

In 'Solitude': A Talk with Rajesh Sharma

Rajesh Sharma, a renowned actor who endeavored characters in films like 'Annayum Rasoolum', 'Homely Meals', 'Charlie', 'Aanandham' and so on. Recently he appeared in Theatre as protagonist of 'Ekandham' (Solitude), drama performed by a troupe from Kollam called Prakash Kalakendram. He has won the best actor award from the Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Akademi. Moreover he has written and directed dramas for children's theatre. Here is an extract of interview of his experiences in 'Solitude' as an actor :

1. Tell us about 'Solitude' - the drama

The drama is an adaptation of Anton Chekov's short story 'The Bet', a classic plot but unrealistically realistic in this society. It is about a lawyer who lives and survives 15 years in solitude just to win a bet over his banker. The play has four characters including lawyer, banker, servant and his daughter casted with me, PK Sreekumar, Riju Shivadas and Smitha M.Babu.

Every drama is a 'formation' from various events and situations of the story which combines it perfectly and aptly with music, art, costume, acting and lighting. So it's a presentation of inner consciousness of a man in solitude. Beautiful background music was done by a legendary musician, Paris Chandran. Personalities like Mamooty, BalchandraMenon applauded with standing ovation. And they shared the disturbance the play had upon them. They even indulged with the character so as to escape the identity. Throughout the play, Solitude is brought to the audience.

2. How far do you think the parallels of capital punishment and life imprisonment impacted the audience?

This drama breaks the conventional norms of the theatre because. Sreejith designed in such a way that the conflict or the crisis of the play exist inside the audience and it's not on the stage. Here it discusses the concept of capital punishment and imprisonment and a conflict between them in this society. Life imprisonment weakens a person, mentally, physically and emotionally and transforms him into an 'other' man. In this play, the man faced psychological conversion under the closed room in solitude.

3. it's difficult to express the 'Solitude' on stage. What challenges you faced as an artist to express it?

Exactly, as the protagonist and actor throughout the play, I faced many troubles as our character is in 'solitude', so he has all his frustrations, passions and desires of a normal human beings. The character goes through a stringent life, so it was challenging to contribute aptly through minute expressions with 'body, mind and voice'.

4. Though you belong to a recognized personality in Film industry, you always come back to theatre. What brings you back to theatre always?

Theatre is my life. I am carved as a theatre artist. Amidst of personal and social responsibilities, I was switched to films in one way to support my family and equally to achieve an identity and recognition in the society. That's the reality of the world. I can't reject the call of theatre and it's a recharge of me.

5. What is your opinion about the distinction of plays as professional and amateur?

Actually this distinction of plays as professional and amateur exists only in Kerala. Perhaps there were plays where actors and dramatists take it as their profession, imitating them cultural groups developed plays to discuss the current themes of the society and called them amateur. But the existence of such distinguish is invalid.

6. What are next with 'Solitude' and your upcoming projects as an actor?

Every artist wishes other people to watch and appreciate his work. For the efforts we take, we wanted it to reach to wide audience, so the journey of 'Solitude' continues with its next performance in Thrissur on 23rd June and also re performance in Ernakulam. Meanwhile now am working in Alphons' unnamed movie.