroom."

The "softish boy" of studio-sets is, no doubt, a hard nut to crack when it comes to friendly banter!

Thus the one-time censor clerk has blossomed into one of India's leading cine artists who could not only do justice to his roles but discuss the problems of the film industry with commendable grasp. His success in the world of histrionics has exploded the myth that the "holy" portals of stardom are open only to certain privileged sections of the upper-class society. Indeed, Dev Anand typifies an average middle-class youth who has come on top by sheer merit and hard work.



GEETA BALI

HERE is something of an irrepresible imp in Geeta Bali, which has lent her the reputation of filmdom's most lovable rustic charmer.

As a child, Geeta's main ambition was to become a Robin Hood. Once during her juvenile errands across the native fields and woods together with a friend, she hatched a plot to play dacoits. A twelve-year-old girl was "way-laid". The victim broke into tears and said she was on her way to buy an anna worth of salt for her sick mother. Hearing her story of poverty, Geeta and the friend were themselves moved to tears and gave her the little cash they had. If it was this spirit of adventure that brought Geeta into films, it is also her spirit of sympathy and understanding that has won her a large circle of friends and admirers.

GEETA was born at Amritsar on November 30, 1930 in a Sikh family known for its religious and scholastic traditions. Her father Sardar Kartar Singh was a missionary preacher and this took him and his family to such far off places as Burma, Ceylon and Malaya. This continuous shifting of places did not allow Geeta to have her education at any one school. Nonetheless, it gave her an experience of people and world which she could never have obtained in any other school.

During their stay in Kashmir, young Geeta, whose real name is Harikirtan Kaur, joined a dancing school. At home and to her friends at school, Harikirtan endeared herself as Keeta which was her family nick-name. And Geeta vividly remembers little Keeta's early appearance on the stage in a school concert. Though taken ill at the eleventh hour, she mustered enough strength and played her role so well that it won unanimous applause.

DANCING has been her most favourite subject since childhood. At the age of nine, Geeta with her elder sister Haridarshan Kaur, gave her first really public performance at a dance-art exhibition show at Lucknow. The orthodox puritans from her community objected to girls of their clan taking part in such "vulgar" things as a public dance performance. While the performance was on, these people raised a hue and cry from among the audience, threatened to burn down the pandal and finally did destroy a part of it. That was Geeta's first taste of a public performance. But neither Geeta nor the Bali family lost heart at this turn of events.

It was this variety of experience and the courage and boldness thus cultivated that made young Geeta one day to walk straight into the offices of the All-India Radio, Lahore, ask for a music contract and finally manage



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Geeta Bali learnt dancing ever since her childhood. This rare picture gives us a glimpse of Geeta as a child.

who had won recognition for his work in the Panjabi films. And it was this acquaintance which gave her the first chance to realise her dream. She got a role as a chorus girl in Shorey Pictures' documentary *The Cobbler*. Keeta was overjoyed at having acted in a film and distributed sweets to studio staff out of her first salary. Her solo dance in Roop Shorey's *Badnami* attracted the attention of many a film-producer, but they said, "She is too young for a film role."

Keeta yearned that if only she could blossom into youth in a moment...! The waiting was tortuous. In the meantime, her dancing performance in Maheshwary's *Kahan Gag* and Pancholi's *Pat Jhar* attracted the further attention of producers. And the late veteran Mazhar Khan decided to cast her in his *Guest House*. This brought Keeta to the film city of Bombay.

Unfortunately, *Guest House* did not proceed beyond the Mahurat stage but Director Kikar Sharma gave her the leading role in his *Sohag Raat*. In a role that suited her essentially rustic naivete admirably, Keeta lived the character of a suffering village maiden. With her impish charm and her delightfully unsophisticated personality, she literally stole people's hearts. The picture clicked and Keeta shot into stardom as Geeta Bali.

Of the impressive array of films in which she has acted, her histrionic triumphs in Kikar Sharma's *Baure Nain*, Bhagwan's *Albela* and Navketan's *Boazi* rank among the best. As for Geeta, from her earlier attempts she likes her roles in *Baure Nain*, *Sohag Raat*, *Jal Tarang*, *Be Dardi* and *Raag Rang*. Her other popular films include *Bari Bahen*, *Jaal*, *Jhamela*, *Jalpuri*, *Zalzala*, *Anandmath*, *Garibi*, *Dulari*, *Shadi ki Raat*, *Nishana*, *Neelampari*, *Usha Kiron* and *Baaz*. Her other notable pictures are *Vachan*, *Milap*, *Nai Rahen*, *Rangeen Roten*, *Kaci*, *Aji Bas Shukriya*, *Jailor* and *Intezar*.

Thus Geeta Bali has portrayed a variety of characters with distinction. She does not like to be "typed" for certain particular type of role alone. She

to get it. It followed that often one could hear young Geeta singing in the Children's Programme of the AIR. In the meantime, she developed a great fascination for the movies.

"Just as any little girl would dream of being a queen in a fairytale, I dreamt of becoming a big film star some day", she admits with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes. "I was fascinated by Debaki Bose's *Vidyapati* and Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times*."

AT the AIR studios, she came across the reputed dance director, Pandit Gyan Shankar,

who had won recognition for his work in the Panjabi films. And it was this acquaintance which gave her the first chance to realise her dream. She got a role as a chorus girl in Shorey Pictures' documentary *The Cobbler*. Keeta was overjoyed at having acted in a film and distributed sweets to studio staff out of her first salary. Her solo dance in Roop Shorey's *Badnami* attracted the attention of many a film-producer, but they said, "She is too young for a film role."

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Geeta Bali has an impish sense of laughter. She sets her sisters Jyoti (left) and Haridarshan (right) giggling with laughter.

SHE does not have the glamour popularly associated with a film-heroine. She has a wistful screen personality which lingers in one's mind for a long time. She is noted for her gay, sparkling smile which bubbles with sprightliness. She loves dancing and her first "ritual" every morning is an intensive round of dance-practice. To Geeta dancing is her profession and hobby. She has a fascination for motor car driving and photography also.

Among foreign actresses, she likes Betty Hutton, Jennifer Jones and Norma Shearer. Her ideal Hollywood hero is, surprisingly enough, Charles Laughton. She adores Nargis as the star of the Indian film firmament.

Her elder sister Haridarshan Kaur and younger sister Jyoti are among her most candid critics. Her brother Digvijaya Bali has directed several pictures. *Baag Rang* was a joint production venture of Bali sisters with brother Digvijaya wielding the megaphone.

BUT the Bali family is not complete without Peggy Bali. Peggy is a real Alsatian and this cute canine is an off-spring of Ashok Kumar's favourite dog Jackie. "That way we are related to Ashok Kumar," Geeta claims in her usual impish manner.

Some of her remarks have a typical down-to-earth approach. She has a horror for the glamorised personalities. "To me all that make-up means nothing but ugliness." Another of her remark would make many of us gasp, "I hate to see a girl running after a boy on the screen." All the same we have seen and liked Geeta doing it ever so many times on the screen.

She has a dislike for crowds and club-life. She prefers to live in an atmosphere of simplicity. "I don't like this etiquette business," Geeta chirps with

is quite confident of playing the "bad girl" but once in a way. She tremendously enjoyed her role of the wily younger sister in *Bari Bahen*.

With all this, the brave girl who played Robin Hood, who stood up to the offensive of orthodoxy and initiated her own way into films, had many moments of nervousness in her film career.

"I was rather nervous at the *muhurat* shot of Mazhar Khan's *Guest House*," she confesses today with a shy look in her eyes. Another occasion of her nervousness was when she first appeared on the sets with Prithviraj in Hemen Gupta's *Anand-math*. "I got nervous standing by the side of the towering and stately personality of Prithviraj-ji. I kept looking down to overcome the jitters."

(Continued on page 70)



JAIRAJ

JAIRAJ has the unique distinction of having joined the films in the silent days and of continuing even today as the young hero while his contemporaries have either taken to character acting or retired from the films altogether. Those were the days when the camera was cranked with hand, when there were no arc lights, when artists made up each other by applying rouge with a tooth brush and stuck up each other's beard and moustache, when the studio barber shaved everybody from the hero to the extra in a queue, when the film stars became unemployed when the rains came.

"But", Jairaj tells you with a nostalgic air, "those were good old days. They are no more today!" He terribly misses the camaraderie and warmth of the good old days. He feels that the mad race for money has stifled the artistic and human growth of films. He is sure of this even though, in the early days, he had to work for a paltry Rs. 125/- per month and never got the full salary in one lot, but had to collect it in bits. On top of it all, working in films meant seasonal unemployment because during the four months of monsoon all shooting was stopped and the services of the artists and the staff discontinued. In spite of all this he stuck to films and feels that those were really good old days. "Today, it is just like putting a few ideas together and the mixture of a film is ready. The old attachment and camaraderie are no more there!", he deplures with a sigh.

A SEASONED veteran, he has during the past thirty years of film career, played the hero opposite almost every important feminine star of India, from the glamorous Madhuri of the silent days and Devika Rani and Durga Khote of the early talkies, to Nirupa and Nargis of today. He has acted in about hundred films.

His joining films drew both brickbats and bouquets from his friends and relatives. And as he won fame and recognition, his aunt, the late Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, in her characteristic fashion used to observe: "Nephew, don't become too famous. Otherwise, people would point out to me and say: 'Look, there goes Sarojini Naidu, the aunt of that great actor Jairaj.'" However, both Sarojini and Jairaj won enough recognition in their respective fields and neither had to stand in the other's shadow of fame.

If he had not become a film star, Jairaj would definitely have distinguished himself as a professor in one of our colleges. Not that he is absent-minded. But his sobriety, his scholastic bent of mind and his entire psychological build-up make him ideally suitable for the class-room. "I am quite serious about things, and I take life seriously," he says and he means every

word of it. "He dislikes those who affect too much familiarity and sweetness as also the stand-offish type. "People should be normal," he pleads.

BORN at Karimnagar on September 28, 1909 and brought up at Hyderabad in a family known for its intellectual attainments, he started reading theosophy at the age of 14. "Youngest of the family and an introvert"—to use his own words, young Jai studied at Annie Besant College at Madanapalle for eight years and was greatly attracted by the soul-stirring poetry of Dr. J. H. Cousins.

"I was a back-bencher", he admits, "and used to make lot of fun of our professor who taught us Shakespeare. My best college friend Nooh Abbasi, a nephew of Dr. Ansari and now editor of *Samsaj*, used to be a collaborator in all those good-humoured pranks."

Jairaj's college career was almost uneventful except for his sports and dramatics. He wanted to finish his B.Sc. and take up engineering. He was then the head of the local gymnasium and even to-day he is a good gymnast. His well-built body proved a great asset to him when, due to a certain misunderstanding in the family, he left home for Bombay and decided to gate-crash into the movies.

When asked "what made you take to films as a career," Jairaj replies in a professorial strain: "Well, I too sometimes ask the same question to myself. I try to psycho-analyse my inner-self and that brings me to the conclusion that my joining the screen had a great deal to do with my playing the role of a page-boy in *Richard II* staged by Harindranath Chattopadhyaya for the local Shakespearean Club. I was only 6 then but remember having done well."

HIS first association in Bombay was with that doyen of Marathi literature, Mama Warerkar, and his talented group of educated artists like Altekar, Nayampally and Madhav Kale. Seeing Jairaj's excellent physique, Warerkar recommended him to join the films. Those were the days of silent films and his first film as a hero was *Triumph of Love or Rasili Roni*, an adaptation of *Prisoner of Zenda*. (Jai says it was the *Chandralekha* of those days.) The heroine was Madhuri and the picture was produced by Indulal Yagnik, who is today the President of Mahagujerat Janata Parishad and a Member of Parliament. He played a double role here. Before that he appeared in a picture called *The Sparkling Youth*.

Followed ten more silent films. In between, he appeared in his first talkie *Shikari* directed by Naval Gandhi. The heroine was Seeta Devi and he played the character of a Buddhist Monk, "a character which has intensively influenced my life," he declares with a meditative look on his face.

His first major success in talkies was Bombay Talkies' *Bhabi*. Navyug's *Panna*, R. S. Chaudhary's *Rifle Girl*, Kardar's *Swami* and Ranjit's *Rajputani* are among his early box office hits. His other outstanding films include *Khilana*,



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Jairaj in one of his earlier hits, Bombay Talkies' "Bhahi". With him in the picture is the well-known director the late Gyan Mukherjee who played a small role in "Bhahi".

Prem Sangeet, Nai Duniya, Nai Kahani, Hamari Boot, Rajput, Darogaji, Munna, etc. His later ones include title roles in *Amar Singh Rathore, Wadia Bros.' Gevicolour hit Hatimtai, Tipu Sultan and Prithviraj Chauhan*. In recent years, he has been specialising in historicals. His latest in this series are *Veer Durgadas* and *Jai Chittor*.

For his work in K. A. Abbas's Indo-Russian co-production, *Pardeshi*, he went to Moscow and also visited London, Paris, Stockholm and Copenhagen during the tour.

AMONG the roles that he has played, he considers his portrayal of Shiraz in Kardar's *Shahjehan* as one of his best. He also likes the rustic character he acted in Prabhat's *Nai Kahani*. He has played a few mythological roles, one of them as Indra in *Patit Pawan* against Durga Khote. But then he does not quite like mythologicals. At the same time, he feels that but for the success of the mythologicals, the Indian film industry would not have been able to stand the financial strain that followed the Partition of the country.

In addition to his achievements in the field of acting, Jairaj has done a bit of direction also. He directed Bombay Talkies' *Pratima* which succeeded fairly. In 1953, he produced and directed his first independent picture on a co-operative basis. It was called *Sagar* and starred Nargis, Bharat Bhushan, David, K. N. Singh and himself in the lead. After that he also directed an action picture titled *Mohar*.

In his young age, he was tremendously impressed by Pudovkin's *Lieing Corpse* in which the great Russian director has acted a role. In his pre-film days, he adored the acting of Dolores-del Rio, Eddie Polo, Rudolph Valentino and Douglas Fairbanks. Now he likes Spencer Tracy and Ingrid Bergman. He used to see Eddie Polo's serials with his father. "I owe a great deal to my father. He was a man of meticulous habits, noted for his punctuality", he recalls.

HE is a voracious reader and a lover of classics. His favourite authors include Marie Corelli, Stefan Zweig, Leo Tolstoy and others. He is a serious student of books and magazines and recommends illustrated classics to his children. He has two sons and three daughters. His wife hails from Kashmir.

(Continued on page 70)

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KAMINI KAUSHAL

PREFERRING the serene tranquility of a quiet home to the dazzling fanfare of studio-glamour, loving the peace of a happy domestic atmosphere more than the crowded rounds of social functions and public gatherings, Kamini Kaushal has attained the triple distinction of at once being a front-rank star, a devoted wife and a fond mother.

Smart, petite and graceful, she is happily married to Mr. Brahm Swaroop Sood, a foreign-trained Engineer, who is occupying the highly responsible position of the Superintending Engineer with the Bombay Port Trust. Their residence "Gate Side" is situated in quiet sylvan surroundings, far away from the din and bustle of an over-crowded, over-busy city that is Bombay.

THE story of Kamini Kaushal's entry into films is verily a story of surprises. The person most surprised about it is ... Kamini herself.

In her young days, Kamini never went to pictures and the only movies she remembers to have seen are those starring the dainty little Shirley Temple. The teen-ager Uma Kashyap (that's her maiden name) was fascinated by Shirley Temple's naive, captivating personality and the sight of the tiny Shirley making mud-pies sent young Uma into ecstasies of delight. "I adore the way Shirley used to tap-dance," Kamini says in a highly reminiscent strain recalling Shirley's performances in hits like *Blue Bird*.

Like every Shirley Temple fan, Kamini regrets the loss of the great little sweet-heart from the arena of juvenile roles. "Sometimes I feel it is a shame to grow up", she adds with a deep sigh.

So Shirley Temple and her mud-pies left an indelible impress on the sensitive mind of Uma Kashyap and she adopted her as the little heroine of her dreams. Yes, she even made lovely mud-pies after the popular Shirley Temple tradition much to the amusement of her brothers and sisters.

Even today during brighter moments, Kamini Kaushal reveals a bit of Shirley Temple in her and her unaffected, child-like simplicity and her merry laughter prove to the hilt that Hollywood's one-time celluloid queen of juvenile entertainers still dominates her mind as endearingly as ever before.

Kamini Kaushal loved the stage during her childhood and so did her brothers and sisters. Her sister would write the dialogues, her brothers would direct the play, she would look after the decor etc., and all of them would regale the family audience by staging some nice little dramas on an improvised stage in their house at Lahore.



The happy Sood family—Kamini and her hubby Mr. R. S. Sood with their children Kavita, Kumkum and little Rahul.

Her father, the late Rai Bahadur S. R. Kashyap, was a well-known educationist of Punjab. Besides being the Dean of Punjab University and a President of the Indian Science Congress, he was a respected social figure in Lahore and the children were brought up in the great scholarly traditions of the family.

BORN at Lahore on February 24, 1927, young Uma was an exceptionally bright student at school and always stood first in the class. She acquired proficiency in swimming, music, dancing, badminton and elocution. At college, too, she maintained her academic brilliance, won the University championships for swimming, was elected President of the Debating Society and evoked wide-spread applause by acting important roles in college-dramatics. Among her successful stage performances at college she recounts such diverse subjects as *Abba Jan* and *College Street*. She crowned all her achievements by securing a First Class degree in Economics, English and Geography.

But all these days, she never thought of films. She had seen only a few Indian films like *Jawab*, *Ram Shastri* and *Chitrolekha*. She has not seen a silent film till to-day. With such a background, no one—and least of all herself—imagined that she would ever come to the screen. But then.....inscrutable are the ways of Nature.

Her sister Usha who was married to Mr. Sood was unfortunately killed in a motor accident and Uma Kashyap came down to Bombay with her mother and stayed behind to look after the two daughters of her sister. Later the mutual affection culminated in young Uma Kashyap marrying her brother-in-law. She thus shouldered the responsibilities of managing the household and bringing up the children.

AND then something happened that landed her into a new career, a career she had never dreamt of. Chetan Anand, a young theatre enthusiast then, was planning to launch his first film venture. The title was *Neecha Nagar* and it was an idealistic theme. Chetan being an old family friend of the Kashyaps, approached them and suggested Mrs. Uma Sood to play an important role in *Neecha Nagar*. She consented and with Mr. Sood's encouragement and inspiration, she made her screen debut in 1946.

Kamini Kaushal, her screen name, caught public fancy and though *Neecha Nagar* was released long after that, her portrayals in Filmistan's *Shaheed* and Bombay Talkies' *Ziddi* were hailed by filmgoers with tremendous fan-woeship. Her performances in R. K. Films' *Aag*, Filmstan's *Do Bhai* and *Nadiya Ke Paar*, Arow's *Pugree* and *Paras*, M. & T.'s *Nanoona*, Prakash

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Kamini helps her step-daughters Kavita and Kumkum to make lovely mud-pies on the seashore.

Pictures' *Rakhi* and Jagat Pictures' *Shair* further consolidated her reputation. Then came the popular hit *Shobnam* and the memorable *Arzoo*. Her name was lifted to new box-office heights and Kamini became a much-sought-after star. More and more contracts came her way. The strain of working in so many pictures told on her health and she had a break-down which necessitated a five-month holiday abroad in the middle of the year 1950.

Accompanied by her amiable hubby, she toured Europe and they had a jolly good time. They visited London, Norway, Sweden, France, Italy and

other places. It was strictly a holiday visit and they kept it so till the end by neither visiting any film-studio nor meeting any film-personality anywhere. After five months of holidaying, they were in India. Kamini was expecting then and was blessed with a boy shortly after their return to India. Believe it or not, she knew it was going to be a boy and had even chosen the name far in advance of his arrival. She named him Rahul, the name of Siddharth's son.

Among the earlier roles she has played, she considers her performance in *Arzoo* as the best. Her favourites among foreign stars are Ingrid Bergman, Olivia De Havilland, Gary Cooper, Gregory Peck and Charles Boyer.

KAMINI reads a good deal, her literary favourites being Bernard Shaw and Browning whose poetry she considers the nearest to heart. She likes to keep herself completely occupied with the rigid routine of domestic work. "One should never get bored in life. There is plenty of work to do at home if you can really create interest," she says. She designs her own blouses and also the clothes of her step-daughters Kavita and Kumkum; does a lot of needlework and keeps herself thoroughly engaged from morning to night. She hates idleness. She knows cooking well and her favourite dish is pudding which she makes with remarkable culinary skill. She has a weakness for cakes too. And what does she eat? Well, "just what is necessary" in her own words.

She likes original styles in jewellery and clothes and mostly patterns them herself. Her drawing room is tastefully decorated. There is a colour of artistic simplicity rather than luxurious exuberance pervading the Sood household. Recently she has been blessed with a son, whom she calls Shirwan.

AFTER her return to India, Kamini was given big offers by various producers who hailed her come-back to the screen because, at one time, it was feared that she might not return to screen at all. Kamini, however, doesn't think it worthwhile to appear in so many pictures and she chooses them carefully.



She played the leading role in *Poonam*, the maiden picture of Kay Art Pictures, a company started by her in partnership with producer P. N. Arora. This was followed up by *Jhanjhar*, *Ansoo*, *Rani Dhoban* etc. She played the lead in two of the first colour pictures to be produced here. They are *Shahenshah* and *Radhakrishna*, both in Gevacolor. She has acquired new recognition by becoming a producer. Her first venture was the highly entertaining *Chalis Baba Ek Chor*. But, more than anything else, it was her brilliant performance in Bimal Roy's *Biraj Bahu* that gave us the Kamini Kaushal of *Arzoo* and *Ziddi*. This role earned for her the annual Filmfare Award for acting.

Her recent pictures include *Night Club*, *Raja Beta*, *Bada Bhai*, *Bade Sarkar*, *Jailor*, *Do Dil Ek Rahe*, *Nadiya Dhire Baho*, *Godaan*, etc.

She visited China as a member of the Indian Film Delegation and her diary of that trip in "Filmfare" made interesting reading.

Quick-witted, intelligent and armed with a remarkable gift of repartee, Kamini makes a cheerful hostess and has the rare knack of making guests feel at home by her refreshing conversational brilliance.

Kamini Kaushal is not interested in politics. "I hardly know what's going on around," she says with a smile. She considers Pandit Nehru as the most outstanding man of our age and has a great regard for the late Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. "I could not imagine she wrote poetry," she quips with a naïvete reminiscent of her screen idol Shirley Temple.

Indeed, Kamini Kaushal would still like to adore the sight of the innocent Shirley Temple playfully making lovely mud-pies or make them herself rather than to get caught in the turmoils created by the grown-ups. And that very nearly sums up her attitude to life and its varied problems.

