

Dancing up a storm

THE STAR IS GOING PLACES WITH HER BRAND NRITYA SHAKTI

by ASJAD NAZIR

TALENTED dancer Shakti Mohan has shown off her superb skills on film, television and in the live arena.

The young star has enthralled audiences all over the world and shown quite comprehensively that she is one of the finest contemporary dancers in India right now. Then with *Dil Dosti Dance*, Shakti demonstrated acting skills too and won over fans with a winning performance in the super hit serial.

Last year, she featured in the top half of *Eastern Eye's* list of the 50 Sexiest Asian Women. Parineeti Chopra confessed to being her fan and now Shakti is looking forward to a host of interesting projects including developing her brand Nri-tya Shakti.

Eastern Eye put Shakti into the hot seat by getting fans from Twitter to set a couple of searching questions each to her on her work, life, career, future hopes and more. Shakti answered each question honestly and gave an amazing insight into her life.

Snigdha Chowdhary (@snigdha_): Do you ever miss out on the things normal girls do because you are a celebrity whose every move is observed?

I do. Anywhere I go now I have to ensure I am looking my best and wearing make-up. I hate dressing up and putting on make-up. That's the reason I have stopped going out altogether. It's a bit sad.

How did you feel when Parineeti Chopra confessed to be your fan after *Aa Re Pritam Pyaare*?

I felt really good and was very happy that she noticed me in that song. I really like Parineeti's personality and appreciate how honestly she told me how she felt about my performance.

Neha Parasnis (@dailyzesty): What are your plans for 2015?

I want to take Nri-tya Shakti to a whole new level so I am working towards that. I will have two major announcements next month if everything goes according to plan.

What advice do you have for girls who look up to you as an inspiration and want to take up dance as a career?

(Smiles) I live for moments like these when I know that my actions have inspired someone. To all my lovely friends out there I would say, believe in working hard, stay honest, keep your head high, feet grounded and stay positive.

Ramya Sree (@SweetRamii): Your thoughts on being voted the 13th Sexiest Asian Woman in the world in *EE's* annual poll?

(Smiles) I think of myself as a tomboy, so when anyone calls me sexy I laugh at myself, but I do appreciate and respect everyone's thoughts who believe I am sexy.

Would you like to be in a big Bollywood film and which actor do you want to be cast opposite?

Yes, I would love to. (Smiles) Hrithik Roshan.

Fareeda Qamar (@MyLifeArSha): Apart from

dancing is there anything you want to do in future, like going on an adventure?

Yes, I love going on treks and hiking. I recently tried surfing and was good at it, surprisingly.

You have delivered many phenomenal and memorable performances. Which one is your most favourite or memorable?

In *Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa* it was *Laal Ishq*; in *Dil Dosti Dance* it was *Ang Laga De*; and in *Dance India Dance*, *Khuda Jaane*.

Shukti Ahmed (@Shukti_19): What are the projects you would like to pursue in the future?

I would like to create something unique for dancers who want to make it big. I hope I manage to do that in future.

Besides being an ace dancer, you are now recognised as one of the most popular actresses on the small screen. Would you like to continue acting after *Dil Dosti Dance*?

I really enjoyed being in *Dil Dosti Dance*, so I will definitely continue with acting provided I have good offers.

Zona Khan (@zona_khan1): Nri-tya Shakti is trademarked now, so how does it feel seeing a project that is so close to you being appreciated?

It feels so good. Nri-tya Shakti is the reason why I get out of bed all charged up every morning. I want to make it a big place for dancers. I owe the community for what they have given me with their love and support.

If you are given the opportunity of transforming from Shakti Mohan into another person and liv-

ing their life, who would that be?

I wouldn't want to be anyone else but me and the reason for that is that I love my life and the people around me who have made me and my life so beautiful. I don't want to live anyone else's life.

Sneha Patel (@iamarshian): Tell us three things your fans don't know about you?

I have an overactive mind – it's never at rest. I am very lazy sometimes. I like to be alone 90 per cent of the day.

What are your thoughts about love, life and fun?

Love is a very special feeling that you experience from your childhood with your parents, family, pets and friends. People associate love only with a life partner or a boyfriend, but I feel that love is a pure feeling of no exchanges, it's only about giving and getting supreme happiness from it.

Life is a gift to all and it is up to you to enjoy it or regret it. Every moment we live is teaching us many lessons to grow from it and attain peace.

Fun is what I have when I sit with my friends and laugh – you don't have to be you any more.

