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Master of his Destiny!

Shafqat Cheema

By Zeeshan Ghayur

Female actresses know him as a playboy, choreography girls keep their distance from him, action heroes know him for his remarkable stunts, those who are egotistic know him for his brutalities inflicted on those who anger him, directors know him for his dedication to acting, producers know him as a cash cow, distributors queue to purchase his releases without a word, and awards speak volumes of his work.

The character and villain role-playing actor joined the movie industry in 1989. Portraying a minor role in 'Qatil Haseena', he starred opposite superstars of that era namely Anjuman and Sultan Rahi. 'Qatil Haseena' being a Punjabi film was recorded as a flop at the box office. However, this loss of business to the distributors did not slip Cheema's career into the black hole. Furthermore, coming from a sound monetary background, Cheema was never worried about work either. His passion to appear in the films is what has always kept him motivated.

Shafqat Cheema is known for his hard-work and acceptance of challenging roles. However success has never been easy for him at the box office. It was only in 1991 that his film 'Ishq Deewana' was recorded as an average double version (Urdu/Punjabi) film at the box office. A shift from a flop to an average was something encouraging to the actor. The grapevine speaks volumes when one comes to know that he was to quit had he given another flop. Starring opposite Shaan and Madiha Shah, Cheema was suddenly being hired opposite some of the most prominent names in Lollywood. Perhaps, destiny in which he believes was on his side. The film is known

for its musical score that had Madam Noor Jehan as one of the singers in the list.

Essentially, Cheema stepped on each rung of the ladder. He climbed to record a super hit movie at the box office in 1992. Shaan Productions 'Majhoo', a Punjabi film, gave a boost to the villain's career. Once again, starring opposite top-notch actors namely Anjuman, Sultan Rahi, Ghulam Mohi-ud-din, Reema, and Rangeela, the film ran for 117 weeks in Lahore. A diamond jubilee film that had the songs rendered by Madam Noor Jehan persuaded the actor to declare the industry as his second home.

Another film that had done well at the box office in the year of 'Majhoo' was 'Abdullah the Great' marking its silver jubilee in both Lahore and Karachi theatres. Filling up the pockets of distributors, the actor had a series of film directors lining outside his bungalow in Lahore for him to act as the villain in. This was the time Shafqat Cheema had become the top villain of Lollywood. He was accepted as an actor of immense talents. 'Abdullah the Great' was another double version film.

Starring opposite Reema, Mohsin Khan, Sahiba and Rambo (Afzal Khan), Shafqat Cheema's 'Hathi Mere Sathi' was recorded as the golden jubilee Urdu comedy film at the box office of 1993. Surely, Cheema was on a continued rising trend to success in the industry. The actress turned director Shamim Ara, directed Eveready Pictures' 'Hathi Mere Sathi' that ran for 66 weeks in Lahore.

The following is a record of some of his films recorded and appreciated at the box office by their respective years:

1994: 'Mohabbat di Agg' (Double Version Film - Flop)

1995: 'Sargam', 'Munda Bigra Jaye' (Urdu Films - Super Hits)

1996: 'Ham to chaley Susral' (Urdu Film - Super Hit)

A film that marked the return of the Punjabi films was Pak Nishan Films' 'Choorian' released on 16th October 1998. Cheema starred opposite Saima, Moamar Rana, Nargis, Sana, Bahar, Nagma, Deeba, Sardar Kamal, Irfan Khoosat, Abid Khan, Babur Butt, and Adeeb. Playing a character role, he was appreciated nation wide from audience of all ages. Notably this also happens to be one of his all time favorite films. Having starred in more than hundred films, 'Choorian' is definitely one of his most watched movies.

However, majority of the public are unaware of the fact that 'Choorian' was a remake of 'Mirza Jutt' released in 1967. 'Choorian' happens to be the only film after a significant period of time that ran all over the country and marked itself as the big name in the history of Pakistani Cinema. A Syed Noor directorial hit, it had songs rendered by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, though at the time of the film's release the legendary singer/composer had departed from the world, his track stood as the blockbuster at the music charts.

The list to his blockbuster films at the box office continues below:

1998: 'Choorian' (Punjabi Film - Super Hit)

2000: 'Mehndi wale Hath' (Punjabi Film - Super Hit)

2001: 'Moosa Khan' (Urdu Film - Super Hit)

2002: 'Yeh Dil Aap Ka Hua' (Urdu Film - Super Hit)

Shafqat Cheema's starred big time cash generating films in the year 2005 that are yet to be rated at the box office are namely 'Sahib Log' and 'Mustafa Khan'.

The actor has several awards in his Lahore's bungalow, listed are a few prominent ones:

2000: 'Nigar Award' for 'Mehndi wale Hath'.

2000: 'Asian Cultural Film Award' for 'Mehndi wale Hath'.

2004: 'Asian Cultural Award' for the best actor in villain/character role.

Unlike most actors in any film industry of a developing country, Shafqat has been keen on taking yearlong breaks from filming. Not many are aware of the fact that he was already a grand father the time he stepped in the industry. The actor has been recorded stating it was out of boredom that he chose to move in the film industry. Well, a definitely right choice there by the superstar. However his children seem to have taken a stance in other businesses and have kept themselves away from lights, camera, start sound and action. Pak Showbiz applauds the villain for his remarkable award winning performances and wishing him all the best for his future projects.

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