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THE LAST POET Play Review

Parul Rana

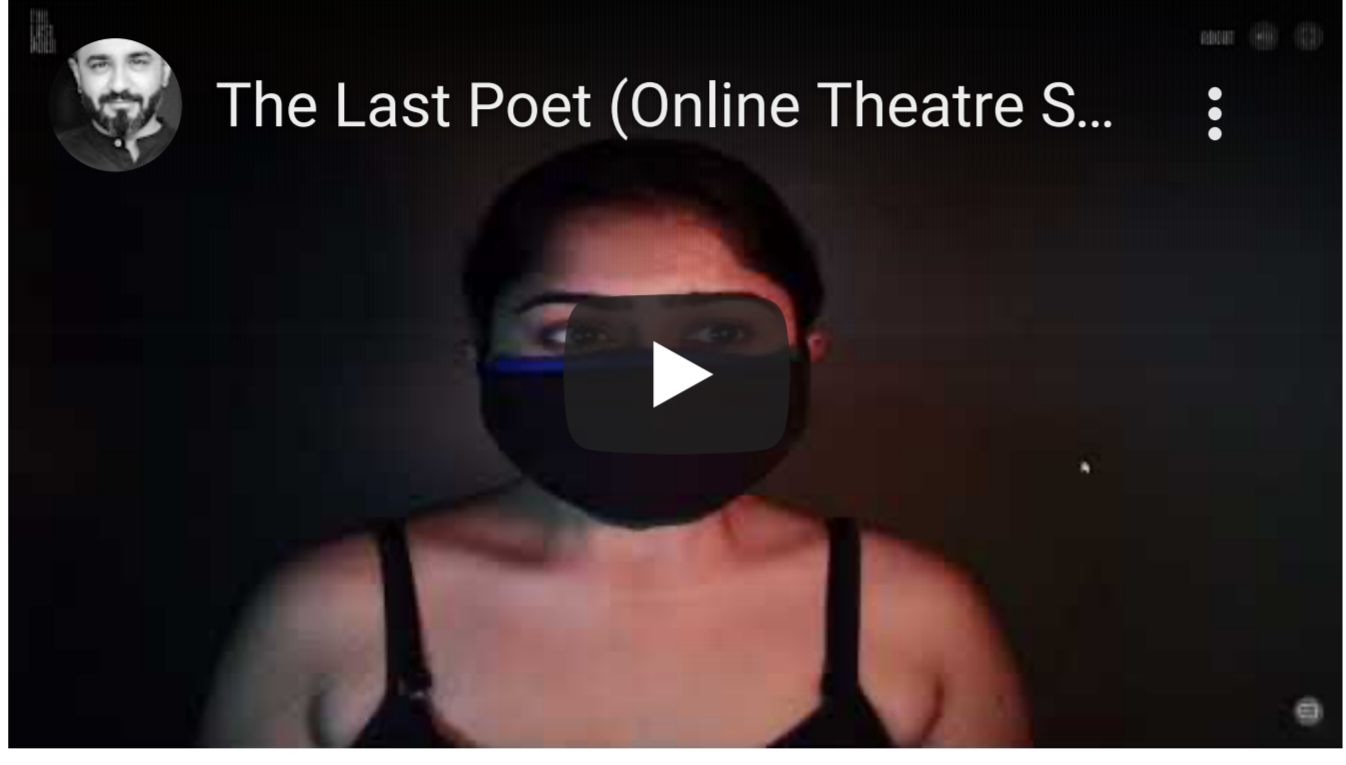
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THE LAST POET Review

THE LAST POET is an interactive, live theatre show. It is bold, intriguing, and serves as an example of the possibilities one can achieve in doing live theatre online. The show as its name suggests is about a poet who goes missing in a virtual city. The characters in this city tell us about their experiences with the poet and what in their opinion could be the reason for his sudden disappearance. The characters in the show are diverse including that of a poet's daughter, a journalist, another poet, an admirer amongst others.

The show starts with the audience entering a virtual city with poles, benches, lights, and rooms suspended freely. The viewer can click on any of these and enter these rooms with performers performing live in them. This serves as one of the unique aspects of the show wherein the audience gets to decide where in this virtual city they want to go, who they want to listen to, and when they want to leave. There is also a live voting poll conducted at the end of each performance, giving the audience the choice and freedom of deciding what the next scene should be about. The show starts with a disclaimer "This city will seek you, as you seek what is inside this unbuilt world".



The show seeks answers on why everyone fears individuals who speak the truth or simply voice their opinions. It raises questions on the right to dissent and the freedom of speech which these days have become more of a privilege than a basic human right. People who bring out the truth in the public are immediately targeted, banned, or bullied by those in power. The same is the case in this virtual city, where their poet whose work vouches for the truth and is admired by people of this city, has suddenly disappeared, and now people left in this haunted city, try to find answers and justification of why this has happened. As a result of which there is an eerie sense of fear and cynicism that now exists in this city. The concept of the show is very relevant to the current socio-political environment of the country we live in, where the students, thinkers, stand-up comedians, journalists are put behind bars without any justification or due process.

Every actor at the end of their performance, ties their mouth with a cloth or a chain, as a symbol of restriction in the freedom of speech. One of the characters played by Pallav Singh is that of another poet who shares an excerpt from the missing poet as he once said "The freedom of living must also include the freedom of not to stay". One of the characters played by Atul Kumar, as the poet's dearest friend, talks about the "poet's curse" and reveals how the poet was so immersed in his work that he knew "the raging fire would consume him one day."

All the actors are exceptionally good and efficiently deliver their performances. They managed to ace the eye level game, they could pierce straight from their camera to the viewer's eyes across the screen, it was almost as if they are sitting right opposite to you and staring into your eyes while performing. The lighting, set design, video quality are exceptionally good which added to making the experience very intimate and impactful for the viewers.

The backdrops were beautifully created and the actors could comfortably move within the set space to fit within the screen, creating an example of the efficient use of limited space available while creating theatre online. The music score adds to the performance and makes it a wholesome experience for the viewer.

Overall, the play is intense, and thought-provoking. This virtual experience might also leave you wondering how the entire show has been created and pulled off digitally. To experience and discover new ways of doing theatre online, one must catch a show of THE LAST POET.

*Parul Rana is a theatre enthusiast and movie buff.

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Schedule

- EKA LAGNACHI PUDHCHI GOSHT**
4:00 PM, Saturday, November 13, 2021 - Dinanath Natyagriha (map link)
- MARATHI BANA**
4:00 PM, Saturday, November 13, 2021 - Prabodhankar Thackrey Auditorium (map link)
- PUNHA SAHI RE SAHI**
6:00 PM, Saturday, November 13, 2021 - Shri Vishnudas Bhawe Natya Grah: Sangli (map link)
- TANSEN**
7:00 PM, Saturday, November 13, 2021 - The Triologue Studio (map link)



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