Of Mice and Men by

The Play & Director's Note

Of Mice and Men takes place during America's Great Depression, which lasted from the stock market crash of October 1929 until 12 years later when World War II began. One result of the depression was lack of steady jobs, which resulted in an increase in the number of itinerant workers. For the most part, these itinerant workers were men who traveled from town to town seeking short-term employment. The play addresses the real hopes and dreams of working- class America. It raises the lives of the poor and dispossessed to a higher symbolic level. *Of Mice and Men* tries to explain what it means to be human. It touches on several themes: the nature of dreams, the nature of loneliness, man's propensity for cruelty, powerlessness and economic injustices, and the uncertainty of the future. Nearly all of the characters admit, at one time or another, of having a profound sense of loneliness and isolation the characters are rendered helpless by their isolation, and yet, even at their weakest, they seek to destroy those who are even weaker than they are. Steinbeck records a profound human truth: oppression does not come only from the hands of the strong or the powerful. The novel suggests that the most visible kind of strength—that used to oppress others—is itself born of weakness.

The farm, of which George and Lennie dream, does not exist in reality but it, is very real in their minds, where they will have self –respect and independence. It becomes a symbol of their relationship and the re-telling of the dream becomes a ritual. In opposition to this symbol is the bunkhouse which represents the cruel world of reality, where we see discrimination, cruelty, insensitivity and suspicion. This production evolved during a workshop with Rang Vinayak Theatre Group. Apart from struggling hard to portray the complex characters the young actors contributed in many other ways.

They added certain hand properties, made set props, even brought suitable costumes.

The Director

Hema Singh, a well known actor, a graduate of NSD's Integrated Course, worked with NSD Repertory Company for 10 years. She has done major roles with eminent national and international directors. She was awarded with NSD's prestigious 'Manohar Singh Smriti Award' for her contribution to theatre in 2008. She has acted in tele-films and serials with directors like Shyam Benegal and M.S.Sathyu. Her portrayal of Imarti Devi in a T.V. serial has fetched her 'Indian Television Academy Award 'for Best Actress in a negative role'. She has done innovative work in the field of Parsi theatre and presentation of poetry on stage. She has assisted famous Parsi style actor Late Master Fida Hussain 'Narsi' at NSD for 6 years. Apart from 15 productions in Parsi style to her credit, she has directed plays of other genres such as *Hot Air, Gadar, Jasma Odhan* & *Chainpur ki Dastan*.

Presently, she is an Associate Professor of Acting at NSD.

The Author

The winner of the 1962 Nobel Prize in Literature, John Steinbeck was an American author of twenty-seven books, including sixteen novels, six non-fiction books, and five collections of short stories. He is widely known for the comic novels Tortilla Flat (1935) and Cannery Row (1945), the multi-generation epic East of Eden (1952), and the novellas Of Mice and Men (1937) and The Red Pony (1937). The Pulitzer Prize-winning The Grapes of Wrath (1939) is considered Steinbeck's masterpiece. Many of his works are considered classics of Western literature.

The Group

Established in 2007 by Dr. Brijeshwar Singh, ‘Rang Vinayak Rang Mandal’ is a cultural wing of Daya Drishti. In 2010 Rang Vinayak formed its own Theatre Repertory which has now 30 artists. It has been hosting theatre festivals, showcasing works of eminent theatre directors . It has also been organizing Children theater workshops, giving them a cultural platform. It’s widely acclaimed productions of different genres are *Adarsh Hindu Hotel* , *Jab Shaher Hamara Sotha Hai, AMidsummer Night’s Dream, Mattavillas* , *Reunion*, *Saiyaan Bhaye Kotwal and Chainpur ki Dastan.*

Design & Direction Hema Singh