

'Fakir Of Venice' - A Peep Into Exploitative Tourism

Film: "The Fakir of Venice"; Director: Anand Surapur; Cast: Farhan Akhtar, Annu Kapoor, Valentina Carnelutti and Kamal Sidhu; Rating: ***

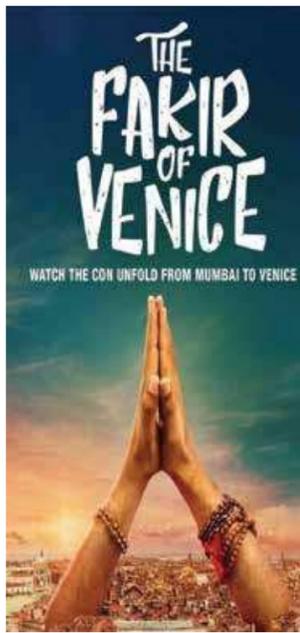
In his first acting assignment, Farhan Akhtar is splendidly in form as a bit of a jerk. He plays a production controller who can get a film crew anything they want -- from a monkey performing tricks to an exotic fakir performing monkey tricks.

Adi is okay with supplying anything, as long as he gets paid.

The monkey and the monkey tricks are aptly equated in the hugely original ferociously flawed script (Rajesh Devraj). When Adi is asked by a museum in Venice to produce a fakir who can bury himself completely in the sand for hours, the narrative brings into play the crass touristic culture of peddling exoticica to the West.

Annu Kapoor, in a stellar performance as the spaced out alcoholic chawl dweller who desperately needs to make money, is that performing monkey.

Though the theme is one of exploitation at the most basic level,



the plot moves in mysteriously non-toxic ways, creating pockets of empathy between the two men with a languorous equanimity. It all comes apart after the first half with the storytellers hell bent on force-finding a crisis and a climax to round off the quirky tale of the human 'bandar' and the 'madaari'. Farhan and Annu

Kapoor play off each other effectively. But the space provided for them to manoeuvre their differences and conflicts frequently gets crowded with humbug. They are unlikely companions separated by class and culture and also by the fact that the more sophisticated of the two men is an exploitative so-and-so.

Sportingly, Farhan plays the morally compromised go-getter with conviction. Annu Kapoor is magnificent as the reluctant monkey, while Jhilmil Hazrika as Annu's sister leaves a lasting impression in a brief role.

"The Fakir Of Venice" builds its narrative pyramid on a solid foundation of exploitative tour-

ism. But the plot falls apart in the third act when a good-hearted local Italian woman (Valentina Carnelutti) intervenes to rescue the Fakir (with a tragic unconvincing secret) and even falls in love with him. If only the imaginative mind knew where to stop, so many global calamities could be prevented.

I Was Encouraged To Develop Own Identity: Akshara Haasan

MUMBAI: Akshara Haasan, the younger daughter of veteran actor-filmmaker Kamal Haasan and National award-winning actress Sarika, says that though as a child she was highly influenced by her parents, she was always encouraged to have her own identity and become the best version of herself.

Talking about the influence of parents, Akshara told IANS here: "Both my parents have strong and influential personalities. It is then obvious to get impacted by their thoughts and of course as children, me and my sister (actress Shruti Haasan) were so influenced by our parents.

"But we were always encouraged to develop our own identities. We were given the freedom to become the best version of ourselves.

"I always loved dancing and I am doing that... I like the process of filmmaking as well as acting. So, I am doing that as well... Nothing is forced on me," added the actress, who recently appeared in a short film titled "Joyride". Meanwhile, Akshara is exploring different film industries in the



country. She has acted in Tamil films like "Vivegam" and "Kadaram Kondan". In Bollywood, she shared screen space with Amitabh Bachchan and Dhanush in the film "Shamitabh". She also acted in "Laali Ki Shaadi Mein Laaddoo Deewana".

"After 'Shamitabh', I did another film which did not work well at the box office... I got a chance to reassess my craft and I also took a professional acting

course that taught me some important things," she said.

"Growing up with two powerhouses of talent - my mom and dad - I have seen how they worked on good stories. My father not only made interesting films, he always picked quirky characters.

"I am physically strong and I am interested in action films. I want to explore that genre and make my mark there," she said.

Boman Irani Becomes A Grandfather Again

MUMBAI: Actor Boman Irani has become a proud grandfather again as his son Danesh and daughter-in-law Reah have welcomed their second bundle of joy -- a girl.

The thrilled grandfather took to Twitter on Friday evening to announce the arrival of the newborn. Boman posted a black and white photograph of Danesh and Reah, and captioned it: "There is nothing sweeter and warmer in the world than holding a newborn

baby girl in your arms that will soon call you Grandpa! Love you more and more my son Danesh Irani and my darling daughter Reah."

Danesh and Reah tied the knot in 2011. The two welcomed their first born, a son, in 2016.

The 59-year-old actor and his wife Zenobia also have another son, Kayoze Irani, 31, who is a Bollywood actor and has featured in films such as "Student of The Year" and "Youngistaan".

Ranveer Talks Of His Struggle

MUMBAI: Actor Ranveer Singh says there was a time when he thought he would never make it big in Bollywood as he had no filmy connections.

"I had a struggle period.... It was in the 10th standard. I sort of realised that my dream - after all - may not come true because most of the people around me were from a filmy lineage." The actor looked back at his struggle in his initial days during an episode of "Starry Nights 2. Oh!".

"I thought to settle for something within my reach. So, I decided to join a university in

America and I was late to register for classes ...only to find out that the acting class for non-majors had a slot empty, so I enrolled myself in," he added.

"I was told to perform on my first day by my instructor and everybody loved it, and that is when I realized I am a performer." Ranveer made his debut in 2010 with "Band Baaja Baaraat." He proved his mettle in films like "Lootera", "Goliyon Ki Rasleela Ram-Leela", "Gunday", "Dil Dhadakne Do" and "Bajirao Mastani". He gained star status with "Padmaavat" and "Simmba".

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