Sarthak Narula’s Play: Ruins in Reverse

RUINS IN REVERSE
(A devised performance based on the poems of ‘Pash’)

Poet: Avtar Singh Sandhu ‘Pash’
Director: Sarthak Narula
Group: NSD Student Diploma Production, New Delhi
Language: Multilingual
Duration: 1hr

The Play
The process of this collaboration started with reading aloud the poetry of Pash in Hindi and Punjabi. A piece without any script or characters but with people, a site and the words of Pash. Sieving through poetry and oscillating from selection to rejection of the text multiple times; engaging with protest music; reading critical material written on Pash; and staying with the site for long hours, the idea of this piece was to revel in what would emerge when people come collectively to produce a performance on the poetry of Pash. On developing a scene on poetry, the performers were wary of not getting into plain recitation or a visualisation of the written word. There was an attempt to delve into the how, why and what is Pash communicating through his poems; its significance in the times we live in being a crucial aspect of the play.

Director’s note
One image of lynching shows up on our Facebook screen and all our senses are captured by it. Soon the number goes up and one sees 16 lynching in a span of two months, and then it becomes a scroll. One scrolls and scrolls till the geography of fear gets etched on our forehead and we become immune to a ‘fact’ to which bowing down seems like an option which, if not opted for, shall lead to serious consequences. What are those

moments of encounter wherein we interrogate the self and the other and what are those repetitions that make violence a routine?
The summoning of Pash's poetry in the current socio-political context of the spaces we inhabit is a provocation to unearth the silences that have been buried underneath the official, documented and visible discourses which have made the repetition of violence so inevitable that even yearning for a near-utopia seems as a task that is unrealistic. The ruins of what remains of the alternate discourse though, are potential sites wherein a traversing into the past has led to the future of these silences. Rummaging through the silences and staying with them, these ruins seek to take things in reverse and then starts the commencement of the trial of the portrayal of a robust entity through Pash's poetry.

The Director
Sarthak Narula is a graduate of National School of Drama, with specialisation in Direction. Before joining NSD, he had completed his Masters in Theatre from Academy of Theatre Arts, University of Mumbai. His area of interest is the intersection between Scenography and Light design. He has designed lights for more than 30 productions in the last two years. Presently, he is doing a fellowship at NSD in the field of technological advancements in lighting in context to the alternative spaces of performance.

The Poet
Pash (9 September 1950 – 23 March 1988) was the pen name of Avtar Singh Sandhu, one of the major poets of the Naxalite movement in the 1970s. He was killed by Khalistani extremists on 23 March 1988. His strongly left-wing views were reflected in his poetry.The poetry of Pash invokes dissent and rebellion against the violence and marginalization that takes place on the basis of class. In his poems he protests against the idealistic portrayal of folk life; interprets love as an expression of pain, which surfaces

as one gives it up for a more important or substantial cause. His poems split open the game of ‘democracy’ and yearn for dreaming towards a world where equality and freedom shall make the ground fecund for progress.

The Group
This play is a part of National School of Drama’s graduate showcase of class 2019. It aims to provide a platform to encourage emerging theatre practitioners to share their work with a wider audience.

Cast & Credits
On Stage Aditi Rora, Anmol Ghuliani,
Ashlesha Phad, Bhumisuta Das,
Hari Shankar Ravi, Jitu Rabha,
Manoj Kumar Thapar, Pallav Singh,
Salim Hussain Mulla, Snehalata Tagde,
Snigdha Mondal, Suman Purty,
Mujib Takhmeer, Rizwan, Imran

Lights Sarthak Narula
Scenography Nitish Arora, Vidur Sethi
Video Sourav Poddar
Costume Bhumisuta Das, Snigdha Mondal
Property Nitish Arora, Manoj Kumar Thapar
Poster & Brochure Mehak, Divyangana,Vidur, Saras
Sound Vishala R Mahale
Music Composition Navdeep Singh, Masood Malik, Manoj Kumar Thapar
Percussion Sayan Sarkar, Paalin Kabak, Bhaskar Jha
Vocals Navdeep Singh, Manoj Kumar, Snehalata Tagde, Ayushi Masood
Dramaturgy Vidur Sethi, Bhaskar Jha, Pallav Singh

Dramaturgical Guidance Avijit Solanki, Vicky Maheshwari

Poet Pash
Director Sarthak Narula

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