Nishantha De Silva & Rajitha Hettiarachchi’s Play: Grease Yaka Returns

GREASE YAKA RETURNS

Playwrights & Directors: Nishantha de Silva & Rajitha Hettiarachchi
Group: Ananda Drama, Sri Lanka
Language: English
Duration: 1 hr 05 mins

The Play
Prologue – Fear Walks
Study Partners – Sahani and Arun ‘study’ despite Kalana, when they see their creepy neighbour.
Lu, Lu – Sahani posts a story that goes viral.
Bus Stand – Kanthi and her daughter Charini learn about the grease yaka.
Shoe Shopping – Arukshi is shoe-shopping with Kishan, helped by a greasy salesman.
Lunchtime – Supun, Hansani, Ms. Shriya and Mr. Manjula are public servants. What happened to their dessert?
Channel Surfing – TV shows enthrall the nation. What is this grease disease?
Warriors – Sahani conducts a make-up tutorial, but can ‘darkies’ discuss beauty?
Spilt Coffee – Charini appeals to Arukshi for help against discrimination.
Fairness Treatment – Sahani needs help to become fairer.
Mirror – The politicians are with us.
The Cure – Kanthi seeks medical help for Charini.
Consequences – Riots!
Another Beginning – We look to our leaders.
Epilogue: A Mother’s Love – Is there a cure?

Directors' Note

The Grease Yaka (grease demon) myth describes scantily clad, grease covered men suspected of crimes ranging from voyeurism to rape to abduction and murder in Sri Lanka. Although no grease yakas were ever caught, grease yaka 'sightings' hogged the headlines from time to time, causing widespread alarm and panic, especially during the conflict period. Ananda Drama's Grease Yaka (2014) examined the emergence and proliferation of fears in the society by using this urban legend as a metaphor and a tool.

Grease Yaka Returns, first staged in 2018, explores the corrosive and sometimes devastating consequences of those fears. It looks at how easily distrust can be sown between various groups in the society through the aggregation of relatively small event and incidents. It looks at how quickly this distrust can morph into social divisions, sometimes even erupting in violence. It holds a mirror, and a warning, to the society.

The Directors & Playwrights

Nishantha de Silva is the founder of Ananda Drama, a non-profit theatre company based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Before Grease Yaka Returns (2018), Nishantha co-wrote and directed the trilingual political satire Picket Republic (2017) and a comic adaptation of Dracula (2015). He produced Grease Yaka (2014) and Grease Yaka Returns (2018) for Ananda Drama. Together with Rajitha, he won the awards for Best Direction and Best Original Script at Sri Lanka's State Drama Festival 2019 for Grease Yaka Returns, which won a total of 10 awards including Best Play. His other directing credits include The Tempest at The Workshop Players' Shakespeare in the Park Festival 2017 and Stuart Paterson's adaptation of Michael Morpurgo's Kensuke's Kingdom (2013). He holds an M. Phil from Cambridge University and a Fellowship in Directing from Trinity College London.

Rajitha Hettiarachchi joined Ananda Drama as a writer and

director following its establishment in 2013. Rajitha co-wrote Grease Yaka (2014) with its director Ruwanthie de Chickera whilst also acting in it. He acted in Stages Theatre' Group's Walking Path, which won Best Play and Best Ensemble Cast at the THESPO theatre festival in Mumbai in 2014. Rajitha founded the performance company Idea Couch and was an Art Think South Asia Fellow in 2018. He holds a B.A. in English from Sri Jayawardenepura University and is an Attorney at Law.

The Group

Ananda Drama grew from the work carried out by its founder Nishantha de Silva and other alumni at Ananda College, Colombo, since 2006. With many students involved in the school's English theatre activities wanting to continue their work in theatre after graduating, Ananda Drama was formed as a non-profit entity in 2014 to showcase their work to the general public.

Cast & Credits

Students	Leeth Singhage (Kalana), Eshani Seneviratne (Sahani)
	Lakshitha Edirisinghe (Arun),
Mother and Daughter	Dmitri Gunatilake (Kanthi), Dinoo Wickramage (Charini)
Couple	Ashini Fernando (Arukshi), Chalana Wijesuriya (Kishan)
Government Servants	Jayavi Jayawardhana (Hansani), Sabreena Niles (Shriya),
	Lithmal Jayawardhana (Supun), Gavin Ranasinghe (Manjula)
Opportunists	Charith Dissanayake, Nandun Dissanayake
	Pemanthi Fernando, Eraj Gunawardena
	Ayudhya Gajanayake, Rithmaka Karunadhara
	Vidura Manoratne, Malith Kulathilake
	Amandi Kulathilake, Hiruni Herath

Designer	Jayampathi Guruge
Stage Manager	Ishtartha Wellaboda

Playwrights & Directors
Nishantha de Silva and Rajitha Hettiarachchi

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