



Irrfan Khan: India's true international star

Talent unlimited... that's perhaps the apt way to describe the critically acclaimed Irrfan Khan. He is the first Indian actor to receive 'the much wanted' attention while walking the red carpet with Hollywood celebrities Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt at the recent Cannes Film Festival.

Having regaled Indian audience with his powerful performances in 'Maqbool', 'Yun Hota To Kya Hota' and 'Metro', the actor tried to explore new terrain with directed Michael Winterbottoms' docu-drama 'A Mighty Heart' based on the life of the slain *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl.

If Jolie, who plays Daniel's wife in the film, got rave reviews for her performance, Irrfan too could manage to please all and sundry and the scribes gave him full marks for etching out the role of the head of a Pakistani counter-terrorism unit with perfection.

James Rocchi of cinematerial.com wrote in his review: "A special praise has to go to Irrfan Khan. His character is the head of the new Pakistani anti-terrorism unit, and he's a man torn between the public pronouncements of support for the West's initiatives and the labyrinthine power-struggles of his government and massive public support for radical Islamic action. He is the face of a new kind of power in Pakistan, and his every line, every motion has the coiled power of a punch about to land, even in stillness."

Indeed 'A Mighty Heart' is a triumph for this versatile actor.

However, Irrfan is not an unfamiliar name in the global film circuit. In 2001 his 'The Warrior', a historical film made by London-based director Asif Kapadia, stormed into international film festivals and made people take notice of him.

His colleagues feel that Irrfan's grounded personality is the key to his success.

"There is a thing about Irrfan which will

take him to very far in life is his talent and his down to earth nature. No amount of success goes to his head. He is a very grounded person," Anurag Basu, who worked with him in 'Metro', said.

He has one more international project called 'Partition' in his kitty. Directed by Canadian director Vic Sarin, the film stars Jimi Mistry and Neve Campbell.

Recently, Irrfan won accolades for his yet another powerful performance in U.S.-based Indian filmmaker Mira Nair's 'The Namesake', based on Jhumpa Lahiri's best-selling novel.

Next on his wish list is to find a foothold in Bollywood masala films.

"For me it's important to be commercially viable. The distributors should be willing to pay for my space. I still have very limited choice... So what's the point of being known as a good actor when you need to be recognised as commercially saleable? I want a better deal," said Irrfan.

But at the same time, he is looking forward to churn out more milestones like 'Maqbool', 'Warrior', 'Haasil' and 'Namesake'.

He said: "It's been a long journey. But I've a long way to go. I'm happy with life. My wife is writing for Rituparno Ghosh and Bela Bhansali. I've two kids, aged eight and three. I'm enjoying watching them grow. No experience can match that."

