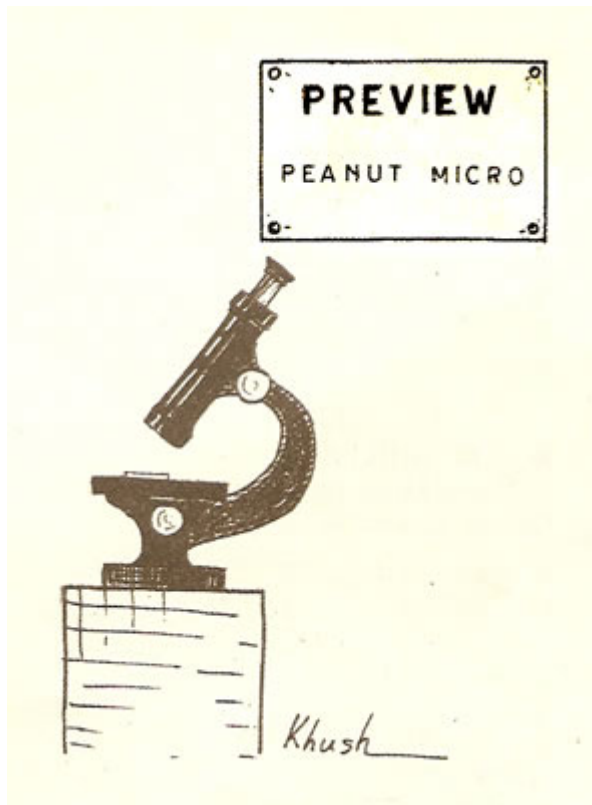


# jEsT a MiNuTe WiTh Khush



jEsT a MiNuTe WiTh *Khush*

Exhibit at the IT Fair

---

## Balladyna

### The Play

Balladyna and Alina are sisters who live with their mother in a poor hut in the middle of a forest. A nymph Goplana – the queen of the Gopło Lake – is in love with Balladyna's beloved, Grabiec, and because of her jealousy she intervenes in peoples' lives and changes their destiny. To the sisters' hut comes a rich prince Kirkor, who was led there by Skierka, Goplana's servant. Goplana wanted Kirkor to fall in love with Balladyna so that Grabiec could be just hers. However, Skierka

made a mistake and Kirkor fell in love not only with Balladyna, but also Alina. In order to get a husband, the sisters compete with each other in collecting raspberries; the one who fills a pitcher first will marry Kirkor. When Balladyna finds out that Alina is winning, she kills her with a knife.

Director's Note Balladyna becomes the Polish queen ("against contradictions and history," as the author says). Her career is a band of crimes and lies, but also a hell of remorse and horror. She is constantly accompanied by the belief that someone else controls her life. It was the enraged Goplana, the malicious sister, the possessive, the primitive mother, and in the background men obsessed with power. Although Slowacki's work is almost 200 years old, the question of whether to stop the machine of evil and live honestly after reaching one's dream destination remains as up-to-date. The world is changing: instead of legends, we have a virtual reality, instead of a sword, sophisticated tools of crime, but human feelings, ambitions, hatred and jealousy remain the same.

### **The Director**

Katarzyna Deszcz is a graduate of the Faculty of Law at the Jagiellonian University and the Faculty of Direction in Drama at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow. In 1982, together with her husband Andrzej Sadowski, she founded the Mandala theater group in Cracow, which exhibited nearly twenty experimental shows on stage in thirty-four countries. In the repertoire she has been directing since 1991, initially with her husband. In 1995, she collaborated with the Scarlet Theater in London, where she has been working on projects in England, Ireland and Scotland. She conducts workshops for directors and actors in theater centers in Poland, England, Egypt, India, Ireland, Japan, Germany and the USA. In 1993-94 she was a lecturer at the English Dartington College of Art in Devon. In the years 1999-2008 she was a lecturer at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow. The Playwright Juliusz Słowacki was a Polish Romantic

poet. His works often feature elements of Slavic pagan traditions, Polish history, mysticism and orientalism. His style includes the employment of neologisms and irony. His primary genre was the drama, but he also wrote lyric poetry. His most popular works include the dramas *Kordian* and *Balladyna* and the poems *Beniowski* and *Testament mój*. The Group The Aleksander Węgierko Drama Theater, in Białystok, is the only facility of this sort in the Podlaskie Voivodship. Its main stage can hold as many as 500 audience members. Along with mainstream

productions, the group also has a selection of performances for young viewers i.e. adaptations of classic literature for children as well as staging of contemporary fairy tales.

