Bratya Basu’s Play: Rani Creusa

Playwright: Bratya Basu
Director: Sujan Mukhopadhyay
Group: Chetana, Kolkata
Language: Bengali
Duration: 2 hrs 10 mins

The Play
The childless couple of ancient Athens, Greece, King Xuthus and his gorgeous wife Queen Creusa, seeks the blessing of God Boreas and then visits God Apollo’s temple in Delphi. Priestess Daphnis informs Creusa, daughter of King Erectheus, about the oracle of God Apollo that the royal couple will soon bear a male child, Doris. But till the prophecy comes true, they will have to adopt the attractive and handsome young man, Ion, who has grown up in the temple and crown him the prince of Athens. While King Xuthus happily agrees to obey the divine command, the Queen does not. As the King goes ahead with the plan of the adoption ceremony Creusa loses her cool and conspires with her servant Danius to kill Ion by poisoning his drink. Danius fails to carry out her order and gets caught red handed. Aghast, Ion returns to the temple of Delphi. Creusa admits her role in this conspiracy publicly. King Xuthus has no option but to initiate the trial for justice in a democracy. The arguments and counter arguments in the trial come to an abrupt end after the sudden appearance of Delphi’s chambermaid, Pythia. The truth about Ion’s birth leaves the royal couple stunned and overwhelmed…

Director’s Note
There lies an innate resemblance in almost all the stories of tragedy of human conflicts and political conspiracies; and of the great wars waged by men. The most significant resemblance lies in their staying relevant throughout the years.

Therefore, to rediscover the age-old mythical tale of ‘Ion and Creusa’, Bratya Basu penned Queen Creusa, a tragic-satire. In the play, where the people demand retribution for a sacrilegious crime committed by the Queen herself, the hypocrisies of the elite are elucidated and illuminated as the fallacies hidden in the constitutional structure.

The Director

Sujan Mukhopadhyay has acted in about 30 plays and written several scripts for theatre, television and cinema. He was awarded the Stagecraft Award for Ghasiram Kotwal and Popular Viewer’s Choice Award for Don..Take Bhalo Lage. He has performed in Mumbai, Pune, Hyderabad, Nagpur, Chennai and all the major cities of India, as well as USA. He has also directed a Bengali feature film Chocolate (available on Netflix).

The Playwright

Bratya Basu is an accomplished theatre artist, a playwright and director who started his career as a sound operator. He is a theatre thinker and activist, and has served Bengali theatre for nearly 20 years. His plays have been staged by eminent directors and a compilation of his plays has been published in three volumes.

The Group

Chetana was founded in 1972. It has produced 33 full-length Plays and 13 short Plays in its journey of 46 years. Chetana received numerous awards and citation from various cultural institutions. It has organised a number of Theatre Festivals, Seminars and Workshops etc., and performed in all the districts of West Bengal and in almost all the major cities of India. Chetana has staged different plays in the Theatre Festivals organised by the National School of Drama and Sangeet Natak Akademi. It has toured USA and Canada with its productions in 1980 and 1990. Chetana performed Mareech Sangbad in Bourdeaux (France) in 1999. Sponsored by the ICCR it took part in the Ibsen International Theatre Festival held

in Oslo (Norway) in 2004 and performed in London (UK) the same year.

Cast & Credits

Rani Creusa	Nivedita Mukhopadhyay
Glaucas	Supriya Dutta
Raja Xuthus	Shaheb Chattopadhyay
Ion	Subhra Sourav Das
Eziptus	Tarun Bhattacharyya
Senior Priest	Amitabha Ghosh
Danaus	Sushovan Guha
Orion	Rahul Sen Roy
Petroclus	Rajat Narayan Bhattacharya
Clotho	Somrashmi Ghosh
Lachesis	Monalisa Das
Atropos	Ashmita Ghosh
Pythia	Ruma Bakhuli
Daphnis	Santwana Banerjee
Singer	Daayaad Mukherjee
Chorus	Parikshit Ghosh, Debashis Naskar, Biswajit Nayak, Prateek Banerjee, Parag Roy, Sayan Maji

