

## **WALKING PATH – a play without words**

### **DETAILED PRESS KIT**

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### **A STAGES THEATRE GROUP PRODUCTION**

Opened - 26<sup>TH</sup> AND 27<sup>TH</sup> July 2014

Lionel Wendt Theatre

Colombo, Sri Lanka

7.00pm

Running time – 75 mins (no interval)

No language

### **INTRO TO PLAY**

‘Walking Path – a play without words’, critically acknowledged as a milestone in modern Sri Lankan theatre, is a wordless play, which examines the relentless, urban beautification drive in post-war Sri Lanka.

Scripted by Ruwanthie de Chickera, Designed and Directed by Jayampathi Guruge, ‘Walking Path’ is a play about the new walking path culture of post-war Sri Lanka – the culture of exercise, healthy living, and almost fanatic beautification of the city and the people within it.

This innovative play was devised along the several pristine ‘walking paths’ of the city of Colombo.

## REVIEW EXCERPTS

*'... superb, fiendishly clever, masterly casual exploration of the universal post-modern condition, the human geography of modern urban civic life, post-war ennui and the insidious encroachment of the military mindset'*

**Dylan Perera, Sunday Times**

*'... the allegorical scope of the play is stunning'*

**Marissa van Eyck, Daily Mirror**

*'In celebrating our new walking paths, we remain unable or unwilling to explore, just outside the familiar, why some doors remain closed, right in front of our eyes'*

**Sanjana Hattotuwa, Groundviews**

*'It is a "must see" play which is a bold and insightful critique on the rapidly changing landscape of Colombo'*

**Rohan Roamer, Groundviews**

## WALKING PATH – MAIN CREDITS

Designed & Directed by	- Jayampathi Guruge
Written by	- Ruwanthie de Chickera
Original Music by	- Ranil Goonewardene
Produced by	- Stages Theatre Group

For more information on WALKING PATH and STAGES THEATRE GROUP, please visit our web site – [www.stages.lk](http://www.stages.lk)

OR

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## **WALKING PATH – Information for Press Releases**

### **‘WALKING PATH’**

‘Walking Path’ is a play about the new walking path culture of Sri Lanka – the culture of exercise, of healthy living, of beautification of the city and people within it. The Walking Path is being used as a symbol to understand this emerging sub-culture in post-war Sri Lanka, its rapidly transforming physique, structures and the underlying reality that goes either unnoticed, unacknowledged, or hidden beneath it.

This innovative play was actually created on the several walking paths of Colombo, where the actors spent many days observing human behavior and interaction. The play ‘Walking Path’ is a collection of what they saw and witnessed. It is a reflection of the post-war psychology of urban Sri Lankan society, how it is being created, sustained and changed.

How do the walking paths reflect human relationships, values and society in current urban Sri Lanka? How do human relationships and society, in turn, impact the subculture of the walking paths? What can we learn about the reality of one, through the existence of the other?

Walking Path is a play without words. The reason for this is that much of the most interesting human behavior around the walking paths of Colombo, happen without the noise of words.

Walking Path is produced by Stages Theatre Group, a theater company founded by Ruwanthie de Chickera in 2000. Stages Theater Group is respected for the cutting edge, high quality, socially conscious original Sri Lankan theatre it has been producing over the last 15 years.

## **WALKING PATH – Intro for International Audiences**

Walking Path is a play created in response to a very specific reality in current Sri Lanka. International audiences may need a context within which to place it in.

Walking Path is a devised piece of theatre about the beautification of the city of Colombo after the 30 year ethnic war.

Immediately the war ended, the city of Colombo began to be scrubbed clean, emptied of all messiness and ‘walking paths’ were laid – immediately creating a culture of exercise and a look of beauty and healthiness in the city. The speed at which this happened – existing neighborhoods razed, large areas landscaped, new spaces declared open to public use – was simply phenomenal. The city was being transformed before our very eyes.

The walking paths were built, are maintained and continue to be monitored by the military, under the Defense Ministry. The types of people who are allowed access these public places are controlled, the behavior in these places is very closely monitored, the facilities of these places are handpicked and stipulated.

Interestingly, as soon as a new walking path is created in the city, it is virtually flooded by people who come to walk, exercise, play and watch other people walk, exercise and play. There is an almost frantic patronage of these spaces.

The play Walking Path is an examination of this situation. It examines the subculture of the walking paths of Colombo. How do they reflect human relationships, values and society in current post-war Sri Lanka? How does the mind-set of our society in turn, impact the subculture of the walking paths?

## **WALKING PATH - Main Artiste Bios**

### **JAYAMPATHI GURUGE – Director/Designer – WALKING PATH**

Jayampathi Guruge is most well known as the director of ‘WALKING PATH – a play without words’, hailed as bringing a new dimension to Sri Lankan theatre.

His entrance into the theatre has been through design and acting, and he is a well respected multidisciplinary artist – having received critical acclaim (and several local awards) working as an actor, set designer, costume designer, lighting designer, stage manager and makeup artist since 2002.

He has a First Class degree in Drama and Theatre from the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, and recently toured India as a part of the artistes’ training programme of Stages Theatre Group. There, he conducted workshops in Acting, Choreography & Make up.

Jayampathi worked as a designer in “Sellotape”, “Kalumaali”, “Putu 11” and “Agamemnon” among others. He was the prop designer in the popular musical “Evita” in 2012. He was assistant director for “Kalumaali” (2012), director of “Frames” (2012) and “Mujari” – a short play without words (2014).

Jayampathi is a core member of Stages Theatre Group, which he is helping set up as a full time professional theatre company in Sri Lanka. As an artiste, he is interested in exploring theatre that can be created without words.

### **Ruwanthie de Chickera – Writer – WALKING PATH**

Ruwanthie is a playwright, screen writer and theatre director from Sri Lanka. Her plays have been produced in Sri Lanka, the UK, Japan, India, Australia and the Philippines.

Her first play won the British Council International New Playwriting award in 1997 and was the first Sri Lankan play to be performed in London’s West End (at the Royal Court Theatre). This play then won the 2000 Gratiaen Prize for best creative writing in Sri Lanka. In 2013 again, a play she co-wrote – KALUMAALI - was shortlisted for this award. Ruwanthie was recently awarded the Eisenhower Fellowship.

Ruwanthie’s first screen play “Machan”, has won several international awards, including the award for Best Film at the 2008 Venice Film Festival (‘Last Days’ Section). The film has been screened in over 50 international festivals to date – including Toronto, Brussels and Dubai, and released in over 10 countries.

In 2000, Ruwanthie co-founded ‘Stages Theatre Group’ – which has been critically acknowledged as one of the cutting edge theatre groups in the country.

**WALKING PATH – Production Photographs**







## **Stages Theatre Group**

Stages Theatre Group is a collective of artistes that has for over a decade been pushing the boundaries of Sri Lankan theatre through a number of original plays, innovative collaborations, translations, bilingual plays, theatre projects and workshops. Stages Theatre Group is currently working towards setting up a full time professional theatre company.

Stages Theatre Group raises issues of social and political importance and pertinence through its plays. It is very well respected for its theatre work that has repeatedly dealt with issues of social justice. Its specific slant in working in more than one language makes it a theatre group that brings communities together through its productions – which makes it relevant both locally and internationally.

Stages Theatre Group was formed in 2000 and has produced several performances which have been shown locally, regionally and internationally.