

SALIM-SULAIMAN

Retaining the deep resonance of classical music, their soulful music strikes a chord with the contemporary as they compose music innovatively to suit the nouveau style of Chiaroscuro films our industry is dabbling in. That is what makes you want to rewind and replay the chart-toppers from movies like *Teen Patti*, *Pyaar Impossible*, *Rocket Singh*, *Kurbaan*, *Luck*, *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi*, *Fashion*, *Chak De India*, *Dor*, *Iqbal*, *Kaal*, *Ab Tak Chappan*, and the upcoming *Kites*. Apart from composing the lead songs of a film, they're always responsible for the background score; if it isn't the musical arrangement of a track, keep your ears open for Salim's arresting vocals and Sulaiman's perfect percussions.

Bollywood came to them when they were still concentrating on advertisement jingles, because sometimes it helps to be at the right place at the right time. Working in the same building as film director Sanjay Gupta, the brothers' work was overheard by the Bollywood director, who immediately signed them on to compose and record the theme of his 1997 Kajol and Saif Ali Khan-starrer *Hameshaa*. Before they knew it, Salim and Sulaiman had captured Bollywood's attention.

Today Salim and Sulaiman are among Bollywood's hottest music directors, and everyone is dancing to their tunes. By incorporating western, folk, Hindustani and Sufi influences to their music, the duo has managed to enthrall audiences across the world and not only keep up with the changing face of India's film industry, but also help redefine it.

When they aren't taking over Mumbai's B-town, they're composing jingles for television commercials of India's leading brands including Visa, Raymond and Pepsi; or producing albums for a long list of artists such as Adnan Sami, Voodoo Rapper, Style Bhai, Shweta Shetty and many more. The Indian audience also identifies television channel Sony and hit shows including *Bigg Boss* and *Khatron ka Khiladi* (Fear Factor) by the music created by this duo. They have previously been seen on many shows including *Chak De Bacche* (9X), *Sa Re Ga Ma Grand Finale* (Zee) and even been the face for Raymond Suitings. This year *Indian Idol 5* puts them in the spotlight with Salim on the panel of judges in search for India's next singing superstar.

If the fan following and regular additions to their awards list (Filmfare, Zee Cine, Screen, IIFA) are anything to go by, Salim and Sulaiman have earned the respect and adoration of both the audiences and the film industry in India. Winning an award at New York's Syracuse International Film Festival for *Fashion*, and bagging an Emmy nomination last year for Nickelodeon USA's show *Wonder Pets!* only serves as proof of their immense talent and diversity as music directors in a worldwide context.

Sons of composer and veteran of the Telugu film industry in South India, Sadruddin Merchant, Salim and Sulaiman's love for music couldn't wait. While at school, Salim insisted on learning the piano, finally mastering it at the *Trinity School of Music* in London; Sulaiman took up tabla, and was mentored by masters such as Taufiq Qureshi and tabla prodigy Ustad Zakir Hussain. And the song may have come later, but three and a half decades back, in true Bollywood style: *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi*.

While the Merchants of Bollywood continually strive to create magic through their music, what's next is anybody's guess. Whether it's Bollywood, Hollywood, Television or Advertisements - you can be sure that it will command our attention. And the rest, as we aren't warned often enough, is the future.