

Publication	The Pioneer
Date	January 10, 2011
Edition	New Delhi
Page	13



Through interactive video projects, a mime and puppet performance, directors from across the globe are trying to broaden the scope of theatre in the time of Internet. DIVYA KAUSHIK reports

MIXED MEDIA ON STAGE

This year's Bharat Rang Mahotsav, the ongoing annual festival by the National School Of Drama, is not just about spoken words and action. At a time when visual media is bombarding you on your palm pads, some European tales, French drama, social issues and much more are being packaged with other performing arts disciplines like mime, dance, music and video slides. This corresponds to the global movement of blending art forms with each other to revive and reinterpret existing formats, widen the creative scope, generate the appeal of a spectacle and create a universal language.

Be it *Silent Words*, a mime performance or *Sweet Sorrow*, the play which uses various dance movements, innovation is the buzzword. As director Manav Kaul sums it up, "Every director recognises the need to experiment with his story-telling style and that is why we have modern themes and edgy technology finding space in our productions. The Mahotsav allows us to share ideas and ensure that more foreign groups get to reach the Indian audience while our troupes find greater acceptance abroad."

This time the festival features 22

productions from 20 countries and two live (interactive) video theatre projects. The first is *The Garbage Project*, a comment on the piling heaps that are the challenges of new cities, while the second is *Social Gaming* that analyses the impact of internet on our lives. "This edition of the festival is an exploration of where theatre is headed globally. We wanted to bring out the changes and, therefore, selected productions that effectively combined mixed media. For example, video theatre projects are being showcased for the first time. The mime performance by French artist Lauren Decol is a must-see while others boast of a high visual component, innovative stage presentations and dance-drama," says festival chairperson Aman Allana.

French director Eric



'EVERY DIRECTOR RECOGNISES THE NEED TO EXPERIMENT WITH HIS STORY-TELLING STYLE AND THAT IS WHY WE HAVE MODERN THEMES AND EDGY TECHNOLOGY FINDING SPACE IN OUR PRODUCTIONS. THE MAHOTSAV ALLOWS US TO SHARE IDEAS AND ENSURE THAT MORE FOREIGN GROUPS GET TO REACH THE INDIAN AUDIENCE'

Vigner, who presented the play *Le Barbier De Seville*, argues it is important to open his production with a beautiful dance sequence. "The lyrics on which the actors matched steps was written by a renowned gypsy composer. Not only did it lend power and drama, in one stroke it also rescued the fringe and made it part of the mainstream. No production is complete today until and unless it is spiced up. Theatre globally is looking for newer expressions," adds he.

Maria Teresa from Bolivia is part of a Spanish group and feels it is mandatory for any theatre person today to think out-of-the-box. "Also, I believe multi-tasking opens up your mind and enhances your potential as a complete artiste. I am a technician but act and write scripts, too. The next generation of theatre performers will be judged by its versatility and identified by originality."

Francisca Bernardi from Chile feels because directors are moving across the globe, they don't want to restrict themselves to one medium of expression. "I recently watched a

Bharatanatyam play in India and was so influenced that I am now contemplating to do something like this. May be, I manage to depict a modern story through this dance form," she says.

Besides the use of high-end technology, Allana points out, most of the plays featured in the festival reflect a multi-culture. "There is nothing like purely French or pure Indian. Each play in the festival gives a glimpse of different cultures," says she.

This is what the festival succeeds in doing with representation from across the world — French theatre has colourful productions like Beaumarchais classic opera *The Barber of Seville* and *In Viva*, a dance piece. A Latin American package will showcase *Santa Maria de Iquique: Revenge of Ramon*. Two repertoires from Britain will speak of the diasporic experience with a stage adaptation of Farrukh Dhondy's *Miranda*.

Don't you think coupled with technology, theatre can give films a run for their money? Well, take a look for yourself.



French director
Eric Vigner