### Cast & Credits

Woman III	Danuta Bach
Balladyna	Justyna Godlewska-Kruczkowska
Woman I	Arleta Godziszewska
Widow	Krystyna Kacprowicz-Sokołowska
Alina	Urszula Mazur Goplana KatarzynaSiergiej
Woman II	JolantaSkorochoodzka
Sparkfire	Monika Zaborska-Wróblewska
Von Kostrin	Bernard Bania
Chancellor	Andrzej Sadowski
Impling	Patryk Ołdziejewski
Servant, Man II	Sławomir Popławski
Gralon, Man I	Piotr Szekowski
Hornbeam	Marek Tyszkiewicz
Hermit	Franciszek Utko
Kirkor	Leszek Żukowski

Costumes	Andrzej Sadowski, Elżbieta Wysocka
Music	Katarzyna Deszcz, Patryk Ołdziejewski
Visualizations	Krzysztof Kiziewicz
Stage manager	Jerzy Taborski
Scenography	Andrzej Sadowski
Playwright	Juliusz Słowacki
Direction	Katarzyna Deszcz

---

# KHAMOSHI SILI SILI by Joseph Stein



## The Play

This play is a translation of *Fiddler on the Roof* written by Joseph Stein. It is a musical that deals with the displacement of communities. The story is neatly bound to the Kashmiri situation in our country. Prithvi Nath loves his daughters, and goes against the traditional norms, allowing them to marry men of their choice. Shuhul, the third daughter chooses to marry a Muslim...

## Director's Note

Going along with the central theme of the play, the contemporary situation of our society took the forefront. The final situation chosen is the plight of the Kashmiri Pandit community. This choice is to support the script with a relevant social background which can be projected on a larger canvas, and can highlight the pain and problems of the people who have been displaced from their own land.

## The Director

Suresh Sharma did PG diploma with specialization in Acting from National School of Drama in 1985.

In 1987-88 he established the only non-government Repertory in the district of Mandi (Himachal Pradesh). From 1996-98 he worked as the Artistic Director of Sri Ram Centre for Performing Arts, Delhi. In 1998 he established the first non-government fully residential Theatre Academy in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. Mr. Sharma has been felicitated by Sahitya Kala Parishad. Sangeet Natak Academy awarded *Mohana*, a play written and directed by him, under the Young Director's Scheme.

## The Playwright

Joseph Stein (May 30, 1912 – October 24, 2010) was an American playwright best known for writing the books for the musicals *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Zorba*. His greatest success came from writing the book for the 1964 musical play *Fiddler on the Roof*, for which he won three major awards, including two Tonys.

## The Translator

A playwright, actor and director of great repute, Asif Ali Haider Khan obtained a PG diploma with specialization in Acting from Nation School of Drama. Later, he worked with NSD Repertory Company as an actor for many years. He received the Sangeet Natak Academy's Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar for playwriting in the year 2006. Currently, he is teaching Modern Indian Drama at National School of Drama, New Delhi.

## The Group

Established in 1964 with only four members, the Repertory Company is the regular performing wing of the School. It was set up with the dual purposes of establishing professional theatre on one hand and continuing with regular experimental work on the other.

## Cast & Credits

Prithvinath Zutshi	Shanawaz Khan
Jungaash Mandal	Shruti Mishra/ Sampa
Shuhul	Aparajita Dey
Sheen	Sukhinjeet Kaur
Nonika	Rukmini Sircar
Himaal	Aparna Menon
Didda	Bornali Borah
Leelawati Mishra	Sampa Mandal/ Shruti
Shambhunath	Deep Kumar
Gaffara	Sikandra Kumar
Bakshi Singh (Kimma)	Rajib Kalita
Brijlal Raju Roy	Niranjana Nath /
Rajguru	Dhutamal Ravi

