



9th Colombo International Theatre Festival Final Report

### **Introduction:**

Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF) is a high-profile international annual event which offers a platform for theatre fraternity of the world, which in turn facilitates multicultural interaction and showcase productions from various countries spanning all five continents.

The main objective of this festival is to invite globally reputed theatre companies to come to Sri Lanka and perform by which the Sri Lankan Theatre audience will be able to witness and understand the standard, quality and the latest trends in the universal theatre. Since at present only a handful of privileged people of Sri Lanka gets the opportunity to travel abroad to witness an international event which cost a lot of money and time, this festival definitely shall benefit the theatre going local fraternity immensely. Whilst the CITF organizers extend this opportunity for the local theatre lovers and the scholars in the field, it will also help boosting Sri Lanka's international image.

### **Brief History of the CITF:**

Inter Act Art, a cultural group initiated the Colombo International Theatre Festival in 2012, which was a national requirement for a long time. IAA is registered under the Ministry of Culture and the Arts and has been involved in theatre and related fields for over 23 years.

The 1st Colombo International Theatre Festival was held for the first time in March-April 2012 featured performances from Australia, Germany, Indonesia, India, Iran, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Since, then countries like Austria, Azerbaijan, India, Saudi Arabia, Nepal, Russia, South Korea and Bangladesh, Georgia and Italy have taken part.

Each year the organizers have ventured in to introducing a new activity. 2014 the festival of theatre performance, was accompanied with a series of workshops in collaboration with various Sri Lankan universities- Colombo, Kelaniya, Peradeniya and Eastern etc, under the assistance of the Ministry of Higher Education, along with a special session on applied theatre for doctors and staff of the Medical Faculty. Its success led the organizers to take a step forward, in opening the theatre world to the masses, by chalking a 'Directors forum' which was a walk- away success.

This year organizers initiated the festival up to a new stage. The Colombo International theatre festival 2023 was held as a monodrama Competition and granted awards in two categories, internationally and locally. First ever award granting in theatre to the world has taken place in Sri Lankan theatre history. Three awards to Best Actor, Best Actress and for the best production which followed with two jury Appreciation certificates to the foreign Monodrama competition and locally the same criteria followed.

CITF was initiated by M.Safeer the director after his visits to Germany and India. He felt the need of an international theatre festival which was lacking in Sri Lanka. It was started with nothing, no funds, no experience and only a couple of ambitious young guys and gals, But, during the last nine editions 80 odd countries and over 250 teams have applied to participate at the CITF, Some of them made it while other missed the opportunity due to various reasons. It means that many countries have come to know about the CITF and wants to come. A point to be proud of....



### **Objectives and Benefits of the CITF**

- \* Build relationships between local & foreign theatre communities, artists and scholars.
- \* Provide Sri Lankan theatre artists a rare opportunity to interact with foreign Counterparts.
- \* Expose the Sri Lankan spectators to modern international theatre standards and creations.
- \* Develop an appreciation of modern performing arts among students and young adults.
- \* Exchange of youth and scholars among the participating countries
- \* Positioning Sri Lanka as a cultural hub in Asia for showcasing international performing Arts.
- \* Focusing global media attention on Sri Lanka as a peaceful, cultured, multi-ethnic nation.
- \* Highlighting Sri Lanka as an idyllic venue for major international cultural & other events.

### **9<sup>th</sup> CITF Programme**

#### **Opening Ceremony 25<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

##### **Felicitation of Veterans**

This year's veteran been felicitated was Professor Walter Marasinghe, renowned theatre personality who has made a major contribution to the betterment and enhancement, an exceptional academic and artistic personality, in the field of education in Sri Lanka's modern theatre scenario, and in the field of theatre education, that spanned from universities, school system and other theatre education institutions, is being felicitated at this year's Colombo International Theatre Festival 2023. This year it was Vidyanidhee Vanarase who has spent more than three decades of his life dedicated to the development of Indian theatre Arts and taken the Indian theatre to the world, south Asian and Asian theatre to the other continents as well. For this enormous, strenuous struggle which made him one of the unique theatre practitioner of this era and Colombo international theatre festival proudly felicitated him as the Foreign Chief Guest attended. **Executive Committee Member International Theatre Institute /Founder - International Association for Performing Arts and Research – India.**

The opening ceremony was held at Elphinstone Theatre, Colombo 10. on the 25<sup>th</sup> August with over 500 invitees including Foreign diplomatic Co, Top officials of the state and private sector , theatre fraternity and media personnel.

The brief opening programme followed with the performance of the Sri Lankan play "Untouched" directed by Sujeewa Pathinisekara, which won the best play award at the 2021 Egypt Sharm El Sheikh International Theatre Festival.

