

# Irwin Shaw's Play: Bury the Dead

Playwright: Irwin Shaw

Adapter & Director: Surya Mohan Kulshreshtha

Group: NIPA Rangmandali, Lucknow

Language: Hindi

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

## The Play

This is a story of an unknown place and time where a war is being fought for the past two years. On the aforesaid day six soldiers who were killed two days ago are being buried in the battlefield. Suddenly, these soldiers rise and refuse to be buried. These dead soldiers have their own logic i.e. that wars are fought and the common man dies to feed the ambitions, business and greed of a handful of power-hungry people. The corpses say that they wish to live... the life of a farmer, of a son, with friends, with their beloved... enjoying nature, relationships and beauty that this life is endowed with. The women from their homes are called to convince them but that too doesn't work. In the end the general tries to blow them with a machine gun but the corpses come out of their graves and stand amidst the people, thus underlining the importance of life, and drawing the attention towards the horrors of war generated by sheer greed.

## Director's Note

Written in 1936 after the First World War, Irwin Shaw's play Bury the Dead is an anti-war story. The play boldly opposes the use of the common man as fodder for war and violence, to fulfil the personal gains of a few people. The play also conveys the un-lived dreams of dead soldiers, and those whom they leave behind to pay the price of war. The near and dears of the soldiers go through extreme trauma emotionally, socially and financially. Today violence, terror and war are

being justified in the name of religion and nationalism. In these times, I feel, this play of Irwin Shaw is as contemporary as it was when he wrote it. This play was a challenge for the creative vision since sometimes it is expressionist and at places idealistic. We have tried to convey these factors with the help of scenography, lights, movements, make-up, costumes and acting. I felt that instead of translating, an adaptation would convey the feeling to the Indian audience more effectively. The presentation is for the audience to enjoy, introspect and analyse.

#### Director and Adapter

Recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi award, and former director of Bharatendu Natya Academy, Lucknow, Surya Mohan Kulshreshtha took his training in theatre from BNA, Lucknow, in 1976-77. He has organized many theatre workshops and his directorial ventures have been staged nationally and internationally. His original plays include Tukde, Veer Lorik, and Natak Ganesh Markaaur Char Shikhaayen. He has translated The Caucasian Chalk Circle and Three Penny Opera by Bertolt Brecht, Sanskrit plays Bhagvadajjukeeyam and Mrichchhakatikam and many other western and Indian plays to Hindi. He has directed, co-directed, acted and scripted many films, TV serials and tele-films. He is known for his performance as Socrates in the play Bare Foot in Athens directed by Raj Bisaria. Surya Mohan Kulshreshtha has been awarded an honorary diploma in Norway; the best costume designer in America; Senior Fellowship by the Govt. of India; and Kala Bhushan by Uttar Pradesh Hindi Sansthan. He is the president and artistic director of NIPA, and has earlier been associated with IPTA and Meghdoot.

#### The Playwright

Irwin Shaw was an American playwright, cine writer, story writer and novelist who began writing at the age of 21. In 1935, he wrote an anti-war play Bury the Dead and his first screen play The Big Game. In the latter half of that decade

his stories were published in many popular magazines. In 1948, inspired by his experiences in the American army, he wrote The Young Lions which was later made it into a film in 1958. He dedicated the rest of his life to writing novels.

### The Group

NIPA Rangamandali was established in 1991 by a group of talented and popular artists of Lucknow. It has given highly acclaimed performances in India as well as in Norway, Finland, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, America, Canada and Pakistan. Bhagvadajjukeeyam has done more than 100 shows. Experimenting with different forms, the group has presented Mitti ki Gaadi, Kundmala, Pret, Lohar, Ashadh ka Ek Din, The Lesson, Exit the King, Jai Sidhnayak, Sambashiva, Vasamsi Jeernani, Balkan Women, Crusades and many more plays.

### Cast & Credits

Soldier 1

Shubam Singh Chauhan

Soldier 2

Akshat

Soldier 3

Sandeep Kumar

Soldier 4

Avinash

Sargent

Sujeet

Singh Yadav 'Bunty'

Priest 1

Ramesh Saini

Priest 2

Abhishek

Captain

Nitish

Bhardwaj

High Command 1

Vinay Kumar

Mishra

High Command 2

Anuj Nigam

High Command 3

Gaurav Dinghra

Doctor	
Akansha Aggarwal	
Typist	
Bajyanti Nath, Pallavi Singh	
Corpse 1	Shubam
Tiwari	
Corpse 2	Vikesh
Bajpayee	
Corpse 3	Suraj
Pratap Singh	
Corpse 4	Shivam
Singh	
Corpse 5	Sachin
Jaiswal	
Corpse 6	Saurabh
Kumar Mishra	
Sister of Corpse 1	Baijanti
Nath	
Wife of Corpse 2	Shivangi
Nigam	
Wife of Corpse 3	Puja Singh
Wife of Corpse 4	Pallavi
Beloved of Corpse 5	Komal Singh
Mother of Corpse 6	Mridula
Bhardwaj	
Scenography Assistants	Vinay, Shubam,
Sachin	
Stage Property	Ritesh,
Sherya, Adarsh, Shivam, Sandeep, Gunjan Jain	
Costume Assistants	Akanksha
Aggarwal, Amrita Paul, Komal Singh, Gaurav,	
Shivangi Nigam	
Live Music	Mahinder
Pal	
Sound & Vocal Music	Bharatendu
Kashyap	

Sound & Music Assistants	Anuj Nigam, Akshat
Vocal Music Operator	Anant Sharma
Light Assistant	Sujeet
Singh Yadav	
Poster	Shreya
Ranjan, Gunjan Jain	
Stage Management	Aarav
Light Design & Operation	Anoop Joshi
'Bunty'	
Make-up	Praveen
Namdeo, Shaahir Ahmad	
Costume Designer,	
Assistant Director	
& Presentation Controller	Mridula Bhardwaj
Art Director	
Bharatendu Kashyap	
Playwright	Irwin
Shaw	
Adaptation & Direction	Surya Mohan
Kulshreshtha	
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