



Kehta hai joker sara zamana...

Nupur Mahajan

At the age of eight, when boys fly kites and climb trees, one little boy decided he would grow up and be a clown. Clown Shiven alias Gunther Bennung from Berlin fulfilled his dream at 36 and today at 61, he still does what he loves most. "I was a journalist, a school teacher, a theatre person and also a film producer. But at heart I always cherished my childhood dream. On one of my visits to India, I was day dreaming and I saw myself flying around as a clown. It became crystal clear that I needed to be one."

It is his passion for children that is his driving force. "I try to spread joy and laughter. I give the children something soulful — music, colours and laughter," muses Clown Shiven as he sits, painting his face at the Spastic Society of India where his show was to be held. Though trained at the Berlin Acting School, he is basically a self taught artiste. He attributes his skills to kids, saying that he learns from them every day.

The students of the Spastic Society wait patiently, sprawled under the shade of a Neem tree, with the sea glistening in the morning sun and a ship sailing not far away. Suddenly all heads turn and there comes Clown Shiven standing atop a slide, waving and calling out to the children. Blowing bubbles, he walks to the centre of the circle where his various accompaniments are lying scattered on the floor. He begins his act by cleaning windows and then a window pane, using a spray gun; ofcourse there are none and the water sprinkles on the children who scream in ecstasy. And thus he proceeds, making the children a very happy bunch indeed. Shiven, who comes to India very often, will be flying back to Germany before the weekend.

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