



## MISSING

The write-up *No. Is Down The Years* (August '90) was truly informative and absorbing. I and many others were, however, disappointed at your failure to mention Kanan Devi and Khurshid Banu in the chapters covering the '30s and '40s. They were great names with fans running into millions. Both were fine artistes as well as formidable songstresses.

Your contention that Noorjehan decided to come to Bombay to act in *Amol Ghadi* in 1946 is not correct. She had earlier appeared in *Nadan* (1943), *Dost* and *Lal Haveli* (1944), all produced in the film capital of the subcontinent.

Murad Ali Kader, Chittagong

## BAN THE EPICS!

I agree with Sanjay Khan that the message 'This serial is not authentic but a fictional representation of history...' flashed before every episode of *The Sword Of Tipu Sultan* is an insult to the intelligence of the viewer (*How Can History Be Fiction?*, August '90). Hindu fundamentalists say that the destruction of temples, breaking of idols, rape and forcible conversion were everyday events under the Muslim rule. Since Tipu Sultan also 'perpetrated unspeakable atrocities on Hindus', they argue, the serial on him should be banned.

Hitler was a tyrant, a despot of the first order. He snuffed the life out of lakhs of Jews. Jews, however, have never sought a ban on films based on this villain of the century. If violence and immoral acts are to be used as yardsticks to call for a ban, then the serial that deserved to be banned was *Mahabharat*.

*Mahabharat* is a story eulogising violence. Felony and fornication, treachery and tyranny—that is, the ills of present-day society—can be attributed to the havoc played by this scripture on our collective psyche. What moral can you derive from such epics?

Since the TV serials *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* were based on myths (myth: an invented story), the message 'This serial is not authentic...' would have been very appropriate along with these serials. It was wrong on the part of Doordarshan to slap such a message on a serial based on historical facts about which there are no two opinions. Fundamentalism has done enough harm to the people. Let us not drag this monster into the entertainment media.

K.P. Rajan, Bombay

## DREAM GIRLS

Long before we even knew the meaning of love, we were all misty-eyed and foolish about these fantastic ladies of the Indian cinema, whom we

would probably never get to meet. They were part of our lives, and we rushed to the movies just to be with them for a few hours.

Yes, we have always been in love with the reigning queens of the tinsel world, age and caste no bar. Your cover story (August '90), I am sure, sent most of us down memory lane, to the time when we cherished our secret world inhabited by our dreams and these beautiful ladies.

As with Sridevi today, we have been crazy about all the No. 1 stars. The innocence of Jaya Bhaduri, the pertness of Mumtaz and the regality of Hema Malini, are written across one's heart as surely as the other experiences of growing up.

And growing up could never be the same without these stars, for they were always in our minds, our inseparable partners and our closest friends. We have laughed and cried with these ladies.

For this reason, we must thank *Filmfare* for showing us these beautiful and exceptionally talented ladies once again. It is not the same as watching them in dated movies; stills are always better. However, looking at the first ladies of the Indian cinema, one could see why they held that place—they all had something!

Dinesh Kumar, Chandigarh

## PAUDWAL MONOPOLY?

The controversy over *Dil's* songs has left a bad taste in the mouth (*Double Trouble*, July '90). Anuradha Paudwal is a very good singer. Nobody will dispute that, not even Alka Yagnik. But Alka Yagnik too is not a dubious talent. We know Ms Paudwal owes half her popularity to Gulshan Kumar's sedulous promotion. But it is quite unbecoming of her to endorse even some of his controversial and unethical decisions.

Notwithstanding Ms Paudwal's modest denial, it's quite obvious that the Mangeshkar monopoly must have irked her in the early part of her career. The pity is she now herself flaunts the same logthsome mask. When she's far ahead of her rivals and has proved almost indispensable to today's music directors, it is painful to see her chasing stray ditties like this. Gulshan Kumar's partiality may fetch her a cartload of cassettes, but what about the loss of goodwill? Her fans aren't going to react lightly, neither are her colleagues.

Despite all that loose talk about the Mangeshkar monopoly, I do not think Lata or Asha would ever stoop so low. Ms Paudwal's attempts at self-aggrandisement using a 'Super' crutch like GK are deplorable.

No doubt Ms Paudwal has come a long way but sans business ethics she has no future. The symptoms are

already showing. Some time back she was rendering all of Laxmikant-Pyarelal's best compositions. But in L-P's latest scores for prestigious banners she is conspicuous by her absence.

