‘Dear Children Sincerely’:Staging 7 Decades of Sri Lankan history

Posted on



With a decisive presidential election fast approaching, it seems appropriate to reflect on the turbulent political history of contemporary Sri Lanka.

Stages Theatre Group, one of the leading contemporary theatre companies in the country, brings back to the stage one of its most acclaimed productions – a tour-de-force of 70 years of post-colonial Sri Lankan history, truncated into one and a half hours. Directed by the international award-winning Sri Lankan playwright and director Ruwanthie de Chickera, the play ‘Dear Children, Sincerely – 7 Decades of

Sri Lanka’ is an ensemble performance that takes the audience through seventy years of Sri Lankan history in seven gripping scenes.

Whether you have seen it before or you have never seen it at all, whether you have studied the political history of Sri Lanka intricately or have no clue about it, ‘DCS—7 Decades of Sri Lanka’ (or DCS) is a must-see play if you are curious about how Sri Lanka arrived at where it is after emerging from over 400 years of colonization.

DCS explores the shifts in politics and the spirit of the Sri Lankan people over the last seventy years, throwing the spotlight on pivotal moments in each decade, such as Independence, the controversial Sinhala-Only bill, the dramatic fall of the English-speaking elite, the devastation of an entire generation through two youth insurrections, the sinister inciting of the 30-year civil war and horrific end to the same. With a 15-member ensemble cast, the play has been praised for its dynamic and imaginative storytelling and succinct portrayal of macro-events. First performed in 2016, this hugely popular play marks its fourth re-run the week preceding a significant political turning point, the much-anticipated Presidential Election scheduled for September 21, 2024. This is the long-awaited, most anticipated, first democratic milestone after the 2022 Aragalaya or the people’s uprising.

Created through the memories of people who lived through these events, the DCS play was built on research and interviews conducted with citizens who grew up parallel to post-independence Sri Lanka, specifically the generation born in the 1930s. Over 60 persons of this generation were interviewed, including iconic public personalities such as actress Iranganie Serasinghe, civil society leader A. T. Ariyaratne, civil servant Bradman Weerakoon, sports star and human rights activist Nagalingam Ethirveerasingam, lawyer and commissioner Manourie Muttetuwegama, poet Ashley Halpe, and renowned academics Ranjini and Gananath Obeyesekera.

Whether you are just passing through the country, arriving at the island for the first time, or returning to a second home, ‘DCS—7 Decades of Sri Lanka’ is a play you really should not miss—well, definitely not at this juncture.

September 14 *– Venue: Harmony Center (Public Show). Time: 6.30pm*

September 18 *– Venue: University of Kelaniya (Student Show). Time: 3.30pm, 6.30pm*

September 19 *– Venue: Panibharatha Theatre, University of the Visual and*

Performing Arts (Public Show). Time: 7pm

Language: Sinhala, English, Tamil (with subtitles)

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