GEETA BALI

(Continued from page 60)

the candour of a village girl. She hit the headlines through her quiet marriage with popular film hero Shammi Kapoor. To their son Mickey (Adityaraj) goes the credit of being the youngest member of the Kapoor family to appear on stage. He made his debut (as a four-month-old) in the arms of grandpa Prithviraj in Prithvi Theatres' drama, *Kimn*. In 1961, they have been blessed with a daughter.

Notwithstanding the impact of a film career, an urban life and wide travels, Geeta Bali still retains something of that village Robin Hood she impersonated when she was a kid. Despite all her fame and money, she strikes you as a simple, unsophisticated rustic belle with an impish charm all her own!

JAIRAJ

(Continued from page 64)

His eldest son, Dileepraj, has also joined the film industry and is working as an assistant director. He has an impressive personality and hopes to take up acting and direction as a career. Jairaj's other son also has taken to film acting and appears in K.A. Abbas's *Gyara Hazar Larkiyaa*.

Jairaj is a sensitive artist and he paints even now. In the make-up room of Bombay Talkies, a nicely drawn oil-colour mural by him is still there, the silent relic of the happy days spent there. His favourite sports are cricket, football and kite-flying. He used to box when in school.

Sober, dignified and modest to a fault, Jai—as he is affectionately known among his friends—is a welcome figure at film parties and trade gatherings and has a ready word of greeting and helpful advice to everyone. He is not the complaining sort and takes things with commendable resignation.

With all the success he has achieved, Jairaj confides in you with the characteristic maturity of the seasoned veteran, "My only aim is to be a good artist and an efficient craftsman."



KISHORE KUMAR

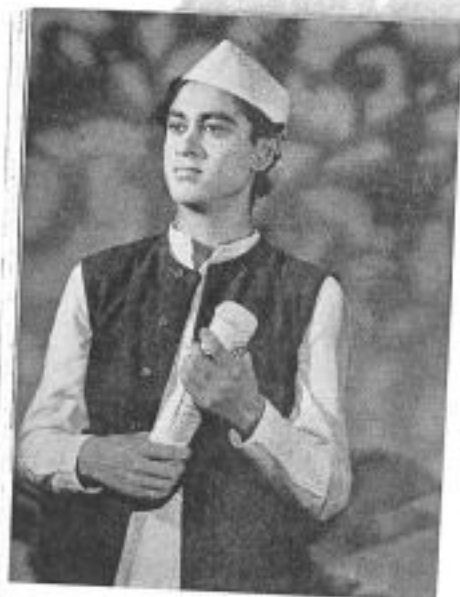
IF ever a star has sung his way to success in recent years, it is none else than Kishore Kumar. Indeed, the popularity of Kishore as a singing comical hero of the screen during the last few years has been phenomenal. Younger brother of the veteran Ashok Kumar, Kishore has not basked in the reflected glory of his celebrated elder brother. Rather, he has become a screen favourite in his own right. Unlike Mukesh who started as a hero and ended as a playback singer, Kishore made his debut in the film world as a playback singer and has ended by becoming a film-hero.

From stunts to comedy is a far cry, but Kishore has strayed a lot from his boyhood dreams. As a child, Kishore's one ambition was to become a stunting in films. A devoted fan of that Indian Douglas Fairbanks, Master Vithal, Kishore could not conceive a film without stunts. When he saw brother Ashok Kumar's first film B.T.'s *Jeevan Naiya*, the absence of any stunts in the film greatly disappointed him and as a youngster he wrote back to Ashok: "I feel I could have done better than you. What a pity, there are no stunts in your film."! Kishore was by no means extravagant in his claim.

FAR away in home town Khandwa, he used to collect a bunch of children from the neighbourhood and imitate the stunts and sword fights seen in pictures screened at Khandwa. And brother Anoop Kumar used to "Shoot" the sequence with a toy camera with a promise that the film would be shown as soon as it was returned by laboratories of Bombay after "processing".

Notwithstanding his fancy for stunts, Kishore had the unmistakable impress of a born clown about him, a factor that has evidently stood him in good stead throughout his career. Yes, Kishore is nothing if not prankish. At school, once he was nabbed by a teacher for carrying books to the examination hall. The trick worked for three days but he was caught on the fourth day.

Born at Khandwa on August 4, 1929, Kishore is the youngest of the three Ganguly brothers—the other two being Ashok Kumar and Anoop Kumar. Though shy and booy as a child, he earned a reputation for mischief. He had also a flair for singing. His favourite game was to play Robin-Hood on the pavement. One member of his merry gang kept a close watch so that Kishore's parents may not catch the son red-handed in the midst of his daring exploits. The parents naturally wanted Kishore to study hard and prepare for a legal career, but Kishore's weak Mathematics proved a stumbling block. However, despite an indifferent memory and lack of interest in studies, he managed to pass the Matric examination with brother Anoop. Both of them joined the college at



Kishore Kumar as he appeared in one of his earliest films, "Andolan", directed by Phani Majumdar. Here he portrayed a resolute youth who defied the Police Raj in the "Quit India" movement.

went with him, Ashok examined Kishore's palm, horoscope etc., and to the horror of the young hopeful who wanted to be a stunt hero, he pronounced the judgement, "Sorry, no hope for you. According to your stars, you can never become an actor."

The prophecy gave a rude shock to Kishore. All his airy castles about becoming a stunt hero seemed to have crashed!

AT that time, Ashok was at the helm of Bombay Talkies, along with the late Savak Vacha. Heart-broken and desolate, Kishore went to Khandala for an outing. There a big surprise was in store for him. He received a telegram from Ashok calling him to Bombay for a song-test. Kishore rushed post-haste to the Bombay Talkies Studio at Malad, where Ashok Kumar interviewed him in the manner of examining a raw recruit. If Ashok had wished, he could have straightaway given his brother an assignment, but he wanted Kishore to get a chance through merit only without unduly exercising any influence of his elder brother. At that time, *Ziddi* was under production at Bombay Talkies.

"You can give a song provided the music director Khemchand Prakash approves of your voice", Ashok told Kishore.

Feeling a little nervous, Kishore appeared for the sound test. The late maestro Khemchand Prakash okayed his voice and Kishore heaved a sigh of relief. Thus Kishore got his very first film assignment — not on screen, but behind the screen. He sang a couple of play-back songs for the hero of *Ziddi*,

Indore and spent two years there without passing the Intermediate. As a collegian, Kishore looked rather unimpressive with his frail body and a long tuft of hair at the neck. His dress too was far from impressive. He was rather conscious of his weak physical frame and tried to hide it under long flabby clothes. He was fond of sports at college, football being his pet game.

His inseparable companion in the college hostel was his harmonium. He became popular with fellow students through his songs and mischief at college. "Wonderful! Doesn't he sing like Ashok Kumar?", college chums used to say.

KISHORE was proud of Ashok whom he calls Dada Muni. In fact, as a child he was the only one in the family to support Ashok when the news came that the eldest brother Kumudlal had quit the laboratory at Bombay Talkies to become the film hero Ashok Kumar.

So when Kishore was through with the studies, he took the first train to Bombay and requested Ashok to help him get a break in films. As is the

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Dev Anand. Music was the highlight of *Ziddi* and both the songs proved very popular. One was a duet with Lata Mangeshkar, "Yeh Kaun Ayo Re", while the other was a solo-song "Morne ki duwayen kyo Mangu, Jine ki Tamanna kaun kare". Both these songs proved immensely popular and Kishore got some more playback assignments. His lilting song "Zagmag Zagmag Karta Nikla, Chand Poonam Ka Pyara" in *Rim Jhim* brought him more fame as playback singer. Having earned popularity back screen, Kishore longed to appear on the screen. He got a chance to do so in a small song sequence in *Kaneez*. Though the appearance was rather brief, Kishore felt that he was coming nearer to his goal. Director Phani Majumdar gave him an important role in his semi-documentary *Andolan*, and *Fareb*. When we met him on the sets of Motwane's *Andolan* at B. T. Studio, Kishore appeared rather shy and delicately built. He appeared to be a man of few words. Then followed a bigger role in *Chham Chham Chham*.

BUT it was in A. V. M's *Ladki* that he got the first major acting break of his career. It was a rollicking role that suited Kishore's happy-go-lucky personality to the finger-tips. His boisterous acting against Vyjayantimala put him on the road to stardom. His appearance in B.T.'s *Tamasha* reminded people of Ashok Kumar in early B.T. days.

Followed one hit after another, *Baap Re Baap*, *Bhagam Bhag*, *Pehli Jhalak*, *Adhikar*, *Naukri*, *Madh Bhare Nain*. Kishore's singing, clowning, dancing, screeching performances sent fans into hysterics. *New Delhi*, *Asha* and *Bhai Bhai* put him right on top among our front-rank comedy stars. *Naya Andaz*, *Paisa Hi Paisa*, *Begunah*, *Chandan*, *Ragini*, *Dilli Ka Thug*, *Shararat*, *Jaal Saaz* also further consolidated his reputation.

In *Bhai Bhai*, he realised his ambition to appear on screen with brother Ashok Kumar. Brothers in life, both acted as brothers on screen also. In his maiden production, *Chalti ka Nam Gaadi*, another hilarious farce, all the three Ganguly brothers — Ashok, Anoop and Kishore — have appeared together. Kishore has produced his own film in Bengali. It has proved a box office hit. Among his recent outstanding films are *Apna Hath Jagannath*, *Mehlon ke Khwab*, *Bewaqoof*, *Girl Friend* and *Chacha Zindabad*.

Despite his nation-wide popularity as an actor, he gave playback songs for Dev Anand in *Paying Guest* and *Funtoosh*. His songs like "Mana Janab Ne Fukara Nahin" and "Hai Hai Nigahen" and "Ai Meri Topi Palat Ke Aa" proved sure fire-hits. The songs he has sung for himself in pictures have already made history. In his recent production *Jhumrao*, he directed music also besides playing the main role.

TODAY Kishore is a top-notch comedy actor and singer of the Indian Screen and likes the work immensely. How strange — if not funny — it seems that way back in 1952, he told a critic: "I don't like to sing comic songs in films and don't want to work in frivolous roles."

(Continued on page 78)



MADHUBALA

A dear little girl sang the popular song "Tumko mubarak ho Unche Mahal ye, humko hain pyari hamari galiyan" at the end of Bombay Talkies' record-breaking hit *Basant* and made her first screen-bow. The name of that girl was Baby Mumtaz who is better known in film-world today as Madhubala.

From the pig-tailed teen-ager of *Basant* to the sophisticated heroine of today, Madhubala's career has been an essay in patience and perseverance. Stardom has come to her after a hard struggle. She has neither shot to stellar heights overnight nor leapt to nation-wide fame with a few early screen appearances. In fact, she has attained her present position by toiling arduously at every step of her career.

Born at Delhi on February 14, 1928^{23 33} Mumtaz Jehan Begum (That is her real name) appeared before movie-cameras as a child star in the famous B. T. Studio at Malad. Director Amiya Chakravarty, who gave a break to many newcomers, was also instrumental in introducing Madhubala on screen in *Basant*. Devika Rani took kindly to this adorable kid and Baby Mumtaz was lucky in making her first screen appearance in a Jubilee hit.

After a promising beginning, she went back to Delhi for some time with her family, but it was decided to shift the family headquarters to Bombay and Baby Mumtaz played her earlier child roles in Ranjit's *Mumtaz Mahal*, *Dhans Bhagat*, *Pujari* and *Phoolwari*.

THOUGH Baby Mumtaz was determined to become a star of eminence, disappointments and failures continued to block her path. Fate was not particularly kind to her in those days and in the midst of the all-pervading darkness, came an earth-shaking catastrophe which literally shook them all out of their moorings. In 1944, a terrific explosion rocked the Bombay docks and took a heavy toll of life and property. Madhubala's family was living in the heart of the affected area. Members of her family managed to save their lives but the widespread devastation drove them out in search of a new house as their modest apartment was completely destroyed. Seeking shelter in a school-friend's house, Madhubala plodded on with renewed courage. Those were the days that would have broken the heart of anyone but Madhubala's faith in her future remained undiminished.

Her grit and tenacity were at last rewarded when Kidar Sharma cast her in the first really important role of her career. The picture was *Neel Kamal*. It was also remarkable for another fact. Raj Kapoor played here his very first



Madhubala in one of her earlier pictures "Pardes"

Madhubala virtually lived her unusual role of a gardener's daughter who pretends to be an apparition. Significantly enough, Baby Mumtaz, who made her debut as a child in B.T.'s *Basant*, attained the top-rung of her film career also through the same studio. Indeed *Mahal* proved a turning point in her career and ever since then, Madhubala has continued to be ranked among film-firmament's leading luminaries. With *Badal*, *Aaram*, *Nazneen*, *Khazana*, *Saiyan*, *Tarana*, *Sagi*, *Sangdil* and other pictures, she further consolidated her reputation as a film heroine of eminence. Her other remarkable pictures include Mehboob's *Amar*, Gemini's *Bohut Din Huwe* and Guru Dutt's *Mr. and Mrs. 55*. Especially her performance in the last-named brought her fresh laurels. Among her other notable films are *Yahudi ki Ladki*, *Dhake ki Malmal*, *Gateway of India*, *Fagin*, *Rajhath*, *Chalti Ka Nam Gadi*, *Kalapani*, *Insan Jaag Utha*, *Do Ustad*, *Mehlon Ke Khwab*, *Joli Note*, *Barsaat Ki Rant*, *Mughul-E-Azam*, *Boy Friend* and *Jhumroo*.

Unlike other stars, Madhubala prefers a veil of secrecy around her and is seldom seen at social gatherings or public functions. She is very regular in attending studios for work. She is so much devoted to her work that she has hardly any time for hobbies or pastimes. She has not forgotten the difficult times through which she has passed during her early career and she feels intensely for the poor and the suffering. Not very long ago, she handed over a cheque for Rs. 50,000 to Bombay's former Chief Minister Morarji Desai as her voluntary donation for Bengal Famine Relief Fund.

She speaks fluent Urdu and recently she has acquired proficiency in English as well. Her father Ataulah Khan, who is better known as Khan

role as a hero. Thus Neel Kamal put both Raj and Madhubala on the road to full-fledged stardom.

The pairing of Raj Kapoor and Madhubala in this picture proved so popular that they were cast in the main romantic lead in a mythological called *Amar Prem* or *Rodha Krishna* directed by N. M. Kelkar and a hilarious comedy *Dil Ki Rani* directed by Mohan Sinha.

HER work in *Lal Dupatta* brought her more laurels and her fascinating portrayal in Bombay Talkies' *Mahal*, directed by Kamal Amrohi, sky-rocketed her fame as a front-rank-star. Here she vir-

MADHUBALA

Sahab in film circles, has served as a great source of inspiration to her throughout her career.

Contrary to general belief, Madhubala is rather simple and unassuming. She neither works at night at studios nor attends the premieres of her pictures. Her daily routine goes on with almost clock-like precision.

Popularly hailed as the Venus of Indian screen, Madhubala has come to top through the hard school of experience and trial.

KISHORE KUMAR

(Continued from page 74)

To-day Kishore has shed both his shyness and his skinny figure; he has shaped into a daring, well-built screen favourite — but he still retains that boyish fascination for pranks and fun. A talented perpetrator of quips, he is always full of jokes. In the beginning of his career, he used to regale people on sets with a self-composed Hindi — English song about the different days of the week. His comedy-pranks sent people in guffaws even in those days. Once he jocularly frightened Madhubala in a mask at B. T. Studios, a piece of acting that created a scare at the studio.

KISHORE is the only self-singing star on the Indian Screen today. His popularity seems to increase with every new picture. He gratefully remembers the late Khemchand Prakash who gave him the chance to sing his first film song and groomed him into a polished singer. He also sadly remembers his cousin, the well-known musician and singer, the late Arun Kumar, who always encouraged him in his struggles to sing for the screen.

Kishore's film career has been a dream-come-true story all throughout. He has realised almost all his ambitions, except becoming a stunt hero — that's partly true because though he might not have performed those customary sword-stunts, he has certainly figured in countless comedy stunts.



MANHAR DESAI

THE scene is a fair-sized theatre at Rajkot. *Shankit Hridaya*, a drama written by the well-known Gujarati author Ramanlal V. Desai, is in progress. Local amateurs, mostly from schools, are staging it in aid of the Red Cross Society. Dramatic situations follow one after the other. And out comes a frail, short-statured figure on stage. He plays the role of a jolly old Parsi gentleman called Poychaji. His comic song is a scream and a thousand throats go hoarse in cheering this youngster. The song gets no less than half-a-dozen encores! It is a bit of a role but sends the audience into raptures. "Who is he?".....The question goes resounding from one chair to another. Those in the know of things reply: "Oh, couldn't you recognise? It is Malcolm!"

Malcolm, this bony little boy, is today known as Manhar Desai, the well-built, well-groomed hero of the silver screen. But those who have seen that riotous stage debut of a shy, trembling amateur can hardly forget it.

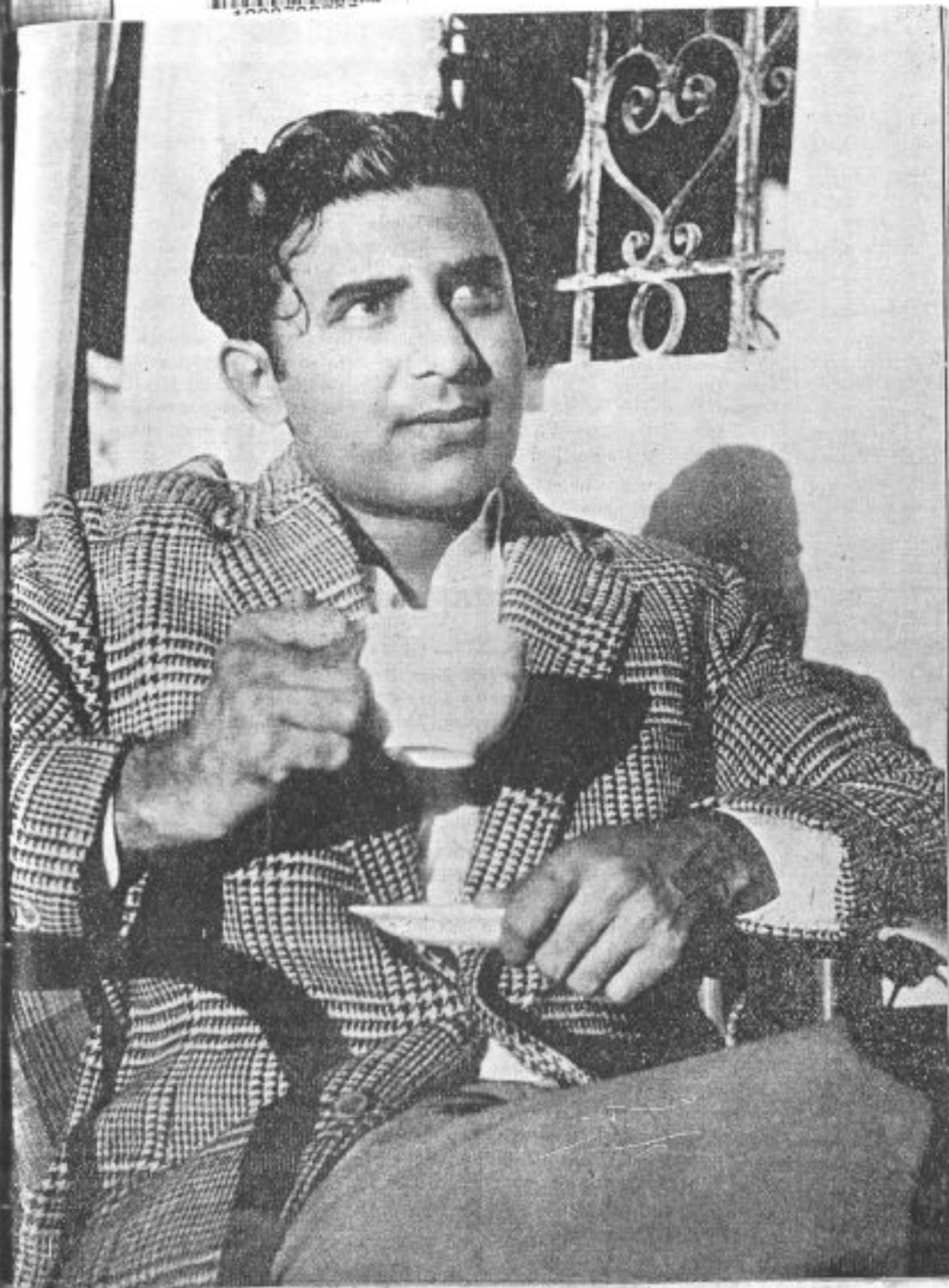
Ever since he saw folk-dramas like "Ramlila" and "Bhawai" in Gujarat villages as a little boy of 8, he yearned to act. When studying at the A.S.C. High School in Rajkot, little Malcolm had nursed a secret ambition to become the Indian Douglas Fairbanks, a *Chhota* Master Vitthal, but then he was at far away Rajkot and films were made at Bombay. But "True hope is swift and flies with swallows' wings; Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings" sang Shakespeare and young Malcolm, who knows his Shakespeare by heart, lived on hope.

HIS ideal of a film-hero was a real "he-man". He saw Douglas Fairbanks's "Thief of Baghdad" at least a dozen times; he went into ecstasies over athletic Elmo Lincoln's performance as the Tarzan of the silent days. And, again and again, he resolved in his boyish breast to become their Indian counterpart. But there was one catch: the talkies had just come and he stammered badly, a handicap which gave him inferiority complex. And he was far from being an athlete.

It was then that he was cast to play the small comedy role in *Shankit Hridaya*. He accepted the role with apprehension because of his stammering. But, like a miracle in a mythological picture, his stammering disappeared the moment he stepped on stage.....but bang it came, the moment he went off-stage.

Stammering was his worry, of course! The thunderous ovation he got for his performance had inspired him very much. And in his enthusiasm he had once run away to Bombay, hovered round the studios till the Pathans at the

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gate threw him off and flung a wet blanket on all his dreams. Crest-fallen and dejected, he returned home. But his wise father cheered him, counselled patience, advised him to complete his education first, and then try again.

By sheer will-power and practice, he completely got rid of his stammer and regular exercises improved his physique. Meanwhile, he kept father's advice in mind. He concentrated on books, passed his matric, joined the Wilson College at Bombay and took part in the college dramas and saw more and more pictures.

More than anything else, he earned a name for mischief in college. He managed to pass his B.A. but in the meantime he had fallen in love with a college-mate of his, Miss Martha, and after graduation they got married.