Chetna Bhagat (@this_is_chetna): According to you, where do you see Indian girls in 2050?

I hope for a big change. I believe that all the rules men made for women to cut down their powers and make them settle down as per society's whims and fancies should change.

It will be a gradual shift in the system with women getting educated and being aware of their rights. Education and awareness is the only way out – one must fight and argue at a domestic level to get well-deserved rights to choose to wear what they want, the right to be with who they want, the right to educate themselves, the right to marry when they want, the right to speak in matters of importance.

So I hope not only India, but women all over the world don't have to wait until 2050 to get their rights of being an equal and first-class citizen.

Kanchan Gannani (@kirtiarsha): Do you have any plans to open an academy so that we can learn dance from you?

I get this a lot from people. I do intend to but I have to be sure to answer this and as of now, I can only say that wait until mid-March for me to announce something you might like.

If you get a chance or offer to be part of reality shows like *Khatron Ke Khiladi* or *Dare To Dance*, will you accept it?

I have been offered both but I don't think I have what it takes to be in these shows. I respect all those who have been on both, but it's scary and requires a lot of guts to perform such stunts. I am not in a frame of mind to do it at the moment.

Sneha Tanu (@sneha_shakti): If you had to spend a day with a fan and the day's event is planned by you, what would the day be like?

It would be a fancy breakfast with waffles, then a movie and a long walk where we will discuss ideas to make a change for the better in society. (Laughs) Awesome cold coffee will follow and we will click loads and loads of selfies.

Can we expect a book written by you about life?

(Laughs) Okay, I will write it, but no one will wanna read it. Sorry this question just cracked me up. I'm still laughing.

Mansi Pitale (@Mansipitale): Do you want to ever sit down in the open at night and observe those beautiful stars billions of miles away from us?

Yes, I love to. You don't get to see it from the cities but when I am in places when I can, I stare at the moon and the sky for a very long time.

A crazy thing you have done so far?

[My sister] Mukti and I were chased by cops because we were shooting without permission in Film City by mistake. We had no clue that we required permission. As they followed us, I kept driving very fast thinking we could escape, but we couldn't. We had to resort to Mukti giving them a long speech about how you all should help actors and some nonsense, and they let us go. Then I thought, it's so easy for girls to get out of these situations, but I bet if a guy was in a similar situation, he would have been questioned very seriously. That was one crazy moment of my life.

Chaithra (@Kudajaane_arsha): Who would you say is your 3am friend?

Vinti and Alisha.

What qualities do you want in your life partner?

I would want them to be understanding, full of life and happy.

Priya Mulji



Follow Priya Mulji on www.twitter.com/priyamulji or log onto <http://priyamulji.wordpress.com>

LEAVE IT IN THE PAST

Leave the past behind

WHEN you're 32 and single, you would obviously have had guys in your past and generally that's where they need to stay. But why is it when men who don't want to be with you when you are younger, suddenly become interested when you become fairly successful years later?

They say some women are gold diggers, but are men just as bad? This got me thinking, should a guy from the past always stay in the past?

Recently, I have encountered some people from my own past who I never thought I would see again for a variety of reasons. I've also started getting messages on Facebook, views on LinkedIn and follows on Twitter from guys in my past.

Now I suppose I should tell you that I was a major geek at school, college and university with glasses, bad skin and no flirting skills. I was everyone's 'friend' and had loads of male friends who were never interested in me romantically.

Then as time went by, I started dating (later than many of my friends, I might add) and met guys. I got jobs, I started writing this column, moved on with my life and enhanced it in many ways. However, those guys just stayed the same.

Then fast forward 10 years in a very *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* style and I have gone from tomboy Anjali to sassy Anjali who has an extremely fulfilling life.

Boys run into you at a wedding and you clearly look good so the next day, you get a message on Facebook saying, 'oh, hope you enjoyed the wedding; by the way how is your love life?' That's when you realise that guys will just be guys. They don't realise when they have a good thing and looks do matter to them – not to all men, but it does to guys who have stayed like their 23-year-old selves and not enhanced their lives in any way.

Girls, these guys aren't worth it. I did have a moment where I thought, 'oh well, I'm single why not go for one of these guys from my past?' but at the end of the day, I will always be that girl with the glasses who is a tomboy at heart. These guys should stay in the past.

Us single women in our 30s are special and deserve the best, so don't just settle for someone who has realised they have missed out. Know your worth, be the best version of yourself and find a man who will love you for who you were, are and will be.