

By: Preeti Thandi

Rani Mukherjee always plays her parts well - so much so that now she can pursue an alternate career in cricket! She is so convincing in her role as a cricketer and a man in disguise in *Dil Bole Hadippa* that you can't help but wonder at her acting prowess. She has been recognized right from her very first blockbuster hit *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* to more challenging roles like *Black*. May it be a bubbly character, an oppressed woman of circumstances (*Laaga Chunri Mein Daag*) or a disgruntled housewife (*Saathiya*, *Chalte Chalte* and *Yuva*) Mukherjee always creates an extremely plausible on screen chemistry with her co-actors. She has the distinction of not only working with the best actors in Indian cinema but also with a broad spectrum of directors. Always looking for roles that excite her, she is now on the lookout for a role in action.

In her latest film she keeps up her own tradition of working with a first time director. Hoping to re-create magic with her talent and persona, Mukherjee was in Toronto for the gala world premiere of *Dil Bole Hadippa* at the Toronto International Film Festival 2009. In the film she wows co-star Shahid Kapoor both as Veera, a stunning Punjabi girl and Veer Pratap Singh, an enthusiastic cricketer. Preeti Thandi connected with the very remarkable Rani Mukherjee for *CityMasala*.

CM: How do you feel about being able to do more female centric roles?

RM: I won't say female centric roles. I would put them as main protagonist and every film has a protagonist. It's good at times to play the protagonist, not that it's the most important thing to do in a film. It's also good to be a part of the film. I've also played roles where I am just the character. Playing the protagonist comes with a lot of responsibility because you have to play the part really well because if the audience don't connect to the main protagonist, they don't connect with the film at all. But I like to challenge myself in most kind of roles.

CM: To what extent would you say have directors and co-actors contributed to your growth?

RM: I think tremendously. I think each film of mine has taught me something or the other. When you work with actors who are much senior and experienced, then you learn from their experience - the way they conduct their professional life, the way they are on the sets and how they worship their work. When you're working with great directors like Mani Ratnam or Sanjay Leela Bhansali they kind of direct you completely differently. They have another take on the way you should perform so you learn with each director. It's always very good and if you have a wide spectrum and if you can work with diverse personalities, you end up learning a lot.



CM: What scares you more – success or failure?

RM: I think success because with success comes a lot of responsibility, a lot of expectations soar high. With failure people are not really expecting anything from you and if you surprise them with a little good work, they feel happy.

CM: What do you think about Bollywood actors wooing Hollywood?

RM: It's great.

CM: Would you like to go that way?

RM: I think, it's not about Bolly-

wood or Hollywood, it's about doing more world cinema and tomorrow if I am offered world cinema I would love to jump and do it.

CM: Given the opportunity would you like to work with directors like Deepa Mehta or Mira Nair?

RM: Absolutely! For me what's important is the role. It's important what they're offering me. More than anything it's also the experience of working with directors like them. Again, it will be a learning experience for me. But most importantly, it is the kind of roles they will offer.



don't think people who want to work with me believe in those rumors. But it might be a problem for film makers who don't know me or haven't worked with me before. For them to approach me, they might think that there is one percent truth in it so they might hesitate to come to me and so that becomes a negative. I would like to clear all those rumours and give a knock on the

CM: Who has inspired you the most in your life?

RM: I think everybody in my day to day life inspires me so I don't have a particular idol.

CM: I've read you have a close bond with your father...

RM: Yes, I think my mom and dad have been very important in my life. They have been people whom I, in a way idolize because they brought us up and the way they are as people. But I wouldn't say I have an idol in my life. I get inspired even by a normal person on the street.

CM: What's your favourite vacation spot?

RM: London

CM: Who's your favourite designer?

RM: It has to be a tie between Manish Malhotra and Sabyasachi.

CM: What were you wearing on the red carpet?

RM: Franco Ferrara

CM: Are you working on any projects currently? What do you have lined up?

RM: I am reading three scripts that I have to give the green signal to but because of my extensive shooting of *Dil Bole Hadippa* and promotions for the film, I have not been able to. Besides, I was busy with my dad's health, he wasn't well. After the movie gets over and done with, I will sit down and decide which film I want to do. I am really not inclined to do anything at random. I want to do something that really excites me.

CM: What are your goals?

RM: Something I want to do is action but I don't know if film makers are ready to cast me in action right now.

CM: Are rumors of your marriage affecting your career in any way?

RM: I wouldn't say it is affecting my career because here I am with my new film *Dil Bole Hadippa*. I

head to all those people who have been spreading rumors for the last three years. And please, I persuade journalists to stop taking the baton from one hand and passing on the same baton to another person without realizing that there is a need to clarify with the person concerned. So it's quite sickening because for the last three years I have been clarifying but they just want to see me married and I don't know why they romanticize my marriage so much.

CM: But do you want to see yourself getting married?

RM: Of course I want to get married. Every girl wants to get married. I also want to get married, have kids, have a complete family but I think there's a time for everything and in today's day and age, it's important that the person who wants to get married should be the one to decide whether she wants to or doesn't want to get married. So I hope they leave the decision to me.