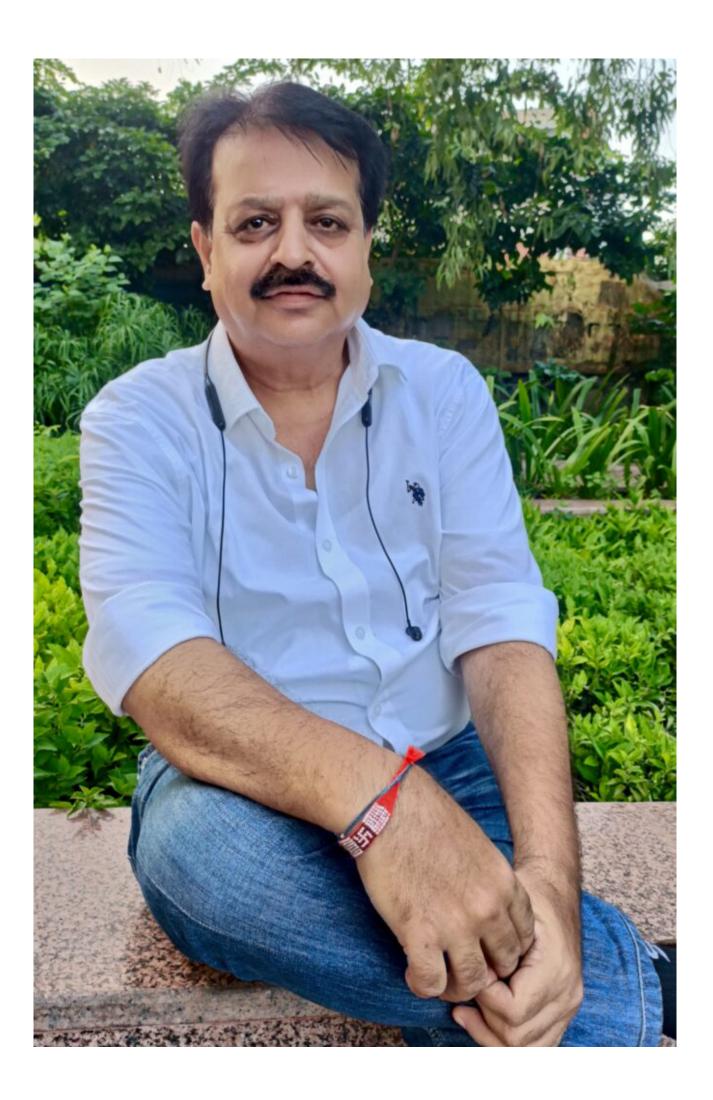
Shyam Swami: A Journey from Stage to Screen



The theatrical journey of **Shyam Swami**, which began in the historic lanes of Bikaner, Rajasthan, has evolved over the years into a significant cultural odyssey, seamlessly bridging the worlds of stage and screen. His earliest tryst with performance took place during his school years, where weekly assemblies became a platform for reciting poems, narrating stories, and enacting skits. His selection for a drama in the annual function further nurtured this emerging passion for theatre.

A pivotal moment arrived before his college years when he was selected for the Theatre Summer Workshop organized by the Jodhpur Sangeet Natak Akademi. This workshop provided him with an intensive introduction to various theatrical forms and techniques. It was here that he played the lead role in Charpai, written by Suresh Awasthi and directed by S.D. Chauhan — a performance that marked his first significant step as a theatre practitioner.

Following this, Swami became associated with the Marudhara Theatre Society. Under the direction of Ashok Joshi, he performed the lead role in *Tidorav*, a Rajasthani play authored by Harish Bhadani, which was successfully staged across the state in nine performances. During this period, he also participated in a *National School of Drama (NSD) workshop* conducted by Vagish Kumar Singh. The workshop resulted in the creation of *Ek Ped Ki Kahani*, an environment-themed play that was performed over 37 times throughout Rajasthan and received widespread acclaim from audiences.

