

Ready for instant theatre

[REWIND]

Time: Year 2001, 11th March, 1630 hours.

Place: ICSA, Pantheon Road, Egmore.

Cast: Members of the Sterling Playback Theatre Group.

Yes, Playback. Where the actors spontaneously [PLAY] back slices of life narrated by members of the audience.

Haven't heard about this before. Let's [REWIND] further then.

Time: Year 1975.

Place: Somewhere in the United

States of America.

Cast: Jonathan Fox, JoSalas and Co.

That was when Fox developed playback theatre, as a variation of culture theatre and story-telling, "as a vital means of integration and healing for the

community", a theatre created through a unique collaboration between performers and the audience.

"Someone tells a story or a moment from their life, chooses actors to play the different roles, then watches, as the story is immediately given artistic shape and coherence."

[FAST FORWARD]

This form of theatre spread to about 30 countries, with the Sterling Playback Theatre being one of the members of the International Playback Theatre Network.

[PLAY]

On Sunday, the members of Ster-

ling Playback Theatre group, demonstrated how interaction between the audience and performers, not just honour stories of the people there, but also "connects them to each other, creating a deeper sense of community".

Like when the artistes enacted out different conflicts, experienced by the members of the audience — be it "to do or not to do", dilemmas ranging from "should I join TISS or MSSW" or just dancing in the rain. It was a unique blend of mime, theatre and 'Whose Line Is



It Anyway' as the artistes came out with improvised performances and lines, matching the situations narrated by the member of the audience. The group even enacted a couple of stories from real life, as narrated by the audience, thus striking a chord with the real life protagonist almost instantly.

Considering it was just the first performance of the Sterling Playback Theatre, the group is all set to go a long way. The group could be contacted at sterling — pbt@yahoo.com.

[STOP]
[EJECT]

By *Sudhish Kamath*
Photo: R. Ragu

Tell a tale

SPONTANEITY, CREATIVITY and skill... All this and more make story telling quite an art. It can knit people and communities together through shared experiences. But, the Sterling Playback Theatre in Chennai, member of the International Playback Theatre Network, goes a step further. Both actors and audience collaborate to playback or relive events from a participant's life. The theatre group is organising a workshop at the AICUF House, 52 Sterling Road Nungambakkam at 9 a.m., on June 9 and 10. You can also phone 4840420 if you want to tell a story or two.