##### **Countries Participated- 2023**

9<sup>th</sup> edition started on the 25<sup>th</sup> of August and concluded on 30<sup>th</sup> of August 2023 with India (2 productions), Tunisia, Spain, Bangladesh, Romania, Poland and Sri Lanka were taken part.



### **Award Ceremony 30<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

This edition was based on a competition in two categories. This edition of CITF is an International and local mono Drama Competition. Awards been presented to undermentioned categories

Best Mono Drama

Best Mono Drama Actor

Best Mono Drama Actress

This festival offered Internationally Acclaimed Awards to the participants.

### **List of performances 2023**

Eka Ek Nari (A Woman Alone) by Debaprosad Debnath/ Bangladesh

Two Dying Scene by Saranjith NK /India

Eréndira's Metamorphosis by Mrinal Jyoti Goswami & Ms Namrata Sarma

PARADOX by Krzysztof Pulkowski/ Poland

Don t revenge us! by Ella Nistor & Silvia Raileanu /Romania

Lyric DragonFly by Amparo Nogués/Spain

Storyless...Blead by Abderamen Cherif & Sadok Aïdani/Tunisia

Asadakta wedi thiyanu by Nirosha Godamulla/Sri Lanka

Equal Feelings by Nirmani Fernando,vidura Abeydeera/Sri Lanka

Tik Tik by Dilshan Thilanka/Sri Lanka

The tyre by Asith Muthukumara/Sri Lanka

Inviction by Samitha Sudheeshwara/Sri Lanka

### **Award List for CITF 2023**

#### **International Section**

Best actress : Silvia Raileanu for "Don't revenge us"/Romania

Best Actor : Abderamen Cherif for "Storyless...Blead "/Tunisia

Best

Production : "Don't revenge us"/Romania

#### **Jury Appreciation (acting)/Certificates**

Zelia Lanaspa for "Lyric Dragonfly"/Spain

Saranjith N K For "Two Dying scene"/India

#### **Members of Jury**

Dr.Ajey Jyoshi/India

Ms.Yashodha Wimaladharma/Sri Lanka

Mr.Lucian Bulathsinghala/Sri Lanka

Mr.Hemantha Prasad/Sri Lanka

Ms.Nihari Somasiri/Sri Lanka

#### **Local Section CITF 2023**

Best actress : None

Best Actor : Samitha Sudheeshwara for "Inviction"

Nevindu Prabath Bandara for "Tyre"

Best

Production : "Equal Feelings"



### **Jury Appreciation (Music) /Certificates**

Dilshan Prabashana for "Tik Tik"

### **Members of Jury**

Dr.Ajey Jyoshi/India

Dr. Asis Goswami/India

Ms.Zelia Lanaspa/Spain

Mr.Krzysztof Rogacewicz/Poland

Ms. Subuddi Lakmali

CITF 2023 Award Ceremony held in a Grand Scale on the final Day... followed with a Gala Dinner with all participating teams and Diplomats, Delegates, members of local and foreign media, special invitees, partners, sponsors and their guests.

### **Venues :**

#### **Performances**

At the Elphinstone theatre, Colombo 10 was the venue for performances and all 13 performances started at 6.30pm daily.

### **Workshops**

At the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (former Indian cultural Centre) – Colombo.

Dates: 25<sup>th</sup>,26<sup>th</sup>,27<sup>th</sup>,28<sup>th</sup>,29<sup>th</sup>,30<sup>th</sup> (Evaluation meeting of workshop done)

10 workshops with foreign resource personnel namely,

Conducted by: Prof. Vidyanidhee Vanarase-India/ Prof. Shafi Ahmed-Bangladesh /Dr. Mrinal Jyoti Goswami- india/ Junaid Eusuf-Bangladesh/ Silvia Raileanu-Romania / Krzysztof Rogacewicz- Poland / Subuddhi Lakamli-Sri Lanka/ Zelia Lanaspa-spain/ Saranjith N K-India/ Abderahmen Cherif- Tunisia

### **Director's forum**

German Cultural Centre in Colombo on 26<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> August 2023. All foreign and local directors together with their Sri Lankan counterparts participated. Local and foreign veterans discussed areas relating to contemporary theatre in the past, present and future.

Time : 02.00 – 5.00 pm

Modarators : Dr. Ajay Joshi  
Mr.Prasad Wikramarathna

### **Publicity**

#### **Official press conference**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2023, CITF was Officially met the Press and Electronic Media members at Goethe Institute to announce the Event and to give the exposure to the partners supporting, and The gathering was remarkable as well as successful one too.

The festival was extensively covered in local electronic, print, TV, Radio and E-media, Outdoor media via sponsorships. 3 TV channels and 5 radio channels for a period of 07 days.





