

Muslim Man of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)

a DCS Monologue

Part of the 'Dear Children, Sincerely ...' project



Edited by
RUWANTHIE DE CHICKERA

Based on interviews conducted through
the DCS theatre research project

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Muslim Man of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)

First public performance 2019

A Stages Theatre Group presentation

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A Stages Theatre Group presentation
First screened
As part of DCS - Seven Decades of Sri Lanka
September 2019
Lionel Wendt Theatre
Colombo, Sri Lanka,

An Introduction to the *DCS Project*

‘Dear Children, Sincerely...’ a conversation across generations

What is the *DCS Project*?

“Dear Children, Sincerely... a conversation across generations” (or the *DCS project*) is a research theatre project begun in Sri Lanka in 2015 by Stages Theatre Group. *DCS* collects the stories and experiences of the generation born in the 1930s and takes them to the present-day audiences in the form of storytelling and live performance.

Under the *DCS project*, short performance pieces are created from extensive conversations conducted with senior citizens, with each performance piece not more than 15 minutes long. These stories stand alone as individual performance pieces and can also be linked together to create longer theatrical productions.

Between 2015 and 2020, through the *DCS project*, over 70 senior citizens of Sri Lanka were interviewed and performance pieces created from these conversations.

The *DCS project* has also been implemented in Rwanda, Palestine, Pakistan, the UK, Serbia and DRC.

The *DCS Monologues*

The monologues under *DCS project* (the *DCS Monologues*) are personal stories of individuals who belonged to the generation born in the 1930s. Each *DCS monologue* tells us the story of one such individual. Together they give us some historical perspective on what people consider important, what people easily forget and what they find unforgettable.

A Tamil sportsman who left the country after securing a Gold Medal for it, an old lady displaced for the first time at the age of 90, a faithful butler who observed the infamous attempted Military Coup, a woman lawyer heading the country’s first Disappearance Commission, a doctor who trusted her family inheritance to a riotous drunk... These are but some of the *DCS Monologues*.

Muslim Man of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) is the first digital monologue of the *DCS Monologues* series. It is not a performance, rather an edited version of a longer interview conducted with Mr. Madhi Hussein.

An Introduction to *Muslim Man of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)*

Based on a video interview with Mr. Madhi Hussein.

Interview conducted by Ruwanthie de Chickera and Azra Jafferjee.

About the Monologue

This monologue is different to the other monologues created under the *DCS Monologues* project. Whereas all other *DCS Monologues*, up to this point, were scripted from the transcripts of the interviews and performed by actors, this monologue is an edit of the original video interview itself and so features Mr. Hussein speaking his own words.

In this monologue, Mr. Hussein, a gentle spoken 93 year old Muslim man, born and bred in Sri Lanka, struggles to come to terms with the shock of the catastrophic Easter Bombings attack in Sri Lanka in May 2019. The monologue was added to the *DCS 7 Decades of Sri Lanka* show which provided snapshots of milestones in Sri Lankan history from Independence to the end of the Civil War. Performing a journey of contemporary Sri Lankan history without mention of the Easter Bombings, did not seem possible in 2019. And so, this monologue was added to the end of the show and captures the significant and defining moment that occurred ten years after the war ended.

Mr. Hussain is well known and respected for his erudite observations and liberal worldview. The purpose of the interview was to try and understand how a pacifist, liberal Muslim man who has lived in this country for over 90 years understood the current situation.

Mr. Hussain spoke to Ruwanthie de Chickera for hours. His personality was so captivating on camera that it was decided that the strongest representation of this interview was Mr. Hussain himself.

Screening History

First screening

DCS Seven Decades of Sri Lanka
Lionel Wendt Theatre
Colombo 2019

For more detailed insights on this play, including the back story about how it was made, an analysis of all its design elements, its production video, soundtrack, publicity campaign, all press reviews and audience comments, and more, please visit its production page on the Stages Theatre Group website www.stages.lk

Muslim Man of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)

Presented by Mr. Madhi Hussein

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I am a 93-year-old Muslim. Born in Ceylon – which is now Sri Lanka.

I am just a man ... who has grown old.

(My father and mother were both born in Colombo.
My grandparents also were born here.)

Easter Sunday... when it happened, I was in a state of shock.

We boast that we are... a cultured people.
We boast that ... we have a high level of literacy.
We boast that we are compassionate because we have ... all the four religions
represented here.

Pause

I can't see any of that.

What I know of religion is ... that it is an empire based on ... power.

Pause

What do people really worship over here? The crudest forms of power. The crudest
forms of wealth.

Pause

Crude fellows. What can you do with them?

Pause

When you are driven by *anger*, and you *pose* as if you are driven by patriotism. That's
all wrong.

That's wicked.

I don't know...

I have hopes that there should be a clean sweep of the present set up.
Because there is no hope in them.
And we must have a new lot of people.

Pause

I think the only hope is in the young.
Because the young are not burdened with our prejudices.
The prejudices that the *elders* in *my* time burdened the young with.

It was nothing but prejudice – you see?

I am a 93-year-old Muslim. Born in Ceylon – which is now Sri Lanka.

And if there is one message I can give you – mainly to the young –

Don't give up hope.

Have courage.

Fight.

END

Production Credits

Muslim Man of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) was first screened as part of *DCS Seven Decades of Sri Lanka*, in September 2019 at the Lionel Wendt Theatre, Colombo.

Featuring

Mr. Madhi Hussein as himself

DESIGN TEAM

Editor	Ruwanthie de Chickera
Photographer	Pramila Samarakoon
Video	Pramila Samarkoon
Video Edit	Jithendra Vidyapathi

For more detailed insights on this play, including the back story about how it was made, an analysis of all its design elements, its production video, soundtrack, publicity campaign, all press reviews and audience comments, and more, please visit its production page on the Stages Theatre Group website www.stages.lk



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