THEN came his first chance to approach his life's dream. An old friend of his, Mr. Panday had promised him that if he ever became a director, his hero would be none else than Malcolm. Prophecies don't come true in life, but this one did. Mr. Panday became a film-director and he kept his word. So Malcolm at last became Manhar Desai, the hero of the stunt film *Too!an Savar* in 1947.

But the real break came when Ajit Pictures produced their first Gujarati film *Gunsundari*. Manhar Desai was cast as the hero against Nirupa Roy. This social film scored jubilees and then came another Gujarati hit *Mangal Phera*, Manhar's name sky-rocketed to fame. His fan-mail swelled. He had at last hit the mark though not as Indian Douglas Fairbanks, but as a social hero.

And he gradually became the top-notch film-star of the Gujarati screen. Manhar Desai and Nirupa Roy became the ideal screen pair in Gujarati social pictures. Among his other outstanding films are *Nanand Bhojal*, *Gada No Bel* and *Nasibdar*.

Manhar's reputation as a Gujarati star caught the eye of Hindi producers. J. B. H. Wadia gave Manhar his first Hindi role in *Madhosh*. When the picture appeared on screen, his perfect articulation of Hindi—a point on which doubts had been expressed earlier—came as a complete surprise to all. But few knew that he has to speak Hindi at home as his wife came from U.P. His remarkable pictures in Hindi include Jayant Desai's *Hazar Rootein* and S. M. Yusuf's *Hyderabad ki Nazneen* and *Anand Bhawan*.

His success in mythological films made him popular as a celluloid God and earned for him countless roles in such films. Notable among his mythological roles are *Shivraatri*, *Sati Madabo* and *Naag Panchami*, the last named proving a big hit. He has also acted different types of roles in *Sultanat*, *Raj Kanya*, etc. His other notable films include *Naya Rasta*, *Janam Janam ke Phere*, *Chandrasena*, *Mastani*, *Navratri*, *Pati Parmeshwar*, *Madari*, *Amrit Manthan*, *Maya Machhindra* and *Veer Durgadas*.

He prefers social roles which go out of the beaten track. "I am tired of falling in love, getting disappointed and trying to commit suicide and all that sort of thing", he wails and adds, "producers should realise that even love

could be tiresome when doled out to people in an overdose." He welcomes roles which have that real he-man stuff, for Manhar's ideal of a hero is not the effeminate tear-shedding milk-sop type one so often sees on our screen.

Manhar likes Jamuna and Kamini Kaushal among our heroines and has great regard for Dilip Kumar who also happened to study with him in Wilson College. He longs to work under a director like Nitin Bose or Sohrab Modi. He thinks Burua is the greatest director we have had.

"LIFE in films is extremely interesting as there is always something to learn", Manhar says with the modesty of a student. Very few people know that Manhar is an artist and paints with considerable skill. At school, he was the editor of the Gujarati manuscript magazine *Mayoor* which was voted one of the best in Rajkot. And Editor Malcolm's illustrations, lay-out and art-work in *Mayoor* had a touch of beauty all its own.

Even now when he gets a little time, he draws, paints and recalls his attempts at school journalism via the pages of *Mayoor*. He is a bit of a poet also and has got his English poems published in several leading journals. Shakespeare is his favourite author and occupies a place of pride in his big library. When in college, he took part in several of Shakespeare's plays but he does not like to come again on stage. "It is so artificial," he says, after having spent years on the studio-sets.

Surprisingly enough, Manhar never takes part in sport. He had a horror for cricket. But his wife is a sports lover. Result: whenever there is a Test match or a big sports event, his wife is in the stadium, and Manhar is at home trying his hand at poetry or painting. They have two children—Ashok and Sheela.

Manhar doesn't like to be a God on the screen or in life. "You see, Gods have feet of clay", he affirms though he has acted in many mythological films. "Nirupa Roy is the best to work with," he believes.

Manhar's father is a retired Police Inspector and has settled down in Bulsar. He is happy that his son heeded his advice to finish his studies first and happier in Manhar's filial loyalty.

His fan-mail is heavy and he gets lot of letters from girl fans also but suspects these to be the handiwork of boys masquerading under feminine names. "I used to do the same thing in my fan days", he is candid enough to admit. But in one case at least a real girl fan did turn up at his house and pestered him. She wanted to marry him at any cost. Manhar introduced her to his wife and still she would not believe he was married. But in the end, she had to.

For Manhar, films have brought about a real revolution in life. He has completely overcome his stammering. He is no longer the bony, short-statured Malcolm of "Psychaji" fame of Rajkot but Manhar Desai, the leading film artist. Standing 5, 11" and 150 lbs. in weight, Manhar believes that he is very much on the way to acquire that elusive Douglas Fairbanks hood!



MEENA KUMARI

TO win the award for the year's best acting successively for two years is no mean achievement. And Meena Kumari won this unique recognition. By her consistently brilliant acting in Prakash's *Baiju Bawra* and Ashok Kumar Productions' *Parineeta*, she won the Clare, the annual award for the year's best acting in the readers' poll conducted by *Filmfare*, for 1953 and 1954. And in 1958, she bagged the critics' Award for her work in *Sharda*.

Thanks to her imposing line-up of acting triumphs, she is right on the top-rung of film-fame today and easily ranks amongst the most sought-after stars at the moment.

Success has come to her the hard way. In the beginning of her career, she had to face countless obstacles and hardships not to mention the series of accidents which at one time threatened to be a regular feature of her life. She went through all these with courage and patience and her indomitable will to succeed triumphed over the odds. Way back in 1952, she had told us that it was her ambition to star with Ashok and Dilip. Within less than three years, she starred with Ashok and won the Clare for it, and with Dilip in *Footpath* and then in the sensational box-office hit, *Azad*. This achievement is an eloquent tribute to the silent, steady way she worked and realised her modest dreams.

That she is modest to the core, we realised from the way she dressed, the manner she kept her home, and when she asked us in her poetic fashion: "Tum kya karoge sunkar, muzae meri kahani?" (What will you do hearing from me my story?), the first line from her delightful self-composed poem.

IRONICALLY enough, the most vivid memory that she has of her life is one of accidents. And one of the worst car accidents happened on her way back from Mahabaleshwar after recouping from an attack of typhoid in 1952. It was so serious that at one time it was feared that her hand would have to be amputated. Luckily, plastic surgery was successful and her hand and career were saved.

"In every picture", she playfully told us reminiscing over the past years of her film career, "there seems to be some sort of minor or major accident in store for me. So I have learnt to take them as little frolics of Dame Fortune".

Many years ago, at the age of four, she played a child role as Jairaj's daughter in Prakash's *Farzand E Watan*. Later on in Wadia's *Magroor*, she portrayed Jairaj's sweetheart. This transformation from a juvenile artist to a

1958

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A glimpse of Meena Kumari from "Bachon Ka Khel" in which she played one of the earlier grown-up roles of her career.

full-fledged heroine significantly sums up the first stage in her eventful career, accidents or no accidents.

DAUGHTER of the once-famous star of the Indian screen Iqbal Begum, Meena Kumari, like her two sisters, has evidently inherited the acting talent from her mother. Her elder sister appeared in films under the screen name of Khurshid Junior while her younger sister is well-known to film-audiences as Baby Madhuri, the popular child star of many an old hit.

Born at Bombay on August 1, 1932, Meena Kumari has worked in nearly fifteen pictures as a child star before getting her first grown-up role in *Bachon Ka Khel*. Notable among these were *Pratigya*, *Bahen*, *Lal Haveli*, *Leather Face* and *Ek Hi Bhool*. But even then she did not stay long on screen. After portraying the heroine in *Ranjit's Piya Ghar Ajo*, *Duniya Ek Sarai* and *Bichhade Balam*, she faced a spell of inactivity due to unfortunate family problems. She lost her mother. The family felt terribly depressed and lonely.

and her elder sister got married. And Meena had to stay at home.

Simple, unassuming and never seeking the limelight of publicity, Meena Kumari was almost forgotten for a period of four years. But in 1946, Homi Wadia cast her in his mythological picture *Veer Ghatotkach*. This picture proved a hit and Meena Kumari virtually became a sort of *Chhota Goddess* of Indian screen by playing various divine roles in mythologicals like *Ganesh Mahima*, *Hanuman Patal Vijay*, *Laxmi Narayan*, etc. Her impressive performance in *Hamara Ghar* started a cycle of social roles for her and her work in Wadia's *Magroor* and United Technicians' *Sanam* was well applauded. But the real break of her career was yet to come in Prakash's *Baiju Bawra*. As the village belle in love with the celebrated singer, she rose to dizzy heights of success. It was indeed *Baiju Bawra* that established her as a front-rank star.

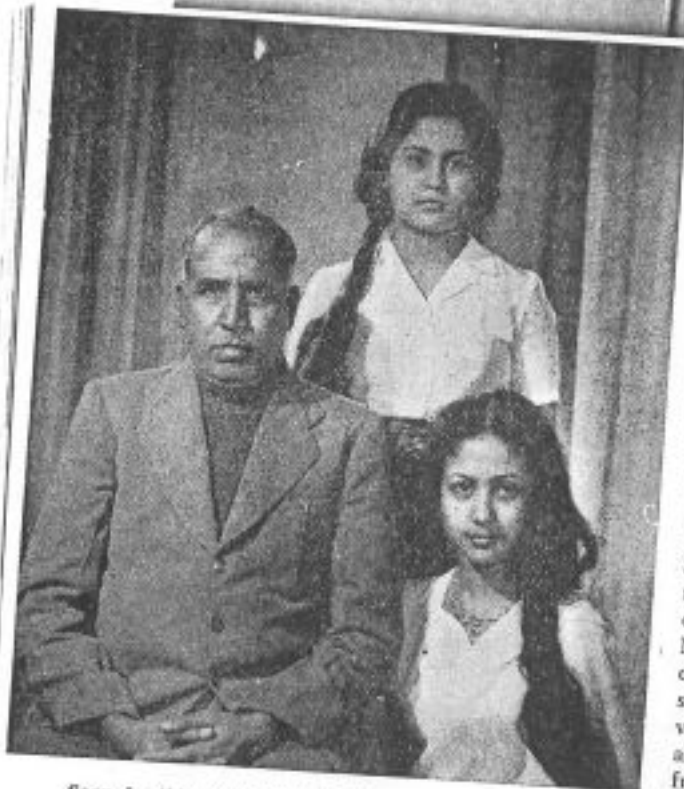
In *Tamasha*, *Alladin* and *Navlakha Har*, she displayed a vivid flair for screen-histrionics. But it was in Ashok Kumar Productions' *Parineeta*, directed by Bimal Roy, that she captured the heart of fan-population as one of filmdom's most talented heroines. Here she breathed life into Sarat Babu's immortal character. More screen roles followed and her performances in *Zia Sarhady's Footpath*, Chopra's *Chaudni Chowk*, Phani Majumdar's *Boadbaan* and Pakshiraja's *Azad* were well appreciated. She has shaped into one of filmdom's most versatile heroines and her other remarkable pictures include *Ek Hi Rasta*, *Miss Mary*, *Bandhan*, *Bandish*, *Sharda*, *Yahoodi* and *Moelhu*. She has risen to top stellar honours through her consistently good acting. Her recent films include

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Seen in this family-group, taken a few years ago, are Meena Kumari (sitting), her father Ali Baksh and her sister Baby Madhuri.

Char Dil Char Rahen, Satta Bazaar, Ardhangini, Chirag Kahan, Roshni Kahan, Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai, Kohinoor and Pyar ka Sagar.

However, she does not very much like the name Meena Kumari, though it is on the lips of lakhs of film fans and many a new born girl is being named after her. Her real name is Mehfabeen which means a person with a forehead like that of a moon. She prefers this to her screen-name. She is very much attached to her younger sister Madhu. They were constant companions in studios ever since Madhu used to play juvenile roles. Though occasionally they indulged in those friendly domestic quarrels and fights, they couldn't remain without each other even for a day.

At home Meena Kumari works hard and her nicely furnished residence reveals her interest in art and music. Her father Mr. Ali Baksh was a veteran music director and Meena Kumari has the natural gift of a sweet voice. Formerly she used to give play-back songs for her sister Madhuri and she sang her own songs in most of her early pictures. She likes classical songs, but sometimes doesn't like the appearance of classical *ustads* who are invariably ugly.

Among her early performances, she likes *Sanam* best. It was a light role and she was herself surprised to find her play it successfully. "Believe me, our lives being what they are, tragedy is not difficult to portray, but to play a light comedy role, you require all your guts" she maintains. Nevertheless, she played a light role in *Ilzam* with remarkable success. She likes Olivia de Havilland and Jane Wyman among foreign stars.

AFTER her marriage to writer-director Kamal Amrohi, who gave that hauntingly memorable film *Mahal* under the Bombay Talkies banner, Meena Kumari gave a sublime portrayal in *Daera* produced and directed by hubby Kamal Amrohi.

"I have got great regard for Kamal Amrohi as a director," she had told us way back in 1952 and we are glad to find that this mutual regard has culminated into her happy marriage with Kamal Saah.

(Continued on Page 108)



MOTILAL

"**M**ARRIED about a hundred times, died almost twice, never born but always brought down by parachute,"—the statement sounds fantastic but that is how Motilal, the veteran film-hero of Indian screen, describes his screen career with characteristic humour.

Indeed, Motilal has a glorious record as filmdom's smartest hero. For over two decades, he has reigned supreme over the heart of fan population and even at the age of 50, he is "still going strong." "I am ahead of our Government because I have a 55-year plan," he claims with a smile that strikes you as a fifty-fifty concoction of gay abandon and solid self-confidence. The dapper, well-tailored Motilal, with that devil-may-care look right down to the famous tilt of his felt-hat, has walked away with histrionic honours in many a picture lock, stock and megaphone. Noted for his unique mastery over histrionics, his name has become a byword for effortless acting.

His sense of humour is matchless and his quips and wise-cracks have an effervescence all their own. Even when he recounts some of the unpleasant incidents of his life, they get illuminated by the spark of his humour, as, for example, when he recalls the illness which overtook him in 1952. "I had become so serious, that my friends refused to believe that I was alive. Many of them, who had rushed to my wife on hearing the rumour about my death, kept rubbing their eyes and touched my body to ascertain that they were not talking to my ghost!"

Even Motilal's doctors agreed that, more than any medicine, it was his sense of humour that came to his help and facilitated his recovery. With his unique gift of the gab, he puts life into parties and film-functions.

AS a child, Motilal was a bundle of mischief and adventure. Among other things, he was fond of shikar. "I used the gun at the age of 10 or 11," he proudly claims and a look at the scars on his face convinces you of his juvenile dare-devilry. When he was a child, one day he asked the Maharajkumar of Vizianagram, (Vizzy to cricket fans) an old family-friend, to allow him to ride his pony. It was young Moti's first ride on a horse and yet he mounted the pony with great courage and rode on with confidence. Then came a small pit on the way. The pony slipped and fell. This accident has left an indelible mark on Moti in the scar that we see on his forehead even today.

Born at Simla on December 4, 1910, Motilal comes from a distinguished family which hails from Delhi. His father was a renowned educationist. Unfortunately, he died when Moti was just one year old. Moti was, therefore,



Mirthful Motilal brings new life into any party. Forming a merry group at a friendly revelry are (from left) Mubarak, Surendra Desai, Motilal and the late Chandramohan, one of Moti's dearest friends.

influenced him a lot and gave him a broad liberal outlook on life. At college Moti made a good name as an all-round sportsman and excelled in cricket. Both at school and college, next to sports he had a fascination for drawing.

After leaving college, Moti came down to Bombay to join the navy. With wander-lust in his veins, the naval career had a peculiar fascination for him. But suddenly he was taken ill and his sickness prevented him from appearing for the test.

THEN one day he went to see the shooting at Sagar Studios where Director K. P. Ghosh was busy with a social picture. Moti, then as now, was one of the best dressed men in the town and his smart, well-groomed appearance immediately caught the eye of Director Ghosh. Motilal, who had visited the studio-set out of curiosity, was taken aback when he found Director Ghosh continuously staring at him. Result: Motilal was straightaway offered the role of the hero in Sagar's social picture *Lure of the City* alias *Shaher Ka Jadu*. Unlike many of the celluloid idols who had to go through the mill to get the hero's role, Motilal found himself becoming a film hero overnight. After some persuasion by K. P. Ghosh, he consented to take up screen as a career and appeared in the romantic lead opposite Sabita Devi in *Lure of the City*. As the playback system had not come into vogue then, Motilal used to sing his own songs in the pictures. One particular song "*Hum se sunder koi nahin hain, koi nahin ho sakta*" which he sang in *Lure of the City* proved a hit. It was tuned by that musical maestro from Bengal K. C. Dey. His performance in this very first picture was so impressive that Director Ghosh said: "Here's the hero I have been hunting all throughout."

In those days, Sagar Movietone was a nursery for stars like Surendra, Bibbo, Yakub, Maya Bannerjee, Sabita Devi, Kumar, Rose, etc., directors like Mehboub, Sarvottam Badami, Chimanlal Lahar, and music directors like Hiren Bose, Anil Biswas and Anupam Chatak. Motilal's superb portrayals in the romantic lead made him a hot favourite with fans. In the wake of early successes like *Silver King* and *Forbidden Bride*, came *Jagirdar*, a sensational box-

brought up by his uncle who was a well-known civil surgeon of U.P. Uncle was a stern disciplinarian and at the same time a liberal sportsman. He was a good 'shot' and young Moti used to accompany him on his hunting errands. At first Moti was put up in an English school at Simla and afterwards for a while he did some schooling in U.P. Then he shifted to Delhi where he continued his studies in a school and later in a college. His uncle

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office hit. In *Forbidden Bride*, he played a double role while in *Jagirdar* he played a dashing hero to a new heart-throb, Maya Bannerjee. With *Kokila*, *Captain Kirti Kumar*, *Dr. Madhurika* and *Three hundred days and After*, Motilal attained newer heights of histrionics. His romantic roles in *Kuloodhu* and *We Three* were equally well appreciated. Especially, the light comedy *Three hundred Days and After* was far ahead of its time and Motilal considers his performance there among one of his best so far. And it was in this picture, that he polished shoes at Bori Bunder, Bombay, in an outdoor sequence.

In sophisticated comedies and streamlined drawing-room romances, in provocative socials and domestic melodramas, Motilal at once became a big success. By his immense popularity, he created tremendous fan-following and that way he ranks among the pioneers of film-acting as a romantic idol who perpetuated the legend of "film-hero worship" on a nation-wide scale. There was an air of gaiety and informality about Motilal which people had missed so far in the rigid, copy-book variety of film acting on the Indian screen. Smart to his finger-tips, that arresting glint at the back of his eyes had the elements of mischief which endeared him to one and all. Even when he switched on a sober expression on his face, that slight twinkle in his eyes indicated that Moti was enjoying a secret leg-pull.

HE left Sagar in 1937 and acted the hero in Director R. S. Chowdhary's *It's True*. Then came Sudama's *As You Please (Apki Marzi)* and Motilal won fresh histrionic laurels. Soon he was bagged by Ranjit where he appeared in all types of social subjects ranging from *Diwali to Holi*. His performance in *Shadi*, directed by Jayant Desai, won him more praise. The picture was a silver-jubilee hit and with Khurshid playing the heroine, it created new records. He appeared in countless Ranjit pictures notable among which are *Pardesi*, *Arman*, *Savera*, and *Moorti*. Another of his outstanding picture at Ranjit was *Achhoot*, a bold theme which tackled the burning problem of Harijan uplift. It was directed by that veteran of Indian screen, Sardar Chandulal Shah and had Goharbai as the heroine. Motilal's splendid work as a down-and-out untouchable proved his versatility in acting. In 1939, some of the prominent film personalities were interviewed on the AIR in a special broadcast: "1939 in Indian Films". Motilal referred to his portrayal of *Achhoot* in the following words over the AIR: "In *It's True*, I was a Brahmin. In *Achhoot*, I am an untouchable. But the aim of both these characters was the same—humanity".

In *Age Kadam*, directed by N. R. Acharya, his breezy portrayal was a veritable gem of hilarious acting. In *Dost* and *Gajre*, he displayed his mastery over the histrionics of the sober variety. He brought tears to countless eyes by creating vivid cameos of pathos that lingered in one's mind for a long time. He was equally at home in Mehbub's *Taqdeer* and Mazhar Khan's *Paheli Nazar*. In the latter, he gave a chance to Mukesh to sing for himself. That lilting song "*Dil jalta hey to jalne de*" proved very popular and it gave the biggest break of his career to Mukesh.



Motilal's later acting triumphs include *Muskarohat*, *Prarthana*, *Biwi Sadi*, *Beete Din*, *Lekh*, *Betaab* and others. *Hamari Beti*, produced and directed by Shobhana Samarth, revealed his mastery over various branches of film-production. Besides giving a scintillating performance, he wrote the scenario as well, and the pointed dialogues written by him had the stamp of a seasoned writer. He took the fan-world by storm by his scrumptious comedy in Roop K. Shorey's *Ek Thi Larki* against Meena, the *Jarra-lappa* girl of Indian screen. The Moti-Meena pair provided more laughs in *Ek Do Teen*, another typical Shorey comedy. In Gemini's *Mr. Sampat*, Motilal excelled himself in portraying the complex character of Mr. Sampat and added one more histrionic triumph to his career. In *Mastana*, a picture modelled on Chaplin's *Kid*, he literally tramped his way to people's hearts. His semi-tragic semi-comic role in Datta Dharmadhikari's *Saudhan* was equally outstanding.

His other notable films include *Devdas*, *Jagte Raho*, *Ab Dilli Dur Nahin*, *Anari*, *Paigham*, *Zamin ke Tare* and *Parakh*. His work in *Devdas* and *Parakh* earned him the *Filmfare* Awards. His own independent production under the banner of Rajvanshi Production, *Chhoti Chhoti Baten* promises to be a novel subject.

DESPITE advancing years, he still retains his love for adventure. His daredevil exploits in the field of sports have often given many anxious moments to his friends. Years ago, while fielding under the celebrated cricket-star Vijay Merchant's captainship at the C. C. I., a ball hit the upper lid of his eye which kept him in bed for weeks. His eye had a very narrow escape and still there is some sort of swelling round that spot. He, of course, shows it to you with the pride of a battle-scarred soldier!