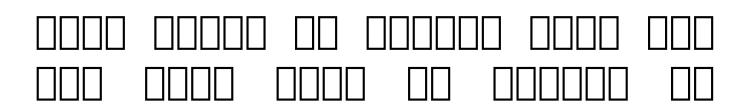
Upon completing his graduation, Swami moved to Delhi for professional reasons. Although he stepped away from active theatre for a period, his engagement with the art continued through regular attendance at performances. A fortuitous meeting with director Ashok Talwar at Shri Ram Centre opened new avenues, leading to his selection for a role in the television serial *Vaidik Kaleen Nariyaan*. This opportunity brought him closer to the worlds of acting and production,

marking the beginning of a new phase in his artistic journey.

Swami then fully embraced production work, collaborating with some of the most eminent figures in Indian theatre and cinema, including *Tigmanshu Dhulia*, *Gulzar Sahab*, *Sagar Sarhadi*, *and Meghna Gulzar*. His passion for theatre remained constant, reflected in his significant contribution to the production of *Amal Allana's* teleplay *Devyani Ka Kehna*, a noteworthy milestone in his career.

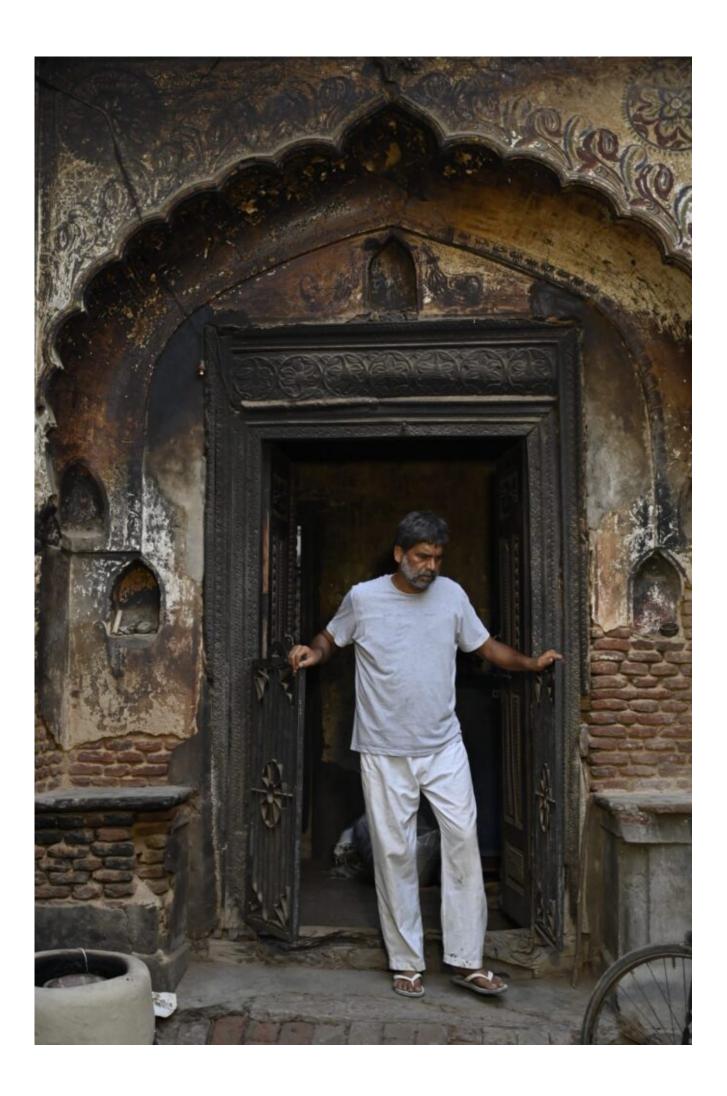
During the Commonwealth Games, he undertook the production responsibilities for NSD professor Hema Singh's acclaimed solo play Zindagi Madhur Hai, Kuman Senu Mein, which was successfully performed more than thirteen times across India, including at the Bharat Rang Mahotsav. His dual role as actor and production member in the Parsi play Khoobsurat Bala, directed by Vagish Kumar Singh and Hema Singh for the Theatre Olympics, stands as a highlight of his theatrical career.

