



Ananda Sangbad

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Ethnomedia Center for Theater Arts (ECTA) of New Jersey presented three plays over the weekend of June 28th and 29th 2008 at the Edison Valley Playhouse in Edison, New Jersey. On Saturday June 28th the audience was treated to an encore staging of the play "Satyameva". This play was directed by Indranil Mukherjee and starred Sudipta Bhawmik and Pinaki Dutta. Ananda Sangbad had published a detailed review of "Satyameva" in the April issue of 2008 and so it is not necessary to do so again.

On June 29th, Sunday, the Theater Practitioners of Cleveland, Ohio, presented an audio and video staging of the play "Ashomoy." This play was first published in 2006 in

A Mini Theater Festival By ECTA

"Anadalipi", the yearly literary-magazine published by Ananda Mandir. The play was read on stage by Saubhik Sengupta and Moushumi Sengupta. Computerized projection was used as the background of this play and also to tell a part of the story.

"Taconic Parkway", directed by Sudipta Bhawmik and performed by Indranil Mukherjee, Keka Sirkar and Pinaki Dutta, followed. This play will premiere at the California Natyamela on

June 7th. All of these plays were written by Sudipta Bhawmik. In the play "Ashomoy", a phone rings in the middle of the night in an upper middle class Bengali home in

suburban America and throws the life of a married couple into chaos. My observation of the directing of this play is that the computerized projection to tell the story was excessively and unnecessarily used. This made it appear to be less of a play and more of a movie at times. The effect would have been much better if the stage was divided by light and darkness in separate sections. The feeling of two people talking from different parts of the world could have been achieved by highlighting the person talking on the phone at that time. If the actors would have said their lines instead of reading them then it would have been much less like listening to a radio drama. That said, the

reading was done rather well and it compensated for the lack of any physical acting.

The first thing that I have to say about the play "Taconic Parkway" is that it should have come

with a warning about the subject matter and stated that it is a play with a definite adult theme. In

this play-- Manasij, a veteran Bengali screen actor who is visiting the U.S.A. to stage some shows in multiple cities, stays with Dipak and Sharika, a wealthy couple, in their home in upstate New York. What happens next is full of suspense and unexpected developments which unmask the suspicion and animosity that was so

carefully camouflaged by the appearance of happiness by this affluent N.R.I. family.

The acting by all the characters in this play was superb. The directing was also very good. I will strongly suggest that a statement be presented with each promotion about the adult theme of this play. Sudipta Bhawmik's plays, especially "Taconic Parkway", remind me of the plays by the Nobel-Prize winning American Playwright, Eugene O'Neill(1888-1953). O'Neills plays were the first to introduce into American drama the techniques of realism. His characters, like some of Sudipta's characters, struggled to maintain hope and aspiration but often slid into depraved behavior and despair.