

Spotlight on the stage: PVR, Zee take gigs, theatre to new platforms

Entertainment firms plan to monetise content by showcasing it on various digital formats

BINDU D MENON

Mumbai, January 14

Entertainment companies such as Zee Group and multiplex owner PVR are not only experimenting with various forms of content including live gigs, musicals and theatre but are also looking at taking it to new platforms.

The Subhash Chandra-owned Zee Group, for instance, has ventured into plays, with its own Zee Theatre. The company plans to popularise and monetise plays by screening them on a array of platforms, including big screens and various digital formats, besides the regular stage shows.

"Our aim is to revive theatre by providing not just the physical infrastructure but also make theatrical content available on multiple platforms (online, on-air, on-ground, in-transit) for audiences to consume at their convenience," says Shailja Kejriwal, Chief Creative Director, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited.

Kejriwal said over the next three years, the company plans to produce over 100 plays, whose rights will rest with Zee Theatre.

"We will be screening it across platforms such as the internet, mobile, DTH, television, in-flight,

Our aim is to revive theatre by providing not just the physical infrastructure but also make theatrical content available on multiple platforms (online, on-air, on-ground, in-transit) for audiences to consume at their convenience

SHAILJA KEJRIWAL
Chief Creative Director, Zee
Entertainment Enterprises Limited

at multiplexes and educational institutes, in addition to existing on-ground performances," Kejriwal says.

Sector analysts point out that it will be a win-win for both players as India evolves from a single screen to multi-screen content providers.

PVR has created a property called PVR Live. It showcases pre-recorded content including ballet, concerts, theatre and musicals from around the world, at various PVR multiplexes.

"We have capacity and keep looking for means to monetise the same. Such services are not just niche but complement our multiplex offering. Additionally, we broadcast sourced content



from across the globe during non-film hours," says Gautam Dutta, CEO, PVR Ltd.

PVR runs over 500 screens pan-India, making it the largest multiplex operator. The company has already telecast Matthew Bourne's 3D Ballet *Swan Lake* and choreographer Christopher Wheeldon's live show *Cinderella*.

Dutta points that such services takes care of the occupancy by driving traffic to multiplexes during non-peak hours.

Other players

Players like Shemaroo and Reliance had also toyed with such a platform. Reliance and London-

based More2Screen had come together to screen operas at BIG Cinema theatres.

Going rural

Meanwhile, UFO Moviez, a film distribution company, has developed a concept called Caravan Talkies - an open movie viewing experience for India's rural population. "A sundown show is played at villages, typically at a weekly marketplace. Each caravan visits seven villages a week in a close circuit. This business offers advertisers a unique opportunity to reach audiences on a captive platform," said company spokespersons.