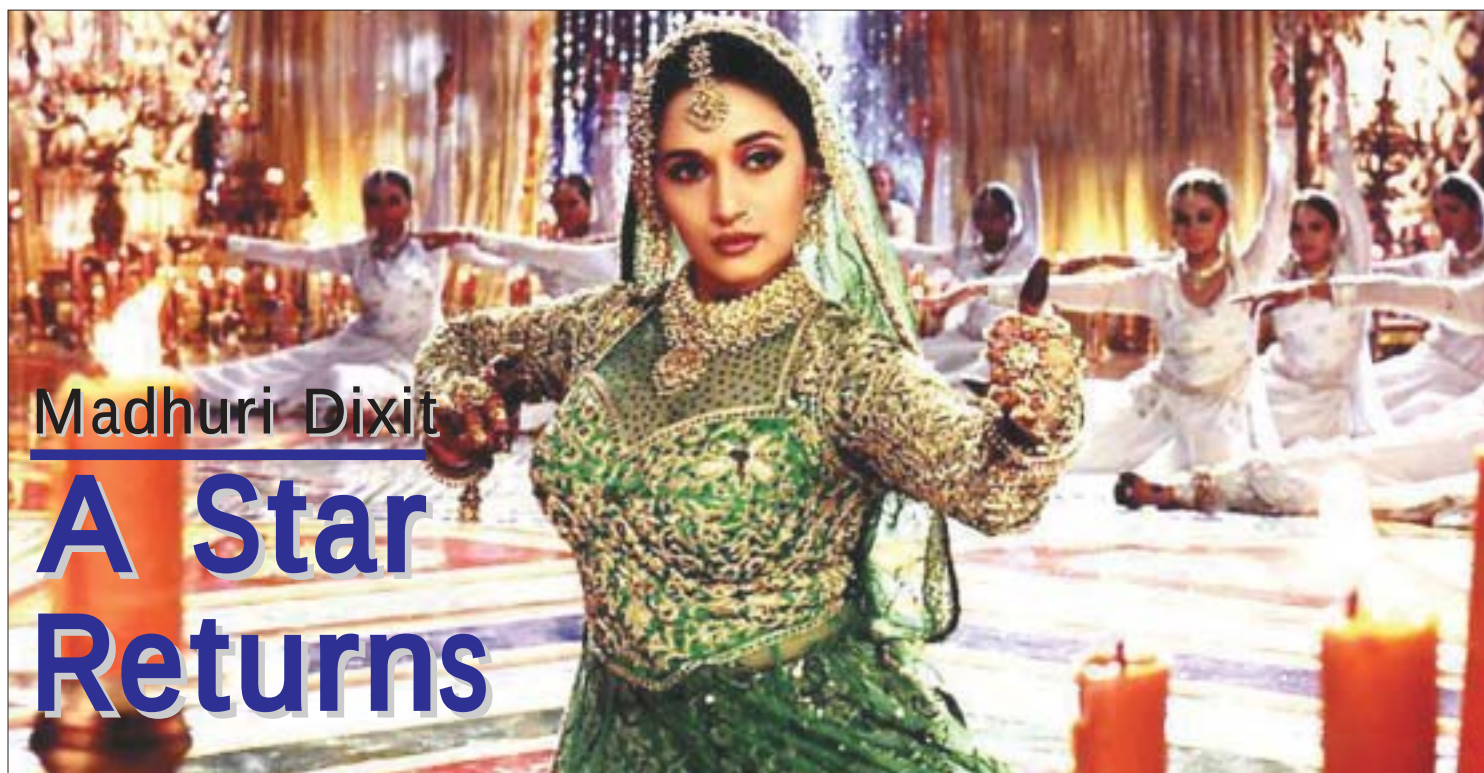




Madhuri Dixit A Star Returns

Madhuri Dixit, who took a break from Bollywood after marrying a California-based doctor, is set to mesmerise her fans again but says she will sign only those films that can be shot in the U.S. where she is now based. According to reports, she has made it clear that in her second innings she is not going to be working full time as her children are young and need her.

There are many filmmakers who still want to cast the actress, including veteran filmmaker Yash Chopra. He has offered her a role in his as-yet-unnamed upcoming movie. Way back in 1997, the two had teamed up to deliver one of the biggest Bollywood hits of all time, *Dil To Paagal Hai*.

The actress does not deny that Chopra had offered her a role, but has said it was too early to talk about it because everything was at still only at the "discussion level".

Madhuri, who captivated the hearts of millions with performances in *Tezaab* (1988), *Saajan* (1991) and *Beta* (1992), moved to the U.S. after marrying Sriram Nene, a doctor.

After a long gap, on February 25, she made an appearance at the 51st Fair One Filmfare awards function and gave a superb dance performance, choreographed by Saroj Khan, the person behind most of Madhuri's sizzling onscreen dances.

Madhuri, who wanted to become a microbiologist, received her first film offer from Rajshree Productions for a role in the 1986 film *Abodh*. Director Subhash Ghai gave her a dance sequence in *Karma* (1986).

The early years were not exactly great for Madhuri, as most of her films were not successful at the box office, and few noticed the Maharashtrian girl with extremely expressive eyes, a dazzling smile and an almost natural acting ability.

But things began to change when Ghai signed her for *Uttar Dakshin* (1987), and later *Ram Lakhan* (1989).

Madhuri however, didn't have to wait for Ghai's *Ram Lakhan* to finally make an impact. Before the film could be released came N. Chandra's unheralded *Tezaab* (1988) with Anil Kapoor — and its immensely popular song 'Ek, do, teen' took the nation by storm. *Tezaab*, or acid, went on to complete a golden jubilee in the theatres and catapulted her into the top spot in Bollywood. There has been, as the cliché goes, no looking back since.

After a superb performance in *Dil* (1990), which brought Madhuri her first Filmfare award, two more blockbusters — *Beta* and *Raja* (1995) — followed. From 1990, a hit film per year followed, including *Saajan* (1991), *Khalnayak* (1993) and another of Hindi cinema's biggest blockbusters to date — *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* (1994).

Later, in 1997, Prakash Jha's *Mrityudand* ensured critical acclaim for Madhuri. Then came the phenomenal success of Yash Chopra's *Dil Toh Pagal Hai* (1997). In 1998, Madhuri had only one major film to her credit — C.N. Chandra's *Wajood*.

The year 1999 seemed to be Madhuri's golden year. For an actress who rarely treaded the path of unconventional roles, the year saw Madhuri playing a host of different characters in artist M.F. Husain's unusual debut film *Gajagamiini*.

A year later, in producer Boney Kapoor's *Pukar*, she played a negative character, while her first south Indian film, *Engineer*, was a techno thriller.

Madhuri, who is holidaying in Mumbai these days with her two sons — three-year-old Arin and one-year-old Ryan — is also reading scripts and meeting directors. Only time will tell if the *dhak dhak* girl is able to leave a mark in her second innings. ■