Years of active involvement in both theatre and screen ultimately inspired him to establish the *Skin and Stage Foundation (Trust)*. Today, Shyam Swami brings together his acting expertise and production experience to lead this institution as a vibrant cultural initiative. His journey exemplifies how dedication, passion, and creativity can converge to shape a meaningful artistic legacy, contributing to both traditional theatre and contemporary media.





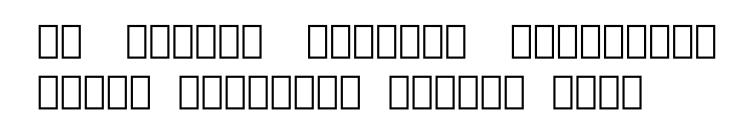
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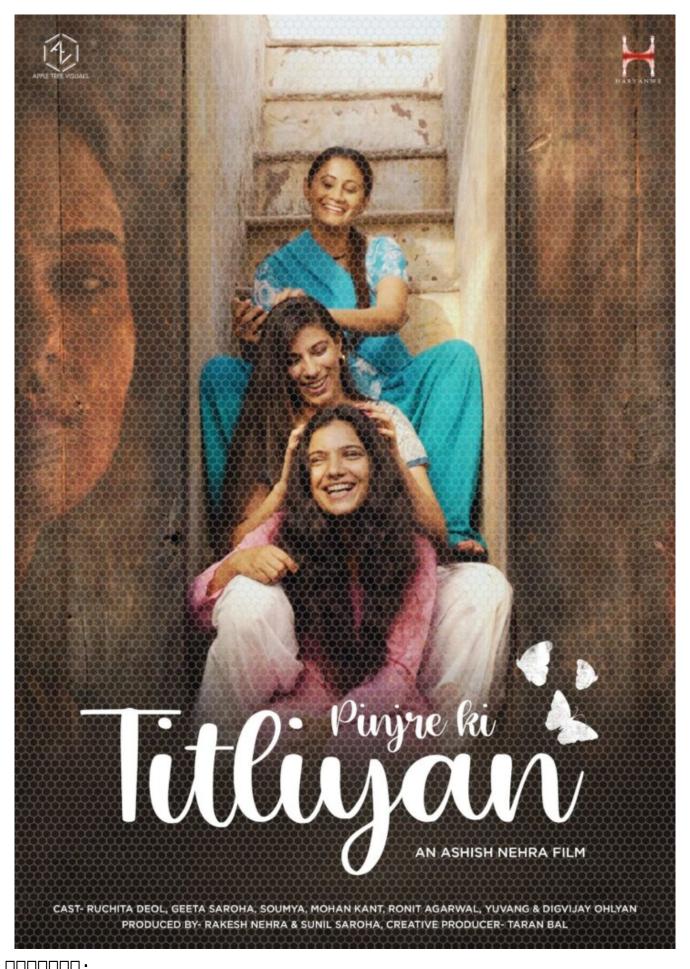




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Jaya Bacchan- The snob is inevitably ok

They may say as they please. Call u a snob, a stoic, a conventional but u are the best Jayaji. People's memories are so shallow and so shortlived. Little do they remember how arduous it has had been to be a BACCHAN'S WIFE. Sacrificing is not the word. A willing suspension of the yearning for the glam industry at the peak of your career, raising two children with an unparalleled wisdom of INDIAN SOLACE boldly facing every media gossip about the husband and standing true to all wifely responsibilities through the thick and thin of the BACCHAN PARIVAAR is indeed praiseworthy.. Everlastingly supporting a husband when he is a victim of both; public acclaim and accuse is not an easy achievement at all. PROUD of you. You have been the most dignified INDIAN actress ever. One can watch all your films with family is the best compliment that I think exemplifies your artless and immaculate persona as an INDIAN WOMAN ACTOR. Let them talk. They are of least importance. Indeed, a woman of your stature definitely has a reason to feel.proud of herself. And...it is NOT always important to put a fake smile in front of the media and walk the red carpet. I perfectly understand the irritation it causes. So, JAYAJI is avoiding media intervention and so justifiably indeed. If u want her to be kind, let her privacy be hers.

