

MY THEATRE CAFE

- [Reviews](#)
- [Telescope](#)
- [Mumbai](#)
- [Delhi](#)
- [Pune](#)
- [Hyderabad](#)
- [Bangalore](#)
- [Other Cities](#)

Homepage » Other Cities » Bangalore » No more apologetic 'Hinglish' plays for Bangalore

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By [Kamal Pruthi](#) - August 17, 2014 7:48 PM - [0 Comments](#)

Kamal Pruthi "In Gupshup With" Mathura Kalauny, the Artistic Director of Kalayan, a 26 year old theatre company in Bangalore

Since decades your theatre company "Kalayan" has been doing Hindi theatre in Bangalore, a city where Kannada and English theatre has dominated the audience's heart?

Hindi theatre was almost non-existent in Bangalore when we started Kalayan Theatre Group way back in 1988. We built up our audience brick by brick. We approached social associations, highly subsidized the tickets, and went door-to-door to bring the audience to the theatre hall. Our efforts

paid. I have always believed that good work and good intentions speak a language which everyone understands. Although Kannada and English theater dominated the theatre scene, we have been successful in creating our own niche. We are fortunate that we always had loyal followers that urged us to go ahead.

In the last few years your frequency of producing Hindi plays has reduced. Why?

It has always been one or two plays a year. Of late more often than not I have been working on my own scripts. Writing, producing, casting and directing, it does take time.

You always did shows at Chowdiah Memorial hall, the biggest and the most expensive auditoria of the city. I'm totally amazed how you managed the finances and pulled the audiences so well?

Chowdiah has indeed been my first choice. The hall is very professionally managed. It has good ambiance, spacious front and positive energy around it. It always has been an amazing experience watching your play performed there. We had our share of funding problem and getting 1000 audience for the show was never easy. One however needs to be effectively connected to the social groups and prepared to do plenty of leg-work to bring the required no to the hall. In the later years due to change in my job profile I had to travel very frequently and could not devote required time for theatre, that's when I started staging away from Chowdiah in smaller halls.

Kalauniji, do you think audiences can be pulled through right PR? Your comments on the latest initiative PR.for.ART?

Of course PR is very important in bringing audience to theatre. PR tells people what you are and what your group stands for. While advertising creates awareness, PR helps in crossing the barricade of initial inertia of the audience.

A good example is our last play "Usne Kaha Tha". Main protagonist of the play is a Sikh boy. We had involved our Sikh friends to tell us about their customs. We had gone to Gurudwara to learn how to tie a Pagdi. The effort helped us in not only creating authentic scenes, but also in the sale of the tickets. There was a good sprinkling of Sikhs in the audience.

You have written and directed 18 hindi plays? Tell us about your latest writings?

I have written 18 plays for Kalayan and have produced and directed 26 plays. My two plays "Subah Ka Bhula" and "Swyamvar" 2010 have been staged in Ductac, Dubai.

I was invited to read my play "Kaun Ho Tum Brihannala" in 7th International Hindi Sammelan held in

Cambodia. The play was highly appreciated there. So much so I have been invited again. I will be reading my new play “Tu Nahi Aur Sahi” in 9th Sammelan being held in Beijing, China.

What is your current project and priorities at this moment?

The current play we are working on is “Dhature ke beej”. The idea of the play was conceived in one of our play reading sessions. The play will be staged in November this year.

Many of the actors who worked with you are doing really good in the TV and theatre industry. Do you see right credits coming your way?

Definitely. I am so proud of them. They are in touch with me on a regular basis. Once I was in St Louise USA. One of my Kalayan actors who has settled down in the US drove 400 KM to meet me. I was very honored and touched. This kind of cohesiveness and bonding keeps us giving our best to the theatre.

We don't see Kalayan theatre performing that frequently, but whenever your theatre company performs, you usually have a permanent set of fixed actors, how do you hold them together?

Kalayan is like a family to my actors and not just a platform to perform. Over years we bonded well and understand each other which help us to work together again and again.

Tell us about your latest projects and how do you see “Kalayan theatre” growing and reaching the hearts of the audiences?

After the play “Dhature Ke Beej”, I want to have a relook at my old comedies “Kayapalat” and “Jodtod” for staging in near future. Kalayan is and will remain a niche theatre group consisting of well bonded serious theatre practitioners, always attempting to bring the life on stage.

What do you have to say about the current Hindi theatre scene of Bangalore?

Hindi theatre scene in Bangalore is very vibrant now. One can find Hindi plays happening almost every week. Gone are the days when some local social groups ‘imported’ only Hindi comedy plays from Mumbai. Now Bangalore is a must destination for theatre groups that matter. We have had scintillating comedies to thought provoking plays not only by namma Bengaluru groups, but also from Mumbai and Hyderabad. No more apologetic ‘Hinglish’ plays for Bangalore.

