

Raigadala Jevha Jaag Yete

A doting yet misunderstanding father who wishes to connect with his oldest and wants to see him grow. A frustrated son lost in his childhood woes wishes to prove his worth to the father he considers akin to god; Abhijeet Choudhary and Yuwaraj Shah's *Jag Utha hai Raigad* is a play crafted to keep the audience entranced for its duration. The play is a Hindi translation of Marathi playwright Vasant Kanetkar's *Raigadala Jheva Jag Yete*. The play captures the lives of Chhatrapati Shivaji Bhonsle and his son Shambaji's daily trials and tribulations and depicts them in a very humane situation. The play explores the details of the almost irreparable divide between the duo and its reasons – familial pressure, lack of belief in and respect for Shambhaji. It portrays a father's attempt to woo back his son and a son's uphill battle with the burden of a vast legacy that he must uphold.

The play has a stellar cast, with each actor delivering their best to make the play a success. Dhanashree Heblkar, who opens the play as Soirabai, Shivaji's second wife, is the stereotypical stepmother through and through. She is cunning, biased, partial, manipulative and jealous. She wishes for her son to be king and is very quick to point out the faults of her stepson. In Prime Minister Annajee Datto (Suyash Kukreja), she finds a confidant and yes man. He is assertive, self-contradicting and dislikes the older son. Together with Pant, Annajee wishes to depose Shambhu Raja (Chezan Lawer) as the Yuvraj and place the younger, more pliant, Ram Raja (Prem Gowda), as the heir to the throne. Ram Raja is innocent as a rose yet, wise beyond his years. His love for his family surpasses anything and everything else. He wishes to spend time with his father and brother and not upset his mother. Prem Gowda portrays the role of the child who loves unconditionally with great ease and accuracy.

Annajee and Pant are calculating, cunning, manipulative yes men who misconstrue stories to pain the young Yuvraj in a bad light. Hambir Rao, the Queen's brother and Yesubai (Hennu Khanna), Shambhu Raja's wife, are the only two who seem to hold him in positive regard. Yesubai, as portrayed by Hennu Khanna, is a devoted, loving wife who loves and supports her spouse and gently nudges him in the correct direction. She is usually the voice of reason and is a beloved of Hambir and the Chhatrapati. Chezan Lawer as Shambhuraja is every part the wounded and needy son as he is the prideful, self-respecting and assertive Yuvraj. Although rarely disrespectful to his father, he wishes to make changes unacceptable to his father, perform actions the latter does not approve of and jump to conclusions about the latter's regard and

decisions. He is insecure yet confident, and Chezan Lawer delivers the son's, who wishes for affection and encouragement from his father, role with absolute justice.

Shivaji, as portrayed by Ashwin Sharma, is a statesman and loving father to the very core. He wishes the world for his children and thinks the world of them but misunderstands the impact his actions have on them. He loves his sons unconditionally but makes some unfortunate decisions when it comes to the core. The character is portrayed brilliantly. He thinks himself to be a ruler first and a father second - he cannot shake off his kingly duties to be his son's father – when it should be the other way around. The characters' portrayal is fantastic: this provides them with a depth that helps the audience connect with and embody their souls by the end.

The cast, however, is not the only thing that is wonderful about the play. The set design, the costume design and the dialogues all add to the aura radiated on the stage. The set transports you to the 18th century and entices you. It keeps you bound to the story as it enables you to imagine and envision life in those times. The costumes are accurate for the time, adding to the authenticity of these characters, although had Shivaji and Shambhu Raja been wearing the shell necklaces they were known for, the costumes would have been more genuine.

The lights and sounds, however, are what breathe life into both the stage and the costume. The sound engineering is terrific – the music and the sound effects enhance the audience's viewing experience and enable them to feel every single emotion deeply. It sets the mood for the scene, and when accompanied by the lighting, it creates something magical. The lights draw attention to every critical detail of what is being put out for the audience. The use of singular spotlights, backlights and even darkness for some scenes compared to the more flat lighting of the others builds up the mood for the crescendo. When Shambhu pushes Yesubai and leaves, the entire confrontation between Shambhu, Hambir Rao, and later Shivaji and finally the darkness upon Shivaji's death all embody a spirit breath soul into the scenes.

The play is a must-watch for anyone interested in the historical genre. With its awe-inspiring performances, brilliant sound and light design, and fantastic set and costume design, the play is set to leave its audiences breathless and make them feel as if they've been ripped raw and constructed anew. It is a ride of emotion and delivers just what it promises: a drama about the relationships of two people.

