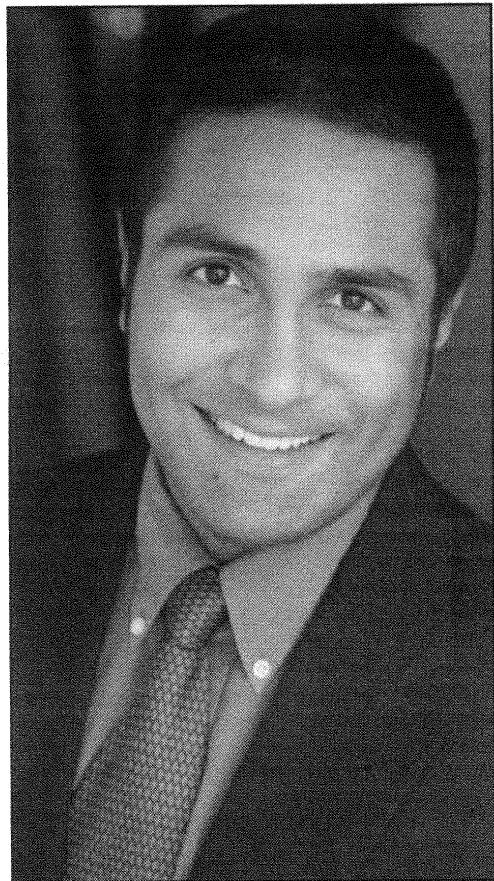


By A STAFF REPORTER

# Kahlil Joseph Smashing Stereotypes



said Joseph. "I identified well with the acting styles here and so I thought why not come here and learn the ropes of the film and acting industry."

Joseph has also done the lead voice over for the yet to be released documentary film "Naked in Ashes." He has also played the lead role in the feature film "Far from India" which he said marked "the beginning of a good acting career in the United States."

"It allowed me to show an enormous amount of range as an actor, from going from a guy who is all about partying and girls, to someone who actually cares about life, about God and spreading the message of God. He becomes a missionary at the end of the movie," Joseph explained.

He recently played the lead character Vivekananda in the musical play "Vivekananda, the Lion between Matter

and Spirit" at Vedanta Society in Trabuco Canyon on Vivekananda Day and won much praise from the audience for his convincing portrayal and stage presence.

Named after the poet Kahlil Gibran, Joseph said, "Kahlil, is an Arabic name, also a Christian and Lebanese name which means trusted friend. I am named after Kahlil Gibran, a world famous poet, philosopher, writer and the Joseph is part of my Catholic origin. My parents both liked the uniqueness of Kahlil Gibran," he explains.

"I like to think myself as a citizen of

the world. I will always be incredibly proud of the fact that I am Indian and that I am from India," he said.

The upcoming actor said he wants to leave nothing to chance to make his dream come true.

"I definitely came with a battle plan," Joseph said outlining his efforts to become visible in the competitive field of acting. "I am a firm believer in planning your career at least to the best of your abilities."

After having completed his bachelors from Delhi University he went on to earn a degree in Communications Arts from Concordia University. He is currently in his final year of Masters in Fine Arts in Acting at University of California, Los Angeles.

While arming himself with a degree in acting from the top institute, Joseph has long honed his skills as a voice over artist and teacher and has trained extensively in marital arts and dance.

"I try to be multit talented," Joseph said. "It's not very common to see an Indian actor very good at martial arts, at least in this part of the globe. That is a very strong point in my resume. I have been training in martial arts for a very long time. That's been helping me immensely."

By switching accents very convincingly, he turns a rather simple conversation into an amusing one. Joseph said he realizes that being aggressive is a key to succeed in his profession and he loses no opportunity to showcase his talent and stand out of the ordinary-even when it comes to the mundane things like one's voice message.

"Every two or three months, I change my voice message to something really

Joseph said. Further adding, "If something as silly as an accent is made to loosen up some people, so be it. As long as I can retain my values and my heritage that I want to retain."

"These days casting directors, producers and hiring people in general in showbiz love to see an educated actor," Joseph said rationalizing his efforts to become multitalented. "It's a thing of the past where actors in the olden days may not have always gone to school or college, but not so now. An educated actor is becoming increasingly respected."

"It's very tough. You are typically working seven days a week," Joseph said with his characteristic heavy laughter on his work schedule and how he manages to find time between audition, stage, film, voice over and kick boxing training.

"My life is constantly on a schedule," Joseph said. "Hopefully someday all of this will pay off."

And exactly how has the switch from India to Hollywood been, Joseph confesses,

"It is incredibly hard. I have been

very aggressively pursuing my goal."

But apart from the usual hardships of the profession Joseph said it is being cast as the stereotype that bothers him most.

"I definitely combat it everyday. I face difficulties for the roles I may go out for myself," Joseph said. "But I have made some good progress, I think."

"I am tired of Indians being portrayed as the 7/11 guy or the cab driver or the computer nerd, all the stereotypes," he said. "I definitely intend to 'smash' those stereotypes as best as I can."

Shekhar Kapoor and Mira Nair are his favorite directors and given the training and exposure he is confident of approaching them someday.

"I am not virgin talent, I am a newcomer to Hollywood, but I have got a lot of experience behind me. It wouldn't be costing them money by being an inexperienced actor," Joseph said. "So, I really hope that some day it will be possible to work with them."

As for what he enjoys doing most, Joseph did not want to make a preference list, "I love a lot of aspects of performance. I love film and TV, stage and voice over... as long as I am doing all of these I am happy."

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