Rakesh Ghosh’s Play: Upal Bhaadury… Tale of a Dead Star

Playwright & Director: Rakesh Ghosh
Group: Dum Dum Shabdomugdho Naatyokendra, Kolkata
Language: Bengali
Duration: 1 hr 50 mins

The Play
Upal Bhaadury…Tale of a Dead Star is based on the life of a living legend Sri Chapal Bhaduri. He is a renowned female impersonator in Bengali Jatra. As a teenager, after the death of his mother, Chapal Bhaduri came to perform in Jatra for the purpose of raising money due to severe poverty. His voice was girlish, so he got a chance to play female roles. For this, he had to endure humiliation by the society. After a while, Chapal Bhaduri became ‘Chapal Rani’. Gradually he became a popular actor and a star of Jatra world. But the moment female artists joined the Jatra, Chapal Rani was rejected. The ‘rani’ began to work as a servant in households for survival. In exchange for a little money, he started singing bhajans in front of the temples, slums and streets of Kolkata. Someone from theatre saw his performance and gave him an opportunity to perform in theatre. According to Chapal, Jatra has given him money, but theatre has given him respect. Chapal Bhaduri has played the role of Upal Bhaduri in this play.

Director’s Note
What does a creative artiste desire? He wants wealth, fame, honour. But all of these become insubstantial at a certain point in his life. What drives him relentlessly is an intense desire to create exquisite art. This drive gives him fulfilment, guiding him to explore new horizons in his creativity.
Upal Bhaadury…Tale of a Dead Star is not just a play, but also the journey of an actor who has devoted his life to art. His

life is a tutorial to be followed not only by actors but by artists from any field. The play takes on a complex, layered and nuanced meaning, stirring up in its vortex all the intricate shades of love, dependence, endearment, affection, desire, illusion and… betrayal. It is a strange conflict between the flesh and the spirit, the performing body and the soul, the inner workings of the artiste's mind and its manifestation in performance.
I felt the importance of making the audience aware of this forgotten 'rani' or 'diva' of Bengali theatre, and bring him again into limelight when he is in his 80's, when he is all alone staying in an old age home in his last days. It is a tribute to our beloved Jatra-diva Chapal Rani.

The Director & Playwright
Rakesh Ghosh is a professional playwright, director & actor for theatre, television & films. In the beginning, he joined Dwandik, a Howrah based theatre group & performed in its plays. He also worked with the theatre group Natadha. In 2006 he formed his own theatre group Shabdomugdho for which he writes and directs plays. Rakesh has worked with legendary theatre personalities. He has worked under Sri Manoj Mitra. His group had been selected for National Theatre Festival organized by State Govt. of West Bengal in 2017 & 2019. Rakesh Ghosh has worked as a writer and assistant director for television serials and films. He has also acted in short films, television serials & telefilms. Presently he is working with Star Jalsa as a story developer and script writer.

The Group
Dum Dum Shabdomugdho Naatyokendra was established in the year 2006. The organization has produced 16 contemporary productions till date and has performed all over West Bengal, in the 20th Bharat Rang Mahotsav, and at 4th National Theatre Festival 2018 organized by Minerva Natasanskriti Charcha Kendra, Natya Mela.

Cast & Credits

Upal Bhaadury Chapal Bhaduri
Gour Mohan Rakesh Ghosh
Madhab Pradip Roy
Pratap Jayesh Laha
Masterji Nilanjan Saha
Chorus Aninda Roy, Prasenjit Kundu, Raja Rajbhar, Abhijit Dutta, Rahul Roy, Abhi Banerjee, Barnali Roy Chowdhury, Sampreeti Chakraborty, Priyanka Das, Pampa Goswami, Ranjan Bose

Light Design Debabrat Sarkar
Scenography Atanu Sarkar
Music Recording & Mixing Abhijit Acharya & Jagmohan Singh
Make-up SK Israfil
Costume Ranjan Bose
Sound Operator Bandan Mishra
Art Setup Manindra Bera
Vocals Ranjan Bose, Abhijit Acharya, Prakriti Dutta, Jagmohan Singh

Playwright & Director Rakesh Ghosh

Contacts
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