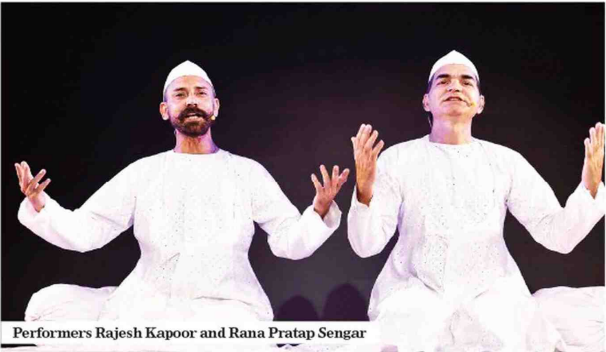


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TRIBUTE

DASTAN-E-RAJ KAPOOR USED TRADITIONAL STORYTELLING STYLE TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE LEGENDARY SHOWMAN



Performers Rajesh Kapoor and Rana Pratap Sengar



It was a full house at the amphitheatre of Kolkata Centre for Creativity.



Sibtain Shahidi, writer of Dastan-e-Raj Kapoor, said: "Stories are small, but *dastaans* are big. *Dastaans* give one that scope to be extensive, to tell the tale with all your heart and with fewer verbal restrictions. Big personality, big content, deserves big expression

and hence *dastaan*." Talking about Kapoor's legacy, which he has been researching for years, Sibtain, who has had a two-decade career in TV, radio and films, said: "His legacy is pre-Independence and comes from a social activist's house. His house was open to all, and many big names in the industry would stay there. He would help everyone. His story and India's story ran parallel. While India gained independence, he released his first film. India was taking shape, so were his films. His films had hope and were a mirror to society. He has had an incredible life and his contributions make him the biggest showman of the Indian film industry."

Continuing the birth centenary celebrations of the icon of Hindi cinema, Raj Kapoor, Dastangoi performers Rana Pratap Sengar and Rajesh Kumar presented Dastan-e-Raj Kapoor at the Kolkata Centre for Creativity recently. The 100-minute biographical production, written by Sibtain Shahidi and directed by Mahmood Farooqui, reminded a packed audience at KCC about the life and legacy of the filmmaker and actor. It paid a fitting homage to Kapoor whose contributions to Indian cinema continue to inspire actors and audiences across generations.

Raj Kapoor's story cannot start without his father, the legendary Prithviraj Kapoor, and with their hold in the traditional art of storytelling in Urdu, Pratap and Rajesh presented a captivating odyssey to the two Kapoors, their journey from Peshawar to Bombay and even in Calcutta. The duo held on to the style of storytelling and with their lyrical *andaaz*, interspersed with some iconic songs from his films, and presented before us the Raj Kapoor that history knew — passionate and focussed, a dreamer, a joker, an *awara*, and the biggest showman of the Indian film industry.

While Kapoor's life cannot be told in a few hours, Sibtain's effort in researching his life and presenting all his aspects with honesty needs appreciation. Following a linear storyline, Dastan-e-Raj Kapoor touched upon the actor's childhood, his rise from a junior artiste to a hero, building his own empire with RK Studios, delivering hits after hits, receiving setbacks with flops and never giving up dreaming big. Kapoor's personal life was not a secret and Sibtain wove that in the narrative — his rift with Prithviraj Kapoor, his love for wife Krishna, and his delightful bonding with Dillip Kumar.

Farah Khatoon
Pictures: Kolkata Centre for Creativity