

# PATHEY NIMIDAM by Ravindran Drama Group

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## “A Platter of Tamil Theatre“

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**Reviewer: Isaac Tan**

**Festival: 21 September 2017**

If *Pathey Nimidam: A Tamil Theatre Festival*, organised by Ravindran Drama Group, is meant to give us a taste of what our Tamil theatre scene can offer, it is a well-conceived platter as we get a sampling of various topics and theatrical conventions.

The first sensation that hits my taste buds is the spiciness of the some of the pieces as they tackled difficult topics head-on.

Kalaiselvi Grace, in *Ulagam Pora Pohke Paary* by VER Theatre Ltd, is a spice that hits you in the gut. She plays an old lady pretending to be deaf in order to sell more tissue papers and key chains. From the moment she admonishes the audience for paying \$30 to watch a show, but unwilling to spare some change, she has the audience right in the palm of her hands.

The highlight of her performance comes when she turns the tables on a gentleman in the audience just as he tells her that he does not have money. I will not spoil the show for you, but it sends everyone rollicking in their seats. As the laughter dies down, I found myself stewing in a sense of guilt.

Another interesting dish is *Moved* by The Kaizen M.D. It is surprising to find a physical theatre piece in a festival geared towards celebrating the Tamil language. On the surface, the recorded speech about what not to say when someone goes through a divorce might qualify it for inclusion. I am glad that it is included because that speech adds a new complexion to the movement work, which supposedly depicts Orpheus leading Eurydice towards the land of the living.

The act of leading becomes a strained tussle as two performers pull on the same cloth. What starts out as a veil for a chaste bride soon becomes a shroud mummifying the wife's body. With the movement vocabulary resembling those employed in tradition Asian dance dramas, *Moved* is a dish best savoured slowly as you consider the relationships between the ingredients.

Those looking for a light diversion, *Refresh* by WeCanDoIt and *Change Shift 2* by The Writing Doc/ Ten Minute Treats provide a light-hearted take on love.

Fans of traditional storytelling will be catered for with *Susuk* by A.D.I. Concept. Despite the small space and limited stage effects, the group manages to relay a chilling tale of a woman who paid the price in her pursuit for beauty.

As with all platters, some dishes are less impressive as they are either too flavourful from dollops of over-acting (*Rainclouds* by Wisdom of Monkeys Production), or the ingredients are not cooked together properly (*Junkfood* by Underground Theatre).

That said, I did enjoy the tasting session and look forward to the main courses served by the individual theatre groups in the future.

Do you have an opinion or comment about this post? Email us at [info@centre42.sg](mailto:info@centre42.sg).

## **ABOUT THE FESTIVAL**

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### **Pathey Nimidam by Ravindran Drama Group**

21 – 23 September 2017

Multi-purpose Hall, Aliwal Arts Centre

## **ABOUT THE REVIEWER**

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**Isaac** started reviewing plays for the student publication, Kent Ridge Common, and later developed a serious interest in theatre criticism after taking a module at university. He is also an aspiring poet, and has a passion for acting and flamenco dancing.