Vijay Merchant was so much upset over this injury, that even after Motilal was normal and started playing screen roles, he always made it a point to see Moti's pictures on screen with great anxiety and it was only when Moti played a grand, stylish knock of 31 delightful runs in the second innings of the Film Star Cricket Match in 1951, that Vijay (who acted as master of ceremonies) was convinced that everything was O. K. with Moti's eyes and congratulated him. Motilal has played first class cricket since 1926. "Had I not joined the movies, I would have certainly made a name in cricket. I was playing so well that by



Motilal with Sheila Ramani in a recent picture. Despite advancing years, Moti looks here as youthful as his first screen appearance in "Shaher Ka Jadu".

now I would have surely become India's captain", he claims with his usual good-humoured audacity.

Ever since air-services started, Moti has seldom travelled by train. He is an excellent pilot himself and once owned a plane. He has travelled all over India. "I have gone as far as Andamans", he tells you and then he is quick enough to add: "Of course, not as a criminal but as a tourist". He has had both minor and major accidents in his quest for travel and adventure. In his earlier days, while driving at break-neck speed, he used to keep time to the music played by his car-radio on his accelerator, a feat very few people could boast of.

He is leading a happy married life. His wife is a doctor and the Motilal establishment at Walkeshwar, on Bombay's Malabar Hill, is a picturesque sight. Thanks perhaps to his love for naval surroundings, Moti stays in a nice house overlooking the sea. He has been living here ever since he joined the films.

He is a lover of dogs and horses and has a great craze for horse-racing. He had a horse whom he had re-christened "Traitor" because the animal had the nasty habit of looking back at Motilal exactly at the time of reaching the winning post and losing the race in the effort! When the horse was sent to Madras, however, it made good all the loss Moti had undergone. He has given up racing since the death of his dearest friend Chandramohan, that prince among character-actors. As a monument to their friendship and inspired by Chandramohan's life, Moti hopes to produce a picture called *Juari*. It has a central character in the person of a gambler and has lots of horse-race scenes. Many real-life jockeys and turf personalities are expected to appear in this novel venture.

Moti gets all kinds of letters from film-goers and to the usual compliment "I am your fan", he hits back with a typical request: "Then come in the summer"! His wise-cracks bristle with intelligence and humour and his repartee is really classic. "My best girl friend is loneliness" is Moti's pet witticism. After his last serious illness, he shocked journalist friends by his sensational but hilarious confession: "After playing the role of Mr. Sampat I have developed a speciality for cheating. Like Mr. Sampat, who was an expert cheat, I have cheated death".

"I love human beings, but am more partial to dogs," he says, "because I find dogs more loyal and grateful than humans." In this connection, he mentions the loyalty of his pet dog "Monarch" which starved itself during his absence from home in the course of his illness.

In school, Moti had a great liking for drawing and painting and later on he encouraged one of his teen-aged servants, Devidas, to develop this hobby so much that the prodigal 15-year-old artist held a one-man exhibition of his paintings, under the auspices of the Bombay Art Society, which received handsome tributes from the art-critics.



NALINI JAYWANT

THE prophets of filmdom aver that once a star disappears from the film firmament, the chances of his or her come-back are hundred to one. Nalini Jaywant has attained this feat by throwing all the conventional beliefs of these studio-weather-cocks to the winds! After vanishing from the horizon of film-land for full three years, she again took the fan-world by storm. And since her return to films, Nalini has marched from one triumph to another.

Born on February 18, 1926 in a renowned Maharashtrian family of Bombay, she was noted for her smartness as a child and displayed greater understanding than the tiny-tots of her age. She began going to the films at the age of six and liked them immensely unlike many of our artists who were seldom visitors to the movies. At school, she took a keen interest in dramatics and dancing.

She gave her first public performance when she was just six. She sang in the Children's Programme of the AIR, Bombay, and earned praise. In those days, nobody took dancing seriously in schools but the principal of the Ram Mohan High School, where Nalini was a student, evinced active interest. He got a dance teacher from Lucknow and a small school of dancing was started. Nalini's father Mr. Purushottam Jaywant, who was attached to the Customs Department of the Bombay Government, gave her the necessary encouragement to act in school theatricals. She gave her first performance in a school drama at the age of ten which was well appreciated. Her subsequent performance as the heroine in Gurudev Tagore's *Shrimatiji* brought her fame as an accomplished juvenile star of the stage. She literally lived this role and she came to be known as *Shrimatiji* among her friends. Still there was not the slightest inclination in the family to groom her for a screen career in spite of the fact that her cousin, Shobhana Samarth, had already become a front-rank star.

SOON there took place an event which marked the beginning of the change in the entire career of Nalini. She had to render a song on the occasion of young Nutan's fourth birthday celebrations at the Samarth's. The singing was applauded by the gathering which included director Virendra Desai who was on the look-out for a suitable heroine who would also be a dancer for his new picture *Radhika*. He already knew Nalini's reputation as a good dancer and offered her the leading role straightaway. She was surprised and could not even believe it. Thinking that Virendra was not at all serious, she agreed to work in his *Radhika* provided he got the consent of her parents in the matter. His early attempts in this direction proved abortive. Ultimately, her uncle who also happened to be Virendra's teacher once, acted as the intermediary and the consent of the parents was obtained.



Nalini likes to potter about the nice garden in her Chembur home.

throb of that era. "The story of *Ankh Michouli* was specially designed for me and the role was specially designed for me. Nowadays, I find nothing like that," Nalini complains recalling her acting success. Equally notable was her sprightly performance in *Adab Arz*.

Then came a momentous event in her life. In 1943, she married for love, director Virendra Desai. The news caused a furor in social circles as they belonged to different communities. It also brought about a gap in her career. She virtually retired from film acting. Followed a trying period for both. Fuel was added to fire when some producers backed out after casting her as the heroine. In one case, she was even offered a supporting role.

FOR a while Nalini was forgotten by the film world. To get a break in the film world is difficult; it is even more so to stage a come-back after a spell of obscurity. Many stars have tried to re-appear on screen after a temporary break and failed miserably to do the trick. 1944 to 1947 was a completely blank period for her. By 1947, she began to re-trace her steps back into the films. She began in a small but sure way. She secured the leading role in a Gujarati picture *Varasdar*. Though a Maharashtrian by birth, she speaks fluent Gujarati and in *Varasdar* her polished acting and faultless dialogue came as a surprise to the fans of Gujarati pictures who were fed up with the stilted effect of the professional stage diction that marred nearly every Gujarati film. After *Varasdar*, she got a role in producer-director Dharamsey's *Anokha Pyar*. Here she acted with such leading artists as Dilip and Nargis. She acted with delightful realism and freedom as the poor daughter of a gardener who loved the hero (Dilip). With this, she was on firm grounds. Then came the long-awaited chance. Filmistan cast her opposite that popular film idol, Ashok Kumar, in *Samadhi*. Set against the background of the Indian National Army, it

At that time she was just 13 and her enthusiasm for screen career had the juvenile curiosity. In her own words, she had walked into filmdom in frock and pig tails, and with all the buoyancy of a school girl going to a picnic. The veterans of the screen took kindly to this dear little girl and everyone tried to encourage her. But the success of *Rodhika* came as an eye-opener for all. She was acclaimed as a sensational discovery by critics and the public. In her very first picture, she literally danced her way to people's hearts and her fresh, youthful personality burst like a bombshell on fans. Following this, she consolidated her reputation further through Mehboob's *Sister* and Virendra Desai's *Nirdosh*. But the biggest break of her career was yet to come. In veteran R. S. Chowdhary's *Ankh Michouli*, she hit a new high in histrionics. She breathed life into that novel type of role and established herself as a dear little heart.



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Nalini has a hearty tete-a-tete with her pet puppy.

starred them in powerful roles. Nalini gave a marvellous performance and made a magnificent return to the screen, which even eclipsed her earlier popularity, by rising to newer heights. Not only that. The memorable performance by Nalini and Ashok established them as a favourite love-pair of the Indian screen.

The success of *Samadhi* did not come to her in a casual, "lucky" way. She had to sweat for it, like an altogether new artist, going it all over. She even attended the studio whole day, right from eight in the morning every day, during the entire period of shooting. The box-office triumph of *Samadhi* let loose a series of Ashok-Nalini pictures which include *Sangram*, *Kafila*, *Nau Bahar*, *Saloni*, *Jalpari*, *Naaz* and many others. Roles came one after the other. *Nand Kishore* and *Muqaddar* followed in quick succession and *Ankhen* proved another hit. Then followed *Jadoo* and *Naujawan* which further stabilised her fame as a versatile actress.

Since then she has played leading roles in umpteen pictures and displayed her mastery over all types of roles. Her notable films include *Rahi*, *Railway Platform*, *Nastik*, *Sheroo*, *Munimjee*, *Insaf*, *Hum Sub Chor Hain*, *Bharati*, *Miss Bombay* and *Kalapani*. In the last-named, she gave another memorable performance, which earned her the *Filmfare* Award for supporting role. Her recent films are *Maa ke Ansoo* and *Amar Rahe Ye Pyar*.

After separating from Virendra Desai, she recently married Prabhu Dayal, a prominent film personality.

NALINI ranks among the most jovial female stars of filmdom. Her hair-styles are the craze of college girls. In every new picture of hers, she sports a new hair-do. She is the girlish sort of charmer whose very informality breaks through the deadliest monotony. On the sets, she is the life of the studio-crew. But her jolly exterior and prankish nature provide merely a popular window-dressing to her essentially robust and intellectually advanced mental make-up.

She prefers to lead a quiet, domestic life. She is not a member of any club and she goes to parties and functions only rarely. She likes to do the domestic chores and can cook many delicious dishes without referring to any ready-made menu in cookery books. Her favourite drink is coffee. She equally relishes an ice-cream cone or a packet of chocolate.

She considers her roles in *Radhika*, *Samadhi* and *Naujawan* among her best and she puts Mahesh Kaul among the most sensible directors. "A picture

(Continued on Page 114)



NANDA

“NOT by years but by disposition is wisdom acquired”, one is reminded of these words of Plautus when one meets and talks to Nanda, one of the brightest stars to shine in Indian film firmament in recent years. At the tender age of twenty Nanda reveals a surprisingly mature outlook on life and its problems. Polite despite success, modest despite her good looks, and homely despite all the tinsel glamour of a studio-world, she is refreshingly free from the moods and tantrums usually associated with a rising, successful star.

Behind this welcome, understanding mental make-up of hers lies the tragic tenor of events in her childhood. It is perhaps the quintessence of the struggle she underwent after tragedy overtook her family in the wake of her famous father's death. Her unpretentious personality seems to have been moulded on the anvil of experience derived at an early age from life's ups and downs.

She does not fancy herself to be a glamour-goddess of the silvery skies, but a down-to-earth working girl from a middle-class family whose happiness was destroyed by a cruel blow of fate. The thought uppermost in her mind has always been the well-being of her family.

The late Master Winayak, her father, is well-known to all as an exceptionally talented film producer, director and actor who has left an indelible impress on the Indian film industry. He has given many memorable performances and many memorable pictures to the film-going world. Nanda is his second daughter. She was born on January 8, 1941 at Kolhapur. When *Mandir*, his last picture, was under production, he passed away. The sorrowful event changed the fortunes of his family which composed of his wife and seven young children.

NANDA was only 6 then. She had played a small role of a boy in *Mandir*, which was completed by one of her father's assistants. “I was too young at that time and today I don't recollect what work I did there, but my elders say I did fairly well”, Nanda says recalling her first ever screen appearance. After the death of Master Winayak, the family stayed with one of their uncles. The expenses for the children's education were born by Shri V. Shantaram, the noted producer-director, who is also one of their uncles. Nanda, Meena, her elder sister, and brother Subhash went to a convent school at Peddar Road. Nanda also had her lessons in Kathak dance and classical music after school hours along with sister Meena. The idea of taking screen career had never



In this rare childhood photograph, Nanda (extreme right) is seen with her sisters Meena (extreme left) and Jaimala (in the middle)

earn and help her family. She felt that their family should not be a burden to anyone. In this trying period, their mother proved a tower of strength and encouragement to the children. "It was mummy who gave courage to all of us and inspired us to face the hardships in those days," Nanda declares with her voice choking with emotion.

WHILE in school, Nanda played child roles in *Angoren*, *Jaggu*, *Shankaracharya* and *Pandharicha Patil*. She became familiar to film-goers as "Baby Nanda", the child artiste. "Though I had no desire to take up film acting as a career, it seemed as if the hand of some unseen power was pulling me in that direction", to quote her own words.

At the young age of 14, she played the role of the heroine in *Kuldaicat*, a Marathi picture. Miss Nanda Winayak Karnataki, the school girl from Peddar Road, shot into stardom as Nanda, the leading lady of the screen. But it was not until she acted the main lead in V. Shantaram's *Toofan Aur Diya* at the age of 15 that Nanda took up acting as a career seriously.

"So I was dragged by circumstances into screen career. Fortunately, in my earlier roles I did not encounter any nervousness or stage fright as people were familiar and very helpful. For instance, *Toofan Aur Diya* was my uncle's picture and everyone was known to me there. I felt as if I was in my own home", she says.

Followed roles in other pictures. Her work in *Bhabhi* and *Chhoti Bohan* put her on road to stardom. She thrilled film audiences by her vivid acting in *Shakshi Copal*, *Shevgyachya Shenga*, *Dhool Ka Phool*, *Usne Kaha Tha*, *Barkha*, *Anchal*, *Kanoon* and other pictures. Her performances in *Char Diteari* and *Hum Dono* have added further laurels to her career. Her recent notable pictures include *Ashiq*, *Amar Bahe Ye Pyar*, *Mendi Lagi Mere Haath* and *Kalanklut*.

occurred to her, though her friends at school used to say she might one day become a star, being the daughter of a film celebrity like Master Winayak.

Sister Meena and Nanda gave nearly fifty performances of Kathak dance in aid of charitable causes, at a time when their own family was passing through difficult times. Of course, relations were quite helpful, but Nanda was yearning for the time when she would be able to

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NANDA has distinguished herself in a variety of roles. In real life she is far from the tragedienne she mostly portrays on the screen, and hence her friends are sometimes surprised to find her portray tragic roles with remarkable success. "This is perhaps because though outwardly I am light-hearted, inwardly I am rather serious", she explains with a smile.

Now that she has established herself as a talented star with a brilliant future beckoning her, she nostalgically remembers her father and his contribution to the Indian screen. "I feel had he been alive today, things would have been quite different for our film making standards, especially for Marathi films. He was an excellent producer-director, a wonderful actor and a very kind father. Tears welled up in my eyes when I attended the premiere of *Toofan Aur Diya*. The memory of my father flashed in my mind and I recollected his great gesture in casting me as a child in his last picture", she observed while paying a glowing tribute to her father.

She gets a very sympathetic fan-mail. Recently during her trip to Jakarta to attend the Indonesian Film Festival, she was greatly touched when a tiny Indian girl aged about 5 or 6 recognised her as the young sister of *Chhoti Bahen* and presented her with a doll which so far she had refused to give to anyone. "I was so overwhelmed by that little act that I felt the words 'thank you' were just not enough," she admits. Nanda delivered a small speech in Jakarta which disproves the theory of her being a shy girl.

Asked about her best performance so far, she replies, "I have just started. There is still time for the best". Her dearest hobby is going to films. Nothing delights her more than a visit to the cinema. "I am known as a crazy film-goer among my friends", she chuckles. Nanda believes that watching good films one could learn a lot about life and its different facets. Among her favourite stars are Audrey Hepburn, Deborah Kerr, Ingrid Bergman and Jennifer Jones.

NANDA's family has now moved to a lovely bungalow at Bandra. It is nice to see her exchanging pleasantries with her younger sisters, Jaimala and Bharati. She has three brothers, Subhash, who is working with the Air-India International, Prafulla and Jaiprakash. Elder sister Meena is happily married to Shri C. V. K. Shastri, Controller of Productions, B. R. Films.

Nanda thinks that hard work and sincerity are always rewarded not only in film career, but in other walks of life also. "I believe in God and I feel He has helped me all throughout," she quips with child-like simplicity. That's a typical remark, so typical of the school girl who has become a popular screen heroine against all the odds and who has literally carried the responsibilities of her family on her slender shoulders—very much like the girl she played in *Toofan Aur Diya*.



NARGIS

FROM the clown of the class-room to the greatest tragedienne of the Indian screen seems a paradoxical metamorphosis and yet that's exactly what has happened to filmdom's most versatile heroine. The naughty, noisy Miss Fatima Rashid who set scores of her school-mates giggling with laughter is, today, the uncrowned queen of tragedy themes. A sad dreamy look on her face is enough to bring tears to a million eyes in countless auditoriums. Her name, in case you haven't already guessed it, is Nargis.

One of silver screen's top-most fan favourites, Nargis made her screen debut at the age of 14 in Mehboob's *Taqdeer*. Unquestionably the darling of film-going legions, she is the least pretentious of the top-grade stars of Indian screen. Dressed immaculately in white, she looks the very picture of simplicity come to life.

Daughter of the celebrated songstress-cum-star and India's first woman film producer, the late Jaddanbai, Nargis has inherited the histrionic talent from her mother. Though she had the stellar blood in her veins, her greatest ambition was to take up medical career, become a doctor and heal the wounds of the suffering humanity. Born at Calcutta on June 1, 1929, Nargis has the distinction of playing the very first film-role of her career as a child in *Talash-E-Huq* which the late Jaddanbai produced under the banner of her own film concern, Sangit Movietone. Nargis's screen-name then was Baby Rani. It is also on record that at the age of four she appeared in Sagar's *Natchwali*.

Jaddanbai was a renowned and popular songstress of her day and her songs had thrilled music lovers over the Radio, through gramophone records and (after the talkies came) through her film songs. Her *thumris* and *dadras* were the rage of connoisseurs of classical music. In 1918 she was admitted for an operation in a hospital at Lucknow. There she met a brilliant medical student hailing from Rawalpindi, Uttamchand Mohanchand, and they fell in love with each other. He embraced Islam to marry Jaddanbai. He was converted by the well known Indian leader Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

WHEN Nargis was born, she was given the name Fatima and she was the pet of Papa Mohan Babu. She fondly remembers her childhood under the loving care of her parents. "My father had a very generous heart and even when my mummy affectionately used to say 'Never give her money,' my daddy always gave it to me", she told us remembering the early days of her childhood.

In 1934, Nargis moved to Bombay with her parents. Though Jaddanbai started her own production concern, neither she nor Mohan Babu had any



Nargis as child star Baby Rani with Yakub in "Talash-E-Huq" produced by her mother Jaddanbai.
(This very rare and unavailable picture of Nargis as a child star is reproduced here from the collection of one of the authors, Mr. H. S. Bopch)

intention to groom Nargis for a screen career. In 1936 she joined the Queen Mary's High School and passed her Senior Cambridge. Called "Baby" at home, she was a bright student at school. She secured distinctions many a time; her favourite subject in school being drawing. "Nobody took me in school-plays," she complains with a faint smile. She was very good at comedy but, strangely enough, was considered a bad risk for serious roles. "Look, now she wants to act!", her school-mates used to say with a twist of nose.

In the class-room, she was known for her delightful sense of humour, and her jolly good antics earned for her the title: "the clown of the class." School-mates used to derive great fun from the boisterous pranks of young Nargis.

She used to take life easily as a child. Cycling was one of her favourite hobbies and she used to ride her cycle so fast that her falls from the bike became a regular feature. Her earliest hobby, therefore, may be said to be "falling from bicycle." "You see I wanted some sort of martyrdom for myself," she mused defending those dare-devil feats with her bicycle.

"Please, don't exert yourself", was her motto for the class-room and she prepared for examinations only at the last minute. Two months before her final examination, little Miss Rashid would sit with all earnestness in her class and become a brilliant student. Her teachers were dazzled by her final success and wondered how she managed to pass.

AFTER finishing her studies, she wanted to join the M.B.B.S. course, exactly as her father had done. She had no inclination at all for a screen career. She was never a regular picture-goer. In fact, she had no permission from parents to visit cinemas and they were very strict about her upbringing. When she was in the VI standard, she saw Bombay Talkies' *Kismet* with about ten friends and enjoyed Ashok Kumar's acting as a pick-pocket. Little did she know then that three years later she herself would act in a picture against Ashok Kumar. Once Director Mehboob, a good family friend, put forward a suggestion that she should join the screen. She vehemently protested against this and just in keeping with her age, broke into tears and declared that her

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Cycling was one of Nargis's favourite hobbies when she was in school.

brothers were big enough to support her. As for her, she reiterated that she had made up her mind to become a doctor.

But Mehboob did not leave the matter there. "Later on, on a Saturday evening," said Nargis vividly recalling the incident, "he came and asked whether I would like to see the famous star Motilal acting on the sets of his new picture *Taqdeer*." She accepted the invitation and went to dress up. There she was intrigued when Mrs. Mehboob started plucking her eyebrows, preened her hair, dressed her in a sari, applied lip-stick and gave her high-heeled sandals

that made her feel like walking on a tight-rope. Then they all went to the studio. Motilal was there with his inseparable smile. Nargis was persuaded to deliver a few lines of dialogue against Chandramohan. There was the usual hubbub and shots were taken. Then she was told that she was the heroine of that picture. She argued that she didn't want to become a film-star and she had decided to become a doctor. But Director Mehboob pleaded that if she refused work any more, he would suffer a great loss as he had already taken some shots. As Nargis did not have any idea about production and its costs in those days, she believed Mehboob's story and consented to work, but it was to be strictly for *Taqdeer* alone so that Mehboob may not undergo any loss. "Only one picture and no more of it," Nargis pleaded and Director Mehboob nodded assent.

Taqdeer proved a big success and her refreshingly pleasing personality and acting captured the heart of film-goers. Critics hailed the entry of a "smart new face." Against such top-notch veterans as Motilal, Chandramohan and Charlie, she gave a commendable portrayal as the heroine. Overnight the teen-ager Fatima Rashid, hardly out of the portals of her school, became Nargis, the heart-throb of film fans. The nation-wide welcome she got through her very first screen appearance and the pleas of friends and relations to take up acting as profession, finally succeeded in persuading Nargis to take up screen as her career.

After her flying start in Mehboob's *Taqdeer* in 1943, under the loving care of her mother Jaddanbai, she acquired further training in acting and developed an excellent poise. Among her earlier achievements are such diverse subjects as Famous Pictures' *Nargis*, Mehboob's *Humayun*, and *Romeo and Juliet* which mother Jaddanbai produced under the banner of Nargis Art Concern and which was directed by her brother Akhtar Hussain. Her other brother Anwar Hussain has also taken to film acting and proved quite popular.