**THEATRE 3**

**morning brunch**

**SAMITHA SUDEESHWARA'S THEATRICAL JOURNEY**

**PAUL GAUGUIN UP CLOSE AT SKY GALLERY**

**Named 'Best Actor at the Colombo International Theatre Festival 2023'**

**SRI LANKA CELEBRATED ITS FIRST 'WORLD SANSKRIT DAY'**

**06 06 06 2023 Tuesday, 18 Rajop**

**9TH COLOMBO INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL**

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In addition to extensive coverage by the print media sponsor (Wijaya Newspapers) CITF became news in almost every newspaper in Sri Lanka. All Newspapers, some radio channels, some TV channels, websites, Social Medias given a vast coverage about this event

Cutouts, Banners, posters have been placed at strategic positions in and around Colombo and over 15000 handbills were distributed in Colombo.

All selected countries have agreed to obtain a wide coverage of the Festival in their own countries, as they have done for the previous Colombo International Theatre Festivals.

All performances were non-verbal or with minimal dialogues for easy understanding by everyone.

### Integrated assembly and dinner

Global veteran theatre artistes met most of the days for dinner at a common meeting, Some well-wishers organised dinner on their own and the participant were entertained with local cuisine which gave a difference and variety.

### Attendance

2,400 in Colombo and (Capacity) 90% of the capacity was full every day and it is a result of the untiring efforts of the organisers finally and it seems that the message of the festival has gone in to the theatre lovers.

### Conclusions

All in all the festival was a success. History will be writing a new Era.....

CITF has awarded International theatre practitioners for the first time in Sri Lankan Theatre History. It was a great response that festival director got for his request on behalf of Colombo International theatre Festival... The house was almost full each day.

It is not an easy task to organize and succeed an international festival as Colombo International theatre Festival... which is so extravagant...

While coordinating the international teams up to the arrival till departure ...

Connecting various partner together, coordinating local theatre fraternity, Advertising criteria of print, electronic and social media, printing, awards, Inauguration, performances, workshops, forum, award presentation, meals, accommodation, transport were the noted work scenario while unspoken part was so huge to mention... unexpected issues, problems to solve, lack of sleep, accidents were along with it..

However organizers sole target at the end was only a successful theatre festival...

With all the obstacles, Issues and heart aches and unspoken issues, the festival was very successfully finished.

The house was full almost within all the days.

CITF team is happy about all these things and happenings. So many people granted their heartfelt support to achieve this happiness.



#### **Feedback (some of the Participants)**

I have been visiting Sri Lanka since 2012. Colombo International Theater Festival initiated by my dear friend Mohamed Safeer is the only reason for my several visits to Sri Lanka. Last three years the festival couldn't take place due to Covid and the situation in Sri Lanka. But this year he dared again to host the ninth edition.

The festival invited me as an international guest of honour for the inauguration of this year's edition. It was very heartening to see the audiences coming back to the theatres in the post Pandemic era. Sri Lankan people have suffered a lot in the last few years. And art brings them together. It was wonderful to meet some of the stalwarts of Sri Lankan theatre. I am glad that I could meet Parakrama Niriella, Lucian Bulathsinghala, Sujeewa Pathinisekara, kanchuka, Gaya Nagahawatta, Yohan Ferreira again. Meeting with some amazing theatre practitioners like Yashoda Wimaladharma, Nihari Somasiri, Hemantha Prasad was a pleasure. It was wonderful to meet Ankuran Dutta, the Director of Indian Cultural Centre in Colombo. I couldn't stay for the entire duration of the festival due to personal reasons, but the day and a half I spent there was enriching!

I did miss our beloved Jayalath Gomes uncle...

My best wishes to Safeer and his team for the next edition.

#### **Vidyanidhee Vanarase – India**

*Thank you so much everyone! I think I started missing Sri Lanka.*

*It's a great feeling to be a part of the festival! I couldn't say bye to each one of you!*

*But for me nobody leaves from me anywhere, only coming!*

*So! Wonderful people*

*Wonderful shows*

*Wonderful moments!*

*Once again., Thank you Safeer and team!*

*We all will meet again!!! Until then ciao...!*

*Love.. love.. love!*

#### **Saranjith NK – India**



*Thank U Sri Lanka, thank u all our colleges, and thank u Safeer and the staff. Was amazing here, we are proud to be part of this festival. Time go so quit, but for sure part of us will meet again! We love u all!*

**Alex – Romania**

*It has been a great, great experience. Warm people of warn heart. Our best whises for live and drama, and maybe we will meet again! Thanks a lot!*

**Zelia & Pablo – Spain**

*Thank you very much for the opportunity to be part of the festival. It was a wonderful time filled with interesting performances, discussions and, above all, contact with a different type of theater. I wish everyone every success in creating performances.*

**Krzysztof Rogacewicz**

*Thanks to the entire team at CITF 2023, to make our stay comfortable and the festival such a success. Wishing you many more such!*

