

Azim Premji University review

### EINSTEIN : A STAGE PORTRAIT – AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE!

Azim Premji University in association with Bangalore Little Theatre and St Joseph's College presented 'Einstein – A Stage Portrait' an internationally-acclaimed one-person play on December 5 and 6, 2015 at St. Joseph's Autonomous College Auditorium, Bengaluru. Written and directed by Willard Simms, the play held the audience spellbound for its running time of close to two hours driven by the powerful performance of Tom Schuch. From the moment Schuch appears on stage, inviting the audience to his parlour to have a chat, one is totally under his charm as he recounts the various moments of his life in a conversational tone laced with gentle humour.

What is revealed to us is the portrait of an entirely human Einstein whose scientific work is propelled by an unending curiosity about the way nature works but who faces all the personal tragedies, little joys of family life and moral dilemmas that any ordinary person faces. We saw glimpses of his relationship with his two wives and the children, his pacifist political beliefs and its clash with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki which was made possible partly by his scientific discovery, his support for the state of Israel, his love for music, especially Mozart; and many hilarious incidents involving the media and over-enthusiastic fans born out of his global celebrity status. Schuch has been playing Einstein for some 15 years now and he has internalized the character to such an extent that watching the play was like spending an intimate evening with Einstein himself at his home.

The number of people who stayed back for the Q&A session with the director and actor after the two-hour long performance was a proof of how deeply they were involved with play. During the session Simms explained how the idea of Einstein came about and how he read up everything available on Einstein, including the then unpublished letters of his to his first wife, before he started writing the play. Schuch answered questions about how he manages to remember lines that fill up two hours and how he manages to create such a believable replica of Einstein on stage and he infuses his performance with such intense passion after playing the same character for 15 years.

All in all, a scintillating and unforgettable experience!