By her consistently good acting, Nargis attained a unique position and acquitted herself creditably when pitted as a heroine against veterans like Ashok Kumar, Motilal, Jairaj, Pahari Sanyal and others. And today Nargis belongs to that very small group of artists who have to their credit the largest

number of silver jubilee hits. Among the wide variety of outstanding portrayals she has given, her performances in Fazli's *Iqbal*, Sunny's *Mela* and Babul, Raj Kapoor's *Aag*, *Barsaat*, *Anara*, *Aah* and Shree 410, Nitin Bose's *Deedar*, Dharamsey's *Anokha Pyar*, Mehboob's *Andaz*, Ranjit's *Jogen* and Papi, S. K. Ojha's *Adhi Raat*, K. Asif's *Hulchul* and her double role in K. A. Abbas's *Anhonee* deserve special mention. Today, in sheer tragedy, there are very few



Even a top-tragedienne must laugh some time and here is Nargis sharing a joke with Nirupa Roy at a film function.

actresses who can come anywhere near Nargis. "My best picture has not been made yet. Yes, the picture in which I have done my best is yet to come", she modestly says even after such a proud record of screen successes. Her other notable pictures include *Lahore*, *Chhoti Bhabi*, *Darogaji*, *Birha ki Raat* and a mythological role in *Bhisma Pratigya* which is the only such one so far in her career.

Her later acting triumphs include *Chori Chori*, *Miss India*, *Pardashi*, *Adalat*, *Lajwanti* and Mehboob's memorable colour film, *Mother India*. Her recent film assignments include *Din Aur Raat* and *Ek Tha Raja, Ek Thi Rani*.

1958 proved an epoch-making year in her career. President Dr. Rajendra Prasad conferred on her the Award of Padma Shree in the Republic Day Honours. She won another unique honour when her acting in *Mother India* was adjudged the best among the pictures exhibited at the International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia. She also bagged the *Filmfare* Award for her superb acting in *Mother India*.

Socially also 1958 proved historic for her. Her romance with the accomplished film hero Sunil Dutt, which started on the sets of *Mother India*, culminated into a happy marriage. They got quietly married in Bombay on March 11, 1958. In 1959, they have been blessed with a son—Sanjay.

AS a leading lady to Raj Kapoor, she made one of the most popular romantic pairs on the Indian screen, but when she saw the rotund Raj as a boy, she was totally scared and not knowing who he was, shouted from a passing car, "Mummy, look! What a fat boy!" It was only when mother Jaddanbai retorted: "It's Prithviraj's son" that she knew the identity of that buxom lad. Later on, when Raj became an actor and acquired fame on stage and screen, Nargis used to boast before her friends that she knew Raj well and that they used to play

together etc., though she did not have the slightest acquaintance with him. She was, therefore, unnerved a bit when one fine morning, Raj unexpectedly turned up at her house and signed her up for *Aag*, his maiden venture. Both of them appeared for the first time in this picture and became friends. With *Barsaat*, their popularity as filmdom's most appealing romantic pair rose to dizzy heights. Like Raj, Nargis has contributed a great deal to lift R. K. Film's studio to its present enviable position.

Nobody can seriously dispute the mastery with which she has portrayed various characters. The following observation by Raj Kapoor is but a modest tribute to her histrionics:

"With Nargis on the sets, the director has no need for rehearsal. He can shout 'take' as soon as lighting is fixed. This is because Nargis makes it her business not only to study the script, but also to study and understand the star or actor opposite her. Her response on the sets thus comes from complete understanding. Her performance has, therefore, hardly to be directed and at no time to be improvised."

THOUGH recognition and fame increased year by year, fate had not been very kind to her because just within a period of one year, death snatched away her parents. Mohan Babu died on November 18, 1948 and Jaddanbai on July 21, 1949. This domestic bereavement has left an indelible mark on her sensitive personality.

However, by a strange sense of premonition, she foresaw the coming tragedies. Once she was acting a scene in *Andaz* which depicted that her father died of heart failure. Suddenly she felt that her own father was on the death-bed. The shooting over, she rushed to the hospital to find her ailing father in a very serious condition. "I saw my father. He was there by my side. I knew he was going...going, but couldn't help it," Nargis recalled, grief writ large on her face. Nargis had a similar experience regarding her mother as well. During the shooting of *Hulchul*, she somehow felt that her mother was very ill and immediately after that she lost her mother through heart failure. "Mother collapsed in my arms. . . I simply couldn't believe she was dead," she said, tears dripping from her eyes.

Nargis was extremely fond of Chandramohan. Once trying to fool Raj, she told him: "Chandramohan has died of heart-failure at nine today." In the matter of hours, to the grief of all, news came that Chandramohan who was ill for sometime had passed away.

We asked her to recollect some of the happy incidents of her life. Her reply is significant, "I find it difficult to remember happy incidents. Sad things are unforgettable."

"Many of the situations in films portray scenes of our inner conflicts and personal tragedies. There I act well. Tears come rushing to my eyes," she explained with a melancholy look, almost giving us a clue to her mastery over tragic roles. But soon she warmed up and recalled with pride an interesting



encounter with Pandit Nehru. Once she was invited to a Government House party at Bombay. At that time she was not so well-known as today. Her simple, elegant dress without any artificial trappings attracted the eyes of Panditji in the midst of the colourful parade of costly saris and shining blouses. Panditji came up and greeted her, not knowing who she was. Nargis took the opportunity to remind him that her mother Jaddanbai was once given an appointment by Panditji for only five minutes but Panditji was so interested in Jaddanbai's conversation that from the scheduled time of five minutes, the meeting lasted for one hour and a half. Panditji remembered that incident and had a very pleasant chat with Nargis. Afterwards, she has met Panditji several times at important film functions and holds him in high esteem.

DURING off moments, she likes to play with dolls and she has a beautiful collection of dolls from all parts of the world. When she was a newcomer to the films, Motilal, Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani were her hot favourites. She has great regard for Mehboob, who happens to be her very first director. She told us in an affectionate tone; "I always feel that working with Mehboob Saab is like being at home and not in a studio." Among foreign stars, she likes Ingrid Bergman, Greer Garson, Betty Hutton, Charles Boyer and Gary Cooper.

Nargis has gone to the United States and the U.S.S.R. as a member of the respective Indian film delegations. She proved very popular in the social sphere as well as on screen in both the countries. Her performance in *Awaara* was liked tremendously by Soviet audiences and here is a typical example.

When Mr. M. V. Dondé, a leading Bombay educationist, went to Soviet Union in a cultural delegation after the return of the Indian film delegation, a professor at Moscow University gave him two albums of Russian pictures and requested him to present them to Nargis and Raj on his behalf.

On Mr. Dondé's return to India, a special function was held in Bombay to present these albums to Nargis and Raj. During the course of his speech Mr. Dondé made a startling revelation: "Among the members of our delegation there were several young women. Big crowds used to surround us at various places in Russia and people used to whisper among themselves 'Look, that's Nargis'. Nargis, of course, was no longer in Russia at that time, but that only showed how popular she has become among the Russian people." And he added amidst laughter, "Unfortunately, we had no Raj Kapoor among the members of our delegation!"

BESIDES being an accomplished actress, Nargis has remarkable conversational brilliance and she is a talented sportswoman. She is quite good at badminton and cricket. Ask her to talk on the Radio or at a social gathering, she would be equally at ease.

She reads, knits and writes her own diary. "For once I become truthful to myself and scribble down the diary without a break," she admits. Her

favourite subject for reading is novels and dramas with tragic themes. Her favourite among authors is Marie Corelli. White is her favourite colour. "Colour lost all importance for me after I joined the films. On the screen, there are only two colours, black and white. That I looked beautiful on screen, according to my fans, proved that simple white dress was enough to give you grace and beauty provided you knew how to wear it," she declared explaining her love for white apparel.

When asked what are her likes and dislikes, she promptly replies; "Well, I don't know what I dislike," and after looking pensive for a while adds: "I prefer peace and hate noise."

"I like acting in films, of course! More.....I am very happy as an artist," she proclaims with an air of complete self-satisfaction, revealing the indomitable artist that reigns supreme within her.

MEENA KUMARI (Continued from page 86)

She dislikes parties and big gatherings and keeps herself away from crowds. Most of her spare time she spends in knitting and painting. She has a weakness for beautiful pictures and paintings and has built up quite a big album with her collections. At times she "doodles" on a pad of paper and she could well be proud of her achievements in writing poems in Urdu. Her book of self-composed poems is vividly illustrated by her. Her pen-name is "Naaz." Neatly written and scrupulously kept, the verses are a modest attempt but reveal a highly sensitive mind.

Here is a typical bit from her treasured collection of self-composed poetry:

"Tum kya karonge sunkar, Muzae meri kahani, Behuf zindagi ke, kisse hai phike phike"—"Naaz" (What's the use of your hearing my own story from me? The episodes of a prosaic life are quite colourless).

But Meena Kumari is neither prosaic nor is her life colourless.

Modest in her aims and ambitions, with a flair for literature and the fine arts and possessing a very sensitive mind, Mehjabeen has merited and won top honours as Meena Kumari of the Indian screen.



NIMMI

“WHEN I was young, my favourite dream was to become a queen. It has come true. . . I played the queen in *Aan*.” That’s a typical remark; typical of the ambitious star with tell-tale eyes who goes by the name of Nimmi. With *Barsaat* she jumped to nation-wide fame; by *Buzdil*, she consolidated it and through *Deedar*, *Daag* and *Uran Khatola*, she maintained it. The bunch of contracts that have followed keeps her terribly busy. But one thing Nimmi hasn’t given up and that is her dreaming habit.

Long before *Barsaat* was released, she dreamt to own a Cadillac. People at home thought it was a mad idea, somewhat like a child in a cradle crying for the moon. But when thousands in Bombay were applauding her performance in *Barsaat* at its premiere and were feverishly searching for Raj Kapoor’s sensational discovery, Nimmi was in search of her Cadillac. And she got it. Raj had given her the present of a cheque to buy chocolates. Nimmi bought Cadillac instead. It was a rash thing to do as Nimmi hadn’t any fresh contracts. *Barsaat* was her first picture. But her dreaming habit came to her rescue. She dreamt of more and more contracts. And after a brief spell of suspense, the dream came true with a vengeance. More contracts came to her than she could work with.

CONTRARY to public belief, film-fame did not knock at Nimmi’s door. She had to undergo most trying times before she got her first break in *Barsaat*. Daughter of the famous star and singer Wahidan, Nawab Banoo (that is Nimmi’s real name) was born at Agra in February, 1933 and had the natural gift of acting and singing but never thought she would any day become a film-star. “I thought it was impossible for me to act though at times I used to practise acting before the mirror just for fun,” she recalls.

During the days when her mother worked in films in Bombay, Nimmi stayed with her and cultivated the friendship of the Mehboob and Kardar families. Her mother used to take her to the studios. Unfortunately, her mother passed away when Nimmi was but nine years old and she went to live with her granny at Abbotabad. Her father Mr. Abdul Hakim continued to stay at Meerut as a military contractor. Following the tragic developments of Partition in 1947, she came away to Bombay with her granny and stayed with her aunt Jyoti, who was once a leading film star.

The changed circumstances compelled her to seek a job in films. Mehboob being an old family friend, she approached him for “Kaam” (work) Mehboob misunderstood “Kaam” for “Makan” and said it was very difficult as things were but could give her only a small room near Central Studios.



Nimmi with the replica of the Ashoka Pillar given to her as an award for her performance in "Bari Bahu" at the Mussoorie Film Festival.

She gladly accepted this unexpected offer of a room which she needed ever so desperately and pressed her original request for "Kaam." As *Andaz* was then nearing completion, Mehboob told her that she would have to wait till his next picture.

And she went from producer to producer and studio to studio. Nothing but disappointment greeted her everywhere. A prominent producer took her test and made her sing a couple of lines. "O.K. I will call you tomorrow", he promised. "That tomorrow has yet to come. I am still waiting for it," Nimmi says recollecting her early days in search of a film role. Yet another prominent director thought her unfit for screen.

Feeling totally frustrated, she met Mehboob again and told him, "I have lost all hopes. My only ambition is to get myself photographed by a studio cameraman." Mehboob consoled her and asked veteran Cameraman Faredoon Irani to get a still of hers.

Irani asked her to collect the photo after a few days. When she went to get a copy, Raj Kapoor who was working in *Andaz*, happened to be there. He almost gave her a fright. For a while he would look at the photo and then stare at her, again would look at the photo and then stare at her. The intense anguish and frustration portrayed in the photograph struck Raj's imagination. Here was the tragedienne whom he wanted for his new picture *Barsaat*. But Nawab Bano did not know. Nor could she find anything exceptional in her photograph except that it really and intensely reflected her frustrated state of mind. She left the place suddenly, awe-struck, displeased at the straight stares of the stranger.

Next day Mehboob sent for her and pointing to Raj Kapoor asked her, "Look, do you know who this is?"

"No", Nimmi replied.

"This is Raj, Raj Kapoor".

"Namaste . . ." she said in a trembling voice, remembering the previous day's photo incident.

"You are to work in his picture *Barsaat*".

She was dazed for a moment, unable to believe the sudden stroke of luck. Then recovering her poise, she thanked them both profusely.

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Nimmi prefers seashore for outings whenever she has some spare time.

A COMPLETE new-comer to screen, she went on the sets of *Barsaat* and her trial shot proved very successful. But Raj was astute enough to tell everyone not to reveal that to Nimmi. It might have given her a swollen head.

Acting a role is not as comfortable as getting one. And Nimmi very soon realised it. For her romantic lead in *Barsaat* she got a tall, hefty person, like Premnath. "I was really afraid to work with the big hefty Prem," she admits and, adds "I was asked to rehearse a love scene with him and, would you believe, I could hardly look at him. I closed my eyes and recited off the dialogue."

Raj realised her plight and asked Premnath to "kill" her shyness. Prem devised a new technique. Off the sets, he began befriending her, talked to her about various artists, how they worked etc. He often warned her, "See this is your first picture.

Big stars like Raj and Nargis will steal all the honours. You and I will be forgotten. See, how freely they act. We too must. Otherwise . . ." This process helped a lot in giving her confidence. The other was Raj's chocolates which he gave her in plenty before and after shots together with a word of praise for her performance.

After the first shot was taken, Nimmi was anxious to see how she looked on the screen. She stole into the studio theatre where the rushes were being shown. But Raj asked her to clear out. Nimmi could not bear it. But discipline after all was discipline.

And this discipline was applied with equal "ruthlessness." When the question of choosing her screen name came up, Nawab Banoo was too conventional. According to Raj's request a number of suggestions had come, but Raj did not like any. Then he hit upon a new idea. He called her Nimmi, the name of the dream-girl in his first picture *Aag*. Nawab Banoo did not like such a short name. "I want a long, long name. Look at other stars. Am I so small after all?", she argued. But Nimmi, she was to be; Raj had decided about it once and for all.

BARSAAT proved a sure-fire hit. And so did Nimmi. "I never imagined *Barsaat* would prove such a big success", Nimmi confesses frankly. Nor was she sure of her future in films though she waited with bated breath for new offers at her small apartment at Churchgate then. Whenever she saw a motor car come and stop near the flat, she would run in and tell her



brother Niaz: "Brother, a producer is coming to sign me up. Be prepared". But no one would turn up. After a few such disappointments, a well-known director suddenly turned up, quite unexpected but brother Niaz turned him away thinking that she was not ready to meet the visitor. Nimmi became angry when she came to know about this. "Brother, you have lost a golden chance," she rebuked.

Then she rehearsed with him as to how to welcome a producer—how Niaz should talk, first he should shout "Baby," then she should come etc., etc.

They rehearsed it over and over again. Then the director came again. And the drama was enacted. But Nimmi wanted to act only the heroine. The director wanted her to play a side-role. The performance failed to fetch the desired role. Nimmi went through a number of similar disappointments while *Barsaat* continued to draw big box-office returns. This changed the attitude of producers towards her. In a remarkably short period, she secured contracts for the role of heroine in more films than any star of her standing in the line. *Jalte Deep*, *Buzdil*, *Raj Mukut*, *Deedar*, *Bedardi*, *Wafa*, *Banera*, *Bari Bahu*, *Sazaa*, *Durd E Dil*, *Kache Dhage*, *Alaf Laila*, *Sabz Bagh* and others followed in rapid succession. She has produced the film *Donka*, under her own banner, in which she gave a commendable performance. Her acting in Nitin Bose's *Deedar*, Amiya Chakrabarty's *Doag* and Sargam Pictures' *Kasturi* has been hailed by fans and critics as really outstanding. In *Buzdil* also she was tops. Her other pictures include *Aabshar*, *Anshian*, *Wafa* and Mehboob's *Amar*. She has made a good impression in India and abroad as a talented actress by her performance in Mehboob's technicolor production *Aan*. When she went to London to attend the premiere of Mehboob's *Aan*, her statement that she has not been kissed so far by anyone, sent the London press-boys in a flutter and earned for her the title: "Unkissed Glamour-star of India".

She played the double role in Sohrab Modi's *Kundan* remarkably well.

Among her notable pictures are *Shikari*, *Jaishree*, *Uran Khottola*, *Anjali*, *Chhote Babu*, *Bhai Bhai*, *Basant Bahar*, *Sitaron Se Aage* and *Sohini Mahiwal*. She got the critics' Award in 1957 for her work in *Bhai Bhai*. Among her recent notable acting triumphs are *Pehli Raat*, *Angulimala* and *Shama*.

THUS the dreamy-eyed Nawab Banco has come to stay as Nimmi, one of the few talented tragediennes of the Indian screen. She has a great respect for Raj Kapoor and thinks that while working with him one feels that one is not acting at all. She has great regard for Dilip Kumar as a co-artist. She considers Mehboob and Raj as great directors and is immensely grateful to them. "They have made me what I am today", she proclaims with a lump in her throat.

She considers her role in *Barsaat* to be the best among her earlier attempts and equally likes the role she played in *Buzdil*. Ingrid Bergman and

Joan Fontaine are her idols among foreign stars. In her pre-film days, she liked Ramola and Motilal.

Her favourite game is Badminton and she likes to read Urdu books in her spare time. If there is anything that she utterly dislikes, it is pride.

Nimmi is called "Baby" at home but brother Niaz teases her by calling her "Chocolate Baby" thanks to her weakness for chocolates. She likes 'salwar' and 'Kurta' in dress and her favourite colours are white, light blue and mustard.

She is very fond of music and can sing pretty well. In her child days, she was awarded a prize for rendering the songs of Nurjehan from *Khandaan*.

Another prize event was her part in the first film star cricket festival match at Bombay. After having fielded all day and that too for the first time in her life when she went out to bat, the movie-camera ran short of films. By the time the camera was reloaded with film, she was already out, clean bowled by the very first ball.

Nimmi might have missed the news-camera; but the movie-camera has not missed her. She has succeeded in carving out a coveted position for herself in the Indian film-world as one of its talented tragediennes. Having realised her dream of playing the queen, she now dreams of producing a film in Hollywood with Indian artists. An unrealisable dream, one would say. But you never can tell with that tell-tale-eyed girl!

NALINI JAYWANT

(Continued from Page 96)

to my liking is yet to be made," she modestly told us. She believes that if we get the script in advance and get sufficient time to study it, we can give much better performances—"even better than Hollywood", she adds with an emphasis. She has a melodious voice and it is her ambition to sing her own songs in pictures some day. She rendered a couple of tunes in Bombay Talkies' *Saagar* and they had a lilt all their own. She feels that in India we have to slightly over-act because it is required for the large section of illiterate people who come to see our pictures.

She believes the best thing in life is to keep busy. "My ambition is to work, work and work. Worries come when there is no work. I would like to work till death," she said in a voice that had the unmistakable stamp of earnestness about it. Thanks to this robust outlook on life, Nalini has emerged triumphant in the face of the hardest ordeals.



NIRUPA ROY

FROM the heavenly goddess of the ancient mythology to a down-to-earth peasant girl of modern era is a long long way but Nirupa Roy has covered the distance with the proverbial ease of a miracle performed by a goddess! Many have been the miracles on screen in which she has figured as a mythical figure, but her change-over from a successful film-goddess to an equally successful luminary in the firmament of social melodramas is perhaps the biggest miracle that has taken place in her entire screen career.

From *Har Har Mahadev* to *Do Bigha Zamin* and *Heera Moti*, and from *Alakh Nirvanjan* to *Aulad* and *Chhaya*, Nirupa has gone through the histrionic transformation with superb ease and adaptability. She has won unique recognition in India and abroad as one of the most talented actresses of the Indian screen.

Popularly known as the goddess of the silver screen, Nirupa Roy has perhaps played more goddesses in films than any other Indian star. In fact, there are very few goddesses or "Satis" Nirupa has not played on screen. She has played Laxmi thrice, Draupadi twice, Sita four times, in addition to playing hallowed roles like Rukhmini, Tilottama, Devaki, Damayanti, etc. in an endless series of mythological movie-marathons.

Indeed, she has been so closely associated with godly roles that fans started addressing her as a "goddess" and the success of her mythological pictures inspired even film-producers to believe that she is some sort of a goddess, the goddess of box-office.

Her fame as a screen-goddess did spread far and wide. One day she was startled out of her wits when an elderly *Brahmin* from Benaras came all the way to Bombay to have her *darshan* and presented her such pious offering as a rosary, a pot of the holy Ganges water and a volume of Bhagwad Gita. This old god-struck fan lay prostrate before Nirupa and went away only when he was convinced that "the goddess" had bestowed enough blessings on him. He still writes to her calling her "Matuji" (mother), like other Nirupa fans, and invoking her blessings in every letter. This is by no means a solitary instance of the divine fan-worship to which Nirupa is subjected by her admirers. There are letters and letters with such profuse praise that they would make the goddesses in heaven sit up and take notice.

Such overwhelming god-like worship is likely to give a swollen head to any star but not to Nirupa. She still remembers her early struggles before she reached such heights of popularity.



This unique photo gives us a glimpse of Nirupa Roy as a teen-ager long before she joined the screen.

UNLIKE most of the stars, Nirupa had never dreamt she would be a star. She was born on January 4, 1931 in a poor family of Bulsar. Her father Bhagwandas was working in the railways. She came to Bombay in 1943 after her marriage to Mr. Kishorechand Lallobhai Bulsara. Bulsara, having worked in a factory on a pittance, had long since migrated to Bombay for bettering his prospects. He was struggling against heavy odds to earn enough to support a big joint family. He first joined a mill and then the rationing department and married Nirupa in 1945. The match was arranged by family elders and bride Kokila (Nirupa's family name) came from Bulsar. To balance the family budget, Bulsara decided to try his hand at new ventures. Having a personable face, he tried to get a job as a film actor. But instead of hubby Kishore getting a job in a studio, Nirupa managed to land one.

