

Sanjay Bhansali's opera now goes to Italy

After wowing Paris, celebrated Bollywood director Sanjay Leela Bhansali's opera 'Padmavati' now goes to Italy and the director is nervous.

'Padmavati' opens in Italy June 27 at the prestigious Italian Festival in Spoleto at the Umbrian hills near Rome. A handpicked retrospective of Bhansali's films will also be screened.

Talking about his anxiety, Bhansali told IANS: 'I'm even more apprehensive and nervous about this second season in a different country. The first staging was in Paris and since the language of the opera was French, the bridges of communication between the audience and me were far easier to cross.

'But now I wonder how the Italians, who are known to be extra-passionate about their opera, are going to react to a French opera directed by an Indian.'

Bhansali's adaptation of Albert Rousell's opera 'Padmavati' was staged to a sold-out audience at the posh Theatre du Chatelet in Paris.

The cast and crew and sense and sensibility of the opera remain unchanged as it travels from France to Italy.

'I remain myself wherever I'll go with the opera,' said Bhansali. 'When I was in Paris, I walked alone by the Seine in my kurta listening to the songs of Lataji (Mangeshkar). I'll do the same in Italy.

'It's important to carry a portion of your personality and culture wherever you go. If you try to assimilate an alien culture you get lost in transition.'

What makes the operatic journey in Italy exciting for Bhansali is that a retrospective of his films is being held there.

'They're screening four of my films - 'Devdas', 'Black', 'Saawariya' and 'Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam'. Then there'll be four performances of the opera.'

Bhansali leaves for Italy June 20. 'I hope to take the opera to many other countries. It's my way of connecting Bollywood with different cultures all over the world.'

Subhash K. Jha (© IANS / India eNews)