

No one has been able to tap Shahid's talent yet: Pankaj Kapur

Pankaj Kapur has plans to direct a film and will cast his son because he feels that no one has been able to tap Shahid's talent fully.

'Not right away. But I might direct my son Shahid soon. No one has tapped his talent properly as yet. I wish the filmmakers would give him a dramatic role. We might work together as director and actor. We're both trying to crack a project together,' Pankaj told IANS.

He is one of the most underrated actors and the sparse work that Pankaj does makes you want to tear your hair in frustration. Not Pankaj. He's cool as a cucumber.

'I admit I'm choosy. That's because I like to concentrate on what I'm doing. There aren't too many great offers coming my way. So I've to pick and choose from the ones that do come to me. I agree I'd like to do more work. But the right kind of roles has to be offered to me. I'm not saying the roles need to be realistic all the time, though that's what I like connecting with on screen. But if the role is larger than life, it had better go the whole hog as it did in Anubhav Sinha's 'Dus.'

Post 'Dus' and the stunning performance in Vishal Bhardwaj's 'Maqbool', Pankaj isn't exactly inundated with offers. He is currently doing the evergreen working-class sitcom 'Office Office'.

'Yes, the offers did come my way, but nothing that excited me. But I've done three more films. One is Bharadwaj's 'The Blue Umbrella', Bhavna Talwar's 'Dharm' and finally there's 'The Good Sharma.'

Don't jump because he isn't playing the title role.

He explains, 'I'm not playing 'The Good Sharma'. It's based on a real-life story of man who went to America as a lawyer, but ended up as a taxi driver. He returns to India to try and build a school in his village.

'I play a character called Hanuman who's the antagonist of the story. I look at the project in totality - what kind of a story it is and what it has to offer me as an actor. It's okay if the part isn't large.'

Although he doesn't appear on big screen frequently, Pankaj has more than his share of the pivotal in the long-running TV serial 'Office Office', which now switches channels from Sab TV to STAR One.

'It gives me a chance to play someone real, someone who can laugh at the vagaries of life. I play a common man who goes through all the day-to-day hardships. After three years on one channel it's going to another channel. I'm glad more people might get to see 'Office Office'.

'I'm rather impressed by STAR's choice. 'Office Office' is totally in contrast with what they've been doing so far. Thank god there's room for something different on television.'

He admits that TV is mired in mediocrity.

'I admit TV is a far cry from the films that I started my career with, like 'Ek Doctor Ki Maut'. It's like reading Chekov and then going on to a comic strip. Both have their own pleasure. I mean, reading

R.K. Laxman's cartoon can be as satisfying as reading literature.'

As an actor, Pankaj just wanted to play different characters representing the truth about life.

'I didn't want to get stuck in any one kind of image. When I came to [Mumbai](#) to join the film industry I was offered mainstream cinema but I knew I'd get slotted in one kind of cinema. On television I had the opportunity of doing different kinds of parts.'

He recalls his days of superstardom on the home-viewing medium with affection.

'There were certain things that I tried to do on 'Karamchand'. Initially, they were hated, but eventually everyone loved the characterisation. I was only a theatre actor when I did 'Karamchand'. I never knew this kind of popularity existed for an actor. A large section of the audience didn't know who I was. 'Karamchand' gave me an opportunity to be a household name. It was a good feeling.'

And why did Pankaj say no to brother-in-law Naseeruddin Shah for 'Yun Hota To Kya Hota'?

'It's such a huge misunderstanding. I can't say no to him when he's making his first film. I was extremely caught up with my house being done up because I was the contractor, architect and interior designer of my new home. Apparently, his assistants told him that they couldn't contact me. By the time he realised I was willing to do it, he already had another actor for my part. Naseer is family. Secondly, I hold him in great esteem as an actor. Why should I say no to his first film?'

Pankaj and his talented wife Supriya Pathak were seen together in the film 'Dharm' after a long time.

'She played my wife. Earlier, we did the mini-series 'Mohandas BA LLB' together. I did everything on that serial - production, direction, scripting etc. I got tired and decided television was an unproductive medium. We look forward to doing more work together. But it has to be worth our while.'

Subhash K. Jha (© IANS / India eNews)