

COMING UP

The week ahead in Whitchurch-Stouffville

EDITOR'S PICK

Actor tackling Hamlet by himself

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No sets, props or costume changes. Just one man, 17 characters and 15,000 words.

Canadian actor Raoul Bhaneja brings his original production of Hamlet (solo) to the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment - Nineteen on the Park, March 1 and 2.

"If people can sit at home and get the same thing on TV or YouTube, then why come to the theatre? I want to give them something they've never seen before," he said.

Mr. Bhaneja and director Robert Ross Parker started working on the show 11 years ago. After six years of work-shopping it, Mr. Bhaneja started touring the production in 2006. He's done about 125 performances so far.

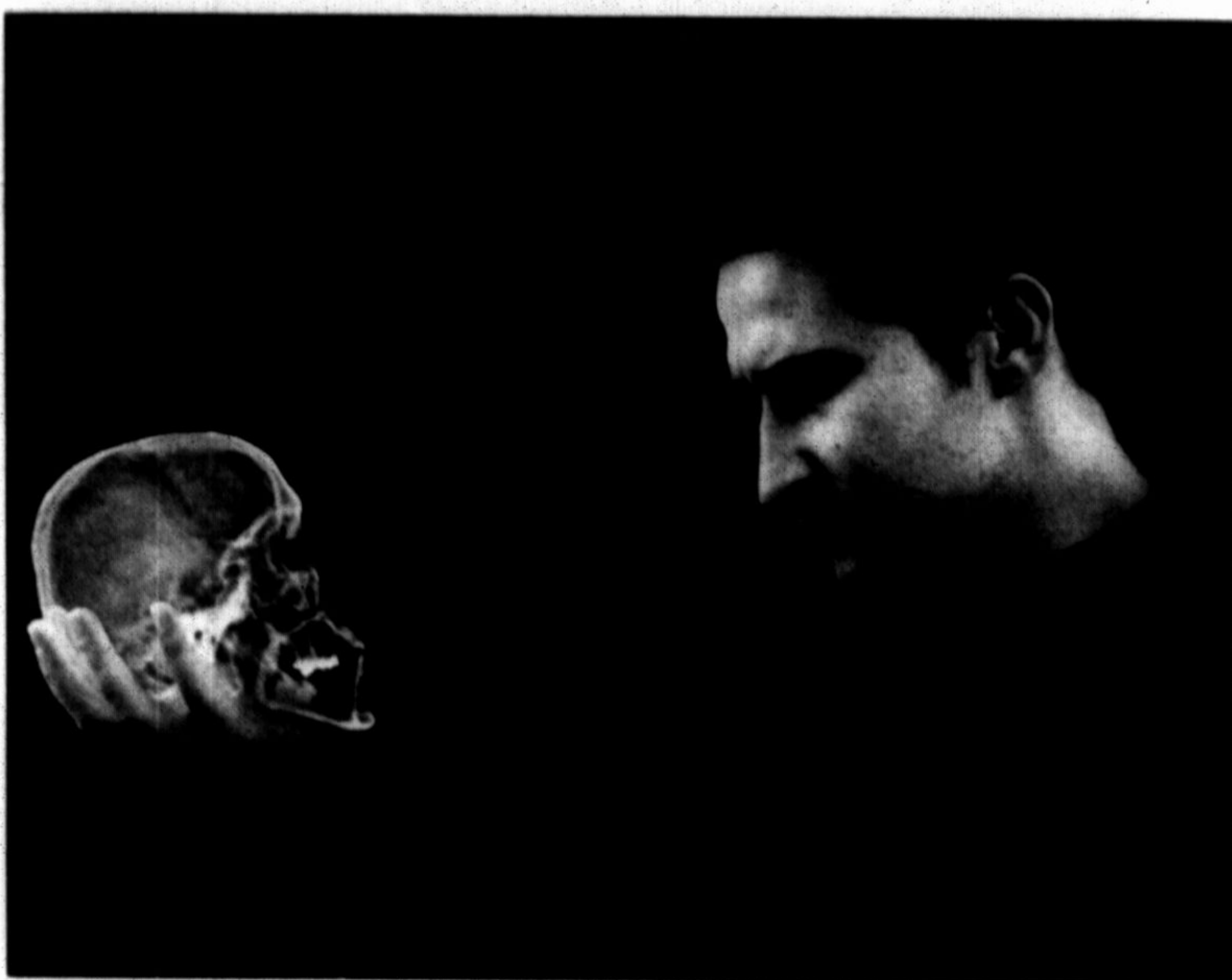
He's also appeared in films (*Ararat*, *Cold Creek Manor* and *The Sentinel*, with Michael Douglas and Kiefer Sutherland) and on TV in

Train 48 and *At the Hotel*.

The show won the Montreal English Critics' Circle award for best visiting production and has been performed at the Banff Summer Arts Festival, Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Edmonton Fringe Festival and Stratford's Shakespeare Festival.

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"That's pretty amazing as an achievement, an actor could do that and that it received so much acclaim," said Steven Foster, cultural facility and programming co-ordinator for the Lebovic Centre for Arts and Entertainment



Raoul Bhaneja brings Hamlet (solo) to Nineteen on the Park next Thursday and Friday.

Nineteen on the Park.

Most people know the story of Hamlet from studying it in school and because of that Mr. Bhaneja doesn't want them to discount the show.

"Shakespeare is really meant to be performed, not studied in the classroom," he said.

He also noted many people's experience with Hamlet has led them to believe they are not literate enough to understand the play,

which he said is wrong.

"The vast majority of Shakespeare's audience was illiterate," he said.

Despite the language and enormous amount of prose, Mr. Bhaneja said at the core of it, the play is just "about parents and kids trying to understand each other".

Tickets are \$35 regular, \$30 subscriber, \$18 student and available from the theatre at www.nineteenonthePark.ca or by calling 905-640-2322.

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