

## American Marathi Theatre (AMT) Project of Basement Theatre

In the next five to ten years low ebb may be experienced in the spirit in which community activities like Maharashtra Mandal are carried on. The gap will be inevitable, since the 'born here' second generation has not as much assimilated in the community milieu as one wished. Reasons are many. But, unless a novel effort is made those reasons will look impossible to tackle. Theatre has been one factor that brings Marathi people earnestly together. That avenue appears to be our best chance to attract and assimilate the young blood. We want to foster a Marathi theater that is born here.

When we tried any assimilation of the young in the past it was by unwittingly forcing our choices down their throats. Perhaps, we never realized that the language, the slang, the subjects, the symbols – the whole ethos that we eagerly enjoyed in the theatre was absolutely alien (and distasteful) to them. On the other hand, we also assumed that what the young growing kids would prefer to see is all-American theatre that was completely alien to us. The limit of our generosity has been to allow them a slot to sing a few songs (mostly of our liking!!) and to accord a mandatory appreciation.

We created this "either/or" situation by religiously preserving our cultural tastes as the 'only' genuine Marathi heritage and completely lost sight of the reality. Our kids have grown in a unique environmental dilemma of "American peer pressure" and "Indian/Marathi parental pressure" when it comes to culture.

This is however not an impasse, but an opportunity; provided we recognize it. The uniqueness is in the problems they face and how that shapes up their identity which may not be either Marathi or American. It will be uniquely indigenous. It will also be inclusive, in the sense they will respond to Marathi theatre in their own way (not our way!) and they will accept the Americanism too in their own way.

Our duty is to provide a platform, a bed of soil for a theatre to be born with original American-Marathi idiom. This effort is to make it a reality via Basement Theatre. We the senior artists will stand by and provide this sapling with any help, direction and protection needed. What we will expect is a polished professional performance on the mainstream MMC event this year. What we will not do is to influence or interfere in their creative expression.

We need a team of budding actors, director, writer, music coordinator and stage hands. If you like this and have a young adult between 18 to 25 years with potential and passion, please let him/her get in touch with Ganesh Yadav today. His email id is [yganesh@hotmail.com](mailto:yganesh@hotmail.com) and phone # is **219-232-8421**. The first meeting is scheduled on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 2:30 to 4:30 PM at Poplar Creek Library at Streamwood.