

D C H presents Mohan Rakesh's three-act play

By our drama critic

HYDERABAD, Nov. 21. — Mohan Rakesh's three-act play "Ashad Ka Ek Din", which was presented by the Dramatic Circle Hyderabad last evening at Ravindra Bharati, can be said, with no conscientious hangover — that this is a playwright's play.

"Ashad Ka Ek Din" tells the story of a day in the life of the Sanskrit poet Kalidasa. Ashad — the fourth month of Sambat and the departing period of summer, turns out to be a crucial time in the life of the Sanskrit Poet Kalidasa. A day in Ashad, marked by thunder, lightning and heavy downpour, sweeps the Poet from a hill-nicket to the magnificent court of Ujjain.

The day wheels the poet to unconceivable heights, but makes havoc of his emotional life. Mohan Rakesh brings out this transformation in his play with deftness, easing his way to the very core of Kalidasa's soul.

While the efforts of the Hyderabad Dramatic Circle can be lauded, much is left wanting in their presentation of the play.

The magnanimous poet refuses to be felicitated by the Court but proceeds towards Ujjain, when his beloved Mallika pursues him.

Deepa's husky voice prevails over the audience but she could not fight back the blankness from her face. She plays Kalidasa's beloved Mallika.

Direction fails when the characters stand expressionless on the stage waiting patiently for others to finish speaking or playing their parts.

The ruin of the play — Ram Narain — who acts as Kalidasa, cuts a sorry picture faltering in his lines, seeking once too often, the prompters' help.

This critic does not know whom to give the credit of the play — to B. S. Prakash or to Roda Reporter. Prakash played an ever-concerned uncle of the poet, and does the role with understanding. He wears the role like a well-fitted banian close to his skin. Roda lives up to her part. Following behind in excellence is Ganesh Eshwaran — the antagonist — he is Kalidasa's rival for Mallika and ironically makes the poet appear puny. To conclude the good actors' list, one has to include — Bala, Mohana, Ahamed, and Askari. Bala very playfully displays the vanity and pompousness of the pseudo-intellectual. Ahamed and Askari give you the whole history of the idiocy and suezishness of bureaucracy. Things go wrong when Bizeth Banerjee appears. She has the charm, poise and beauty of the queen but what the role demands is something more than that. She has to be malicious, treacherous, and venomous and a machiavellian person. Instead she appears a picture of innocence.

The audience has to slice away her personality from her beautiful dialogue to give justice to her character. Tall Sarosh becomes a Liliut when it comes to acting. Ram Peeta, though alright does not make an impact. Light effects are good compared to the setting and the sound. The asset of the Director, Rey, Robert Marsh, his scintillating of the play, his scintillating brief to Roda, Prakash, Eshwar and his polishing of the short appearances of Bala, Askari, Mohana and Ahamed. He could have made the Queen and Mallika more dynamic. Kalidasa and Mallika dynamic.