

Tribute

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Anand and the Odds...A Few Hits and Misses of Dev!



Dev Anand has always been an everlasting icon. Dev Saab was always 'Dev'! The opportunity to see a different, a little detouring from the original Dev Saab was seen when Goldie Saab directed him in the Hindi version of *Guide* (1965). In the Hindi version of *Guide*, the fans could see glimpses of a different, unusual Dev. In every reincarnation, if there is any, Dev would be born as Dev only!

Even though his life journey stopped on December 3, 2011, his journey on the silver screen continued through each of his works, his style on and off screen, the songs he sang on screen and the songs he lived in life, the way he looked at his leading ladies and smiled with a broken tooth...everything is recalled as part of the celebration of his birth centenary.

Here, one is trying to look at the odds in the life of Dev Saab. He had a few hits and misses in his personal and professional life as an actor, producer, and director. For Dev Saab, like any other film star, there were ups and downs. It's an entertaining chapter where we can see a few glimpses of Dev Saab's done and not-done roles in films. There are a few places where his bold approach as a producer is seen, and in a few places, the boldness and path-breaking attitude are shined in the selection of roles in films. I personally have a benchmark, a standard to see an actor as a star. My parameter is the mimicry carried on by others of that actor makes him a star. The following of his style in every way makes him or her a star. A singer is said to be famous when others start singing his or her songs. The rumours around the star

make him or her a superstar. Dev Saab was a superstar. There were many rumours around him. One interesting rumour was that the high court ordered him not to wear a black suit. This was to avoid young girls committing suicide. It was a big rumour that whenever Dev Saab wore a black suit, someone committed suicide. Dev Saab has denied this, as they all were rumours.

'Not making a movie' is also a process in filmmaking. There are announcements, there are muhurats, there are talks, there are advertisements. Shooting starts, songs are recorded, and some reels are completed, but the movie stalls due to 'some inexplicable reasons'. This phenomenon has happened in the lives of all artists. It also happened with Dev Saab. Did we ever imagine Dev Saab in the Indian Avatar of Mario Puzo's 'Godfather'? Indian fans have seen different stars trying to get into the shoes of Marlon Brando as Godfather, and this has happened many times in various versions of Indian cinema. One director thought of Dev Saab as the Godfather as well. This was none other than *Gadar* fame director Anil Sharma. He announced the film, and of course, there was publicity. It is said that Dev Saab had made efforts to be the 'Godfather'. He tried to be 'The Godfather' in his unique way of walking, speaking, looking, and being with all his virtues. Unfortunately, the announcement of this film post came to a halt.

There is one film that Dev Saab started with his elder brother, Chetan Saab. It was much before '*Gadar*' that a theme was explored by Chetan Saab. The title of the film was '*Kaafir*', in which Dev Saab was performing a role of a Hindu doctor, and Priya Rajvansh was a Muslim girl who was his lady love. After shooting two songs, the film got stuck where it didn't start again. Apart from *Tere Mere Sapne* under the direction of his younger brother Goldie Saab, this was a good opportunity to see Dev Saab as a doctor under the direction of his elder brother. We missed this opportunity. One may have a *Kala Bazaar* (1960) screening where the three brothers could be seen on screen in one film. *Kala Bazaar* has Dev Saab as a lead, Goldie Saab in a supporting role and Chetan Saab as a guest appearance. The climax of *Kala Bazaar* is a treat to watch the siblings perform; one is

a film producer, and the other is a director. This opportunity came again after many years when Dev Saab decided to produce '*Jana Na Dil Door*', a film in which the Anand brothers came back together, but the film was never released.

Dev Saab lingered around one of the film titles of his earlier film, changing or twisting it into a new one and launching a new film. One famous film was *Jewel Thief* (1967), which he later made into a sequel-like film, *Return of Jewel Thief* (1996). It is also interesting to look at similar-titled films that resemble earlier titles of Dev Saab films, making them into new ones.



Muhurat of Ek Do Teen Char

Savankumar Tak titled a film to star Dev Saab titled '*Mister John*', Rekha, Bindu and Anil Dhavan as guests as the cast planned. This film equation didn't work. Suraj Sanim was a scriptwriter for many of Dev Saab's films. Considering Dev Saab's specialities, he wrote a film for him. However, the two films he wrote were never made. The one among them was titled '*Hum Tino*' (resembling *Hum Dono*), directed by Gogi Anand. Dev Saab, Hema Ji, Yogita Bali, Mehmood, Baby Geeta, and Raj Babbar were in the cast. Sunil Anand, the son of Dev Saab, produced this. The second one that missed the chance was titled '*Naya Johnny*' (resembling the cult *Johny Mera Naam*), directed by Surendra Suri and Produced by Amit Khanna. Dev Saab, Shammi Kapoor, Hema Ji, and Tina Munim were in the lead. Later, the film never reached the theatre.