Producer V. M. Vyas was planning a Gujarati picture titled *Ranak Devi* and he signed Nirupa for a minor role. She kept on drawing salary and waited for the day when she would be called on the sets; but *Ranak Devi* was completed without Nirupa. The very news of Mrs. Kokila Bulsara having joined the films had an adverse effect on relations and family friends. The film line is taboo in the majority of Gujarati homes and people in Bulsara's circle did not like the idea of Kokila acting on screen.

CAME the day when Nirupa got the leading role in *Gansundari*, a picture produced by the Gujarati unit of Ranjit Film Co. The role fitted Nirupa Roy like a glove. The picture proved a hit and scored jubilees in many centres and she became famous in every Gujarati household. Mrs. Kokila Bulsara, the rustic belle from Bulsar, at last became Nirupa Roy, the star. The screen-name was given by her husband Kishorechand Bulsara who also changed his own name to Kamal Kishore Roy. This change was in keeping with the new life they had entered.

After *Gansundari*, Kamal Roy gave up his job in the rationing department and became Nirupa's business manager. Soon, Nirupa appeared in her first Hindi film: *Lakhon Me Ek* directed by Taimur Bairamshaw which remains still unreleased. Followed Wadia's *Amer Raj*. Mr. Roy was proving to be a good business manager. Even today all her contracts, all her shooting days, all her business affairs are scrupulously managed by Mr. Roy. Even her fan-mail is looked after by him.

The success of *Gansundari* inspired its makers to produce more Gujarati pictures. *Nanand Bhojai* and *Mangal Phera* came to the screen. The latter proved a sensational box-office hit and further consolidated her reputation

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NIRUPA ROY

as the top-most Gujarati star. She identified herself so thoroughly with the twin social roles of an oppressed daughter-in-law and a suffering wife that fans came to look upon her as an ideal Gujarati daughter-in-law.

For both *Gumindari* and *Mangal Phera*, she was awarded gold medals at their golden jubilee celebrations. These pictures were directed by Ratibhai Punatar, a nephew of Mr. Chandulal Shah, the famous veteran of Indian films and the head of the Ranjit Film Co. And it was her work in these two Gujarati pictures that established her as a star in the early days. An important change in her career was yet to come. She played a few mythological roles in Gujarati pictures but did not win any fresh laurels. It was then that Director Jayant Desai cast her as Parvati in his *Har Har Mahadev*. This proved a sure-fire hit, created new records and incidentally opened up new vistas for goddess Nirupa Roy.

Thanks to *Har Har Mahadev*, the pair of Nirupa Roy and Trilok Kapoor got mythological roles in umpteen pictures planned after the *Har Har Mahadev* pattern and Nirupa gradually became the most popular goddess of the Indian screen.

Vishnu Bhagwan, Alakh Niranjan, Gorakhnath, Ishwar Bhakti, Jai Mahakali, Ganesh Janma, Bhimsen, Rukmani Haran, Satyavan Savitri, Shio Shakti, Lav Kush, Ram Janma, Veer Arjun and *Damayanti* followed in rapid succession. So the favourite daughter-in-law of Gujarati audiences was metamorphosed into the goddess of the Hindi screen.

BUT too much of goddesshood is tiresome for anyone and Nirupa was no exception. She yearned for a change from this non-stop cycle of mythologicals. She was fed up with playing miracle performing *satis* and earth-shaking goddesses and very much wanted to come down to earth from the seventh heaven of godly film-roles.

The much-coveted change-over came at last but gradually. Along with mythological roles, she started playing social characters. Her work in social themes like *Grihalaxmi, Uddhar, Ma Ka Dil, Hamari Manzil, Naya Rasta* and Shantaram's *Teen Batti Char Rasta* brought her more such roles. *Bhagyawan* and *Dharmapatri* made her a popular domestic type.

But the biggest triumph of her career came when she acted the peasant's wife in *Do Bigha Zamin*. Her own life as a poor hard-working girl in her village of Bulsar helped her to play the role with commendable ease. She just re-lived her old days and had no necessity to act. The picture brought her great fame and later on her performances in *Aulad* and *Garam Coat* further consolidated her reputation as a mature artiste who excelled in delicate, highly sensitive roles. She also continues to play mythological roles and her films *Shuk Rambha, Shitoratri, Naag Pauchami, Chakradhari* etc. have proved quite popular.



Nirupa Roy in her very first picture in Hindi, "Lakhon Me Ek." Others seen in the picture are Ghulam Mohammed and Bipin Gupta.

By virtue of her excellent acting in *Do Bigha Zamin*, Nirupa was invited to tour Russia as a member of the Indian Film Delegation and she proved quite a popular figure wherever the delegation went. The Russian people called her Nipura Roy. She enjoyed the tour very much and says she will treasure the memories of this trip for a long time.

Her other pictures include: *Waman Astar*, *Sati Madalsa*, *Unchi Haveli*, *Bhai Bhai*, *Tangewalli*, *Muamaj*, *Teen Bhai*, etc.

Among her other notable films are *Janam Janam Ke Fere*, *Ram Navmi*, *Chandrasena*, *Navratni*, *Chandragupta*, *Karigar*, *Ghar Ki Laaj*, *Baazigar*, *Heera Moti*, *Anchal*, *Veer Durgadas*, *Jai Chittor* and *Chhaya*. In the last-named she has given a memorable performance as a mother.

Whenever she is free, she reads famous novels of Gujarati authors like Ramanlal Desai or goes to films and occasionally does cooking. Among her favourite foreign stars are Jennifer Jones and Danny Kaye. She considers Jayant Desai and Bimal Roy among the most talented directors with whom she has worked. Among Indian stars, she has great regard for Nargis and Kamini Kaushal. She considers Balraj Sahni as one of the best co-stars.

One thing Nirupa never forgets is her morning prayers. For, even a screen-goddess must pray. And obviously Nirupa has prayed to her gods with good results! Recently Mr. Kamal Roy and Nirupa have been blessed with a bonny son.

MOTILAL

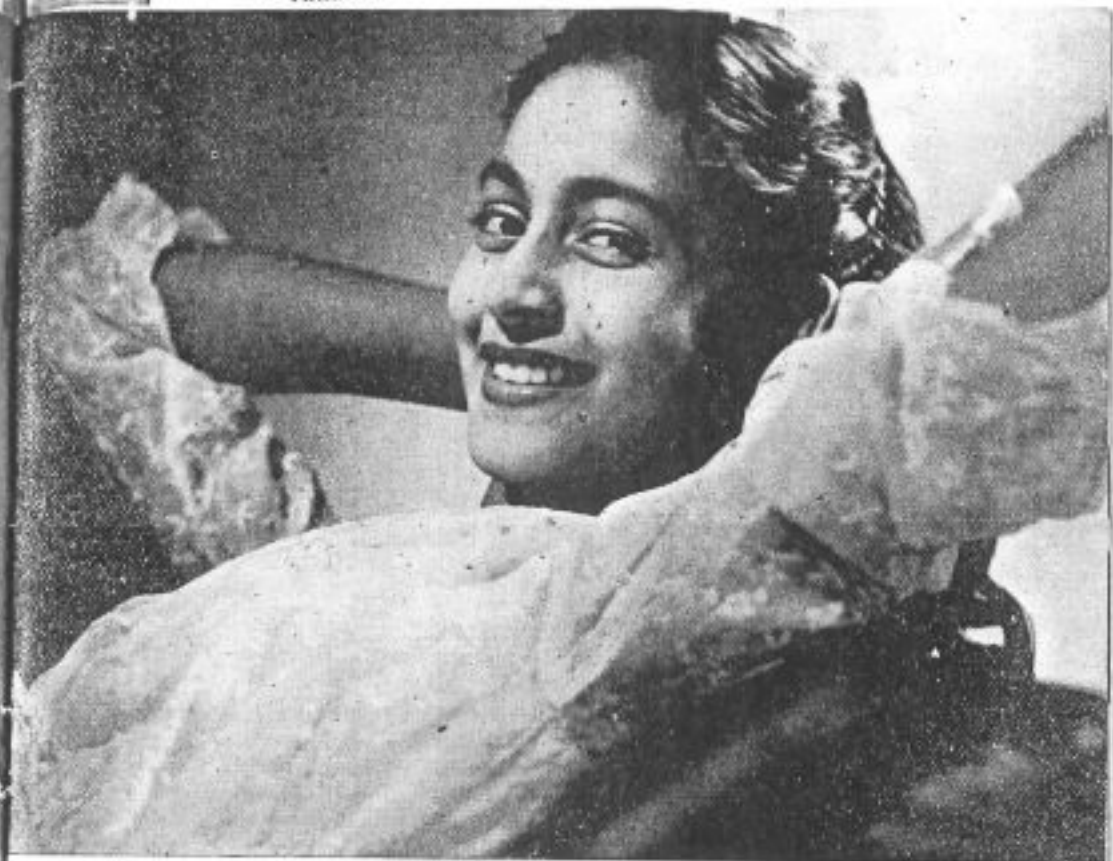
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In today's film-set-up Moti does not find the team-spirit and camaraderie of old which provided a big factor in the success of film ventures. In spite of his success and the lapse of two decades, he retains the same affectionate ties with Director K. P. Ghosh who gave him his first film-break in *Lure of the City*, which is warmly reciprocated by Ghosh. In one of his letters which we had the privilege to read, he wrote to Moti: "I am very proud of you. You will always have my blessings I shall come to Bombay and spend a few days with you". Such friendly comradeship even after a lapse of twenty years is a unique compliment to camaraderie of old. "K. P. Ghosh is one of the most intelligent directors I have worked with", Moti declares and feels proud and happy that this veteran has given some of the greatest pictures produced in Bengal like *Vidyasagar*, *Kar Popey* and *Hani Roshmoni* during the last few years.

Moti has acted against almost all the outstanding heroines of the screen ranging from the veteran Gohar to a comparative newcomer like Shyama during past two decades. His first picture with Shobhana Samarth as heroine was *Be Kharab Jan* based on a novel of Shri K. M. Munshi. The list makes an imposing line-up and includes such prominent names as Sabita Devi, Maya Bannerjee, Ruse, Madhuri, Khurshid, Veena, Munavar Sultana, Shamim, Vanmala, Nargis, Naseem, Suraiya, Anjali, Nurjehan, Geeta Nizami, Mumtaz Shanti, Snehaprabha Pradhan, Meena Kumari, Madhubala, Meena and many others.

Reminiscing over his experience of working with these glittering luminaries of the screen he told us: "On the sets of *Taqdeer* it was quite an experience for me to make love to the same Nargis whom I used to lift on my shoulders as a child when she used to accompany her mother Jaddanbai to Sagar Studios as a tiny-tot," and then added with characteristic candour: "Recently I met that child-star Daisy Irani at a party and told her, 'Don't worry, I am not going to quit the screen in the near future. I am waiting for you to grow up and play a heroine opposite me.'" A typical Moti-remark, revealing his affectionate approach to his colleagues as well as tremendous self-confidence.

"I have lot of faith in a guy called Motilal", Moti affirms and you feel that even though here he refers to himself in his usual care-free manner, the remark could have as well come from one of his oldest comrades in all sincerity.



NUTAN

"I OFTEN dream of sitting in one of the stars in the sky and then watch the whole universe from there," Nutan takes you on the wings of imagination with a delightful abandon when you ask her about her future ambitions. "This typically robust, juvenile imagery symbolises her entire approach to life and its problems."

Nutan is the star-sensation of the past few years. Till she made her debut in *Hamari Beti* in 1950, no one knew her. Today she is in the headlines as filmdom's talented glamour-queen. When mummy Shobhana cast her 15-year-old daughter as the heroine of *Hamari Beti*, people looked askance. But this slim, slight girl took the film-world by storm. At 15, she established

herself as cinema-world's youngest heart-throb. Came Pancholl's *Nagina* and she literally swept people off their feet. Mother Shobhana was right. Nutan revealed a wealth of histrionic ability which surprised people. Then came *Hum Log* and it stabilised Nutan's reputation as a front-rank star.

Parbat, Nirmohi, Angash, Aasman, Shisham,—more film roles came to her than she could manage. Her performance in *Hangama, Malkin* and *Shabab* won her more praise. She acted the age-old character of Laila in Arora's *Laila Majnu* with refreshing dignity. After continuously working in picture after picture, she went on a well-deserved holiday to Paris and Switzerland in 1954. After staying there for a few months, she returned to India looking lovelier and fresher than ever before.

And gradually she has reached the top place among our younger heroines by her brilliant performances. Her notable films include *Seema, Boorish, Paying Guest, Chandan, Akhari Dao* and *Amari*. She won the Critics' Award and *Filmfare* Award for her acting in the late Amiya Chakrabarty's *Seema*. Her other recent films are *Chhaliya, Chhabili* and *Manzil*.

Her recent topping histrionic achievement is *Sujata*. The picture has won the unstinted praise of less a person than India's Prime Minister Shri Jawaharlal Nehru. Nutan's arresting portrayal of a Harijan girl in this film has earned for her the 1960 *Filmfare* Award for best acting.

Besides being an actress, Nutan is a talented singer. In fact, as early as 1942, *Filmindia*, the famous magazine of India, wrote the following lines in an interview of Shobhana: "Her eldest daughter, who is six years old, is a very clever little dancer and singer." That little girl is today making film history.

Nutan actually surprised people when she was four. In the famous Taj Mahal Hotel at Bombay, she gave her first dance performance. Again when Jutika Roy, that nightingale of Bengal, came to Bombay, Nutan appeared with her on stage and received great applause. When she was eight, she played her first role in *Nal Damyanti* directed by her father. Nutan, like mother Shobhana, had her education at the Baldwin's High School, Bangalore. Surprisingly enough, she liked Geography and Arithmetic, the hoodoo of all students. She learnt classical music for four years under the famous maestro Jagannath Prasad. Her mastery of music was well revealed in *Humari Beti*. She dances quite well and is able to compose readable verse.

Born at Bombay on June 4, 1936, Nutan is the eldest child of the Samarth. When she was born, the parents were anxious to give her a new type of name. According to horoscope, her name was to begin with "NU" and both Shobhana and hubby Samarth simultaneously said: "NUTAN." As a child, she attended the Villa Theresa School, Bombay.

NUTAN SAMARTH, then being the baby of our team of film heroines, was chosen for the signal honour of garlanding the foreign delegates at the inauguration of the International Film Festival in 1951. Her age was not always an advantage and Nutan realised this when she could not go to see her own per-



formance in Pancholi's *Nagina*, because the picture was given "A" (for adults only) certificate and Nutan, the heroine, happened to be not quite an adult then.

Nutan likes work. She gets terribly bored at home if there is nothing to keep her busy. During her off moments, she does a bit of painting and prefers a real outdoor holiday than wasting time in idling about the house.

She regularly goes to foreign pictures and among her favourites are such a varied lot as Hedy Lamarr ("I admire her for glamour", she says), Elizabeth Taylor, Ava Gardner and Jennifer Jones. She is very fond of playing with her sisters Tanuja and Chatura while her brother Juju is her chum despite all his mischief. Their pet dog Too-Too is also a "film-star" having acted with Nutan in *Nirmohi*. Nutan could knit, swim, ride and play a number of musical instruments. She loves simple white dress. She has inherited her mother's gift of repartee and whenever fussy foreigners ask her: "Did you get tanned in sun?", she promptly replies: "No, we are born in sunny land."

She stayed in Switzerland for six months and attended the La Chatelaine school near Geneva where she proved quite popular among fellow students. During her stay abroad she visited Rome, France, Venice and saw most of the important landmarks and also increased her weight by twenty-two pounds.

She receives a large fan-mail, but she has no time for replying sweet nothings of star-crazy idlers. At the same time, Nutan is Shobhana's greatest fan. She says that she was so moved by mummy's performance in *Ram Rajya* that she saw the film not less than eleven times.

SHE is very fond of comics, collects lots of them and nothing pleases her more than a cone of ice-cream. Picnics are a craze with her, but now it is no more possible to join her teen-aged friends on such hitch-hiking expeditions. Her sister Tanuja too has become a star in her own right.

When young, mother Shobhana taught her the art of mobile facial expressions and helped her to overcome many a juvenile mannerism. Veteran Motilal made her rehearse every scene in *Hamari Beti* and under their guidance, Nutan mastered the finer points of histrionics.



A shining luminary of film firmament herself Shobhana Samarth has presented another brilliant star to screen by grooming daughter Nutan into a talented artiste.

Strangely enough, mummy Shobhana feels a bit nervous on the stage. "The responsibility of putting on the show unnerves me", she admits and adds: "But Nutan is not like that. She is perfectly at home on the stage..... Temperamentally too, we are a bit different. I am short-tempered, but Nutan is calm and cool. Even if she loses temper, she would at the most retire into her room."

"Mummy, don't say that!" interrupts Nutan at mummy's good-humoured exposure and both share hearty laughter. The pleasantries and the "sharp exchanges" between this brilliant mother and daughter pair are always a treat to those present.

As a leading luminary of film firmament, Shobhana has also risen to dizzy heights of popularity and fan worship. Her superb portrayals in *Ram Rajya*, *Bharat Milap*, *Ram Baan* and many other pictures are still fresh in one's mind. Now in the wake of her glorious screen-career, she has groomed daughter Nutan into a full-fledged artiste and presented another gifted star to the nation's screen. She has thus kept alive her association with films and made a notable contribution to the domain of screen-histrionics.

Nutan's ambition was to build her own studio and produce and direct her own film. "I like to build castles in the air," she used to say with a smile.

She doesn't believe in astrology but still she likes to talk about stars and soar higher on the wings of imagination. If according to her pet ambition, she has not been able to sit in one of the twinkling stars in the far distant sky, hasn't she already realised her dream in a way by becoming a star herself in the film firmament and thus watching the universe from her olympian heights of screen-glory?

After her marriage on the Dusserah Day in 1959 with Capt. Bahl, a smart, handsome Naval Officer, she had announced her retirement from the screen, but luckily she has continued her screen career and promises to go higher and higher in the domain of histrionics.

On the Independence Day, 1961, Nutan and Capt. Rajneesh Bahl have been blessed with a son.



RAJ KAPOOR

TO millions of our film-goers and to a large circle of his friends, Raj Kapoor appears as a happy-go-lucky person, almost on the side of comedy, who is interested in all sorts of pranks. But all this comedy and pranks are only the unobtrusive means to keep everyone out of track of the busy, serious working of his mind. A man of extremely restless nature, a personality who could not adjust his dreams to the subordination of others, he is a jolly good friend to his close associates while to the millions of film-goers in India, he is an idol. In the Soviet Union where lakhs of people saw his *Azara*, he became Comrade Awara overnight. Raj thus creditably distinguished himself as one of India's best director-actor-producers.

Born on December 14, 1924 at Peshawar, Raj is the eldest son of Prithviraj Kapoor, India's outstanding screen and stage personality. Originally, the Kapoors belonged to Kabul but Raj's ancestors left this place and settled down in Peshawar. After graduating from Edwards College, Peshawar, Prithviraj had to shift to Bombay and Calcutta in his pursuit of a successful screen career and hence Raj had his schooling partly at Calcutta and partly at Bombay.

Raj's boisterous, prankish nature made him a popular boy at Antonio de Silva School at Dadar, Bombay. As a student, Raj excelled more in elocution than in studies. It was a familiar sight in the Kapoor household to see young Raj performing indoor dramas before family audiences. The whole drawing room used to be turned into an improvised theatre and things became completely topsyturvy with furniture, curtains, make-up articles and costumes lying scattered all over the place in magnificent disorder.

Next to dramatics and elocutions, he was very fond of delicious dishes. Thanks to his love for eating, Raj grew into a rotund youngster and his portly appearance made him a target of many good-humoured jokes. In the early forties when Nargis did not know him, the plumpish, chubby Raj once caught her eyes while she was going in a car with her mother, Jaddanbai, and Nargis shouted excitedly, "Mummy, mummy. Look there, what a fat boy! He looks like a baby elephant; doesn't he?" Mother Jaddanbai at once reprimanded her and said: "Keep quiet! Don't you know, he is our Prithviraj's son?"

FAT people do not gatecrash into films so easily. Raj was more than fat. In those days, people knew him more as a champion sandwich-eater than an aspirant to screen fame. At Bombay's popular restaurant Marosa's he stunned his friends by his record score of sandwiches.

In 1937 when he was a student at St. Xavier's School in Calcutta, Raj's



Seen together at a "puja" ceremony at R. K. Studios are the four generations of the well known Kapoor family (From left): Grandfather Basheshwar Nath, Father Prithviraj, Uncle Trilok Kapoor, Grandson Dabboo and Son Raj Kapoor.

attempts to play a minor role in the annual school gathering enraged the teacher in charge so much that he told Raj in all seriousness: "You will never be an actor." But papa Prithviraj's encouraging words always inspired Raj and saved him from those

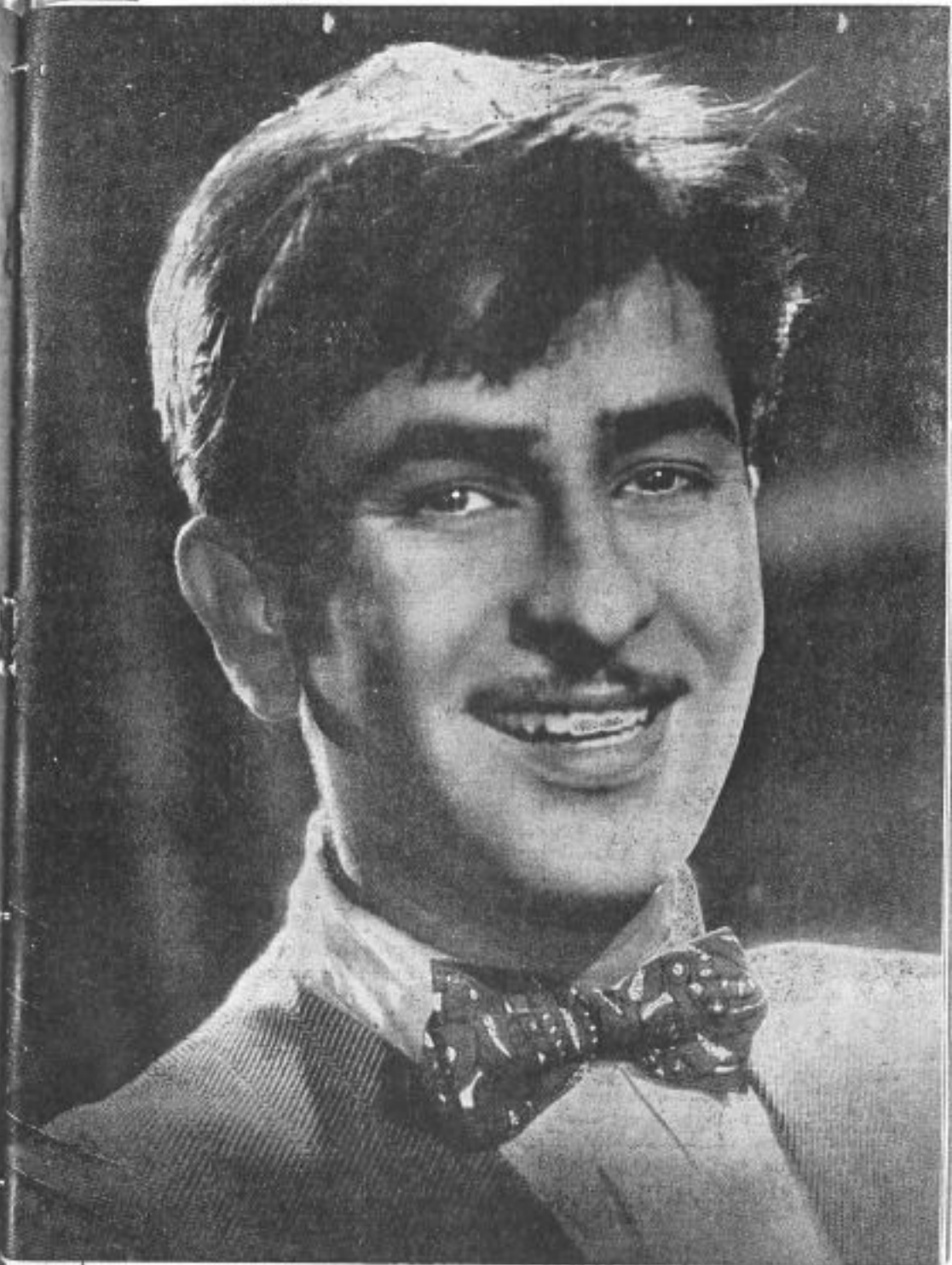
depressing blues that kill the creative urge in an artiste. "I remember one particular incident," Raj recalls while trying to illustrate his daddy's helpful attitude. "I was hardly eight years old at that time. I had to play a small role in my school drama. Papaji was present at that function. I hesitated to go before the audience through stage-fright, but Papaji patted me and pushed me on the stage. His kind, inspiring gesture did the trick for me. I could act with great confidence that day."