Those that intend to comment may use the comment box given below:

'This is a dream come true.'

Actor AUROSIKHA DEY participated in the Cannes Film Festival, representing the film The Shameless, in which she played the character Durwa. I talked to her and wanted to know about the experiences she had gained. Here are the excerpts of that conversation.



Congratulations on representing your film "The Shameless" at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival. Could you share your experience and your movie's reception at the festival?

When I first heard the news from my director and producer, I was numb for a fraction of a second, searching for the perfect

expression. This is a dream come true; I feel ecstatic. It is an honour to represent my film on such a prestigious platform and present it to a global audience. I am both happy and humbled by this opportunity. I had a great time in Cannes. It was a privilege to meet many professionals worldwide, learn about new cultures and passions, and discuss ideas and filmmaking. The film was received extremely well at Cannes. The audience's reaction was incredible. They appreciated both the story and my performance in the movie. I am very humbled and honoured by the response.

Please tell me about your character in "The Shameless" and how you felt working with Anusuya.

I am thrilled to contribute to this exceptional project. My director, Konstantin Bojanov, crafted a brilliant script and meticulously outlined the character 'Durwa', which provided invaluable clarity for my preparation. As a primary cast member, Durwa introduces shades of grey and compels the audience to confront the conflict between conventional norms and individual will. She is aggressive and fiercely focused on securing her daily livelihood above all.

I had a great time working with Anusuya. I am thrilled and proud of the global adulation and appreciation the film and the entire team have received.

The Cannes Film Festival is known for its glamour and starstudded red-carpet events. Can you describe any memorable moments or interactions with fellow artists or industry professionals during the festival?

I was extremely excited to be on the Cannes red carpet and present my film. I was wearing a beautiful saree designed by Priyanka Raajiv. Right before walking on the red carpet, I was a bit nervous and jittery but also thrilled. There were so many photographers ready to take our pictures. I chatted with my co-actors, and they all shared the same feelings. It was my

day.

As an artist, how do you view the importance of platforms like Cannes in promoting diverse and thought-provoking cinema worldwide, and what impact do you hope your film will have on audiences globally?

It's an honour to represent my film on such a prestigious platform and present it to a global audience. I am both happy and humbled by this opportunity.

It's a significant achievement to showcase my work on such a grand stage. As an actor, you always aspire to reach a broader audience, allowing your work to be visible and appreciated. Being able to do so on a platform like Cannes, one of the biggest film festivals in the world, not only marks a proud moment for me as an actor but also reaffirms faith and confidence in myself.

With the success of "The Shameless" at Cannes, what are your future aspirations and goals as an actor? Are there any dream roles or collaborations you'd like to pursue in the coming years?

Both the role and the story are integral parts of any project. The role has to be significant enough that one cannot imagine the story without it. It's about the weight of the role. There are so many roles to choose from for my dream role that it is tough to select. I want to do as much work as possible with as many versatile directors in as many complex roles as possible.

India needs more of Sonu Sood and Gautam Gambhir

By Sunil Sarpal

Their names should be revered with a lot of respect and gratitude as they are the Role Models in our society.

Both resurrect the society where Administration fails in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities towards mankind, particularly down-trodden strata of society.

During Covid time, when migrant workers were rendered homeless and hapless, Sonu Sood came to their rescue and provided them with suitable transport so that they could reach their homes safely. In doing so, he had to deal with a high level of dignitaries to get permission to transport them from one state to another. He turned out the messiah for the down-trodden then.

Sonu, by profession, is an actor and plays generally the role of a villain in South movies. But for the above cause, he turned out to be a real hero in the public eye.

Gautam Gambhir, an ex Indian Cricketer is another live example whose heart beats for the poor and down-trodden. He is running 4-5 outlets where free food is supplied to the poor of society. He claims to have no such means to provide food but earn this money by playing competitive cricket.

