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Home » News » Danny Boyle's Winning Ticket

## Danny Boyle's Winning Ticket

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### Slumdog Millionaire strikes gold



By: Preeti Thandi

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Danny Boyle didn't quite believe in destiny until he went to India. As soon as he set foot in Mumbai he fell in love with the city. The offshoot of Boyle's love affair swept audience and critics alike off their feet.

*Slumdog Millionaire* (Fox Searchlight Pictures) was a smash hit at the 2008 Toronto International Film Festival and went on to win the festival's coveted People's Choice Award. As Oscar buzz resonates around the film Boyle admits

how destiny played a part in his film making process in Mumbai, his ultimate "maximum" city.

*Slumdog Millionaire* is the story of Jamal Malik (Dev Patel), an underdog from the slums who ends up on the Indian version of 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire' in an attempt to win his childhood love, Latika (Freida Pinto). Doubts swirl around his uncanny ability to answer each question correctly, leading him to the police station where he is questioned on suspicion of cheating. Other key players in the film include Bollywood's Anil Kapoor,—who plays the host of the national TV obsession and Irrfan Khan—who stars as the police chief in charge of the interrogation . Following its release in the US and Canada, the film is a major crowd puller and is striking gold at the box office.

Boyle was inspired by Suketu Mehta's book 'Maximum City' and made notes of all the minute details about Mumbai as part of his research for the film. "It's the ultimate city really. It's got everything and that's why people say the film is very Dickensian. He was a great storyteller and his stories are based on the explosions that were happening in London in the Victorian times Mumbai at the moment feels like it has so much potential. I wanted to make (the film) in the city, not in the studios."



Despite being a story from the slums, there is an effective cheeriness in *Slumdog Millionaire*, which comes alive with A.R. Rahman's music and Boyle explains that getting the maestro music director to do the music was also a stroke of good destiny. "We think of the concept of destiny as passive but it is also enabling. You get the things that you wouldn't normally get. How did we get A.R. Rahman to do our music? It was because of good spirit," says Boyle.



Boyle kept his lead actors, Patel and Pinto waiting for a long time as he wanted to balance the age transition of the characters seamlessly. "They both had a starter quality and they are lovely to work with as they don't bring any baggage from other films." Speaking about working with the seasoned actors he says, "Irrfan's great. He has done a lot of crossover films and I was very pleased to get him. Anil was a big help to me and he has seen the ups and downs of the star system. He helped me with the crowds."