

Choose a city... ▾

Search



Sign In | Register



92°

96° Hi / 79° Lo
Precip: 20%
7-Day Forecast▶

Culture Celebrities Movies Theatre Television Music Books Fine Arts

Entertainment :: Theatre

Shaheed: The Dream and Death of Benazir Bhutto

by Giovanna Philippeaux
EDGE Contributor
Tuesday Mar 12, 2013

Recommend 23

Tweet 0

PRINT

EMAIL

COMMENTS (0)



The many faces of Anna Khaja who has written and performs in the Off-Broadway premiere of the acclaimed new solo play (Source:Maia Rosenfeld)

Appropriately debuting on International Women's Day, "**Shaheed The Dream and Death of Benazir Bhutto**" is an exceptionally crafted and acted play. A one-woman triumph, the play explores the events leading up to and including the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. Written and acted by Anna Khaja, this work is a testament to her talent and capacity, gifts that Hollywood must take full notice.

A thoroughly engaging experience, "Shaheed The Dream and Death of Benazir Bhutto," is an international journey that presents different perspectives on the life and legacy of Benazir Bhutto. Told as individual but interconnected monologues, the audience is introduced to eight distinct characters. From the obscure, a cab driver in Pakistan, to the notable, former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, each character is unique in experience and presentation.

The audience is first introduced to Sara, a young student attending Boston University who has arrived in Pakistan to attend a rally being hosted by Benazir Bhutto. Being of mixed heritage and having not been raised by her Pakistani father, Sara has an incomplete identity. She was never taught to embrace her Pakistani half and instead developed a Western perspective regarding its history and value.

Drawn to Benazir Bhutto, faith and circumstance have brought Sara to Rawalpindi, Pakistan. This first story plays a critical role in establishing the overarching theme of identity in "Shaheed The Dream and Death of Benazir Bhutto." Just as Sara questions who she is, the audience begins to question who was the real Benazir Bhutto?

After Sara, the play then presents a distinctly American perspective on Bhutto through Rice. It is implied that Bhutto was attending the rally in Pakistan at the request of the United States. She was there to quell uprisings against the political establishment in place at the time. Rice threatens to freeze all of Bhutto's monetary assets if she does not make an appearance at the rally. This conversation takes on greater significance later when the audience is introduced to Fatima Bhutto.

What the audience sees is a human being, not perfect but flawed, struggling to define herself under a family legacy that is a weighty as the history of Pakistan itself.

being used as said puppet.

The finale character showcased in "Shaheed The Dream and Death of Benazir Bhutto" is Benazir Bhutto herself. Everything has led to this moment, everyone else has given his or her opinion as to who Bhutto really was. The preceding characters have painted a complex and conflicting picture, all that is left is for Benazir Bhutto to set the story straight.

But Bhutto's confessions do not result in greater clarity but rather more complexity. What the audience sees is a human being, not perfect but flawed, struggling to define herself under a family legacy that is a weighty as the history of Pakistan itself. She is a multi-dimensional person whose depth is compacted into singular dimensions for the sake of simplicity. Just as the stories about her are complex and confusing, she too is complex and confused. Amazing consideration is given to the depth and intricacy of this story and its title character.

The interrelation amongst personal narratives exists throughout the performance. It becomes six degrees of Bhutto as more layers are added. The result is a multifaceted story of Bhutto and the country she represented. Anna Khaja has expertly devised a method of expressing sincere and gratifying humanity. Khaja has taken a public and revered figure and turned her into someone tangible and normal; like a Boston University student attempting to find her way through life beyond the burdens it has delivered.

Khaja has delivered something outstanding, not only can she write a compelling story but she can also act. This production would have not been successful if Khaja could not effectively relate the many different narratives. The outstanding capacity represented in this production is awe striking.