Society these days has turned selfish and self-centered. They hardly think in terms of less privileged.

Me and mine are the buzzwords.

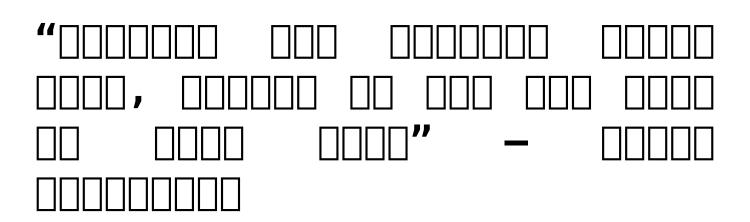
Human being sans humanity is in the blood of today's man. As a result, people keep fighting for petty issues.

God provides money to fulfill our basic necessities i.e. ROTI, KAPRA, AND MAKAN.

What is the difference between a human being and animal if the latter consumes animal food. We are human beings and humanity should be reflective in our persona i.e. in thought, action and reaction. If not, we need to still improve upon otherwise we remain animals in human form. If we remain animals in human form, what kind of society we are building. What kind of heritage we are leaving behind for our next generation to step into.

When will we improve upon even if people like Sonu Sood and Gautam Gambhir set unprecedented examples in front of us. If we still do not improve upon, we are cowards and 'C' class citizens of society.

Even if we are rich and people just gather around us, of what use. One of them will stab us on our back and run away with our false pride





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Review of Merry Christmas(movie) in the light

of Western Classical Music



I am a big fan of filmmaker Sriram Raghavan and after Andha Dhun the expectations were high. His recent film Merry Christmas did not fail to amuse me. It was a rapturous experience to see his film in theatre. Witty dialogs, on screen flirting, old world charm of Bombay (not Mumbai as he wrote in title roll) and a Hitchcockian drama in a Victorian set up is all I needed for a thorough entertainment. However, there is more to it if you see details and feel the film. The screenplay is doubtlessly taut with twists and turns every 15

minutes; there is God in details. The visuals of Victorian Gothic and Art Deco buildings of Mumbai added a splendour. Particularly for people who like Mumbai, this movie is a treat because Bombay seeps into it as a character. With an overtone of Christmas, the choice of cityscape cannot be better than Bombay in whole of India.

I never knew Katrina Kaif has so much left in her in terms of acting and histrionics. In Bollywood and regional films of India an actress is outdated after few years being in her peak. She is generally shown and seen as a Diva and an item number. Most of the actresses are out of business before they hit mid-life. So, in that kind of background Katrina has made a comeback and what a comeback it is!! Her charm added to her free willy nature of the character and surprisingly her histrionics later on exhibited the violence and cruelty in that character. Vijay Setupathy made "Non-Acting" his acting style. His witty one liners, awkward dance and subtle expressions made my day. His method acting made it a superb watching experience. And I must mention Sanjay Kapoor, who, in a brief role, was hilarious.

The movie is a dark comedy, a Noir film where two lonely souls with chequered past and shades of grey cross paths on a Christmas night and gets locked forever. You may love or hate the ending but last 15 minutes was extraordinary. And now comes the role of Western Classical Music in creating and maintaining the mood of this film.

I have observed earlier in Andhadhun how beautifully Sriram Raghavan used Beethoven's Symphony no.5 to show the jarring visuals and rapturous moments. Similarly, the background music in "Merry Christmas" was heavily influenced by Western Classical Music. For example, during the gunshot the crescendo of Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite no 1, "In the hall of the Mountain King" superbly helped to muffle the crime. If you hear this classical music piece you will relate how the slow tempo initially is growing to a thundering crescendo eventually

within few minutes. For your reference I am pasting the Youtube link below. If you see the film you can relate to what I mean.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nMUr8Rt2AI

Similarly, to add class, Maria was playing Habanera from Carmen by Bizet. Listen to the video. Ronnie was constantly saying "Oh she is a classy woman." In India, due to a colonial hangover, anything Western means sophistication and it implies that to enjoy western classical music, Opera particularly one needs good education and sophistication, which is treasured by many. So the Habanera from Carmen is a great choice to exemplify class.

