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MOTHER AND DAUGHTER IN THE SAME PLAY. AND PEARL AND RAEEL PADAMSEE ARE QUITE ENJOYING THE EXPERIENCE. AGAIN

EVEN as you double up in laughter as the shenanigans on stage reach new heights of absurdity in 'Family Ties II', you can't help but wonder how mother Pearl Padamsee — playing the 'Gujju' NRI

so often, I can safely say that my mother's a very accommodating person. She's not at all autocratic or dogmatic and doesn't throw her weight around just because she's my mother, nor play prima donna

PHOTOGRAPH: BOMAN IRANI



Raell (top) with Pearl: Tying together

Raell feels the fact that she and Pearl have very different styles of directing has meant less friction on the sets

STRIKING A FAMILIAL CHORD

Kokilaben Patel — and daughter Raell Padamsee, director of the play, manage to do it.

After all, it can't be all that easy for Pearl, a veteran director in her own right, to take orders from daughter Raell. Neither can it be a cakewalk for the said daughter, especially when mama Pearl happens to be a vintage actress who cut her teeth on stage long before Raell was born.

But, according to Raell, it's not 'that' tough!

"I've already directed her in a couple of plays like 'Interpreters' and 'Family Ties I'," she explains. "And, after working together

Pearl (centre) plays a 'Gujju' NRI in 'Family Ties II'



because she's Pearl Padamsee. And since we both have a democratic style of functioning, we've both learnt to accept or reject each other's suggestions. With no hard feelings on either sides." She continues reflectively. "As such, both she and my father Alyque are equally exacting, but she's a little easier to work with than my father," Raell admits frankly.

Says Pearl, "That's because I've taken care of my ego a long time ago. But haven't quite managed to take care of my temper," she adds wryly. "Attribute that to my age; I'm 60 plus (the sprightly little dance number she does in the play belies the fact), or attribute it to my bad health (she's had a bypass, not so very long ago). But temper aside, I've always allowed both my children (Ranjit Chowdhury's the other one) a lot of space. Because I believe if you're too close, there're bound to be more fights."

Raell also feels the fact that both she and Pearl have very different styles of directing, has meant less friction on the sets.

"My mother's got a very demonstrative style — she knows what she wants and shows you how to do it; she's a more involved director, she wants to play all the parts herself!" Raell says, tongue firmly in cheek.

"I'm different. I'm not so demonstrative; I let my actors interpret and improvise on their own and then I polish



Cyrus Broacha and Pearl Padamsee in 'Family Ties II'

up their performances."

"I guess my directing style has been influenced by the fact that I'm a teacher," Pearl explains. "When you've been teaching youngsters acting for as long as 16 years, the way I have, you get into the habit of showing them 'how' to do what you want them to do!"

"But nowadays I'm into double shifts," Pearl laughs. "From two p.m. to four p.m., I'm a director ordering my little ones around; and from six p.m. to eight p.m., I'm an actress, rehearsing with Raell!"

"I could never do this, I'd find the shift too difficult," Raell admits.

And although nowadays, Raell too, with her Little Actor's Club, is doing the dual shifts of teaching and direc-

ting, she has never really been keen on acting, inspite of the impressive family lineage — father, Alyque Padamsee; mother, Pearl Padamsee; brother, Ranjit Chowdhury.

Raell has an explanation for this. "I've always loved working backstage even when I was a little girl. But, in the first play I acted in, 'Don't Drink The Water', directed by my mother, on the first day, first show, I forgot my first line!" She laughs. "And that's when I decided I was better off working behind the scenes. As it is, we have too many stars in the family!"

Pearl, too, admits that, "Though Raell's a good actress, she's not really interested; and doesn't have any deep desire to act. But she does have a deep

desire to work with children."

Another aspect mother and daughter differ on is films. While Pearl unabashedly admits she just 'loves' acting in films (who can forget her memorable roles in 'Khatta Meetha' or 'Baton Baton Mein?'), Raell as unequivocally says she "hates the thought". But both have ambivalent reactions to television.

While Pearl says "No TV!" very emphatically, Raell voices a hesitant "Not yet..."

So there you have it, Pearl Padamsee and Raell Padamsee. Mother and daughter. Bound by something more than the umbilical cord and their shared genes. Bound by their all pervasive, all-encompassing love for theatre. And each other.

RAELL:
I acted in 'Don't Drink The Water', directed by my mother. On the first day, first show, I forgot my first line! And that's when I decided I was better off working behind the scenes. As it is, we have too many stars in the family!

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