Beastly Tales: Animal and Human Fables



Naseeruddin Shah and Ratna Pathak Shah performing in Beastly Tales

Beastly Tales : Animal and Human Fables

A review by Manohar Khushalani

READINGS: Beastly Tales
Poems by Vikram Seth with Stories by James Thurber
Presented by Motley
Recitations by Naseeruddin Shah;
Ratna Pathak Shah; Heeba Shah; and Kenny Desai
Produced by Jairaj Patil
17 November 2022

Beastly Tales was billed as readings by the well-known performers, Naseeruddin Shah, Ratna Pathak Shah, Heeba Shah

and Kenny Desai. Produced by Jairaj Patil for Motley, the heavily attended event included poems by Vikram Seth, from his book ‘Beastly Tales with stories by James Thurber’, TS Eliot’s poems from ‘Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats’ and Robert Browning’s Legendary poem ‘Pied Piper of Hamelin’. The starkly designed presentation had no bells and whistles. Led by Naseeruddin Shah, the four performers stood behind their individual lecterns and read out the poems with a flair and perfect diction. Each one read their own piece individually and sometimes, in perfect synchronisation, in a chorus.

Spiced with humour, the content of the performance was deftly curated to reflect idiosyncrasies of contemporary times with follies and foibles of its people juxtaposed against an animal world which reminds you eerily of ‘Fables of Aesop’ and ‘Panchatantra’. The animals were near human too, but unlike the complexities we fallible folks suffer from, the cat, the lion, the tiger, the elephant, the owl were more focussed with a single idiosyncrasy each. This curious fact, along with the pulsating rhythm of the poetry delivered with a punch and an aplomb by the actors brought out the message of each piece with precision.

Let’s pick a few stanzas from here and there and see for ourselves the merriness of the mirth involved.

The Tortoise, in Vikram Seth’s poem, initially maintained the original story with who won the race thus:

“And the cheering of the crowd
Died at last, the tortoise bowed,
And he thought: “That silly hare!
So much for her charm and flair.
Now she’ll learn that sure and slow
Is the only way to go –
That you can’t rise to the top
With a skip, a jump, a hop”

But here comes the twist in Seth’s version, it is in fact the hare, who became the hero of the hour:

But it was in fact the hare,
With a calm insouciant air
Like an unrepentant bounder,
Who allured the pressmen round her.
“And Will Wolf, the great press lord
Filled a Gold cup – on a whim –
And with an inviting grin
Murmured: “In my eyes you win.”

Each of the selections had interesting, and sometimes mind blowing twists and turns, that be made you realise that, as in real life, in these fairy tales too you cannot take a happy ending for grantedFirst Published in IIC Diary Nov-Dec 2022

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▪ **MANOHAR KHUSHALANI**



Manohar Khushalani's Team Building Exercises

By now you must be very excited to see the actual workshop conducted by Prof. Manohar Khushalani. Please watch the film of the actual workshop and listen to participants feedback also

19th NATSAMRAT NATYA UTSAV and 14th NATSAMRAT THEATRE AWARD opens 11th March

Natsamrat has been at the forefront of Capital’s amateur theatre movement for the last 24 years,
presenting entertaining and socially conscious theatre, participating in the prestigious theatre
festivals and organizing every year theatre festival featuring work of leading theatre directors.
Under the inspiration guidance of its founding director Shyam Kumar, a seasoned director and
actor, Natsamrat has instituted awards which are given away every year to theatre practitioners –
directot, actor (male and female), playwright, backstage performer, critic, lifetime achievement,
theatre promoter – of eminence.

Treasure Art Gallery opens with Prabhakar Kolte’s ‘The Mind’s Eye’

The operative system that Kolte found for his works was in a way colour field, but fundamentally different from that of the colour field abstractionists of his time like Marc Rothko, Robert Motherwell, Clyfford Still and so on. What he made was

not even remotely similar to the paintings by KCS Paniker in the south or GR Santhosh or Biren De in the north.

Abstractionist Prabhakar Kolte’s Exhibition,’The Mind’s Eye’ opens 9th Oct

The Preview will be followed by wine and cheese
The exhibition will be on view until 10th December, 2021. Monday-Saturday, 11am-7pm

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As tributes pour in on Surekha Sikri’s demise listen to her Swan Songs

As a fitting tribute to the great performer she was we will listen to her mellifluous recitations of Hindi and Urdu Poetry. But before that, here are some of the tributes which poured in on social media and otherwise from her millions of admirers, and eminent people whom she knew, including actors and directors from film, television and theatre.

Bookmark: New Age Theories for Architectural Practice by Prof. Sagar Desai

Preface by the Author
It gives me great pleasure to introduce this book for Architecture students studying Professional Practice. Often, I have observed that the professor in the class keeps talking about contracts although he may be explaining it very well but the students does not seem to understand. After thorough introspection I realized that its now time to add few more topics to the entire subject like, to understand contract and its formation better. One needs to understand what a company is? What banking and financial markets are?

Aneeta Chitale: Sojourn to Maldives – Book Review / Interview

The turbulent times between the years spanning from 2008 to 2014 is presented on the canvas. The relations between the two countries were totally raptured in this era. The entire plethora of Indian nationals and foreigners had gone berserk. I had to study it in detail and follow it consistently.

Resonances of the Past – a review by Manohar Khushalani

Ruth is best known for her pioneering work integrating sacred texts into contemporary voice/body theatre. Her pioneering approach to the transcendental aspect of voice is founded solidly in sacred cantorial Jewish traditions. In Mirror Sky in a backdrop of dimly lit scenes Ruth, swirling, moaning, producing gutrral sound explains the origin of her techniques:

Spic Macay – Pt. Rajan Mishra – IIT Delhi Program



IIT Delhi, Diamond Jubilee Program 2021 April – May

The pandemic is growing rapidly all over the world. With aim

of spreading hope and remembering **Pandit Rajan Mishra** ji (who passed away on the 25th of April), **SPIC MACAY** dedicates its online 3-day **IIT Delhi Diamond Jubilee year program** to him, the details of which are given in the link: https://spicmacay.org/rendezvousiitdelhidj

April 30th, 6:00 pm, Friday:
Cinema Classic “Hirak Rajar Deshe” by Shri Satyajit Ray, followed by an interaction with the expert, Tuhinabha Majumdar ji
Link: bit.ly/smcinemaclassic

1st May, 3:00 pm, Saturday Afternoon :
Great Masters Series- Vidwan Lalgudi G Jayaraman, followed by an interaction with G J R Krishnan ji
Link: bit.ly/smlivezoom

May 1st, 6:00 pm, Saturday Evening:
Classical Evening Series with Vidushi Nandini Bedekar (Hindustani vocalist)
Link: bit.ly/smlivezoom

May 2nd, 12 noon, Sunday:
Craft and Folk Series with Shri Rajaram Sharma (Pichwai Painting)
Link: bit.ly/smvolunteermeet