



Talktime
HARSHVARDHAN RANE

Having done all kinds of jobs for about 15 years before stepping into B-town, Rane is proud to have gone through that phase which made him what he is today. He speaks with Musba Hashmi about his debut, fondest memory and upcoming projects

‘I avoid doing intimate scenes’

■ **Your father is a doctor, how did you end up becoming an actor?**

It's a long story. I had run away from home when I was 16. I came to Delhi in 2001 and did a lot of odd jobs to earn a living. I worked at an STD booth. I worked as a logsheet maintainer in a cyber cafe where I was paid ₹10 a day. Then I joined another cyber cafe where I was paid double the money. I also worked as a delivery boy. I have done all kinds of jobs but the one thing I had in mind was to become an actor. Back then, I didn't know that this could be a profession because not many people would choose this line. In my subconscious I knew that this is what I wanted to do. Gradually, I carved a path in the South industry and finally became an actor.

■ **What lesson did you learn during your struggle days?**

I don't see it as a struggle; it was rather fun for me. In order to reach somewhere you have to carve a path and all these jobs served that purpose. There were many lessons that I learnt dur-

ing the period. In fact, I learnt some of the best ones. Discipline is one of them. Second, value of relationships. Third, honesty. If you are not honest with yourself and your job, you can't reach the heights you want.

■ **You made your Bollywood debut with Sanam Teri Kasam. How did you come on board for that?**

My debut movie was *Satra Ko Shaaadi Hai* produced by John Abraham. But it never got released. For *Sanam Teri Kasam*, there's a different story. It was in 2015 when I was shooting for a couple of Telugu films and got a call for the film. I asked them if they could wait as I was shooting. It took me two-three months to complete the pending shoots and then I went to Mumbai. I reached the team's office and was told that I was too late. They had already cast someone else and he was preparing to begin the shoot. I tried convincing Radhika Rao ma'am and Vinay Sapru sir (writer-director) to cast me as I was in love with the script and the role. I was able to relate to Inder Lal Parihar a lot. After a lot of efforts, they asked me to perform a scene and I did. They asked

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me to do it once more. I did and they were in tears. They loved the conviction with which I played Inder. That's how I got the role.

■ **What is the difference between**

South and the Hindi film industry?

The South film industry has taught me a lot of discipline and also how to make your producer comfortable. A person who is investing money should feel comfortable. For Bollywood, undoubtedly it is every actor's dream. It has a wider reach.

■ **Is there a role that you would like to experiment with?**

I want to play a warrior. Whenever I see such movies, there is a certain energy that I feel. I believe that I have some connection with a warrior. May be I was a warrior in my past life. (laughs)

■ **What things are outside your comfort zone?**

Doing intimate scenes. I try to avoid such scenes but if the script demands it then I don't have a choice. But yes, I want to avoid it as much as possible because by all means I want to guard my co-actor. It is my responsibility to not do anything that would harm women co-actors in any way.

■ **What has been your fondest memory?**

When my first film got released — both in Hindi and Telugu and I saw

myself on the big screen; it is a moment I can never forget. I remember when I walked into the theatre, I didn't get a seat. I was just standing in the corner and seeing such huge version of me on the 70 mm screen.

■ **What are your upcoming projects?**

I have my hands full. *Haseen Dilruba* and *Taish* will be releasing this year. Both of them are amazing movies. For *Taish*, I have done more homework than what I did for *Sanam Teri Kasam*. It's a revenge-drama and people will see me in a different avatar.

■ **Can you share a few memories from your life?**

When I was struggling, I was very fond of river rafting. Back in 2011, all my friends made a plan to go to Rishikesh. I had no money back then. One of my friend knew a resort owner who was about to get married. I requested my friend to ask him if I could be the photographer and that he had to let me stay at his resort for three days — all free. He agreed. And now after so many years, I am playing a river rafter in *Haseen Dilruba*. Life definitely makes you take a full circle.

Those wheels of yore

The 9th edition of 21 Gun Salute International Vintage Car Rally and Concours d'Elegance was flagged off from India Gate last week. SHALINI SAKSENA tells you what makes this 4000 km royal expedition special

In 2011 when the first edition of the 21 Gun Salute Heritage Cultural Trust in association with the Ministry of Tourism was flagged off, nobody would have thought that nine years down the line it would only grow from strength to strength and attract international participation, be covered by 20 international magazines and would bring 100s of rarest of rare vintage cars on to its platform. The ninth edition, was more than just display of rich automotive heritage that paid tribute to the golden era of the automotive industry; it was also about celebrating the country's rich heritage. The 21 Gun Salute International Vintage Car Rally & Concours d'Elegance has grown to become one of the most anticipated and talked-about automobile events of Asia.