Tulasidas Mishra, Bolangir

Prize: Rs 75

## VINDICTIVE

It was shocking to read the utterly vindictive and misleading letter titled *Long-playing L-P* by Mr R.M. Vijayakar (July '90). In his desperation to prove me wrong he distorts what I stated in my letter and fails to relate his details with fidelity. It was purely incidental that the four films out of six that I preferred happened to be R.D. Burman's. But what astonished me was Mr Vijayakar's exposition of a strange concept that "one prefers or has a rapport with certain types of music and compositional styles". This is a baseless concept as far as the true music lover is concerned. In the past several films were big hits entirely because of their music. Films like *Albela*, *C.I.D.*, *Phagun*, *Barsaat Ki Raat*, and the latest *Maine Pyar Kiya* illustrate my point. Obviously people fell heart and soul for the melodious songs oblivious of who the composers were. In any case, how many music lovers know who composed the songs of *Chandni* and *Maine Pyar Kiya*? Had they chimed in with Mr Vijayakar's absurd opinion, they would have been divided over their preferences and those films would not have been such big hits.

I fail to understand why he chose to pick on only *Sharaabi* and *Sanam Teri Kasam* and kept silent on the elimination of *Kudrat*, *Bazaar*, *Masoom*, *Souten* and *Alag Alag*. *Sharaabi* remains Bappi Lahiri's finest score to date and he won the *Filmfare* award for it against RD's capricious score in *Jawaani* and not against his own pathetic ones like *Tohfa* and *Kasam Paida Karnewale Ki*. I was surprised that Mr Vijayakar could overlook this fact. Decidedly *Jawaani* was not among the top 25 of the '80s; all the same, it saw RD churning out some really spry tunes with Asha's topnotch rendition of *Tu rootha* still delighting music lovers. Should I conclude that he is deliberately ignoring RD?

Excellent singing by Kishore and Asha and RD's superb orchestration fetched the award for *Sanam Teri Kasam*. Asha, in fact, rates *Jaan-e-jaan* as one of her best songs. Simply lamenting this Burman creation as mediocre is not going to help Mr Vijayakar. As I had said in my letter (June '90), he should have justified the omission of *Sanam Teri Kasam* in favour of an ordinary score like *Tridev*.

Regarding the *Filmfare* awards, let me confess that I still feel dejected at the

trashy *Beimaan* winning over *Pakeezah* and *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* in 1972. Even Pran refused his award for *Beimaan* in protest. This one and only controversial judgement remains a patch on the otherwise illustrious history of the *Filmfare* awards, spanning almost four decades. Can Mr Vijayakar point out any other instance of a wrong choice? Certainly not. So why should I cavil at the genuineness of all the *Filmfare* awards given in this category so far? And I must add here that L-P's *Shor* was not nominated at all in 1972 as put forth by him. Rather, it was RD's excellent *Amar Prem* and *Mere Jeevan Saathi* which were the other two nominees. (L-P themselves claim that it was only in 1973 that they were nominated for *Bobby*, since then they have been nominated every second year—see Section II of the March '90 issue). This again proves his forgetfulness, or should I call it plain ignorance?

While obtrudingly comparing the '80s with the '60s and '70s, Mr Vijayakar merely beats about the bush. I wonder what he means by claiming that neither his selection of 14 L-P films nor mine would have been possible in the '60s or '70s. It was clearly a ruse to divert attention from his unfair preference for L-P's mediocre films. I have always appreciated L-P's brilliant scores like *Dosti*, *Milan*, *Daag* and *Anurodh* to name very few. But if Mr Vijayakar says that L-P's scores were more impressive in the '60s and '70s, I disagree. The '60s belonged to S.D. Burman and O.P. Nayyar. I agree that L-P reigned supreme in the '80s but the '70s were undoubtedly dominated by R.D. Burman with a spate of splendid scores like *Kati Patang*, *Caravan*, *Amar Prem*, *Parichay*, *Yaadon Ki Baaraat*, *Aandhi* and many more with *Ghar*, *Gol Maal* and *Jurmana* coming at the tail end. RD wielded his baton in this decade with great diligence though unfortunately not winning a single award.

While he continues to dote on L-P, Mr Vijayakar appears to be quite irrational and weak in memory as well. For writing on a subject such as music one needs to be thoroughly informed. Making a select list is not an easy job. In pursuit of achieving congruity many momentous issues tremble in balance. So let's be sure of our facts and sober in our judgement; otherwise a single false step will render criticism inevitable.

M. Asif Alvi, Charkhari

## EXAGGERATIVE

Film ads have become extremely exaggerative these days. The advertisers, it seems, have lost all scruples. There are innumerable examples to prove this. Very often it is found that ads regarding the release

of a movie read 'Kissing the screen very shortly'. But actually the release of the film is delayed due to censor or other reasons.