Babasaheb

Policeman

Vivek Emmaneni

Somnath

Mazibur Rehman

Badrinath

Naveen Singh Thakur

Paadshah  
Thorat

Siddheshwar Kashinath

Makkhan Lal

Raghvendra Pratap Singh

Krishanpir

Mahendra Singh

Firdous

Mohan Lal Sagar

Grandmother

Shruti Mishra / Sampa Mandal

Chorus  
Kadir Shah,

Moti Lal Khare, Abdul

Thakur, Md.Suleman,

Naveen Singh

Bisht, Naresh Kumar,

Dharam Singh

Menon

Mazibur Rehman

Bijja Aparna

Male

Naveen Singh Thakur

Male-1

Naresh Kumar

Male-2

Mazibur Rehman

Kukka

Raju Roy/Niranjan Nath

Woman-1

Sukhinjeet Kaur



Woman - 2	Shruiti Mishra / Sampa
Mandal	
Male-1	Dharam Singh Bisht
Male-2	Pradeep Aggarwal
Set Design	Bansi Kaul
Set, Props Execution	Rajesh Bahl
Set Execution	Ram Pratap, Dharam
Singh, Manoj Kumar	
Light Design & Operation	Govind Singh Yadav
Assistance	Md. Suleman,
Pradeep Aggarwal	
Costume Design	Kirti V. Sharma
Assistance	Pushpa
Vishwakarma	
Costume in-charge	Budh Ram
Chief Costume Coordinator	C.S. Bhatia
Assistance	Parvati Bisht
Sound Operation	Mukesh Kumar
Sound & Music Recording	S. Manoharan, Subhanjan
Property Design	Suresh Sharma
Property in-charge	Motilal Khare
Music	Kajal Ghosh
Tabla & Dholak	Om Prakash

Octopad	Narender Kumar
Harmonium	Naveen Singh Thakur
Tumbkh	Feroz Ahmed
Rabab	Gulam Qadir
Gara	Fearoq Ahmed
Sarangi	Syed Yaseen
Kashmiri Diction	Ashwath Bhatt
Dance Classes	Sonal Modi Vorah
Choreography	Norbu Tshering
Make-up Mishra	Raju Roy, Shruti
Assistance All Repertory Artists	

<b>Playwright</b>	<b>Joseph Stein</b>
<b>Translator</b>	<b>Asif Ali Haider Khan</b>
<b>Director</b>	<b>Suresh Sharma</b>

---

# ADHE ADHURE by Mohan Rakesh

## The Play

Savitri, a middle aged woman, is dissatisfied with her

circumstances. She has an unemployed son, a promiscuous teen daughter and a husband, who has failed to provide her emotional and financial security. She tries to find fulfilment in relationships outside her marriage, only to realize that all men are the same beneath different faces. What makes Mohan Rakesh's portrait of Savitri, one of Hindi theatre's first feminist icons, so gripping, is that one is never sure whether he admires her rage to get a grip on her life, or whether he suggests that she is a woman caught in her destiny and circumstances in the manner of a tragic Greek heroine.

### Director's Note

I thought of doing this play in eighties as an expressionistic farce. In the nineties again thought of doing in a simple manner but with controlled and more believable performance instead of actors' greed to jump in to rhetoric and overplaying. At last now in 2018 got a chance to direct it for the theatre Olympics, when all my ideas and the ways of theatre have crossed to 21st century.

Hence, in this poetic theatre piece we, the team are trying to find out what all the sequences of the play mean to us at 2018.

The play a definite confluence of Sanskrit plays, Parsi theatre prototype characters is schemed and the approaches of the western playwrights like Tennessee Williams, Jean Anouilh poses multi-layered pressure for actors.

Thanks to the encouragement of Nalini, Rajesh Singh, Rana Santosh, Chetan and later on the whole team. Special Thanks to Neelu Dogra for having accepted the burden of Savitri. Thanks to Rajesh Bahl for designing the set and poster. Thanks to Vijay Srivastava for adjusting time in spite of busy schedule, Bharat Sharma and Devender Mann. Thanks to the Director of NSD and Festival Cell for the invitation to perform at the 8

Theatre Olympics.

### **The Director**

A graduate from Utkal University and an NSD alumnus, Robin Das joined the National School of Drama teaching faculty in 1977-78. As a designer he has worked with important directors of the country and has produced exciting and innovative designs for over 50 plays of diverse genres. As a director, he has brought forward many complex and important aspects of traditional Indian theatre, in the context of contemporary global theatre. He has also worked as an art director and actor for films and other media. As a senior teacher he has held many workshops with students, theatre groups, theatre institutes and at regional and tribal levels. He was awarded by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in the year 2000 for his contribution in the theatre.

### **The Playwright**

Born as Madan Mohan Guglani on 8 January 1925 in Amritsar (Punjab), Mohan Rakesh did M.A. in English and Hindi from Punjab University, Lahore. He was one of the pioneers of the Nai Kahani literary movement of Hindi literature in the 1950s. He wrote the first modern Hindi play, *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* in 1958. He made significant contributions to the novel, short story, travelogue, criticism, memoir and drama. He was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1968.