This salute to the spirit of motoring will showcase rare vintage cars in the world like the 1938 Rolls-Royce 25/30, Maserati 3500GT Vignale Syder, 1939 Buick Roadmaster Convertible, 1959 Jaguar XK 150 S, 1951 Bentley MK VI Freestone and 1959 Alfa 2000 to name just a few. The rally will cover 17 cities, 4000 km in 23 days that will be a tribute to the motoring and historic Indian culture. The rally, after 17 check-in stops, will end in the City of Lakes — Udaipur — on March 10, 2020 with the participants enjoying the Festival of Colours — Holi.

Madan Mohan, chairman and managing trustee of 21 Gun Salute Heritage & Cultural Trust tells you that India's culture and heritage motoring are the two strong pillars of the competition. "Both aspects highlight that the show is of special importance and attract both participants and visitors. For the past eight years, the event has grown in all aspects to become a magnificent show that attracts tourists and motoring buffs from around the world," Mohan says.

He tells you that the idea is the rally is not to just show the rarest of rare vintage cars that compete but it is a step in generating interest in global tourists to experience the grandeur of India. "Along with international participation from 15 motoring enthusiasts from around the globe, the rally



Madan Mohan with his one of the many vintage cars that were showcased in the Capital
— Photo: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

THE IDEA IS TO SHOW PEOPLE CARS FROM DIFFERENT ERA AND HOW THE SPEED AND CYLINDERS CHANGED OVER TIME. THERE ARE CARS WITH A SPEED OF 40 KM AN HOUR WHICH IS PHENOMENAL FOR EARLY 90s

— MADAN MOHAN

will be a biennial effort to promote India as a global motoring tourism destination on a global platform. It will also bring enormous tourist footprint to our country," Mohan tells you who got the support of the Ministry of Tourism for the rally back in 2014.

The motoring enthusiasts along with their masterpieces will travel to



unique destinations — which changes each year — stay at palaces of erstwhile *maharajas*, dine with royal families and visit the forts to build lifelong bonds. And then there is the fact that while the entries this year is over a 100, each vintage car that will be on the road have never been showcased in the show before.

"The idea is to show people cars from different era and how the speed and cylinders changed over time. There are cars with a speed of 40 km an hour. Given that those were still times of horse-drawn carriages, this speed back in the early 1930s would have been phenomenal," he says.

In order to judge these cars, there

is a gathering of an international jury panel comprising 37 motoring experts and renowned classic car experts, Fédération International des Véhicules Anciens (FIVA) officials, restoration experts, FIVA scrutineers, F-1 racers and other celebrated individuals from all over the world. The handpicked cars are given points on the basis of authenticity of cars, their style, design, rarity, the stitch on the upholstery, how authentic the colour is, how authentic the upholstery is and the entire car has been upgraded.

Mohan, who has 328 vintage cars, 43 jeeps and 106 bikes along with clocks, typewriters, and other antiques, has been a collector since he purchased his first-ever vintage car Dodge Victory 6, 1928, back in 2000, that was previously owned by Raja Saheb of Khetri.

"All these antiques have been painstakingly restored to their original glory. I scout palaces and garages to look for abandoned vintage cars, buys them and then spends years in upgrading them. It is time consuming and an expensive hobby. One has to look for original parts or order them from the companies that are in the business of making these parts. Then comes the cost of shipment. It is very rare that one will find a part here in India. It has to be imported.

"At each and every stage, there is a cost not to forget that the first six-eight months are spent in doing research on the car; its history and what made it special. Once that is done, the work on the car itself starts. Sometimes it takes months before we get a part or a specific upholstery. A lot of patience is required when you work on doing up a vintage car. But the satisfaction that comes from looking at the end result is worth all the hassle," Mohan says.

Interestingly, Mohan is the face of the show and looks after the front management and it is his brother who spends hours toiling and restoring the cars. "My brother went for a course in vehicle restoration in the US when he was 46. He likes to stay in the background. While I do the marketing and am the face of the what we do," Mohan says.

‘Indian music has an awe factor’



SHILPA RAO recently released a single in collaboration with six-time Grammy Award nominated sitarist-composer-producer Anoushka Shankar and Ayanna Witter, a British singer-composer and cellist. She speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about her journey and cross-culture collaboration

■ **How did the collaboration happen?**

Anoushka (Shankar) and I had met many years back and then we met again recently when I was in London for a holiday. We had talked about our music and things related to it. We also talked about a collaboration. Then we came together in Mumbai on a music that she had composed. It was such simple and minimalistic that I wanted to be a part of and couldn't refuse.

■ **What is the song about?**

The song, *Those Words*, is about a journey of a woman who is all by herself now. She is out a relationship now. In the song she talks about the times when she was in one and the moments she lived in that relationship. It is a not a sad or a depressing song. More of a song that is based on internal thoughts. Something that we all do when we sitting by ourselves.

