HIGH DRAMA / RAVINDRA MANCH

Clowning Is Serious Business



Naresh Gulati

MEMBERS OF the Caravan Theatre group of France will complete their workshop in Jaipur today. Seventeen of them have been here for yet another workshop in the space of one year — a workshop that aims at grooming the clown within each individual, at bringing him out of the façade and be good to the world around.

While an equal number of young theatre workers joined their French counterparts from here in the workshop at the Ravindra Manch, it seems the Pink City has become second home to the clowning genre.

As the end of the workshop hosted by Jan Kala Sahitya Manch (JKSM) is in sight, Jean Pierre Besnard the director is a satisfied man. Not because the work-

fly home. (In fact, his entire troupe will move out for a Rajasthan darshan before going back.) No, Besnard is happy recalling his discovery at Jaipur two years ago of the tremendous appeal that the genre could create when applied to the Theatre of the Oppressed.

Also called Forum Theatre, this has been Besnard's core performance activity for years. Clowning has done some value addition to what once used to be an exercise in information dissemination, participative interaction, discussion and debate for resolution of a proposition taken in hand. And he discovered it here while doing a standard drill a workshop, of says Besnard.

"Clowning has added a much-needed lighter ap-

shop is ending and he will

proach to serious issues," rence performing two roles for the troupe. Not only is acting as

clown does is create an instant rapport with the universal body language, for he addresses the clown within each individual.

its interpreter, but also she

is more or less Chef De Mis-

sion as she takes care of all

the mundane details. Then there is Besnard's co-worker

Beatrice, who was here last

year too, handling the be-

ginners while he grooms the

to be a refresher for the 11

actors who visited and per-

formed in France about two

months ago. Sponsored by

JKSM, the actors seem to be

a cohesive group, now coor-

dinated by this young

Pankaj Sharma. A visit to

the workshop reveals them

the midst of an exercise on

inter-cultural appreciation.

An energetic Pankaj leads

her side to join the counter-

parts from France in under-

standing and analysing the

clowning as just a comic relief for an audience. She

seems to be in agreement

with Besnard when she says

the clown has the power to

create empathy. Jaipurites

have learnt that language

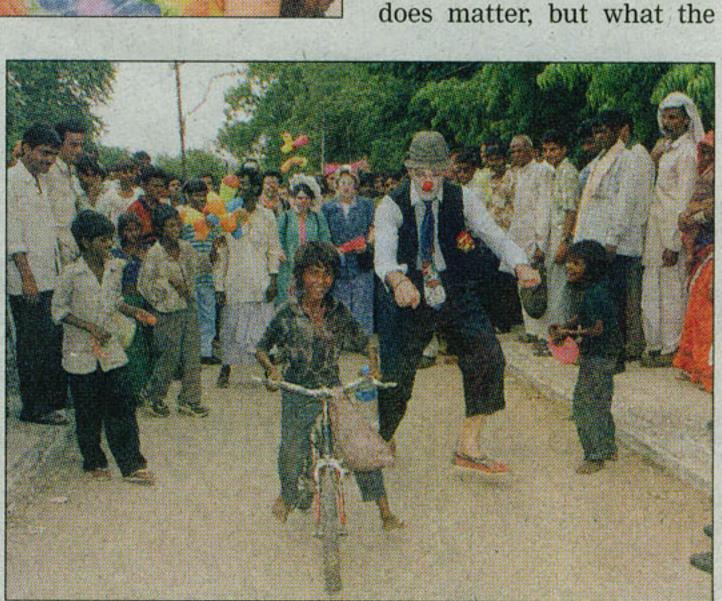
No doubt she doesn't see

The workshop has proved

seniors.

session.

And that is where a new beginning always is.



informs the young, bubbly and communicative Lau-Marafante. Half French, half Spanish she is