### **Cast & Credit**

Kale Suit Wala Aadmi

Kaviraj Laique

Savitri

Neelu Dogra

Mahendranath

Rana Santosh Kamal

Jagmohan

Rahil Bhardwaj

Juneja  
Srivastava

Vijay

Singhania

Chandan Kumar

Binni  
Sharma

Ankita

Kinni

Deepika Roy

Ashok  
Padhiyar

Chetan

Set Design

Rajesh Bahl

Light Design

Avtar Sahni

Music  
Mahaley, Sourav Poddar

Vishala R

Properties  
& Team

Mrinalini Pandey

Choreography

Vikram Mohan

Photography

Shiv Bharadwaj

Executive Producer  
Rajesh Singh

Devendra Man, Nalini,

Stage Manager

Mrinalini Pandey

**Playwright**

**Mohan Rakesh**

**Director**

**Robin Das**

## **Contacts**

Robin Das

310 A, Shipra Suncity

Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, U. P.

M: +91 9811814121

---

**Luminaries Galore at The  
Closing Ceremony of 8th  
Theatre Olympics in Mumbai**



**Mumbai, 8th April 2018:** After a glorious run of 51 days across 17 cities of India, the historic event 8th Theatre Olympics drew to a colourful close here today.

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Devendra Fadnavis was the Chief Guest at the closing ceremony. Hon'ble Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Culture, Dr. Mahesh Sharma and eminent theatre and film personality Shri Nana Patekar were Guests of Honour at the closing ceremony.

The closing ceremony was honoured by the gracious presence of Artistic Director, 8th Theatre Olympics, Shri Ratan Thiyam and presided over by Acting Chairman, National School of Drama Society, Dr. Arjun Deo Charan. Shri Theodoros Terzopoulos, Chairman of the International Committee of Theatre Olympics, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Shri M L Srivastava, and popular theatre and film personality Shri Nawazuddin Siddiqui were special guests at the closing ceremony. Director of

National School of Drama, Prof. Waman Kendre, was also present on the occasion.

“We get many chances to show our strength and potentials, but 8th Theatre Olympics has given us unprecedented opportunity to show the power of our culture. 8th Theatre Olympics could not have been possible without the inspirational support of Dr. Mahesh Sharma, our beloved and visionary Culture Minister, Government of India. NSD is proud to have organised an event that has shown the cultural might of India, a vision shown by our honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi,” says Director, National School of Drama Prof. Waman Kendre.

“I wish the Indian theatre with support of Indian government should dominate the world. The 9th Theatre Olympics will be jointly organised by Russia and Japan,” says Chairman of the International Committee of Theatre Olympics, Shri Theodoros Terzopoulos.

“I am really happy that Prof. Waman Kendre has taken theatre on another platform. I appreciate your work and thanks that you kept theatre alive, thanks for being associated with theatre for so long in all possible manner,” says eminent theatre and film personality Shri Nana Patekar.

“Our rich heritage and culture is the reason that India stands united today despite the diversity. My friends, Life is like Theatre. Like life, it goes on; it is only time, settings and people that change. It is true for this city Mumbai, which goes on in all situations. Entire nation should be woven in the cultural fabric to create a united India. Through Theatre



Olympics, we have commenced our journey to reach that goal,” says Hon’ble Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Culture, Dr. Mahesh Sharma.

“I thank Dr Mahesh Sharma and NSD to have selected Mumbai to organise the final phase of Theatre Olympics. Maharashtra is known as birthplace of cinema but actually much before that Maharashtra has been the centre for theatrical activities. Our theatre will flourish from generation to generation. Without even the technical aspects of movies, theatre is able to create the effect through acting, and hence our theatre will never die,” says Hon’ble Chief Minister of Maharashtra Shri Devendra Fadnavis.

“Theatre is a place where we can reflect all emotions and sentiments of society. Politics also has a bit of theatre in this. If we do our role well, people give us support and when we fail to play our role, they reject us. This I see a parallel between the theatre and politics,” Hon’ble Chief Minister Shri Devendra Fadnavis adds.

“We thank Dr. Mahesh Sharma; he took this initiative and took Theatre Olympics on another level. I am grateful to the students and faculty of NSD who have supported all through the event. Also, I thank all the coordinators in the 17 cities who have worked very hard to make this a success,” says Acting Chairman, National School of Drama Society, Dr. Arjun Deo Charan.

