Jit Sarkar’s BAPU Director: Samir Biswas

Playwright: Jit Sarkar

Director: Samir Biswas

Group: Mangolik, Kolkata

Language: Bengali

Duration: 1 hr 50 min.

The Play

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was one of the prime leaders at the forefront of India’s fight for freedom from British rule. He was a leading architect, who eschewed violence in every form, of non-violent civil disobedience that would influence the world. When the protest at Chouri Choura against using British goods and attires, became violent Gandhi shouldered its responsibility and called for a cease of Non-co-operation Movement and Satyagraha and began five days fast subsequently. He was arrested and interned to the Sabarmati jail for six years on charges of instigating public through his anti-establishment literature. From the jail in South Africa Gandhi wrote on Satyagraha to spread the message of peaceful protests. Madeleine Slade, daughter of British Rear-Admiral Sir Edmond Slade, was an ardent admirer of his and was inspired enough to live in the ashram. Gandhi renamed her, Mirabehen. The British prime minister, Winston Churchill cast aspersions on BAPU’s attire referring him as “half-naked fakir”. Followers reacted but Bapu accepted it to describe the true condition of Indians under the British rule. He was left alone after wife Kasturba, his partner and fellow-fighter in the freedom struggle, passed away. We hereby try to recreate the essential relevance of Mahatma Gandhi’s vision for coming

generations in, Bapu.

Director’s Note

The entire world is now a victim to intolerance which is a painful cause of concern for us. Our vast India is in panic by acts of violence. The warmth of father – son relationship is corroding and an icy coldness is spreading across the nation. We are meant for reviving the warmth of human values whereas factors of jealousy and brutality prevail. At this crucial juncture we refresh our collective memory by invoking an inspiring life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi also called, Bapu, as a reminder to our society. This Indian activist through his honesty, dedication and perseverance handled the non-violent movement and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world winning hearts of the common masses. This flash back is a tribute to our freedom fighters.

The Director

Born on 12th April, 1947 his career on stage started as child artist in Tagore’s play, Dakghar in the role of Amal. His fascination for drama and allied arts grew with age joining a theatre group in 1962. He started his group, Mangolik on 12th December, 1968. He has also worked with other major groups like Rangarup, Chetna, Samabeta Prayash etc. as an actor and director in last 50 years. He acted in the lead role in film, Manush Bhoot and the play Bapu.

He has received the Drama Academy of India’s Jyosthna Makha Das Smarak Samman and Lebedev Drama awards.

The Playwright

Jit Sarkar has consistently scripted several radio dramas, TV documentaries, telefilms, serials and films in Hindi and Bengali ever since his career as writer began in 1982. Some of his acclaimed works are – Dayen (The Witch) and Sundari (Quest for Beauty) Hindi feature films selected in children’s

film section of the 4th Kolkata Film Festival 1998 and Samporko in Bengali selected in the 9th Kolkata Film Festival 2003 under telefilm section.

The Group

Formed on 12th December, 1968 Mangolik, is one of the few groups that have managed to sustain their creativity in Bengali theatre. Its founder, veteran actor-director, Samir Biswas has devoted his entire life to acting and designing serious theatre. They do not gather performers for their own sake rather believe in doing responsible theatre for social change and harness new talents. It seeks encouragement and inspiration from the audience. It grooms members towards struggle that is an inherent nature of theatre. The group celebrated its golden jubilee last year only.

Cast & Credits

Bapu: Samir Biswas

Nathuram Godse: Shouvik Majumdar

Mahadev Desai: Soumya Biswas

Kasturba Gandhi: Upali Ghosh Bose

Madeleine Slade (Mirabehn): Debjani Mukherjee

Harilal: Debashish Ganguly

Md. Ali Jinnah: Samiran Mukhopadhyay

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel: Ujjal Biswas

Jawaharlal Nehru: Partho Roy Chowdhury

Lakhan: Nanigopal Pramanik

Manu Gandhi: Sanchita Chowdhury

Abha Chatterjee: Satabdi Bose

Nayar: Sudip Chatterjee

Rioters, Revolutionaries & Ashramwasi: Murari Chakraborty, Adrija Basu, Tanish Chatterjee, Priyotosh Dhar, Khokan, Biswas, Ashim Bose, Sanatan Hari

Lights: Bablu Sarkar

Music: Shanto Adhikary

Make Up: Ramen Chakraborty

Set: Swapan Das

Watch The Director’s Meet for the play