If a film is not up to the mark on all fronts, then false claims are made in a bid to whitewash the flaws. Ads in this context read: 'Multi-million rupee saga of chivalry, romance and action', 'Most interesting and entertaining film ever produced', etc.

These untrue ads imply as if never before has such a film been seen on the screen. On the very day the film is released, the ads claim it is the No. 1 hit of the year. But alas, the film fails miserably at the box-office. Still, flattering ads eulogising the film and misguiding filmgoers, crop up. The headlines go: 'At the top of the popularity charts', 'Running to packed houses', 'Acclaimed by press and public alike', 'Drawing mammoth crowds', 'Heading towards silver jubilee', etc.

It is high time a check against such false ads is introduced. At the same time, the film industry should consider its moral responsibility not to mislead the public by releasing such ads. Highlighting a film's merits is one thing, blowing them out of all proportion, is quite another.

Umakanta Mishra, Bhubaneswar

Best letter: Rs 100

## THE COPY CATS

It's time to say goodbye to originality, and welcome the Pharaohs of Plagiarism.

Today, every other film or song is a direct lift from another. *Maalmaal* was a translated version of *Brewster's Millions*, *Khoon Bhari Maang* had its roots in *Return To Eden*, *Jurm* drew its inspiration from *Someone To Watch Over Me*, *Ghayaal* had shades of *Rambo* and... well, the list is endless. Plus, some time ago you gave us an article on how *Dil* unceremoniously stole the climax of *Aashiqui* (which itself was like that of *Jaانwar* and so many other movies!).

Copying has had its impact on music too. Bappi Lahiri, of course, heads the list. Recently he's copied *Lambada* (by Kaoma) for *Ghayaal* and *The look* (by Roxette) for *Yoddha*. Besides, his *Tamma tamma* is competing with L-P's *Jumma chumma*—both lifted from the same African source.

If this state of affairs should continue, one shudders to think what would happen to Hindi films. We'd just have to stop seeing them, save the once-in-a-blue-moon *Maine Pyar Kiya* or *Appu Raja*.

Ram Goyal, Bombay

## JUST ONE POINT

While everyone's been raving about Nadeem-Shravan's excellent score in *Aashiqui* (including the composers themselves!), nobody has pointed out one little aspect that's not original. The *ohh...hh...ho* refrain in the song *Mera dil tere liye* has been lifted from the international chartbuster of 1988, *You're the voice* by Australian pop star John Farnum.

Rajesh Thadhani, Bombay

Success has zoomed to Salman Khan's head. His behaviour was really disgusting at the show he did in London with Amitabh, Sridevi, Neelam, etc. While the other stars were at their courteous best, Salman scowled at his fans cursing them under his breath when they approached him for an autograph. If this mannerless lad doesn't improve his ways, he may soon be shown the door.

Bewla La Rive, New Delhi

Apropos of the letter titled *Frankly speaking* (July '90), Mr G. Swaminathan's understanding and assessment of Bachchan's acting prowess is extremely pathetic. His reasoning is wayward and the conclusions drawn are all wrong. Just because he's written something contrary to the generally-held belief, he doesn't deserve a place in a prestigious magazine like yours. By awarding him you seem to acquiesce in his theory. If so, then it is most unfortunate.

Snehanshu Pratap, Patna

With *Jurm* Mahesh Bhatt has hit rock bottom. Not only has the story been 'inspired' by *Someone To Watch Over Me* but several scenes have been lifted take by take from *Fatal Attraction*, *Witness* and *Cobra*. It is absolutely heartbreaking that Bhatt has gone totally commercial—he's directing a record-breaking 14 films simultaneously! I sincerely hope he realises his mistake and returns to old form once again.

Sandeep M. Hattangadi, Bombay

The August cover story was simply superb. The interview with Sridevi brought forth some intelligent facets of the actress' personality. The issue, on the whole, was the best so far this year—especially because of the interesting article on the No. 1 screen goddesses down the years.

Rohan Tyagi, Ranchi

The video and cable TV onslaught was bad enough. Now Doordarshan has gone and increased the number of feature films by showing one on Saturdays also. This will not only adversely affect the student community but social and cultural gatherings in the cities, already on the wane, will be completely wiped out. I hope Mandi House will reconsider its decision.

V. Prabhakar, Davangere

*No. 1s Down The Years* (August '90) wonderfully spotlighted female power in the otherwise male-dominated silver screen. But don't you think you blundered because old-time favourite Madhubala wasn't even mentioned? Who can forget films like *Mughal-e-Azam*, *Mr. & Mrs. 55*, *Half Ticket*, *Dulari* and *Mahal*, where she not only appeared so elegantly beautiful but also excelled in her roles.

Pradeep Jain, Calcutta