

Hit Kerala play to be staged in UAE

Expatriate Indians in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are in for a treat this winter when the hit Malayalam play 'Chayamukhi', starring superstar Mohanlal and Mukesh, is staged here.

The play, which has revived theatre culture in Kerala, will be staged in Dubai Oct 30, in Abu Dhabi Oct 31 and in Ras Al Khaimah Nov 2. It will also be staged in other Gulf nations in November.

'The play will be a visual treat for all theatre enthusiasts here,' Baby John, managing director of the play's organisers in the UAE, Good Times Tourism, said at a press conference here.

'With illustrious actors such as Mohanlal and Mukesh on stage, 'Chayamukhi' will certainly turn out to be an unforgettable experience for all of us,' he added.

The story of 'Chayamukhi' revolves around a mirror. When one looks at the mirror, it surprisingly exhibits the image of one's beloved.

The mirror brings much stress and troubles in the lives of the play's main characters.

'Chayamukhi' is an amalgam of the elements of classical and ethnic theatres and is based on characters of the Indian epic 'Mahabharata'.

Mohanlal and Mukesh play the roles of Bhima and Keechika, respectively. The play also has other young actors.

Addressing the media, Mukesh said that the play has been a dream-come-true project for him.

'Though I have come into the world of films, I am basically from a theatre background. My father has been running a theatre group called Kalidasa Kalakendra for the last 50 years,' he said.

Mukesh said he had been mulling doing theatre for a long time and had also approached Malayalam superstar Mohanlal for this.

'For the last two-and-a-half years we have been working on finding a suitable project.'

And then 'Chayamukhi' happened.

'I saw 'Chayamukhi' on an amateur stage. Everything was there except perhaps the grandeur. When I told Mohanlal about it, he immediately said that this was the project for us,' he said.

The play, which has been staged across different stages in Kerala over the last six months, has revived mass interest in theatre in that movie-crazed south Indian state.

Mohanlal, who was also at the press meet, said that he had always been interested in doing stage plays.

'I have done a lot of theatre in college like Sanskrit dramas. When Mukesh came to me with the 'Chayamukhi' project, I became very interested,' he said.

The two-time national award winner said that Mukesh did not want any gimmicks associated with movies and wanted people to watch the play as a play.

'Chayamukhi's characters are based on characters from the `Mahabharata'. The play carries a message but it is for the audience how to interpret it,' he said.

Both Mohanlal and Mukesh stressed the need for revival of theatre culture in Kerala following the success of 'Chayamukhi'.

'Already (Malayalam) actors like Mammoothy and Sreenivasan have got in touch with me saying that they would like to be part of my future projects,' Mukesh said.

'Film director Priyadarshan has also told me that he has at least two ideas in his mind for theatre and wants to work with me. It is heartening to note that the thought of doing theatre has crossed people's minds.'

A presentation of Kalidasa Visual Magic, 'Chayamukhi' is directed by Prashanth Narayanan. The director has penned the play on the lines of William Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

While noted Malayalam poet O.N.V. has written the lyrics, the illustrious Namboothiri is the costume designer and Mohan Sitara the music director of 'Chayamukhi'.

The event is being staged in the GCC countries under the leadership of producer and actor Dinesh Panicker.

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