

On stage at a young age

BECOMING A theatre person at 21 is something uncommon. Being modest about it, more so. That is Saad Khan, stage actor, director, and engineering student, for you.

That this student of M.S. Ramaiah College of Engineering excels in studies is another surprise as several other things are about this unassuming young man.

Saad's theatre connections started early, in school. "But I couldn't really take time off for that then because there was pressure at home to get good grades in school... when I came to PUC, there were more opportunities," he says.

While at St. Joseph's School, he did enter several interschool drama events and won prizes.

The Bangalore Little Theatre was where his acting talents were groomed, between 1999 and 2001, he remembers. He appeared in two of its productions, the most memorable being *Ionescapes*. His career on



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stage before large audiences began in earnest.

Two years ago, Saad formed the theatre group, Image, at his college. "We attempted to produce some of the better plays of the time and succeeded. The *Man Upstairs* was a dark comedy well received by the audience," he recalls.

There was also the Hindi play, *Rakth Kalyan*. "Two of the cast suddenly pulled out and I had to don three roles in the play... that of a prince, a soldier, and a young girl," he says with a smile.

During these years, Saad has come up with the professional theatre productions, *Idle Hands* and *Scream*; the latter being an adaptation of a Hollywood thriller.

He scripted *Idle Hands* himself over the course of 20 days, the plot based on the premise: "idle hands and the devil himself".

It had been in production for one-and-a-half months and received good reviews.

"Scream was different; we had to adapt from a hit film and make it suitable for the stage... there was casting to be done," he remembers. Shivanigini Arora, a promising young artiste of Bangalore, played the heroine.

The plot was about how an unexpected telephone call changes the life of a young woman. Others on the cast were models and DJs who were trying out theatre. It was a lavish production running to packed houses at the Chowdaiah Memorial Hall. "It took us two months to finalise the cast and start rehearsals. We were trying out something new, a murder on stage," he remarks.

Saad's approach to theatre is down to earth. "Theatre should entertain and become popular enough to run parallel to cinema... there should be crowds lining up to get tickets for a play as they do for movies. A theatre-going crowd has to grow as in Mumbai," he feels.