

## *In her culture – genes* : alumna Sohaila Kapur



**Sohaila Kapur**

BA

Writer – playwright – director – actress

Beginning as a journalist at The Times of India based in the landmark Fort headquarters of Bennet Coleman and Co Bombay / Mumbai, Sohaila is a much – published scripter, author , also artiste and Visiting Scholar at The Times Media School in The Nation’s Capital, having also anchored the National Geographic Channel Best NGC Film Award winning “Indian Witch Hunt” .

Creatively graduating to Teleserials and Theatre, this DU – alumna carries forward the artistic legacy of the very eminent creative **Chetan – Dev – Vijay Anand** Family, among South Asia’s greatest Cine-Theatre Artistes.

With the inimitable Anand Brothers as uncles and the multiple Awardwinning artiste – filmmaker **Shekhar Kapur** as brother, director Gogi Anand and Bhisham Kohli as cousins, Sohaila has carved her own niche .

Featuring prominently as artiste and as director in near 20 national teteserials and over 25 full – fledged theatrical productions with her debut *Yeh Hai Bombay Meri Jaan / Mahim Junction* launching at Traverse Theatre Edinburgh Scotland and the play was sponsored by The Arts Council of England and performed across Birmingham, Manchester, Toronto, Vancouver and Singapore.

*Gargi alumna* **Huma Qureshi**, Tannishta Chatterjee, Sunit Tandon and Danish Husain, the immortal **Zohra Sehgal**, famed *Kayem* Satish Kaushik, Tom Altar, Amal Allana, *JDM’ s* **Neena Gupta** , **Nandita Das**, **Feisal Alkazi**, Sanjana Kapoor and Nadira Babbar are among the many notable stars – artistes Sohaila has worked with as writer – scripter – director .

Her most recent production is



## Appointment with Death

Tue 15 Aug 2017 7 pm  
Shri Ram Centre Delhi

An American family is vacationing in Jerusalem. The matriarch of the family is sadistic and dominating. She has three children and a daughter – in– law who are completely under her thumb. Other tourists enter the scene and a cheerful scenario turns into a grim one with the death of one of them. Was this murder? Each member of the entourage has a motive and is, therefore, under suspicion. And then one of them stumbles upon the truth. **Agatha Christie**, the Queen of Suspense, at her best in one of her most unique whodunnits.



## Play Review: Appointment with Death

Niharika Dabral Sep 01, 2017 Arts & Culture

Agatha Christie's *Appointment with Death*, directed by Sohaila Kapur is a two hour and twenty-five-minute-long theatrical delight ...

I don't usually plan on watching theater (that too when it's not free), but when I stumbled upon the advertisement of a play based on one of my favorite Agatha Christie novels, I decided to go. So on the evening of August 15th, I watched Shri Ram Centre for Performing Arts Repertory's production *Appointment with Death* directed by renowned actress and playwright, Sohaila Kapur.

The play opens in the lounge of the King Solomon Hotel, as one by one the characters are introduced. Soon the focus shifts to the Boyntons, an unusual American family who've come on a trip to Jerusalem. The audience from the first scene itself establishes that Mrs Boynton, an old wheelchair bound lady, is sadistic and domineering. She psychologically manipulates her family to keep them unnaturally devoted to her, so much so; that her children have no agency of their own. However, the resentment rises against Mrs Boynton and her children start striving for independence after they develop romantic feelings for the hotel guests. Dr Sarah King and Dr Gerard (a psychiatrist) do their best to pull the younger Boyntons from Mrs Boynton's control. The second half of the story develops when Mrs Boynton is found dead and the investigation of her death takes place. Unlike the original story, the Murderer and the characters are different in the play. So, even if you have read the novel, the play still offers intrigue.

Like all Agatha Christie plays the onus of engagement is not so much on the story line but on the script and direction. It is the writing that ensures to sustain the suspense by crafting dialogues which should strengthen the motives of characters, that may or may not have committed murder, however, Sohaila Kapur's directorial falls short in engagement; except for the comic scenes which are hilarious. There are a few segments that are cleverly done, for example, right before the intermission takes place a spectacular scene between Dr Sarah King (played by **Sugandha Srivastava**) and Mrs Boynton (played by Saksham Shukla) where the latter is informed of her impending death in a manner that sets motion for rest of the play, and also justifies why the play is titled *Appointment with Death*. However, all interesting tidbits are sparse and spaced far apart which make the two hours and twenty-five-minute-long production tedious.

The cast consisted of seasoned actors who arrested the attention of audience despite the shaky script. Exchanges between Lady Westholme (played by Surbhi Verma) and Alderman Higgs (played Ashutosh Singh Rathore) were delightful. Smita Singh made a very convincing and vulnerable Ginevra Boynton, while Saksham Shukla impersonated Mrs Boynton with perfection.

The picturesque set, designed by Sohaila Kapur herself, is formed against two backdrops: the lounge of the King Solomon Hotel, and the Travellers' Camp at Petra. The stage formation rightly captures the essence of the story and adds to the drama. Entr'acte music by Arun Nayak and lighting direction by Himanshu Joshi is also on point.

Picture Credits: Niharika Dabral

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