

A Riot of Laughs Returns: Bengal Bungalow Celebrates 22 Years of Comic Chaos

Posted on

This July, Colombo theater audiences are in for another unforgettable dose of laughter as CentreStage Productions revives Jehan Aloysius's iconic comedy Bengal Bungalow for its 22nd Anniversary Production at the Lionel Wendt Theatre.

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A scene from the play, Bengal Bungalow.

First written by Jehan Aloysius during his school days and originally staged in 2004, Bengal Bungalow has since earned its place as one of Sri Lanka's most beloved English-language comedies. Over the past two decades, the production has built a loyal following thanks to its fast-paced humor, eccentric characters, and delightfully absurd situations. Now, returning to the stage on July 4 and 5, 2026, the comedy promises yet another riotous theatrical experience for longtime fans and newcomers alike.

Set in late-1930s Bengal, the play centers around a wealthy British family whose tranquil life is shattered when a British pilot crashes his aircraft directly into their newly renovated guestroom. The pilot survives the accident but suffers from severe amnesia, setting off a whirlwind of misunderstandings and outrageous twists.

The chaos intensifies when Lillian, the dramatic lady of the house, impulsively claims the confused pilot as her husband and marries him on the spot. Her bewildered suitor, Charles Worthing, is left desperately trying to make sense of the unfolding madness. From there, the story spirals into a dizzying spectacle involving a notorious robber, a hopelessly overwhelmed priest, the pilot's very much alive real wife, an enraged mahout, and even a collection of wild animals.

Known for its energetic style and rapid-fire comedy, Bengal Bungalow draws inspiration from the classic British farces of playwrights such as Ray Cooney, while also embracing the exaggerated, cartoon-like humor reminiscent of *The Simpsons*. The result is a production that balances clever wordplay with physical comedy and pure theatrical chaos.

Speaking about the enduring popularity of the play, Jehan Aloysius describes it as "a wild romp that pushes the boundaries of comedic drama." He adds, "We want the audience to leave the theater breathless from laughing."

Since founding CentreStage Productions in 2001, Aloysius has remained a passionate advocate for original Sri Lankan theater. The company has consistently championed homegrown writing and performance, with Bengal Bungalow standing out as one of its signature successes. Previous productions in 2004, 2010, 2016, and 2018 played to packed audiences, cementing the show's reputation as a crowd

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favorite.

Beyond its entertainment value, the anniversary production also reflects CentreStage's long-standing commitment to social impact. Proceeds from the show are expected to support the StageHands Project, Aloysius's humanitarian initiative that uses theatre as a tool for social change. The program works closely with children in need and performers with physical and mental challenges, creating opportunities through the performing arts.

With its blend of slapstick humor, eccentric storytelling, and nostalgic theatrical charm, Bengal Bungalow continues to prove why it remains a cornerstone of Sri Lankan English theatre. As anticipation builds ahead of its July return, audiences are advised to keep a close watch on the Lionel Wendt box office this June. If previous productions are anything to go by, tickets for this wildly entertaining comedy are likely to disappear quickly.

July 4 and 5, 2026

Venue: Lionel Wendt, Colombo 7

Time: 7.30pm-9.30pm

Tickets: Rs.6,500, Rs.5,500, Rs.4,000, Rs.2,500 Whatsapp: +94 77 294 9767 (for details)