

Asvaghosha
India



present

Crusades *Croisades*

a play by
Michel Azama



Hindustani Translation and Direction by

Aseel Rais

(French editor: éditions Théâtrales)
Michel Azama and Aseel Rais ©2014

About *Croisades* by Michel Azama



While Michel Azama, the playwright, wrote his play *Croisades (Crusades)* at the end of the 1980s, what had gone before and has happened since, continues to happen, not only in the Middle East or West Asia, but in Europe and Africa also.

This play is universal in time and place because it comes from and is about, most common facets of human nature.

If the state of the world or human nature were to change drastically, then the play would be irrelevant. However, Azama puts his finger on the pulse of humanity in its broad sense. He uses a theatre language which connects via a geographical and spiritual focal point which has been at the heart of jealous territorial wars for millennia. This place, this piece of land in a desert, with magnetic pull that is indescribable and unquantifiable provides fertile ground for dramatic inspiration.

The play with a two-pronged approach – historical and contemporary -takes us through the last 1000 years or so, from the Christian Crusades, leading up to very recent times, to the ongoing conflict in the Holy Lands. The central character is at the same time narrator, guide and victim. She is the bridge between two worlds, the world of the living and the world of the dead, between those desperate to live and those who in their desperation become killing machines.

The characters tell stories of love, of hatred, of a need to belong, of misunderstanding, of ignorance, of thirst for power or for survival. They also reveal the contradictions which can tear people apart. Without going into the finer psychological or mystical or religious causes and consequences of these wars, Azama exposes the irrational and attacks the emotional. Each spectator at the end of the play asks new questions, or recalls an unanswered one. Of course, the play won't achieve peace on earth, but it brings actors and spectators that much closer towards understanding or at least acknowledging the quintessential human questions which struggle to be heard beneath the individual claims and the individual stories.

***Croisades (Crusades)* is as much therefore personal a quest as it is a reflection on group action, and on conflicts.** Much more can be said about this work which is just as enriching to read, as it is to turn it into a lively stage-play.

Director's note

I saw *Croisades (Crusades)* at its première in 1989 in the French city of Dijon. The subject of the play has continued to make news headlines, almost daily.

**It is a contemporary classic. The story it tells is common to us all.
It is our story in France, and our story in India.**

My aim is to achieve, in a stage form, what Michel Azama has achieved in his stage writing. Harnessing the beauty of art and of life, he uncovers the ugliness which lies hidden in (in)human-beings. Coupled with this is a pressing need to return to my country of origin, India, to share the experiences I have garnered in France, and in the West. My wish is to contribute to the search for the contemporary in Indian theatre. It works both ways : I use what I have learned since birth from traditional Indian theatre to bring the French script to life on stage.

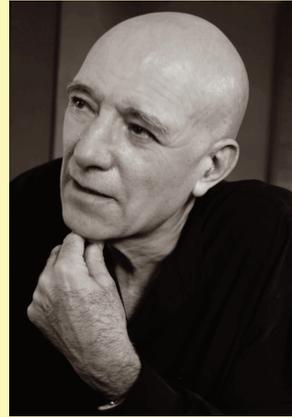
My pursuit of attaining symbiosis of the two cultures (Indian and French) has become part of my everyday.



Crusades is a child of its time, the mother of our feelings.

Our theatre company's goal is to throw light on the recesses of the human heart in rendering this play script lucid and tangible, with flesh and blood as it were, and most of all in celebrating life as it can only be done through theatre.



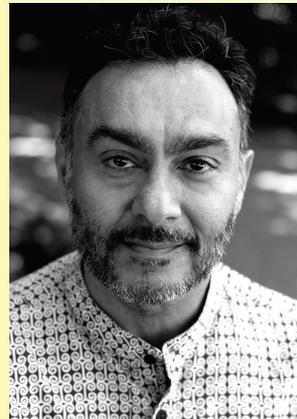


Michel AZAMA

Born in Catalonia, in Spain in 1947, Michel Azama studied literature before training as an actor with the Simon and the Lecoq schools in Paris.