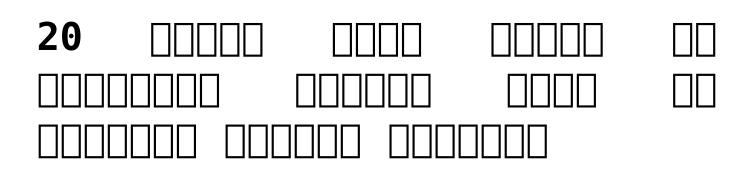
And in the end Vivaldi's Winter played for almost 10 minutes to the perfection. Starting with the Pizzicato which exemplified the sprinkling of doubt in the police officer's mind, it moves on to a rise in tempo and tone, where swiftly the hidden things expose fast climaxed with the exchange of ring between two souls with tormented past. There is anxiety, hope, romance, despair, magic realism and baffle in that last 5 minutes superbly portrayed by Vivaldi's Winter. Nowhere in Bollywood I expected Vivaldi's Winter to personify the swift changes of human behaviour amidst the movie characters. Sriram Raghavan deserves a special mention for this intelligent use of western classical music to evoke and maintain feelings in a film.

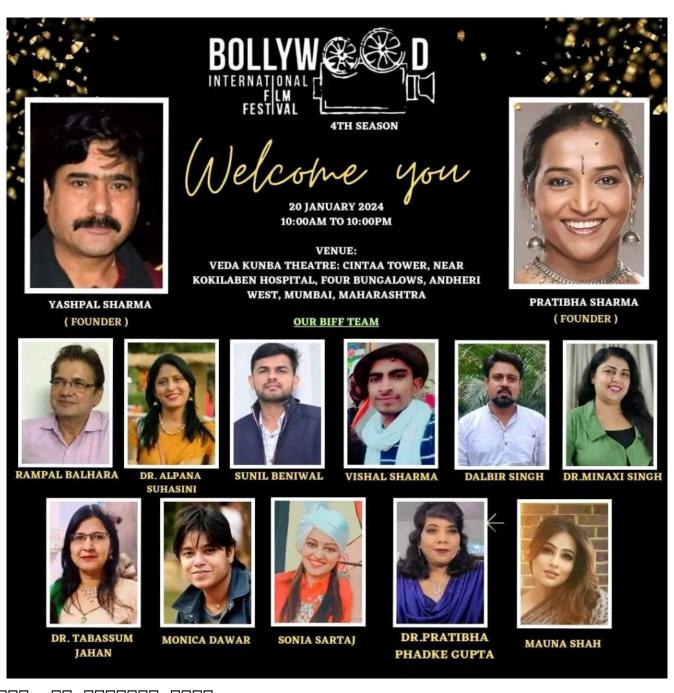
Earlier I have observed use of Western Classical Music pieces in a Satyajit Ray movie or Shyam Benegal movie. For example, Gluck's Melodie from Orpheus and Euridicce was used in "Jana Aranya" by Ray and he also borrowed Mozart's Symphony no 25 in Feluda theme in "Joy baba Felunath" or Mozart Symphony "Jupiter" and Requiem mass in songs of "Hirak Rajar Desh e". Kamaleswar Mukherjee used Beethoven Symphony 5 first movement in his "Meghe dhaka tara". Shyam Benegal films like Kalyug, Trikal or Mammo used music of Beethoven and Mozart. However, in Bollywood use of Western classical music motifs are few and

far. In a refreshing take, Sriram Raghavan has used Vivaldi, Grieg and Bizet in "Merry Christmas" to reflect and set the mood.

Overall, the movie "Merry Christmas" brings a point that "Content is King" in an industry flooded with Jawaans, Pathaans and Animal. Merry Christmas is a thoroughly entertaining movie where you have to sit on the edge not to miss the details. Particularly the edgy ending was something a movie goer will remember for a long, long time. In fact, Merry Christmas opens a new year of pure filmmaking and story telling in Bollywood

_____Biswa Prasun Chatterji.





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