Drama enthusiasts of Matunga, Bombay, still recall an interesting episode which took place in the early forties. Northern India Association of Matunga was having its usual periodical celebrations. A drama was staged. Raj was to play a servant's role and Prithviraj was among the distinguished guests. Raj rushed to daddy at the eleventh hour and said, "I think, I will look nice if I put on moustaches".

Prithviraj replied: "O.K. but see that you look like a servant and not a king. Be careful about the type of moustaches you wear."

"Yes, papaji, I know it too well. I know acting," Raj argued. Prithviraj rose from his seat and with his inevitable broad smile said: "Oh, then I am here to learn from you!". The whole gathering burst into laughter.

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Papa Prithviraj embraces son Raj Kapoor on the cricket ground while playing for the opposite team in a film stars' charity match.

THOUGH he did take part in a drama or two here and there, upto his seventeenth year, Raj had not evidently decided about his future career. For in October 1941, *Filmindia* contained the following reference to Raj in its profile of Papa Prithviraj: "His eldest son (Raj) has just won the Cama Memorial Cup for ellection. This boy, as a child, has acted with his father in a stage-play called *The Toy Cart* but he has not yet decided whether he wants to be an actor, a director or an engine driver."

Finally, when the school-leaving examination drew nearer and when Raj was confronted with the choice of a career, he told father: "Daddy, I want to become a film-artist." Papa Prithviraj remembered that years ago he himself had made a similar plea before his father Diwan Bhasheshwar Nath Kapoor on completing his studies. He at once gave his consent and entrusted Raj to director Kidar Sharma for grooming. Raj started right at the bottom as a clapper-boy. But after three years of hard grooming under Kidar Sharma, he shifted to Bombay Talkies with a personal recommendation from his father to Mrs. Devika Rani who was then Controller of Production at the famous Malad studio. Raj joined here as one of the junior assistants to Director Arniya Chakrabarty. There he got the first chance to play a role on screen—not as a hero but as a peon! With the bit role of a peon in B.T.'s *Hamari Baat*, Raj started his acting career also right from the bottom. His name appeared last in the credit-list of the picture. He was still at the lowest rung.

He left Bombay Talkies in sheer frustration and, after some time, joined Prithvi Theatres, the celebrated dramatic unit started by his father. There he got ideal scope to develop his talents. He was the art-director and special-effects expert for their maiden drama *Shakuntala*. But in *Deewar*, by his hilarious caricature of a domestic servant, he became popular as a comedian. In *Pathan*, another memorable play of Prithvi Theatres, Raj portrayed the difficult role of a dutiful son who sacrifices his life for the honour of his father.

By now he had slimmed down considerably and appeared smarter than ever before. His success on stage attracted the attention of film producers and it was left to the good old Kidar Sharma to give him his first major film role as the hero of *Neel Kamal*. Though not much of a hit, this picture gave Raj the break that had eluded him all throughout. Earlier, he had appeared as Narad in Prabhakar Pictures' *Valmiki* with Prithviraj in the title-role.



Thus daddy and son appeared together for the first time on screen in *Valmiki*. In one of his earliest pictures, *Radha Krishna*, Raj was cast as Krishna opposite Madhubala who played Radha. Following *Neel Kamal*, Director Mohan Sinha featured him as the hero in his comedy pictures like *Dil Ki Rani*. He played an important role in Gajanan Jagirdar's *Jail Yatra* also.



Nargis sticks a flower in Raj's button-hole. They made a memorable screen pair.

HAVING slaved and sweated for years in film-studios, Raj yearned to do something more spectacular than merely acting romantic roles of the slapstick variety on screen. In his usual carefree, audacious way, he mustered enough courage to produce his own film. The very idea sounded fantastic to the grey-haired veterans of film-industry. Well-meaning friends warned him about the inevitable pitfalls of film production. Undeterred, Raj put his production plan into practice. As an unknown newcomer to the field, it was difficult to secure finance but Raj staked all his prestige and earnings into R. K. Films and with the unstinted co-operation of his colleagues and co-workers, he produced his first film *Aag* in 1948. Raj's first essay in production had already made a sensation as it mounted the set because for the first time he cast three popular and accomplished heroines of Indian screen, Nargis, Nigur and Kamini Kaushal, together in one picture—a feat which has not been equalled again. With himself portraying a memorable role of his career and with newcomer Premnath making a welcome screen appearance, *Aag* created a flutter in the dove-cots of both the new recruits and old-timers of production field.

In story-value and directorial treatment, in standard of acting and technical excellence, in shot composition and music embellishments, *Aag* was far ahead of the pictures produced in that era. With his youthful team of co-workers, Raj Kapoor established the trade-name R. K. Films as a hall-mark of quality pictures.

HE consolidated his position as a producer-director-actor by giving *Barsaat*, a roaring box-office hit which is reported to have collected nearly a crore of rupees. Due to its delightfully catchy music and enjoyable romance, *Barsaat* set a new vogue. The popularity of Raj-Nargis romantic pair made them the idols of film-going millions. *Barsaat* also gave two sensational stars in Nimmi and Premnath. Having earned sufficient money to stabilise R. K. Films, Raj concentrated on quality themes and gave *Awara*, a touching theme based on the problem of juvenile delinquency. Written by K. A. Abbas, *Awara* proved

another triumph for Raj-Nargis pair and R. K. Films. It was hailed as a provocative subject in India and became very popular in the Soviet Union where it was shown in 1954 during the visit of the Indian Film Delegation which synchronised with the holding of the Indian Film Festival in the U.S.S.R.

To hostile, unthinking critics who condemn promising talent with one stroke of pen, Raj's plea is: "We don't know things when we are born. We learn them gradually. We work with best of intentions. Please recognise this fact and encourage us."

Happily married in 1946 to Krishna Mehra, the charming sister of Premnath, Raj has three lovely kids. In his quiet residence at Chembur, he lives quite near his newly-built studio and looks after the welfare of his staff-members with personal care. With his usual flair for creating records, Raj made film history by casting four generations of his family in *Awaraz*. Besides himself and Papa Prithviraj in important roles, he featured his kindly grandfather, the late Diwan Bhasheshwar Nath in the role of the judge and his tiny son *Dabboo* appeared on the credit-titles of *Awaraz* fondling a dog. His younger brother Shammi Kapoor is fast becoming a popular star and the youngest brother Shashi, who played the younger roles for Raj in *Aag* and *Awaraz*, promises to be an equally outstanding actor. His uncle Trilok Kapoor is also a popular star in mythological films.

SUCCESS or no success, Raj is still the same old Raju to his parents and all at home. He still indulges in those juvenile pranks which are the privilege of any son. Yes, Raj Kapoor may be the idol of film-going millions, but in his house he is still the same old clown of the family.

His hobbies range from swimming and riding to football and marathon-singing. He had a very melodious voice when he was young and was considered an excellent singer. Even today in his off moments he bursts into songs, plays all kinds of instruments from tabla to toy clarionets. And daddy Prithviraj always feels that Raj should sing his own songs in the films.

"Key to success is hard work", says Raj and his motto is "Work unto death, it is a heritage that you will leave for generations to come". According to him, the "thought content" has improved in Indian films during recent years. "You want good productions and I want good audiences", he quips in response to clamour for good pictures. "Let our ideals not be merely rupees, annas and pies", is Raj's favourite dictum. Raj feels that with sincerity and hard work, nothing is beyond achievement in filmdom.

He considers his performance in Director Mahesh Kaul's *Gopinath* among his best. Besides his own productions, his acting in Mehboob's *Andaz*, Filmistan's *Sargam*, Kidar Sharma's *Baure Nain* and Kurdar's *Dastan* ranks among his early histrionic triumphs. To those who were thrilled to see him in tragic, sober roles as in Mehboob's *Andaz* and Prithvi Theatres' stage-play *Pathan*,

(Continued on page 136)



RAJENDRA KUMAR

"FORTUNE may have yet a better success in reserve for you, and they who lose today may win tomorrow," these famous words of Cervantes acquire a stunning significance when one tries to survey Rajendra Kumar's career. His has been a life of nerve-shattering ups and downs. The harrowing experiences through which he has passed would have broken the back of any other person. But Rajendra Kumar is made of sterner stuff and so have been his ambitions. "Those critical days have been a school of experience for me. They have brought me close to life and its fascinating uncertainties," he says with an air of a true Samaritan.

Today Rajendra Kumar is right on top in the galaxy of our scintillating stars. The films in which he has worked have been scoring jubilees in a row. Producers and directors have been vying with one another to sign him up for their pictures. Indeed, the name Rajendra Kumar has today become synonymous with box office success. But to attain this pinnacle of fame and fortune Rajendra had to pass through severe fire-tests. He did not zoom his way to film glory overnight. He had to wage a lonesome battle against the freaks of Dame Fortune, sometimes fulfilling his desires, sometimes faltering in the way, but at no time losing his faith in himself and the Almighty who reigns supreme over the destinies of mankind.

Rajendra's prosperous family had to leave everything behind when the country was partitioned in 1947. People who had rolled in wealth found themselves destitute within the twinkling of an eye. But Rajendra Kumar, unlike those who have suffered in the wake of Partition, has not even a tinge of rancour for those responsible for the decision to partition the country and those responsible for its aftermath. One finds him surprisingly free from the bitterness usually associated with those who have lost their all as a consequence of the bifurcation of the country in 1947.

This admirable trait is also reflected in his film career also. He has taken all the jerks and jolts of life with a commendable spirit of resignation. "Life has been a revelation to me. Unless we face difficulties with fortitude we can't learn the intrinsic values in life as it exists today," he says in his usual calm and collected manner.

RAJENDRA Kumar Tuli was born on July 20, 1929, at Sialkot (West Punjab) in a well-to-do family. His father Lala Laxmi Chand Tuli had a flourishing business in cloth at Sialkot and Karachi. Rajendra's grandfather was a catering contractor for the army. The family led a happy life. Young Rajendra was educated at Government High School at Sialkot, and S. D. College at Lahore.

He was an inveterate film-goer and did not miss an important picture. At times, he saw more than one film in a day. "I had nursed dreams about myself becoming a great film star one day since my childhood. My Indian film idols in those days were Prithviraj Kapoor, Chandramohan and Motilal and among the heroines I had a fancy for Swarnalata, Khurshid and Nurjehan. The foreign heroes who captured my imagination were Clark Gable, Tyrone Power and Gary Cooper. Alas, all three of them are dead today. My visits to the cinemas became so much a part and parcel of my early life that once when I returned home late after seeing a film, my grandfather told me, 'I have a feeling that one day you will become a part of the cinema'. How I wish the grandpa is alive today to see that his prediction has come true!", Rajendra Kumar observes while recalling his early craze for film-going.

But Rajendra's childhood dreams were not realised in a trice. He had to receive some of the most cruel blows that Fate could deliver. For years he hovered between abject defeats and flickering hopes. When in the August of 1947, millions all over the country were celebrating the birth of our hard-won freedom, Rajendra Kumar and his family had joined the seemingly endless march of dispossessed humanity that trekked the no-man's land in the wake of Partition. They just managed to escape death in the communal riots that broke out in the Punjab and left their all behind. Rajendra Kumar cut short his commerce studies in the College at Lahore and joined the family in their greatest hour of trial. For one full week, the family which was rolling in wealth only a few days ago, kept walking without food or money, in the perpetual terror of being done to death in the tornado of communal frenzy that was raging over Punjab. After passing some anxious days in a refugee colony at Amritsar, the family managed to reach Delhi. Life as destitutes was unbearable. Rajendra Kumar, who had seen his family lavishly distributing food and money among the poor and the suffering, found that they had to wait for hours in food-queues in the refugee camps. There seemed to be no end to the miseries they had to undergo.

Asked how he felt during that critical period, Rajendra Kumar replies, "Well, I felt that I had to take up this challenge of times. These were little frolics of Fortune, and mercifully I could face these with gusto by the grace of God. That period of trial was not without its lessons. 'Why have any grudge against fate?' I said to myself."

After getting a small compensation from the Government, his family settled down in Delhi. His father started business, but eighteen-year-old Rajendra Kumar took a date with destiny and made a trip to Bombay to land a job in the film industry. Forlorn and friendless, he wandered from studio to studio in search of a job only to be turned out. He was a complete stranger to Bombay and for a while found himself lost in the din and bustle of the metropolis. After many heart-breaks a letter of introduction he had got from Delhi on the well-known writer Rajinder Krishen proved very helpful. Rajinder Krishen gave him all possible help but it was difficult for him to get a role for this absolute newcomer fired with ambitions of becoming a film hero ever since his childhood.

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HOWEVER, always a source of encouragement and inspiration, Rajinder Krishen introduced Rajendra Kumar to Producer-director H. S. Rawail who promised to train him up as an assistant director. Rajendra was prepared to work in any department of a film studio as he then was convinced that before becoming an actor, it was necessary to learn the process of film making and watch top stars in action. For a period of five years, he slogged as an assistant to Director Rawail and his active association with day-to-day shooting tremendously helped Rajendra who now set his heart on becoming a director instead of a star. He worked as assistant director for nearly 10 pictures.

In fact, his interest had almost ceased in acting and he pinned all his hopes on film direction which he found quite interesting. At that crucial moment in his life, a momentous event took place which proved the biggest turning point in his career. Producer-director Devendra Goel gave him the main role in his picture *Vachan*. The film released in April, 1955, proved a success and Rajendra heaved a sigh of relief. He had made a flying start as an actor in his very first film. Followed roles in Mehboob's *Mother India*, V. Shantaram's *Toofan Aur Deeya*, Mahesh Kaul's *Talaq*, Vijay Bhatt's *Gunj Uthi Shehnai*. These were outstanding films made by some of Indian screen's top directors and Rajendra acquitted himself creditably. Especially *Mother India* helped him a lot to gain recognition as an important star. Hits like *Ghar Sansar*, *Ma Baap*, *Chirag Kahan Roshni Kahan* established him as a star with a big pull at the box office. *Ma Baap* celebrated a silver jubilee in the East Africa and Rajendra Kumar was the first Indian star to be invited to Africa to grace a picture's jubilee function. He was mobbed wherever he went in Africa by his fans. His work in *Potang* and *Dhool Ka Phool* proved equally popular. The Gujarati film *Mendi Rang Lagyo*, in which he played the main lead, created new records for films in that language. His recent films *Kanoon*, *Sasural* and *Aas Ka Panchhi* have scored jubilees. *Gharana* and *Pyar Ka Sagor* have brought him more laurels.

His recent films include *Akali Mat Jaiyo*, *Zindagi Aur Khwab*, *Ek Ladki Ek Dukaan*, Rawail's colour film *Mere Mehboob*, Raj Kapoor's *Sangam*, *Ghera Daag*, produced by his brother-in-law, and forthcoming pictures of Gemini and Prasad.

He liked his roles in *Mother India*, *Chirag Kahan Roshni Kahan*, *Gunj Uthi Shehnai*, *Aas Ka Panchhi* and *Kanoon* which he considers "best of all." It was a great thrill for Rajendra when his childhood film idol Prithviraj Kapoor complimented him for his work in Producer-director B. R. Chopra's novel song-less courtroom drama *Kanoon*.

Asked about the most memorable experience of his screen career, Rajendra Kumar replied after a little pause. His face became meditative and he mused: "Two incidents stand out in my memory. The first is the occasion when Mr. Goel told me to work in his picture *Vachan*. It turned my entire career. The second is my first meeting with Mr. Mehboob prior to being signed up for *Mother India*. It was the biggest thrill of my life."



Rajendra Kumar is very much in love with his home and children. Here he is enjoying a breezy moment with his son Manoj and daughter Dimple with their pet-dog Soosey.

RAJENDRA Kumar believes that Providence always helps those who are sincere to their profession. While he has implicit faith in God, he feels that one's faith in the Almighty should be backed by solid hard work.

He points out the examples of some of our leading stars who have reached the top through their consistent slogging on the sets. Among present-day film favourites he likes Ashok, Dilip, Raj, Nargis, Meena Kumari and Vyjayantimala. His foreign film idols today are James Mason, Montgomery Cliff and Marlon Brando.

He is very fond of reading. During off-moments he likes to devour the works of Tagore, Kahlil Gibran and Stefan Zweig. His other recreations are outings and long drives in the countryside. Formerly he used to play hockey, tennis and badminton. Now the busy studio-life doesn't leave him much leisure.

He got married in December 1954 when his first acting vehicle *Vachan* was nearing completion. The match was arranged by parents. He leads a happy married life and has two smart children Manoj, a boy, and Dimple, a girl. His parents occasionally come down to Bombay and stay with him. They are delighted to find that their eldest son, who left everything behind, with them, at Sialkot and who left Delhi at the age of 18 to try his luck in films, has today realised his fondest childhood dreams. Virendra Kumar, one of Rajendra's younger brothers, is also undergoing training for film acting at Filmalaya School for acting and hopes to follow the footsteps of the elder brother.

SITUATED at Bandra sea-face, his bungalow "Dimple" (named after his daughter) has a delightful air of informality about it. The simple and unassuming Rajendra is a loving husband, a kindly father and a sincere friend. "I am very fond of my home and my children," he admits.

Rajendra has great regard for Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru among our leaders. "He is the Indian I love most, a symbol of sincerity and selflessness," Rajendra says, paying his humble tribute to Panditji.

Sober, dignified and restrained in speech and gestures, Rajendra Kumar has a stamp of sincerity which endears him to one and all. With that eternal dreamy look in his eyes, he seems destined to attain greater heights in the domain of film histrionics.

RAJ KAPOOR (Continued from page 130)

his hilarious antics in *Dastan* reminded of his rip-roaring comic role in *Deewar* and convinced them about his versatility in acting.

THE popularity of Raj-Nargis screen-pair could be judged from the fact that once during a Ganapati festival in Poona, the clay idols of the elephant-headed God were shaped like Raj Kapoor and Nargis. The scene showed Goddess Saraswati and Ganapati standing after the style and fashion of Nargis and Raj Kapoor in the poster of *Barsaat*. They worked as the main romantic pair in many pictures including *Jan Pahechan*, *Amber*, *Bewafa*, *Ashiana*, *Pyar*, *Papi*, *Dhoom*, *Anhonee* and *Chori Chori* besides R. K. Films' *Aag*, *Barsaat*, *Awara*, *Aah* and *Shri 420*.

Raj made history by winning the Grand Prix for his *Jagte Raho* at the International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary, Czechoslovakia, in 1957. His acting in *Jagte Raho* got him the Critics' Award in 1957. His other notable films include *Sharda*, *Parvarish*, *Phir Subah Hogi*, *Kanaiya*, *Anari*, *Main Nashe Mein Hoon* and *Do Ustad*. In *Anari*, he has given another unforgettable performance. It has won him the 1960 *Filmfare* Award for best acting. His recent films include *Sriman Satyawadi*, *Chhalia*, *Nazrana*, and *Jis Desh Mein Gaago Behti Hai*.

Raj has travelled extensively all over India. "That has given me the background and strength to make pictures", he explains. He was a member of the Indian Film Delegations that toured United States in 1952 and the Soviet Union in 1954. He can act as a fluent platform speaker and bring the house down with his penetrating gesticulations and conversational artistry. Of late he has visited several foreign countries to participate in Film Festivals.

The baffling phenomenon of unbounded hilarity and rigid sobriety of Raj's enigmatic personality was once admirably stemmed up by Nargis, when she said: "This man to whom tragic roles and situations on the screen are food and drink, is in life the kindest of people and the most disarmingly mischievous of friends. His very mischief is kind, his appearance of irresponsibility is infectious—altogether, he is a lovely person and a friend.....The iron hand with which the Producer-Director Raj rules on the sound-stage is shed there when he steps out. And then you find an impish schoolboy." Well, that's Raj!



SHYAMA

WAY back in the mid-forties, a little girl saw a picture starring Ishwarlal and that matchless singing siren of Indian screen, Khurshid. Khurshid's sad, soulful melodies captured her heart and brought tears to her eyes. The name of that little girl was also Khurshid. After seeing the film, she asked herself: "Why I too can't become a star like that Khurshid?" She went home determined to be a celluloid sweetheart and started song rehearsals before the mirror. She imitated songs from her favourite films and put up stage shows at home with friends. After years of yearning for stardom, all that the ambitious girl got was a bit role as an extra as a singer in a *quawali* song. Today that film-crazy teen-aged Khurshid is known by a name familiar to thousands of film-goers—Shyama.

