

Sound Sense

Imaad Shah on his forthcoming film, Little Zizou, and the 'outdated' concept of piracy

By Dipti Nagpaul D'Souza | *Indian Express* | March 06th, 2009

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Little Zizou bears a strong flavour of Parsi ethnicity. What made you take up the role?

I was sure I wanted to do the film the moment I read the script; it represents a global scenario. Every element of the film has such fine detailing that you know it has all been experienced first hand by the director Sooni Taraporevala.

Your character Artaxersus is the other protagonist in the film.

I play a graphic novelist in his 20s and Zizou's elder brother who shares a strained relationship with his father Cyrus Khodaiji—a Parsi fundamentalist—because the father's values disillusion him. At the same time, Artaxersus shares an excellent rapport with his neighbour and father's arch rival, Boman Pressvala, and is in love with his daughter Roxanne.

What were your references for the role?

I have many Parsi friends and my mother grew up at Gowalia Tank, which is where the story is set. I haven't emulated anyone in particular, but there are many characteristics very unique to the community which I've tried to imbibe. I would've however, loved to brush up my Gujarati had the script offered a chance.

A renowned screenwriter, how is Taraporevala as a director?

What I enjoyed most was the personal touch she offered to every frame. She has done the entire casting herself, bringing together a great ensemble cast. Some very fine actors are part of the film for a mere scene or two but don't seem out of place. It's the endless detailing that makes the experience of working with Sooni so rewarding.

Did you build a rapport with the kids, Jahan and Iyanah Bativala?

Not so much with Iyanah as with Jahan with whom I share screen-space. We would often hang out together at his house or play football at the maidan close by.

How's your career in music shaping up? Are you looking at bringing out an album?

I'm associated with a couple of bands and we often perform at the Hard Rock Café. But as opposed to an album, the internet is a better medium since rock bands in India can hardly make money by selling CDs. Instead, by sharing one's music online, they can familiarise people with their work and then do concerts, which is where the money really comes from. So I'm currently working on some tracks; once done, I'll share the music on websites likelast.fm and soulseek.com.

But doesn't that amount to piracy? Don't artists usually oppose that?

Indian artists would hardly oppose the concept of sharing music. Free distribution of music has in fact helped many musicians. Piracy is a term of the past. I personally would like a scenario where the musicians share some of their music online and offer some at a subscription fee on websites like MySpace. That will encourage the spirit of independence in the artist's work.