

I follow instincts, not agenda: Shyamalan

Acclaimed Indian origin Hollywood director Manoj Night Shyamalan, who is here to promote his next release 'The Happening', says he never follows any agenda while writing his films but does try to secure the investors' money.

Budgeted at \$57 million, 'The Happening' is the most high profile Asian co-production with a major Hollywood studio - it is being jointly produced by 20th Century Fox and India's UTV Motion Pictures.

'I have done my best in 'The Happening'. I always do. Without thinking too much about success and failure, I generally try to secure the money put in my movies by investors,' said Shyamalan.

Asked why his movies always had an on-the-edge eerie feeling, he said it was never intentional.

'Since I write my own story and screenplay, subconsciously I get drawn to the subjects I find myself at home writing. I never follow an agenda, either set by myself or by someone else,' said the filmmaker, who is also here to receive the prestigious Padma Shri award.

And how does he feel being honoured by the Indian government with one of the country's top civilian awards?

'I am equally happy and intrigued,' he quipped.

Releasing June 13, 'The Happening' stars Mark Wahlberg, who has the image of an action hero, having worked in thrillers like 'The Departed' and 'Invincible'. But in Shyamalan's film the actor plays a high school teacher, Elliot Moore, who tries to guide people caught in the midst of an imminent catastrophe.

'The movie is about, like, what do you do when you know for sure that there is no escape route from a danger at hand,' explained Shyamalan, who claims he is one of the highest paid Hollywood writers at present.

Having already made eight mainstream Hollywood movies, six of which were box-office successes, does his India connection still come in the way of getting himself accepted by Hollywood big daddies?

'To be frank, it only adds a little mystery to my persona and I take full advantage of it,' the filmmaker told reporters late Monday.

He often plays walk-on roles in his own movies. Has it ever crossed his mind to play a full-fledged role?

'As a director, it is extremely difficult to play a dual role. Yes, I have been offered roles by some of my colleagues, but I have either been making movies or writing and planning them.'

Will he ever make a movie in India with an all-Indian cast?

'Not immediately, but if I write a subject that requires Indian cast, why not? But I can make movies

only in English and if I ever make a movie featuring Indian actors, I will not hire them merely to play with their accent,' he said, contrary to the general Hollywood predilection to use Asians as exotic objects in movies.

Asked whether he liked watching Hindi films, he said: 'Yes, I saw 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' and 'Devdas' and I like them. And I watched a movie ('Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gam'), in which both Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh were there and so it was a double bonus for me.'

Shymalan pointed out that he liked the story-telling narrative of Indian movies, a vital characteristic that has gone out of fashion in Hollywood movies lately.

'But in my movies, I try to tell a story, leading to its logical conclusion,' said the director, who dabbled with filmmaking at the age of 10 and had already made his 45th short movie by the time he was 16.

His first feature film was 'Praying with Anger', but he shot to fame in Hollywood with his chilling psychological thriller 'The Sixth Sense' starring Bruce Willis.

'The Sixth Sense' received six Oscar nominations and earned the best actor award for Bruce Willis while the movie bagged three 'People's Choice Awards for Favourite Motion Picture'.

Following this, he made 'Unbreakable', again with Bruce Willis heading the cast, 'Signs', 'The Village' and 'Lady in the Water'. But the last two movies could not replicate the success of 'The Sixth Sense'.

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