



In conversation with Orko Sinha

Description

Orko Sinha, a self-made man, is soon to be the youngest filmmaker in the Bengali film industry with his debut film *Aamar Aami* (Me and My Desires). This storyteller tries to explore man and his deepest desires through this film which he has both written and directed. Orko was a student in the Model School of Shibpur, where he topped his 12th, and was urged to join engineering. But finding the subject uninteresting, he soon shifted focus. The Inquirer team caught the first time director over a cup of tea where he talked about his film, his characters, how he created them, and about the soul of his film, which deals with the soul of man.

So, how did you get started with films? Where did it all begin?

When I was in school, say about in the 9th standard, I got this feeling, a desire started developing in me, to share my dreams with others. I was a musician back then. I used to play the synthesizer. And while I would play I would get these images in my head. And I would feel like sharing these images with people. And I asked myself how best could I share these images. I realized that the best medium was through cinema. I would be able to reach out to a lot more people.

While studying in college I assisted Buddhadeb Dasgupta, in a film called *Jano Na*. The next year Gautam Ghosh gave me a chance to assist him in *Moner Manush*. And from there I started my work in cinema.

How did you begin working on your film Aamar Aami?



Actors Rahul (left) and Arunima (center) with Orko (right)

I wrote the script for this film about three years ago. Before that I had made some docu-features in Gautam Ghosh's unit. I had directed them while he supervised. After that I wrote some scripts for Tara Bangla, I made some documentaries for myself. I made a few ad films for ABP Ananda and also made some short films.

Usually you go mad looking for a producer if you are a first time director. I was no exception. The search for a producer was a long and laborious job for me. Then after three years I finally got lucky.

What is Amar Aami really about?

The theme of this film is what one wants, one's desires. There are so many types of desires. Some are suppressed, while others we can realize but we cannot really reach. And then again there are desires which we follow through a lot of toil and hard work. But then we come to realize that, that is not what we really want. We want something else.

Imagine a boy who is great at playing football on the computer but not on the field. His desire is therefore limited to only the machine. Different people with different desires, some get what they want others don't. Amar Aami is a story that encompasses all of that.

The story is about the normal folk. I believe all of us have an inner persona, a soul, an *aami*. The search for that is the story of this film.

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Director Orko working with actor Jhilik Bhattacharjee

The different characters in your story. Do they have standalone story lines or do your characters interact with each other?

They are all interconnected. Suppose one of my central characters is the neighbor of another central character. So, they are not scattered. One way or the other they are interlinked.

I would say there are four central characters whose paths cross each other. One is a poet by heart but works in LIC, its played Biswanath Basu. I chose Biswanathda for this role because most of the roles he has played till now have been comic roles. I wanted a familiar face, the next door neighbour kind of feeling, somebody with whom people could connect to. There is no heroism as such, but for Amar Aami a different kind of heroism is born through this role.

As Biswanathda's wife I have cast Arunima Ghosh who used to be a theatre artist earlier. Rahul (Banerjee) plays the role of a commercial filmmaker in Tollywood. He is someone who despite being a talented filmmaker, his producers only want him to do remakes of South Indian films, which have worked nicely for him in the past. Rahul and Arunima used to work in a theatre group together. Now when they meet, years later, a soft corner develops between them the root of which is Arunima's desire to act and Rahul's desire to establish her as an actress.

Apart from them, Indrasish Roy is also in this film as a still photographer. But he cannot get a job due to his lack of experience. People always turn him down because of that and he simply cannot figure out a way.

That is a lot of characters you have in your first film.

Yes. Apart from all of them there is one other character. He is being played by Chandrabindu's lead singer Upal Sengupta. This is the character of Aamar Ami. He is man's inner desires personified. The reason I chose Upal is because I wanted a face who would look like someone who never gets stressed by any situation. His life is without *chaap*. And it is as if he knows what the meaning of life is.

When I first approached Upal for the role I told him that you have this innocence in you and I think that man's inner being is essentially a very innocent character. And that is true for everyone, whether the man in question is social pariah or a well-respected man about town. When we are alone all our thoughts are very innocent in nature. And I wanted a face that could show that.

So what does Upal's character do by profession?

That I am afraid I shouldn't reveal before the film is released. It's a big spoiler. And it is a surprise.

One thing comes to notice. All your characters whom you mentioned, one is a poet, one wants to be an actor, one wants to be an original filmmaker, one is looking for a career in photography. All your characters are in some way or the other an artist. Is there any particular reason for that?

First of all I needed to always interlink these characters. I had to find a point where all my characters would converge. So



Orko Sinha working with crew inside a Kolkata Tram

when I had a character of an actor I felt like needed the character of a filmmaker. A filmmaker can give a job to a photographer. While writing the screenplay you unwind your kite and let it fly, but then while pulling it back you must know how.

Another reason is that obviously there is some influence from my life that can be seen in the script. Maybe that's why the characters are like that. While writing it, it must have worked on the back of my mind in some way and that's how things fell into place.

Upal's character, the one without any tension or stress is kind of an archetypal character. You have characters like that in a lot of movies. If you go back, then Rabi Ghosh in Golpo Holeo Sotti, or more recently Aamir Khan in 3 idiots. How is Upal's character in your film different from these other characters?

Well if you see it this way, we wake up every day and then we tell ourselves that we must live, we must do something, something we enjoy doing. This inner voice in my film is spoken through Upal. This man makes an effort to revitalize our innate desires. He doesn't necessarily lecture all the time. His main idea is that you should live. Even if it is for one day, you should live according to how you want. Like in one scene he and Biswanathda are on a train and when he sees a pretty girl on the streets he points her out to Biswanathda and says, *Mil between all kobiz, meye dekhle khaye khabiz* (All poets meet, when they see a pretty girl on the street)

Somewhere this guy is mingling with the people in the film, making them realize what they really want. Golpo Holeo Sotti is one of my favorite films and although while creating this character I never thought of it that way, I do feel these are the type

of characters we need in your society. And 3 idiots is also one of my favorite films. I think among the contemporary filmmakers Raju Hirani is one of the best. The thing is, I love innocence and Raju Hirani is a master of handling innocence.

You must especially like 3 idiots. It is so close to your real life.

Yes, really. I feel Raju Hirani reminds me of the teachers we had in our school who would explain complicated things in the simplest of manner. Hirani's subjects are never simple. But he explains them in the simplest of manner. The same thing holds true for Tapan Sinha who directed Golpo Holeo Sotti.



Director at work

So how was the experience of making your first film as a director?

Well, it was remarkable. A very special thing about this film is that a lot of the crew members in my film are first timers. The music composers, the editor, the costume designer, all of them are first timers. So they all gave their hundred percent since it was their first endeavour in the industry.

In this film we hear Somalata and Anupam in a duet for the first time. One song was sung by Rupam Islam, another by Rupankar. Dibbendu, the lead singer of Cactus has sung a song for this film. There is a Rabindra Sangeet which has been sung by Jayanti Chakrabarti. The background score was done by Raja Narayan Deb. The songs were composed by Kabir Chattopadhyay and Sibasish Bandyopadhyay. Kabir is 23 while Sibasish is just 22. Overall it was a very good experience.

Orko Sinha's Amar Aami releases in the theatres on 15th August, which for the young director is the perfect date as his film is also about man and his freedom of choice. The Inquirer team wishes him, his crew and his film the very best of luck for their first venture.

Photos Source: Orko Sinha

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