The plays he has written have been translated into more than 15 languages and performed on every continent. Some twenty works have been published by *Editions Théâtrales* in Paris, including one anthology, *From Godot to Zucco*, which established him as an acknowledged specialist in contemporary theatre.

He has taught contemporary theatre at the University of Aix en Provence and also taught classes on Shakespeare's works. He has been an actor-in-residence and writer-in-residence at the National Drama Centre in Dijon, France as well as editor-in-chief of the contemporary theatre journal, "Les Cahiers de Prospéro", and président of a French playwrights' society *Ecrivains Associés du Théâtre* (EAT).



Aseel RAIS

Aseel Rais is an actor, stage and film director and scriptwriter in France.

After meeting French director Ariane Mnouchkine in Madras in 1986, he left India and made his home in Paris. Before joining Ariane Mnouchkine's *Théâtre du Soleil*, he worked with Jean-Claude Penchenat's Théâtre du Campagnol.

From 1986 to 1991 he performed in several of Mnouchkine's plays including *L'Indiade or India of their dreams*, *Iphegenia in Aulis* and *Agememnon*.

Aseel Rais has also worked with Peter Brook (*Hamlet* in 2001), and amongst others, Roman Polanski.

Production & Tour

- Production : November, 2018 (to be finalised)
- European Tour : To be decided
- Indian Tour : To be decided

Rehearsal period : 1 month

Duration : 2 h (with intermission)



Touring Team :

- 1 Director
- 10 Actors
- 1 Costume assistant
- 1 Light Operator
- 1 Sound Operator
- 1 Administrator
- 2 Stage assistants

Total : 17 persons

Crusades

Detailed CV - Aseel RAIS

Contact :

15, rue Manin - 75019 Paris - FRANCE

Mobile: +33(0)6 03 77 91 64

Email: asilrais@gmail.com

STAGE DIRECTOR

- 2017** *Jihaad yatra (Croisades)*, by Michel Azama with The Academy of Theatre Arts, Bombay.
- 2015** *Les Oeillets d'Inde (Flowers)*, by Girish Karnad at L'R de la Mer, Marseille.
- 2014** *Jihaad yatra (Croisades)*, by M. Azama with The National Institute of Progressive Arts, Lucknow.
- 2011** *Madhyama Vyayoga*, by Bhasa at The Goa Kala Academy, Goa.
- 2010** *Hayavadana* (in Hindi), by Girish Karnad for The Bhartendu Natak Academy, Lucknow.
- 2009** *Bal-Trap*, by Xavier Durringer for the Theatre de 16 Francs, Paris.
- 1999** *Hayavadana* (in French), by Girish Karnad at The Theatre de l'Enfumeriaie, Le Mans
- 1987** *Buried child*, by Sam Shepard at The Museum Theatre, Madras.
- 1986** *Welcome to Andromeda* by Samuel French at The Museum Theatre, Madras.
- 1985** *Saari raat*, by Badal Sarkar at The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.
- 1984-1986** *Bhoma*, by Badal Sarkar and other Street plays in Bombay, Madras + India

FILM DIRECTOR

- 2016** *The Jewess of Bombay*. A full-length feature film (in production).
- 2015** *An Untouchable Among the Dead*. A 32-minutes documentary.
- 2000** *Shruti*. An adaptation of a Zen story for a short film in Hindi and Sanskrit.

AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR

- 2015** *It's just a film*. A feature film scenario.
- 2014** *Jihaad yatra*. A translation in Hindustani of the French play *Croisades* by Michel Azama.
- 2013** *Rizwaan*, A translation in French of the Urdu play by Abhishek Majumdar.
Treadmill, A translation in French of the Hindi play by Sandeep Shikhar.
- 2009** *Kal ka Waaris*. A feature-length scenario co-written with Rosslyn Hyams and in collaboration with William Shakespeare.
- 2006** *Mahadeva*, Corpse-Bearer. A 52-minute documentary.
- 1999** *Shruti*. A short film scenario in Hindi and Sanskrit.
- 1997** *Hayavadana*. An adaptation of a Hindi play by Girish Karnad in French in collaboration with Geneviève Rey Penchenat

QUALIFICATIONS

MASK technique of « Commedia dell'Arte » with Ariane MNOUCHKINE.
KATHAKALI with Karunakaran KALAMANDALAM.
NÔH with Sensai Ryo ARAKI

TRAINING ACTORS

Since 1997 regular training programmes for professional actors and theatre schools in India, France and Norway.

ACTOR

Theatre (a non-exhaustive list)

- 2001** *Hamlet*, by Shakespeare. Directed by Peter Brook.
1999 *Hayavadana*, by Girish KARNAD, directed by Asil RAIS.
1998 *Diogène, le chien céleste*, written and directed by Brigitte KAQUET,
1996-97 *Drôles d'Oiseaux*, directed by Akel AKIAN
1995 *An Indian Wants the Bronx*. by Israël Horowitz, directed by Akel AKIAN.
1993-94 *Le Joueur (The Gambler)*, by Carlo Goldoni, directed by Jean-Claude PENCHENAT.
1991-92 *Aztèques*, by Michel Azama, directed by Alain MERGNAT.
1991 *Katzelmacher*, by R.W. Fassbinder, directed by Anita PICHIARINI.
1990-91 *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, by Euripidis, directed by Ariane MNOUCHKINE.
Agamemnon, by Aeschylus, directed by Ariane MNOUCHKINE.
The Libation Bearers, by Aeschylus, directed by Ariane MNOUCHKINE.
1989 *The Imaginary Invalid*, by Molière, directed by Alain MERGNAT.
1987-88 *L'Indiade ou l'Inde de leurs rêves (India of their dreams)*, by Hélène Cixous; Directed by Ariane MNOUCHKINE.

Cinema (a non-exhaustive list)

- 2008** *Secret défense* — Philippe HAIM
La très très grande entreprise — Pierre JOLIVET
2000 *Stand-by* — Roc STEPHANIK.
1998 *The ninth gate* — Roman POLANSKI

Television (a non-exhaustive list)

- 2016** *Tantale* - Gilles Porte.
2015 *France Kbek* - Jérémie Galan et Jonathon COHEN (saison 2)
2013 *Ainsi soient ils* - Rodolphe TISSOT (saison 2)
2011 *Rapace* - Claire DEVERS
2008 *P. J.* - Akim ISKER
Boulevard du Palais - Christian BONNET
2007 *Éternelle* - Didier DELAITRE (6 épisodes de 52')
2006 *Par la grande porte* - Laurent JAOUI
2004 *Nom de code D.P* - Patrick DEWOLF
2002 *Hamlet* - Peter Brook
2001 *Au bout du quai* - Pierre LARRY
1999 *La vie après l'amour*, - Michel COTÉ
La vache et le président - Philippe MUYL
1997 *Trois opérations simulacres* - Arnaud SÉLIGNAC (Série *Commandant Nerval*)
1989 *La nuit miraculeuse* - Ariane MNOUCHKINE
1988 *L'Indiade ou l'Inde de leurs rêves* - Film directed by Bernard SOBEL

Contacts :

Asvaghosha

Asvaghosha Company

Aseel RAIS

Mobile: +33 (0)6 03 77 91 64

Email: asilrais@gmail.com



Compagnie de la Lune

Géraldine KANNAMMA

36 rue du loup pendu - 92290 Chatenay-Malabry - FRANCE

Mobile : +33(0)6 64 96 91 64

Email : lacompagniedelalune@hotmail.com