Music	Prabuddha Banerjee
Light	Soumen Chakraborty
Sound	Anindyo Nandy
Costume	Prabal Mondal
Make-up	Ayon Ghosh
Set	Partha Majumdar
Vocalists	Dipanwita Chowdhury, Dibyendu Mukherjee, Sujan Mukhopadhyay, Shaheb Chattopadhyay, Prabuddha Banerjee, Bodhisattwa Banerjee
Assistant Director	Snehansu Biswas

Playwright	Bratya Basu
Director	Sujan Mukhopadhyay

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Watch Prof. Khushalani's review of the play and interview with the director –

https://youtu.be/9x4IIdxNTPU?t=3724

Ke ?

The Play

Dr. Sunil Sen. has a tiff with his wife Kurchi, following which he comes to stay at his sister Bula's and brother-in-law, Arun's farm house. Manoj, a successful businessman, is Kurchi's lover. One fine morning, a stranger, Srikanta Gupta, comes to meet Sunil and informs him that his wife, Lily who is Sunil's patient, has committed suicide that morning. The reason behind the suicide is Lily's alleged affair with Sunil and her pregnancy. Srikanta threatens Sunil with murder. Sunil, in self defense, approaches his college pal, Rabi, a high rank police officer. But Srikanta is violent with Rabi as well and injures him. Left with no choice, both Rabi and Sunil approach a private detective, Chatak Chattaraj, on Arun's advice. Can Chatak Chattaraj solve the mystery?

Director's Note

Ke? (Who?) apparently conveys the sense of a thriller, but at its core is a blend of complex human relations, empowerment of women, and the modern day stagnancy of the institution of marriage. The soul of the play carries a delicate hint that helplessness arising from individual vulnerability adds to the philosophical belief of life, more than human vaunting. Every space in this production penetrates the other. The office enters the house, the coffee shop makes way into the office, the doctor's chamber breaks out of the coffee shop – each intertwined with the other, expanding into the entire city and society in the end. Casting of light is meant not merely to represent illumination or darkness, but to signify a process of psychological continuum. In this production, the transition from one scene to the next never occurs in darkness; rather the accompanying music portrays a world proportional to the light, entwining the conscious with the sub-conscious. While a prototype of music and light has been used to illustrate the consciousness of the mind, another pattern is used to depict its sub-consciousness. The association of cricket comes as a requisition in the play. Costumes and make up represent two different colors and mental states. Finally, is '*Ke?* (Who?) about analyzing the registers of life, unconsciousness, cricket, and society, placing them all on the same premise?

The Playwright & Director

Bratya Basu is an accomplished theatre artist, playwright, actor and director. His noted plays include *Aranyadeb, Shahar Yaar, Virus-M, Winkle-Twinkle, 17th July, Ruddhasangeet, Chatushkon* etc. His plays have been staged by various and renowned groups and directors. He has directed three films viz. *Raasta, Teesta* and *Tara* and has acted in many films including, *Kaalbela, Icchey, Sthaniyo Sambad* etc. Basu has bagged many awards and recognitions such as Shyamal Sen Memorial Award, Dishari Award, and Satyen Mitra Award.

Bratya Basu, currently Hon'ble Cabinet Minister and in charge of the Ministry of Tourism for the state of West Bengal, formed his own theatre group Bratyajon in 2008. His recent plays *Cinemar Moto* and *Ke?* are milestones in Bengali Theatre.

The Group

'Bratyajon' is the brainchild of ace playwright and actor-director Bratya Basu. The group's productions have been influenced by the learning, motivation, inspiration and experiences of the renowned playwright and theatre artist himself. Some of the important productions of Bratyajon are *Ruddhasangeet, Canvasser, Byomkesh, Chiro Kumar Sobha, Cinemar Moto* and *Ke?*. An important activity of the group is to organize an annual theatre festival, Bratyajon Natya Aayojan. Bratyajon confers Bishnu Basu Smriti Puroskar in the loving memory of the late Bishnu Basu and also organizes Bishnu Basu Memorial Lectures.