Remember that very first all female *quawali* in *Zeenat*—"Aahen na bharin, Shikway na kije" led by the melody-queen Nurjehan? A bevy of comely faces surrounded Nurjehan in this rip-roaring sequence which brought the house down. Among this line-up of charmers was Shyama who appeared here as Baby Khurshid. Her ambition to become another Khurshid seemed to have been partly fulfilled. But she was a very small fry in that scene. The lime-light was stolen all throughout the picture by the one and only Nurjehan. When Khurshid Akhtar (Shyama's real name) saw Nurjehan reigning supreme over the sets like a queen, she felt one day she too must become a big star, a rather audacious dream for a girl in pig-tails who started film career as an "extra"!

THUS Shyama started her career from the bottom of the ladder. Her phenomenal rise to stardom during the last few years has almost nullified the time-honoured film maxim—"Once an extra, always an extra." But her journey to the pinnacles of fame has not been without its sighs and sorrows. She had to struggle for eight long years without losing hope.

Born at Lahore on June 7, 1935, Khurshid Akhtar had to also face a domestic storm after her debut in *Zeenat*. As the role was rather small and insignificant, she had to rehearse only for a fortnight. "I did not feel camera-shy as there were many other newcomers taking part in the *Quawali*-scene." Her father was away from Bombay and did not know about her role. He lost his temper when he came to know that daughter Khurshid had taken to film acting. Her mother and sister somehow managed to pacify him. Baby Khurshid left the school from the fifth form to seriously concentrate on film acting.

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She made a resolve to hit the top-mark and took intensive training in dance and music from the well-known dance-teacher Badri Prasad. She specialised in Kathak. She got some more bit-roles in films and appeared as Baby Khurshid. As a teenager, she was mainly cast as the hero's younger sister.

SHE got the rare opportunity to act as a younger sister of the celebrated Saigal in *Parwana*. "I can never forget the encouragement that the great Saigal gave me on the sets of *Parwana*," she says, recounting a memorable anecdote, "You see, one day I sat on his lap, feeling terribly nervous. Saigal realised my plight as a beginner. He tried to shed my neurosis by humming a song which had words to the effect, 'Don't be afraid, Sister, work hard and success is bound to be yours.' His words had an electrifying effect on me. But for his inspiring words, I would have fared miserably that day."

She continued to be cast in similar roles and played the younger sister to the late Shyam in *Kaneez* and to Motilal in *Beete Din*. Unfortunately her frail and delicate figure was not considered good enough for major roles by the tin-gods of the film industry, so she had to act in a non-stop series of insignificant roles. She had to discontinue her music lessons for reasons of health and she concentrated on acting with a vengeance. In *Tarana* she got a slightly bigger role while in *Hum Log* she acted as Balraj Sahni's girl friend.

MEANWHILE, Baby Khurshid, had undergone a change in nomenclature. In 1944, she was acting in Prakash's *Nai Ma*. Director Vijay Bhatt felt that at that time there were too many Khurshids in films and he gave a new screen-name to her—Shyama.

She got her first major role in *Chhoti Bhabhi*, but for a still bigger break she had to wait for years. I. S. Johar surprised friends and foes by selecting her for the title-role in Filmistan's *Shrimatiji* from over one hundred applicants.

However, the sudden rise to stardom was not without its inevitable tears. After a few shots were taken, an important executive said on the sets of *Shrimatiji*: "This girl is too thin for a heroine's role". The remark gave her a rude shock. She went home and wept bitterly. She felt a chance that came to her after a long struggle was slipping away. She at once saw a medical consultant who put her on tonics. She put in the necessary weight. The boisterous role of the modern girl, Indira, in *Shrimatiji* gave her plenty of histrionic scope. Her sister Gulzar Akhtar helped her with rehearsals and, of course, I. S. Johar was a perfectionist, who knew how to extract the best work from an artist.

Shyama put her best in it, realising fully well that her entire future depended on this role. Her performance was well appreciated by all and Shyama heaved a sigh of relief.

THEN she acted a serious character in Bimal Roy's *Maa* with equal ease. Came *Shart*, another acting triumph of hers. Followed *Aasman*, *Nishan-Danka*, *Char Chand* and *Chori Chori*. Shyama had arrived as a star. By 1956 she had the distinction of acting in over 100 pictures though the majority of the roles were small.

Since then she has played all sorts of roles in all sorts of pictures. Her notable films include *Chandan*, *Chhoti Bhabhi*, *Do Dulhe*, *Ha Ha Hi Hi Hoo Hoo*, *Bhai Bhai*, *Mirza Sahiba*, *Sharda*, *Chhoo Mantar*, *Aar Paar*, *Tulsidas* etc. She has topped her acting triumphs by her memorable double role in *Do Behnen*. Her earlier ones include *Sabak*, *Sarta*, *Sazaa* etc. Her work in *Sharda* brought her the 1959 *Filufare* award for best supporting role. Her recent films include *Duniya Jhukti Hai*, *Bus Conductor*, *Apna Ghar*, *Zabak* and *Borrom Ki Raat*.

Shyama is a quiet, retiring type. She seldom attends any public functions and prefers to stay indoors. That does not mean she is a stiff highbrowish type. At get-togethers she is known for her scintillating sallies and, what is still rarer, she can sportingly take jokes at her own expense.

SHE swims, drives, dances and has a go at Cycling also. She is left-handed. "Is that why people pay left-handed compliments to me sometimes?" she chirps with a mischievous twinkle in her hazel eyes. She has a pair of rabbits as a pet at home and she gives them daily bath with almost juvenile delight.

Today she is among the much sought-after heroines of the Indian screen, right on the top-rung of fame and fortune. And yet, she modestly admits: "I have not forgotten the days when I used to wait endlessly for a bus to reach a film-studio with visions of becoming another Khurshid—another Nurjehan".

Extra girls seldom—if ever—become front-rank heroines. Shyama has achieved the miracle through sheer hard work and merit. What's her ambition now? "To remain in films all throughout my life", she says with supreme self-confidence.



SURAIYA

“**A** SONG is more lasting than the riches of the world”, said Padraic Colum. The singing idol of the Hindi screen, Suraiya subscribes in full to this philosophy. But in her every day life, the song has meant something more—her songs have won her recognition, paved the way to her entry into films and thus to the riches of the film-world.

In Kardar Productions' *Sherida* Suraiya sang the popular tune “*Panchhi ja*” for the heroine Mehtab. The song proved a sensational hit and became a hot favourite with the film-goers. Ever since then, Suraiya reigned supreme over the heart of the film-goers as the singing sweetheart of the silver screen. Perhaps, she has to her credit more songs than any other singing star of the Indian screen.

After the migration of Nurjehan and Khurshid to Pakistan in the wake of Partition, Suraiya is the only film-heroine in India who sings her songs in the pictures. She has a mellow voice that rings with melody and echoes in one's memory for a long time. All this, however, does not mean Suraiya owes her success in filmdom to her voice alone. Had it been so, she would have still remained only a popular play-back singer. No doubt, her voice is her biggest asset and it did facilitate her entry into films. But her flair for acting coupled with her dancing talent played a great part in making her the success she had been because rare, indeed, is a film-star who could claim the three-in-one distinction of being a singer, a dancer and an actress.

BORN at Lahore on June 15, 1929, Suraiya has been educated in New High School for Girls at Bombay. Simultaneously, she was given religious teachings in Persian at home. Her study of Persian literature and *Quaran* has helped her a lot in building up her personality. Therefore, Suraiya, today, appears more as the hallowed heroine of Persian poetry than a mere glamour goddess of the celluloid world. The eloquent testimony to this was her grand performance in *Mirza Ghalib*. Suraiya, in fact, strikes one as more Oriental in outlook than some of her sister stars in the film-firmament.

Like many of our leading artists of today, Suraiya's entry into the world of movies was more accidental than otherwise. In 1941 during a holiday from school she accompanied her uncle Zahur (then a popular character actor) to Mohan Studios to see the shooting of the picture *Taj Mahal*.

A child was needed for a scene and she was asked whether she would like to face the camera. Out of sheer fun, Suraiya said “Yes”. The shot

proved a success and everyone around including Director Narubhai Vakil congratulated her. But at that time none had imagined that she would some day become one of film-land's top-most singing stars. For Suraiya, this new experience was nothing more than an enjoyable juvenile adventure. She continued her studies and occasionally took part in the children's programmes of All-India Radio along with Shammai, today's starlet, and Raj Kapoor who were also unknown to film-world in those days.

AS a youngster, Suraiya surprised everyone with the commendable ease with which she reproduced the film songs of those days. Her sweet voice was her biggest asset and the attraction for others. And literally, she sang her way to success because it was actually her voice that gave her the first major break into the dream-world of the movies. Her fame as a melodious singer spread at once with the popularity of her play-back songs in *Sharda*, *Station Master*, *Sanjog* and *Kanoon*. Soon she started getting roles in pictures. She first caught the eye of the film-goers by her popular dancing and singing performance in Bombay Talkies' *Hamari Boat*. Her song "*Ghar humne le liya hai tere ghar ke aanae*" proved a big hit.

Then came D.R.D. Productions' *Ishara* and Suraiya leapt into the headlines by acting opposite veteran Prithviraj. Roles came one after the other and the name Suraiya became synonymous with successful musical pictures. She had thus become a full-fledged star and won for her the endearing title "*Chocolate Charmer*" of the Indian screen. The list of pictures in which she has worked is an imposing one. Among the outstanding ones could be mentioned *Phool*, *Samrat Chandragupta*, *Anmol Ghadi*, *Omar Khayam*, *1857*, *Aj ki Raat*, *Dard*, *Dillagi*, *Natak*, *Afsar*, *Kajal*, *Vidya*, *Jeet*, *Tadbir*, *Dastan*, *Saanaam*, *Char Dis*, etc. Among her major hits are *Pyar ki Jeet* and *Bari Bahen*. In *Tadbir*, *Omar Khayam* and *Parwana*, she had the rare privilege of acting the feminine lead against that singing idol of millions, the late Saigal. Indeed, they made a unique singing pair. Her other assignments include *Enam*, *Pagalkhana*, *Heer Ranjha*, *Khayal* and *Bilwa Mangal*. Her performances in Nitin Bose's *Waris* and Kashyap's *Shama Parwana* brought her new laurels. Her recent films include *Malik* and *Mr. Lambu*. She has staged a remarkable come-back in *Shama*.

During her off-moments, Suraiya likes to browse over books and magazines. She is a discriminating reader and her favourite authors are Somerset Maugham, Marie Corelli and Khalil Gibran.

Suraiya has thrilled millions with her melodious film-songs. Many have been the popular tunes rendered superbly by her. Though her song-hits are too numerous to mention, among her most memorable numbers could be mentioned the following: "*Tum muz ko bhul jao*", "*Woh pas rahe ya dur rahe*", "*Dil Tere Anese Pahle*" and "*Bigdi Banane Wale*" (*Bari Bahen*), "*O Dur Jane Wale*" and "*Na todapne ki Izzat*" (*Pyar ki Jeet*), "*Mun Mor Huwa Matwala*"

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and "Nayana Diwani" (*Afsar*), "Dus Papiha Bola" (*Gajre*), "O Sanam" (*Sanam*), "O Ishk Hame Barbod na Kar", (*Noach*), "Lai Khushi ki Duniya" (*Vidya*), "Murliwale murli beja" and "Char Din ki Chandni" (*Dillagi*).

SURAIYA's ambition is to play a rollicking comedy role. Another of her more well-known ambition was to meet Gregory Peck, her hot favourite among the celluloid idols of Hollywood. And she realised it in 1954 when Peck broke journey at Bombay on his way to Ceylon for location shooting of *Purple Plain*.

According to her, she experienced the greatest thrill of her screen career when Saigal one day strayed on the sets of Jayant Desai's *Chandrogypta* where she was rehearsing a song. He congratulated her for her lilting voice and made a suggestion to Director Jayant Desai to cast her against him in *Tadbit*, which was readily accepted. And, hey presto, Suraiya realised one of the greatest dreams of her life. She was always a Saigal fan and had longed to co-star with him in a film. And here it was Saigal himself coming to her. It was one of the most memorable moments of her life. They co-starred in two more films *Omar Khayam* and *Parwana*. Suraiya today regrets that Saigal is no more. But still she is a devoted Saigal fan.



USHA KIRON

AMONG the scintillating starlets of Indian screen who have toiled their way to the top rung of success and fame in recent years, Usha Kiron is perhaps the most outstanding. Starting with minor roles in Gujarati, Marathi and Hindi pictures, she has gradually obtained full-fledged stardom by hard work and sheer merit.

Usha was born on April 22, 1929 in a middle-class Maharashtrian family at Bassein, a historic place thirty miles to the North of Bombay. Encouraged by her father Mr. Balkrishna Marathe, she underwent dance training in Kathak, Manipuri and Bharat Natyam along with her schooling. After studying upto matriculation, she started appearing in stage-plays and attracted the attention of that well-known doyen of Indian dancing, Uday Shankar who gave her a dancing role in his picture *Kalpna*. By this time, she had already made a name in local stage and dance circles.

In 1942, she acted for the first time in a stage-drama. It was a Marathi play titled *Ashirvad*. Though here she played a child role, both the public and the press liked her acting immensely. Of course, she was nervous and excited about her debut on the stage, but she was pleased to know that even the hard-boiled critics had applauded her work.

However, she got her first film role as the heroine in *Vevishal*, a Gujarati picture, though her mother tongue was Marathi. The film was a moderate success and critics appreciated her performance. She did not encounter any difficulty in delivering the dialogues because she knew Gujarati quite well.

Having appeared in a Gujarati film, she found it difficult to get a break in Hindi pictures. At times, she even felt dejected, but her father asked her not to lose heart. "My father has been mainly responsible for my success in this sphere", Usha says today, remembering the encouragement and impetus her father gave her whenever she felt frustrated in the beginning of her career. Meantime, Director Amiya Chakrabarty, who was looking for a new face for his *Ganga*, gave her the leading role. She gave a convincing performance and it was in this film that she appeared with the screen-name Usha Kiron.

Then she signed up for *Vasudev Balwant*, a Marathi picture which proved a roaring hit. Her portrayal of a bandit's daughter was immensely liked by people. Followed more roles in Marathi and Hindi films. Her poignant performance in Datta Dharmadhikari's Marathi hits *Bala Jo Jo Re* and *Stri Janma Hi Tuzi Kahani* and Director Ram Gubale's *Doodh Bhaat* earned her the reputation of a popular tragedienne. As for Hindi films, she



Usha Kiron and her amiable husband Dr. Manohar B. Kher, who is a leading medical practitioner of Bombay.

Dost, Nasibdar (Gujarati) and others. Her rendering of the lavanis in *Kanchan Gangra* and *Jashas Taseen* was in a class by itself.

Her other notable pictures include *Awaz, Anban, Bahu, Jeevan Sathi, Dushman*, and the Marathi hits, *Shiklali Baiko* and *Kanyadan*. Her recent films include *Nazrana, Dil Bhi Tera, Hum Bhi Tera, Amrit Manthan, Kabulluwala* and the Gujarati hit *Mendi Rang Lagyo*.

When she was young, her favourite stars were Khurshid and Motilal. "I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Shri Amiya Chakrabarty who has been mainly responsible for my success on the screen," she says paying a tribute to the late Amiya who was her very first director in Hindi pictures.

In the midst of her busy working schedule, she has maintained a live contact with her social surroundings and she has always been conscious of her domestic duties. Stardom and fame have not made her swollen-headed nor

started playing the second heroine and by giving consistently polished portrayals reached the top and played the main feminine lead in *Patita, Baadbaan, Aulad, Dhobi Doctor* and others.

Her performance in *Baadbaan* won her *Filmfare's* Clare Award for the best supporting role of the year 1954. Her portrayals in *Patita, Baadbaan, Aulad, Samaj* and *Adhikar* rank among her best. In *Bala Jo Jo Re*, she acted the three stages of womanhood—as a school girl, wife and mother with consummate skill. Equally memorable was her portrayal of a gypsy street-acrobat in *Jashas Taseen*. Her other important films are *Kalyan Khajina, Madhosh, Daag, Khajina, Madhosh, Daag,*

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Usha Kiron as a child.

does she make a fetish of her achievements. She does not swank about in costly saris and hardly wears any jewellery. At parties and functions, she is again the same modest, simple woman. Thus in her behaviour and outlook, she appears the typical middle-class Maharashtrian house-wife. Her marriage with Dr. Manohar B. Kher, a leading medical practitioner of Bombay and a smart, charming gentleman with polished manners, on May 23, 1954 had no tinsel dazzle of a glamour-girl's wedding. In their newly-occupied home at Bandra, Usha and her husband live with the austere simplicity of a middle-class family. She is a good linguist and has a good command over English, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil and Bengali.

They have a smart boy (born on June 22, 1957) -whom they have named Adwait.

In 1956, she was invited as a delegate to the Sixth International Theatre Congress held at Yugoslavia. She took that opportunity to visit many important places in Europe. In this capacity, she made a valuable contribution to the deliberations of the Congress.

Since her entry into films, she has played a variety of roles from comedy to tragedy, from a heroine to a vamp and from a mythical goddess to a realistic social heroine with equal artistry. A conscious artist, a devoted daughter and a loving house-wife, Usha has achieved a lot in the world of histrionics and bids fair to rise to bigger heights with her sincerity of purpose and her capacity for hard work.



VYJAYANTIMALA

AMONG the most dazzling additions to screen, Vyjayantimala has hit a new high. She has literally danced her way to success. Often described as filmdom's tantalising 'It girl', Vyjayantimala has thrilled film audiences with her bubbling youth and her elasticity of form. Today, she is among the most sought-after stars of the silver screen.

Vyjayanti's greatest assets are her well-shaped youthful figure and her mastery over dancing. Though she took film-world by storm through her very first appearance on screen in A.V.M.'s *Bahar*, she had not originally decided to take up films as a career. Her main interest was dancing and even today dancing does claim her priority of attention over film-acting.

Often described as Kalasahitya Saraswati Kumari Vyjayantimala by her ardent admirers from South, Vyjayanti belongs to a reputed family of Mysore. Daughter of the famous star of the South, Vasundhara Devi, she was born on August 13, 1933. From her childhood she was trained in various schools of dancing. Bharat Natyam is her forte and she started learning it from Vazhuvoor Ramaiah Pillai. She is also the disciple of Shri K. N. Dandayudhapani Pillai, a well-known maestro of classical dancing who is known all over South India and who is associated with the well-known Kalakshetra of Adyar, Madras.

Her dancing ideal in her days was the accomplished Bharat Natyam dancer Pundannallur Jayalakshmi. But Vyjayanti was not satisfied by mastering only a particular school of dance art and, therefore, she underwent intensive training in three other schools of classical dancing.

SHE started appearing in dance recitals at a very early age and drew appreciative audiences. At the very tender age of six, in 1939, she accompanied her mother and grandmother on a Continental tour. She visited the Vatican and was given an audience by the Pope. She gave a dancing performance and won a gold medal for it from the Pope. After her school career as well as the intensive training in dancing, she undertook a dancing-tour of over a hundred important centres in South and won great applause. Director M. V. Raman, an old family friend, was so much impressed with her dancing performance at Gokhale Hall, Madras, that he decided to cast her in his new picture. Director Raman had seen and admired her dance-recitals on previous occasions also, but Vyjayanti's exhibition of the Marwari folk dance captivated him so much that he straightaway offered her a role in A.V.M.'s *Life*, which was titled *Jeevitham* in Telugu and *Bahar* in Hindi. The role of the



Vyjayantimala as she appeared in her first Hindi picture, A.V.M.'s "Bahar"

discovery of Director M. V. Raman proved a sure-fire-hit as did the picture *Bahar*. With her very first screen appearance, Vyjayantimala leapt into the limelight of nationwide fame.

Offers of roles came to her a-plenty. She has played the dancing heroine in many pictures, the notable among them being Sunrise Pictures' *Anjana*, Jayant Desai's *Miss Mala*, Jagat Pictures' *Peheli Jhalak*, Hindustan Arts' *Jashan*, A.V.M.'s *Ladki* and Filmistan's sensational box-office hit *Nagin*.

She has reached the top rung of the ladder by her captivating performances. Her other acting triumphs include *Devdas*, *Aasha*, *Kathputli*, *Devta*, *Raj Tilak*, *New Delhi*, *Patrani*, *Naya Daur*, *Madhumati*, *Sadhana*, *Amar Deep* and *Paigham*. Her work in B. R. Chopra's *Sadhana* has won her the Filmfare Award for 1959. Her recent films include *Nazrana*, *College Girl*, *Aas ka Panchhi* and *Gunga Jumna*.

Her recent dancing tour of Europe proved a thumping success.

As a child she had no particular fascination for the screen. After matriculating with distinction in English, in 1948, she wanted to take up an academic career but strange indeed are the ways of Dame Fortune. Her entry into films came to her somewhat as a surprise. Of course, she remembers that as a child she has acted in the concerts of her school. Her performance as Prince Charming in the play *Cinderella* was admired by pupils, teachers and audiences alike.

Vyjayanti started her dance career under the loving care of her grandmother Shrimati Yadugiri Devi who is her inseparable guide and companion. Vyjayanti has received a good deal of encouragement from her father Shri M. D. Raman whose well-brought out journal on dancing, *Natyamala*, has helped her a lot in putting forth her ideas before the public.

dancing heroine suited her to finger tips and provided an ideal vehicle for her dancing talents.

AFTER the success of the Tamil and Telugu versions in the South, its Hindi version *Bahar* made her famous all over India. Her fresh-as-flower-petal personality and the gay abandon with which she acquitted herself throughout the picture were enthusiastically applauded by film audiences. Thus the star dis-

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She is very fond of sports. When in school, she played table-tennis, badminton and other games. In 1948, she won a table-tennis championship in Madras in partnership with Gool Nasikwala, the famous table-tennis star of Bombay. She speaks English, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Hindi with remarkable fluency. She reads a lot and her favourite subject is mystery novels.

BEFORE joining the screen, she was very fond of films and used to see lots of pictures. Even today, she is an ardent film-goer but mostly sees foreign pictures. Her favourite is the late Tyrone Power. In her pre-film days, she had great admiration for Ashok Kumar and Devika Rani.

Though she is far from being superstitious, her devotion to Hanuman, the monkey God of Ramayan era, is indeed noteworthy. When she was a child, she wanted to buy an idol of Hanuman but could not decide about the size and pose of the idol. Then, one night, she saw Lord Hanuman in her dream and He advised her to buy an idol of the size and form in which He appeared before her in the dream. She followed the advice faithfully and ever since then she keeps the idol with her. She believes Hanuman to be her protecting deity and attributes to Him her success and also the escapes from difficulties.