There are many stories behind the making of the iconic film *Zanjeer* (1973). One of them is associated with Dev Saab as well. In the film, written by the great duo writers Salim-Javed, there wasn't a single song for the character of Inspector Vijay. Dev

Saab, known for his specialised songs as an actor and producer, refused director Prakash Mehra because there was no song for him. The concept of 'Dev Anand without songs' was something he never wanted to imagine; a role without songs was a far-fetched dream. This is one story told, and it could be a rumour as well. Another opportunity came to see Dev Saab acting in a film written by Salim-Javed and directed by Goldie Saab. The film was titled '*Ek Do Teen Char*' with a huge cast including Dev Saab, Dharam ji, Shashi Ji, Hema Ji, Rakhee Ji, Rishi Kapoor, Tina Munim, Parveen Babi, and Amjad Khan. As usual, the mahurat was colourful at Mehboob Studios in Mumbai. The film got an instant buzz because of many great combinations, including the writer and the director and also in actors, but the film stopped and it never took off again. There is a possibility that a few earlier photographers may have pictures of these muhurats.



Muhurat of Ab Meri Baari

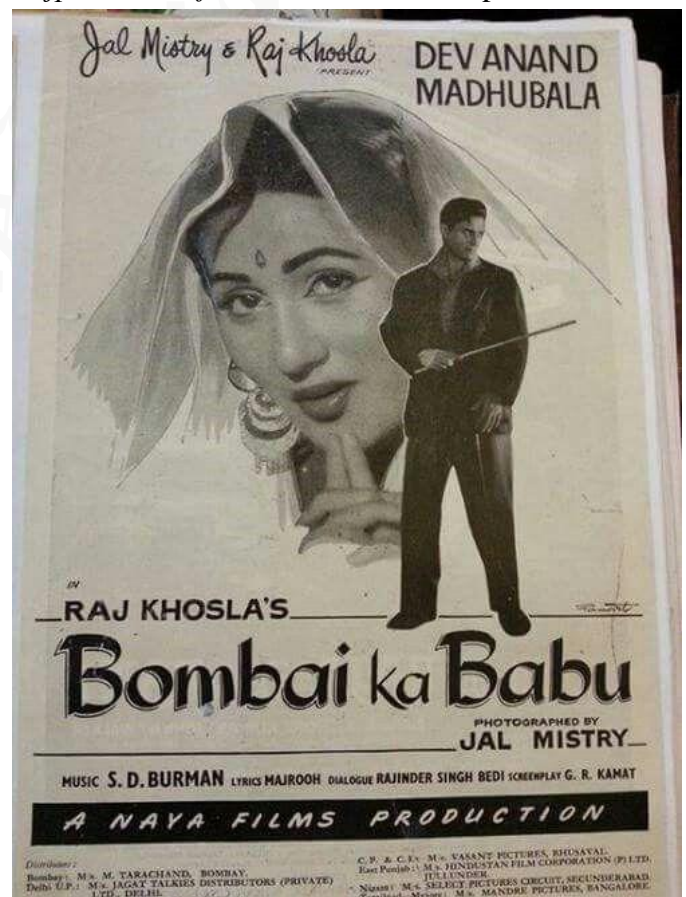
One such rare occasion came under the direction of Dev Saab, where he was to direct Amitabh Bachchan. Dev Saab had finalised the film's title as 'Purana Papi'. The film included the cast as Dev Saab, Amit Ji, Hema Ji, and Meenakshi Sheshadri. A picture of both superstars became famous then; it is hard to find any now, even on the internet. For whatever reason, the film didn't get made.

The pair in casting of Dev Anand and Kamal Haasan would have been a delight to watch on screen. Prakash Verma, the writer of Dev Saab's '*Lootmaar*', initiated the work on '*Do Deewane Pyar Ke*'. Smita Patil, Reena Roy, and Ranjeeta were also involved in

the film as cast. The film's journey remained at the discussion stage.

Like many other directors who wanted to cast Dev Saab in their films, Mahesh Bhatt also tried it in the film *Ab Meri Bari*. This 'Bari' (turn) never came; the film was on floors, though.

On the other hand, Dev Saab's close associates and big directors with experience could also complete many films. '*Tijori*' was one such film. Director Raj Khosla and Dev Saab were friends for years. Dev Saab acted in many important films directed by Raj Khosla. They include titles like *Milap* (1955), *CID* (1956), *Kala Pani* (1958), *Bombai Ka Babu* (1960), and *Sharif Badmash* (1973). So together, they planned '*Tijori*', which was to be produced by Mushir Riaz. He was the producer of big films like '*Safar*', '*Bairaag*', '*Mehbooba*', '*Shakti*', and '*Rajput*' but '*Tijori*' could not be completed.



