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 unlived 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 Corpse1 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

Contacts
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