Saari Raat: Anuragna Theatre Group Explores the Complexities of Human Relationships

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Theatre is not merely a medium of storytelling; it is an art form that explores the deeper layers of human experience, relationships and emotions that often remain unnoticed in everyday life. **Anuragna Theatre Group's** presentation of Badal Sircar's ***Saari Raat*** at Sammukh Auditorium, National School of Drama (NSD), Mandi House, New Delhi, sought to bring these dimensions to the stage through an exploration of human relationships, circumstances and the questions that arise within the human mind.

Translated by Dr. Pratibha Agrawal and directed by Ashraf Ali,

the production offered a theatrical interpretation of a work that invites reflection on the complexities of human behaviour and interpersonal relationships. Through its three central characters, the play creates a dramatic world in which dialogue, silence, physical expression and the interactions between characters contribute to the unfolding of the narrative.

Three Characters, Multiple Layers of Meaning

The production featured **Vinay Kumar** as the Husband, **Kamal Rexwal** as the Old Man, and **Komal Singh** as the Wife. The interplay between these three characters forms the foundation of the dramatic experience, bringing questions of relationships, circumstances and inner conflict into focus.

In a play of this nature, meaning often emerges not only through spoken words but also through pauses, gestures, expressions and moments of silence. The physical presence of the actors and their responses to one another become important elements in conveying the emotional undercurrents of the narrative. These aspects invite audiences to look beyond the immediate action and reflect on the deeper tensions that shape human relationships.

Direction and Stagecraft

Director **Ashraf Ali’s** interpretation brings the focus to the relationships between the characters and the dramatic possibilities inherent in their circumstances. In an intimate theatrical production, the director’s vision extends beyond the performers’ movements to encompass stage space, pacing, dialogue delivery and the overall rhythm of the performance.

Stagecraft plays a significant role in shaping the audience’s engagement with the narrative. The arrangement of the

performance space, the movement of the actors and the transitions between dramatic moments can all contribute to the atmosphere of a production. In a play centred on human relationships and psychological tensions, restraint and simplicity can be particularly effective in keeping the audience’s attention on the characters and their inner worlds.

Lighting Design by Oasis

Lighting is an essential component of theatrical storytelling, shaping the atmosphere of a scene and influencing how audiences perceive the characters and their surroundings. In *Saari Raat*, the lighting design by **Oasis** forms part of the production’s visual framework.

The interplay of light and shadow, changes in illumination and the visual emphasis placed on performers can deepen the emotional texture of a stage production. When working with a narrative driven by relationships and inner conflict, lighting can also help establish mood and direct the audience’s attention towards significant moments on stage.

Together with direction, performance and other elements of stagecraft, lighting contributes to the overall theatrical language through which a play communicates with its audience.

Anuragna Theatre Group: Twelve Years of Theatrical Exploration

Anuragna Theatre Group has been active in theatre for the past twelve years, consistently exploring the relationship between literature and stage performance. Its repertoire reflects an interest in adapting literary works across genres, including drama, poetry, short stories and novels.

The group has presented works associated with writers such as Premchand, Vijaydan Detha, Ismat Chughtai and Rabindranath

Tagore. Its theatrical journey has also included productions such as *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Madhavi*, *Katha Ek Kans Ki*, *Teen Gumshuda Log*, *December 71 Ka Ek Din*, *Chitralekha* and *Khushi Ki Hamari Dardbhari Talaash*. English-language plays, including *The Seagull*, *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck*, have also featured in its repertoire.

This range of productions reflects the group's continuing engagement with diverse literary traditions and its effort to bring different theatrical voices to the stage.

A Gathering of Theatre and Literary Personalities

The performance was attended by senior theatre practitioner Shyam Kumar, Vijay Seth, editor of *Colour Canvas*, and theatre actress Paribhasha Mishra as chief guests. Their presence added a cultural dimension to the event, bringing together personalities associated with literature and the performing arts.

Such gatherings underline the importance of theatre as a space for artistic exchange, creative dialogue and engagement with contemporary cultural expression.

The significance of Badal Sircar's *Saari Raat* lies in the questions it places before its audience. By bringing human relationships, circumstances and inner conflict into a theatrical setting, the play offers an opportunity to reflect on the complexities of human experience.

For Anuragna Theatre Group, the production continues a twelve-year journey of engaging with literature through performance. With Ashraf Ali's direction, the performances of Vinay Kumar, Kamal Rexwal and Komal Singh, and lighting design by Oasis, the production brings together different elements of

theatrical expression in service of its central themes.

Ultimately, the value of a theatrical experience extends beyond the final moment on stage. It also lies in the thoughts, questions and emotions that audiences carry with them after leaving the auditorium. In this respect, *Saari Raat* points towards the enduring relationship between literature, theatre and the human experience.