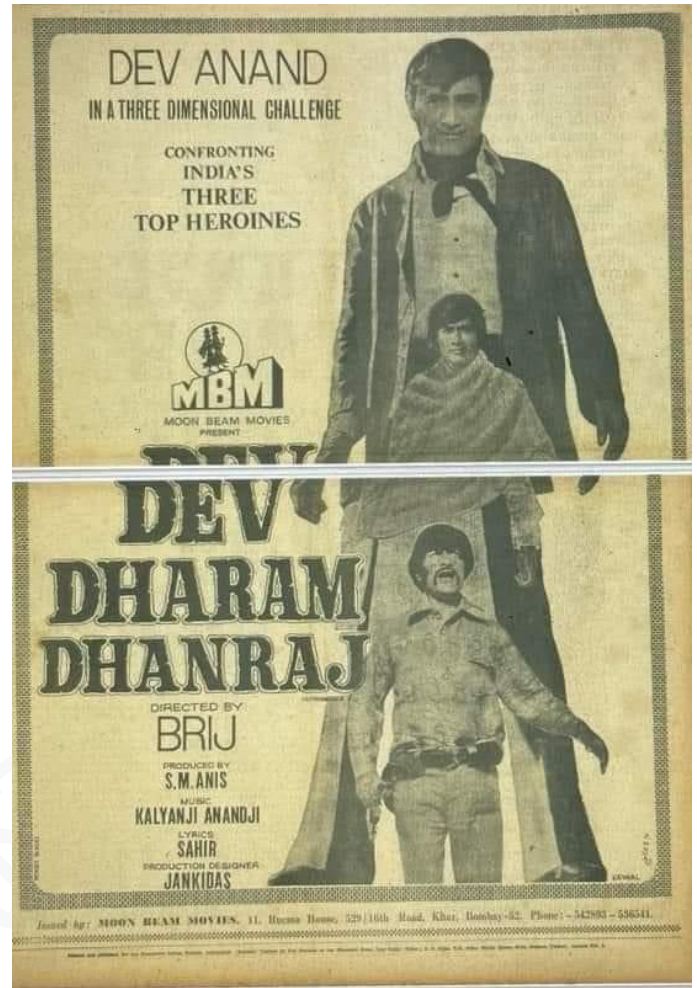
As we are mentioning Raj Khosla and an unfinished film, it's a good idea to look at a film that had both Dev Saab as an actor and Raj Khosla as the director, but the actress changed. This film was *Bombai Ka Babu*, which began with Madhubala. There were posters and publicity done, but due to

unidentified reasons in Madhubala's life, she was replaced by Suchitra Sen.

Now, this role is tricky for both male and female characters as the characters are introduced as siblings, and it takes a turn later, but Dev Saab took it to cast Suchitra Sen despite both working in other films the same year and having a clear love track in it. This was *Safar* (1960) by Shankar Mukherjee. Definitely, *Bombai Ka Babu* was way ahead of the stories during the 1960s. Similar risk could be seen in many of Dev Saab's films, including *Solva Saal* (1958), a story that unfolds overnight with a boy and girl unknown to each other spending a night out of their houses for a particular cause. The international presence that Dev Saab was looking for could be seen and understood by his passion. Many of us know that *Guide* (1965) was made in English, but how many of us know that before making English *Guide*, he produced *Teen Deviyani* (1965) in English as 'Oh Boy, Three Girls'? The experiment he possibly did with languages was also done for making the first film of Navketan in the colour film stock. *The guide* is Navketan's first colour film, but some parts of *Teen Deviyani* were also shot in colour. This could also be an experiment by the producer, Dev Saab. He also experimented while working with new directors like Guru Dutt, Raj Khosla and, importantly, Goldie Saab. Dev Saab gave a break to many actors who went on to become stars in future; the list is long, in fact, very long. The passion of the man never stopped. Since its inception in 1949, Navketan has continuously kept producing films till Dev Saab took his last breath in 2011.

We missed many opportunities to see Dev Saab in many roles. The '*Victoria No. 203*' director Brij wanted to bring Dev Saab on screen in not one, not two, but three roles. He had planned a film with

Dev Saab in a triple role with the title '*Dev Dharam Dhanraj*,' but this was not to happen.



There is a personal regret one has, and that is to miss Dev Saab as 'Rocky' in *Teesari Manzil* (1966). Undoubtedly, Shammi Kapoor has done a fabulous role, but what if Dev Saab played the drums as Rocky? How he would have looked is the question that keeps popping up every now and then. Would he look the same as he does while playing the grand piano in *Teen Deviyani* singing 'Khwab Ho Tum Ya Koi Haqeeqat', the words that always fitted Dev Saab's persona, life and beyond !!!

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