

She goes solo to tell the tale of Durban Indians

GS Kumar | TNN

Md Asad

Bangalore: Solo performances in theatre have always been the ultimate challenge for actors, and taking it up is South-Africa born actor of Indian origin Jailoshini Naidoo. She is bringing her solo play *At the Edge* to Bangalore audiences. Naidoo's act is part of *Going Solo*, India's first theatre festival featuring single-actor performances.

Born in Durban, Naidoo is a popular television host in South Africa, with a huge fan base. She has also been involved in theatre for several decades and is a veteran at single-actor plays. "But I still find it extremely challenging. It is safer to work as a character in a group as you'll have other actors who can support you even if you go wrong. But in solo performances, it is you and you alone. You have to be extremely focused. If you go wrong, it is your own responsibility," says Naidoo.

Naidoo has played leading roles in productions such as *God of Carnage* and *Jungle Book*, but some of her greatest fame has come from solo performances in which she has explored the lives of people of Indian origin living in South Africa. Prior to *At the Edge*, her one-woman show 1949, in which she played 38 characters, was a huge hit. Incidentally, 1949 is written by award-winning playwright Ronnie Govenader, a South African playwright of Tamil descent, whose book *At the Edge* and other *Cato Manor Stories* has been adapted for Naidoo's current performance.

At the Edge looks at the predominantly Indian Durban neighbourhood Cato Manor from the 1940s until its destruction in 1958-59 through a series of narratives dramatized by Naidoo. It raises questions about South African Indian identities -- questions of prejudice, discrimination, and survival in a divided society.

Theatre festival: Jailoshini Naidoo is in Bangalore as part of *Going Solo*, an international theatre festival of single-actor performances to be held at MLR Convention



DONNING MYRIAD ROLES: Durban born Jailoshini Naidoo is a popular television host in South Africa. She is here for a theatre festival

SOLO CHALLENGE

As a solo performer, I have to be constantly in motion on the stage. It is exhilarating and challenging. In single-actor performances, the character and the audience become attached to each other and develop a bond, which is very special. One moment you cry, next moment you smile. It requires thorough training; a lot of hard work and discipline

Jailoshini Naidoo | SOUTH AFRICA-BORN ACTOR OF INDIAN ORIGIN

Hall, Whitefield, from Friday to Sunday. UK's Pip Utton will also perform at the festival, which includes three plays, *Churchill*, *Adolf* and *At The Edge*.