**Ajay Joshi – India**

*Participating in the “9th Colombo International Theatre Festival” held in Colombo from 25-30 August, 2023 was an incredibly enriching experience. From the moment I stepped onto the Auditorium, the vibrant atmosphere of the festival filled me with excitement and anticipation. The warmth and enthusiasm of the Colombo audience were palpable, making each performance all the more electrifying. Collaborating with fellow actors, directors, and crew members from diverse backgrounds brought a unique energy to our production. The festival provided a platform to showcase our creative talents and connect with like-minded artists. Beyond the applause and accolades, the friendships forged and the cultural exchange that took place during our time in Colombo made this theatre festival an unforgettable and heart-warming experience. It reaffirmed my passion for the arts and the profound impact they have on bridging cultures and hearts.*

*Thanks to the entire team at CITF for the cordial hospitality and cooperation given to us throughout the Festival.*

**Debaprosad Debnath  
Bangladesh**

### Colombo International Theatre Festival 2023...

We came with children who has born and brought up at village areas to the International theatre arena. The workshops and the discussions held with Local and foreign veterans which will help us to guide our children to succeed. I think, especially our students and we are fortunate enough to work with such knowledgeable group.

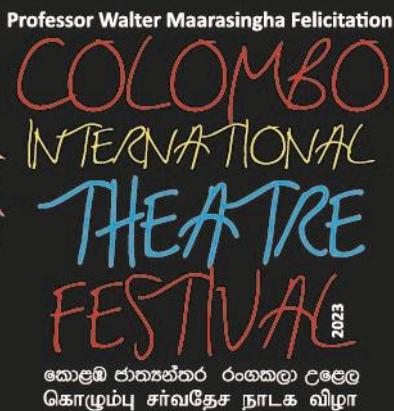
We could have learnt various dimensions of Monodramas through foreign and local productions. The Creativity and the heart felt beauty too.

The experience which we had with the children When we were about to perform at CITF, won't be forgotten in our life span.

The different aspects in lighting, utilizing curtains, while finishing one performance and getting ready for another one simultaneous... experiencing all these things were remarkable.

Finally we would like to thank Mr. Safeer for creating such a huge event and blessing him with heartfelt gratitude with universal energy to serve the Theatre Arts. We would also like to thank Mr.Pathinisekara, Shafraz and all the members of Inter Act art Institute too.

**Nirosha Godamulla  
Thilini Rupasinghe**



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The organizing committee  
extends  
**a big thank you for your**  
words, deeds, publicity and encouragements  
to take

Sri Lankan Theatre  
to a **Turning Point.**

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### Festival Organisation

Name	Inter Act Art (IAA)
Address	295, U.E. Perera Mw, Obeysekrapura, Rajagiriya
Festival Secretary	Jayalath S. Gomes (+ 94 75 852 1126)
Director	M.Safeer (+94 773 129 749)
E-Mail	interactartsl@gmail.com
Website	<a href="http://www.interactart.wordpress.com">www.interactart.wordpress.com</a>
Face book	<a href="http://www.facebook.com/CITFSriLnaka">www.facebook.com/CITFSriLnaka</a>
Government Registration	Section: Cultural Organization; Year: 2007; Reg. No.: CD/3/3/5/2/CO/97 International Registration Assitej : Children's and Young People's Theatre Centre of Germany, with worldwide operations

#### Profile of Inter Act Art

IAA which was inaugurated in 1990 has completed many activities for the last two and a half decades. Basically, IAA is involved in theatre and Performing art. Also, IAA is a multi-ethnic, multi-language and a multi religious group. Its decision making activities are conducted by a committee comprising of Sinhala, Tamil and Muslim representatives.

We have being the pioneers to introduce Forum Theatre (Sinhala & Tamil) and Black Box Theatre to Sri Lanka, as a different dimension to Sri Lankan theatre, located in Sri Jayewardenepura, capital of Sri Lanka and it is the second in South East Asia. As our main objective we have trained young creators, school teachers university students and cooperate sector island-wide in modern trends and techniques. We are the proud owners of Sri Lanka's one and only International Theatre Festival: The Colombo International Theatre Festival which was inaugurated in 2012. We have a small theatre house, a theatre academy, training center for private sector employees, dancing section, drama production unit and a publication section. Few books published by our organization have been prescribes as reading material for A' Level students who are following performing art as a subject, by the National Institute of Education. We have also given the opportunity for youth of all ethnicities with creative ideologies to work to fulfill their objectives by providing basic facilities. Most of their creations have won awards at the National & International level.

IAA organizes two alternative national Theatre Festival & one International theatre festival, all of which are annual events. namely.

- a) Sri Lankan theatre festival**
- b) Black Box short play festival**
- c) Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF)**
- d) Colombo Mono Drama Festival**

**M.Shafraz**  
Festival Secretary

**M.Safeer**  
Festival Director