■ **Was there a reason why you chose this theme?**

When I heard the song, there weren't any lyrics to it. But the music was so beautiful and moving and we wanted to do something on those lines. We discussed and we wanted to do a song that internalised feelings. Shirin then wrote the lyrics. And the whole thing fit perfectly and the song is so beautiful.

■ **How much fun did the three of you have doing this collaboration?**

The whole thing started on a simple note — a thought — which was very simple. The whole process was not complicated. It was just that she had a thought and shared it with me and I shared it with Shirin. The best part is that all this happened face-to-face and not over the mail. It was the first time that I was recording in London at the Guildhall School; it is one of the top schools for music in in the world. It was my first international collaboration. We spent an entire day together to make this song. It was little things that mattered while we made this song. It was not about what the song became later on but the whole journey that made it possible.

■ **How important is it to have more such collaborations to experience global music?**

Indian music has always had a certain awe factor for those who live abroad. It is not a new concept for people outside of India to listen to our music. Indian music is one of the most progressive music's in the world; it has been there for centuries. The best of this song is — Ayanna didn't know anything about the words, Shirin had written them; we came from different backgrounds, we learnt a lot about each other since human emotions are the same. This is what you learn from such collaborations.

■ **Where is Bollywood music heading?**

Music keeps changing every month. When people ask me where I will be a year down the line, it is difficult to answer it. I live in the moment and committed to it. I love the unpredictability that is associated with the music and the business. It makes you want to learn more and keep evolving.

■ **How did your musical journey begin?**

It was an everyday life for us while I was growing up because of my father. We were surrounded with music. I didn't want to be a musician as a child. I learnt and listen to music because I loved it; it was till I was older that I wanted to sing. My musical journey was simple.

■ **What is waiting for you?**

There are a few Bollywood projects and a couple of more single releases coming up in the near future.

They began their journey in 2014 and in the next six years, the band has over 1,000 performances to its credit. The band was formed with an idea to work with instruments and introduce that to the people. When they began to work on the music, they realised that in order to take it to a much larger audience they had to add a vocalist. And that is how sufi-rock fusion band — Swaraag was born.

"Our journey began back in 2014. Arif Khan, a freelancer and I decided to work on instrumental music. But after six months we realised that we needed a vocalist. We approached Khan's younger brother Asif. He is the lead vocalist with the band. His forte lies in sufi music. In fact, each person in the band has a musical background, they are from the Sikar Gharana. We are from Rajasthan. So, people would demand that we play music from the region. Unfortunately, Rajasthani music is not much in demand in the State and hence we had not incorporated that in our band. We found that there was a market for it but not good content. We worked on this and introduced four things into our

Music for the soul

Swaraag, the Sufi rock fusion band from Jaipur, was in the Capital recently for a show. SHALINI SAKSENA speaks with the founder on what makes them sought after and how they were part of the reality show Rising Star 3

band — sufi, Rajasthani, instrumental and Bollywood music. This became our USP" Pratap Singh, the co-founder and manager of the band explains.

But after being in the market for six years, they realised that they needed to add fusion in order to connect Indian classical and the youth. The fusion was done in a manner that it doesn't sound odd. "We ensure that our fusion is such that it acts like salt in a dish. We don't want to sound totally western. We have saxophone, drum and acoustic guitar. We don't use digital instrument. This way the audience can enjoy the music of the instruments," Singh shares. He says that the name of the band is derived from the Sanskrit word — *swar* and *raag* we all know — the music. The idea was to let people know that they are there to promote music.



He tells you that the reason why Rajasthan music is not famous even though it is a popular tourist place because the State is seen as land of royals. But when it comes to entertainment industry, people see only two-

three things — food, palaces and royals. "Ask them if they would want to make a Rajasthani film and they want to know who will watch it. Another problem is that the dialect in the region changes every 100 km," Singh

opines.

The band was also part of *Rising Star 3*. While reality shows are good, it is not always the right place to showcase one's talent. "It is not always correct. When I was there, I saw young

people, who were there to showcase their talent but are nowhere today. One has to ask where they are today. Even if one wins a show, there are no guarantees that they will shine. One needs a combination of talent, marketing strategy and luck. While reality shows give you the much-needed jump, there is need to market it well. Talent alone will not take you far," Singh says. However, he is quick to point out that for an artist, it is a big thing to be viewed on TV. Reality shows give you a face, a recognition.

Interestingly, he tells you that their music is not always appreciated. There have been two instances where they were caught on the wrong foot. One was when the band had to perform in Haryana. The people were looking to dance, our music is not on those lines. "The second was while we were performing in Vishakhapatnam. We wondered where we had landed. Finally, we played Amitabh Bachchan song. Three people came in front to dance. After 45 minutes we understood what they were looking for. The good is that we have people in our band with multiple talent," he tells you.