"Shaheed The Dream and Death of Benazir Bhutto" is an amazing production. It calls upon the audience to bear witness to the frailty of image and the peculiarities of identity. This is a story of



Popular Stories in Entertainment



What's Up, 'Go Doc?' :: Cory Krueckeberg on His Sexy New 'Project'

By Kilian Melloy | May 7

Cory Krueckeberg's directorial debut is a sweet, sexy tale about a country boy and a big-city guy who forge a friendship that turns into something more... much more. Krueckeberg tells EDGE all about it.



It's Just Sex

By Maya Phillips | Jul 11

In the Actors Temple Theatre's new, sexy comedy, three couples, each with their own problems, attend their normal dinner party and end up with more than they bargained for.



Gregory Nalbene Turns Up The 'Summer Heat'

By Kevin Scott Hall | Jul 7

Model-turned-singer Gregory Nalbene has been selling out cabarets in New York for the past few years. EDGE spoke to the rising star about his life, his fears of singing & how he stays fit.

Follow EDGE

Stay up to date with breaking news, arts reviews, interviews, giveaways and more:

[EDGE Media Network page on Facebook](#)

Like

5,997 people like this.

[EDGE News/Entertainment feed on Twitter](#)[EDGE Nightlife feed on Twitter](#)

Enter your email address below to receive daily email updates:

Win Free Stuff!



Celebrate Pride With "Page-Turners"

a human being represented from many angles; we see the good, the bad, and the imperfect. High praise is in order for the team behind this production, effectively illuminating the human experience is no easy task.

"Shaheed The Dream and Death of Benazir Bhutto" runs through Apr. 21 at The Culture Project, 45 Bleecker Street. For more information or tickets, call 866-811-4111 or visit www.cultureproject.org.

Giovannah is a writer, editor, artisan, and entrepreneur. Learn more about Giovannah's work at GigisLittleShop.com.

23 0 1

Like Tweet Share

Comments

[Add New Comment](#)

Comments on Facebook



Add a comment...

Comment using...

Facebook social plugin

From Cleis Press!

In Orlando



Infusion Friday @ Pulse Nightclub :: July 12, 2013

[Back to: Theatre » Entertainment » Home](#)

Inside EDGE



Independence Provincetown @ the Crown



Charles Busch Loses Habit For L.A. 'Divine Sister'



Sandra Bernhard Keeps It Fresh



The Eve-olution Continues



Matthew James Thomas :: Broadway's 'Pippin' sounds off with 'No Sound At All'



Director Paul Feig Takes 'The Heat' (with McCarthy and Bullock)

Network Partners

- Atlanta, GA
- Boston, MA
- Chicago, IL
- Dallas, TX
- Denver, CO
- Ft. Lauderdale, FL
- Fire Island, NY
- Las Vegas, NV
- Los Angeles, CA
- Miami, FL
- New Orleans, LA
- New York, NY
- New England
- Orlando, FL
- Palm Springs, CA
- Philadelphia, PA
- Providence, RI
- Provincetown, MA
- San Diego, CA
- San Francisco, CA
- Seattle, WA
- United States
- Washington, DC

- BARTab
- Bay Area Reporter
- Bay Windows
- Damron LGBT Travel
- HotSpots! Magazine
- Metro Weekly
- NoiZe Magazine
- Rage Monthly
- South Florida Gay News

Things to do

- Learn about EDGE
- Read about our New Design
- Subscribe to RSS Feeds
- Visit our Press Room
- Get Newsletters
- Advertise
- Work at EDGE
- Write Feedback
- Read Privacy Statement
- Read Terms of Use
- Contact Us

Email Updates

Enter your email address below to receive daily email updates including news, giveaways and more.

[About Us](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Careers](#) | [Feedback](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Make EDGE your home page

Copyright © 2003-2013

EDGE Publications, Inc. / All Rights Reserved

Homotech and YouShoot are registered trademarks of EDGE Publications Inc.

72.130.10.36

[View low-bandwidth version](#)