‘Rang Shikhar’, a vibrant collage of tribal, folk and theatre performances, followed the closing ceremony. Renowned actors

Shri Nawazuddin Siddiqui, Shri Manoj Joshi, Ms. Himani Shivpuri, Shri Sachin Khedekar, along with well-known ventriloquist and puppeteer Shri Ramdas Padhye, famous Bharatnatyam dancer Ms. Sandhya Purecha and famed Lavani dancer Ms. Vaishali Jadhav, performed at the presentation.

The 8th Theatre Olympics was inaugurated by Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri Venkaiah Naidu on 17th February 2018 at the majestic Red Fort in New Delhi. This edition of Theatre Olympics brought together around 25,000 artists under the theme "Flag of Friendship". The event witnessed 450 shows from more than 30 countries performed across 17 cities such as Agartala, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Imphal, Jaipur, Jammu, Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi, Patna, Thiruvananthapuram, and Varanasi during the festival.

The 51-day long 8th Theatre Olympics, the biggest international theatre festival held in India for the first time, staged more than 400 plays and hosted 78 allied events including 34 Living Legend series, 29 Master Classes, 7 Interfaces, 6 national and international seminars and 2 workshops across 17 cities. Besides, about 600 ambience performances and 250 youth forum shows took place during the nationwide event.

---

# Polish Director Talks to Prof. Manohar Khushalani about his play Caesarean Section

Play: Caesarean Section: Essays on Suicide

Director: Jarosław Fret

Group: Teatr ZAR, Poland

Language: Non Verbal

Duration: 1 hr

## The Play

The title of the performance is a metaphor for suicidal compulsion, and the involuntary force that pulls us back from the brink. It is about the potential of the necessary ability to prolong one's breathing at the moment when one feels in the veins the pieces of glass that haven't yet managed to reach the heart.

Caesarean Section's musical structure was developed from a base of polyphonic Corsican songs, into which Bulgarian, Romanian, Icelandic and Chechen songs have been woven. It's subtle power and energy owes a debt to composer Eric Satie, and his discovery of the intensity that can be transmitted by each and every drop of sound. Through contact with, and integration into, this contemporary theatre piece the traditional musical material becomes transformed and taken on a new form, becoming seamlessly interwoven with intensive movement by the performers. ZAR also acknowledges the great literary influence of Aglaya Veteranyi on this work.

During the research process, members of ZAR made several trips to Corsica in search of new material for the emerging musical score. Their active participation in paschal liturgy in Tox near Bastia represented a pivotal moment. Therefore the climax of the performance is characterised by the liturgical music of

Corsican confraternities. While the score's basic 'tectonics' are grounded in Corsican music, they have been interwoven by Bulgarian cries, calls and incantations to enhance the musical dramaturgy.

### The Director

Jarosław Fret is the founder and leader of Teatr ZAR; theatre director and actor; Director of the Grotowski Institute; lecturer at the Ludwik Solski State Theatre School, Filia in Wrocław; and the curator of the theatre programme of Wrocław: European Capital of Culture 2016. In 1999–2002 he carried out a series of expeditions to Georgia, Armenia and Iran, conducting research into the oldest forms of religious music of Eastern Christianity. He was the Director of five performances of the theatre: Three parts of Gospels of Childhood the Triptych which have been staged in Los Angeles, Florence, San Francisco, Chicago, Sybin, Athens, Edinburgh, Madrid, Belgrade, Paris, Cairo, Seoul, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and New Delhi. In November 2013 he completed the work on Armine, Sister for which he elaborated original musical dramaturgy and special stage architecture. His newest piece Medeas, On Getting Across was premiered in 2016. He lectures and leads work sessions within Poland and internationally.

### The Group

Teatr ZAR is a multinational group that was formed in Wrocław by apprentices of the Grotowski Institute and took shape during annual research expeditions to Georgia between 1999 and 2003. During these expeditions, the apprentices collected much musical material, including a core of centuries-old polyphonic songs that are probably the oldest forms of polyphony in the world. The name of the group, ZAR, is taken from the title of funeral songs, which in Caucasian tradition, among others in Svaneti, are the essence of singing understood as "column of sound".

Work of Teatr ZAR attempts to demonstrate that theatre does not only relate to the word thea (Greek for "seeing") but it

is something that above all should be heard. From such hearing, deep images are born that would be impossible to create even by means of the most modern theatre technology; where the body of a singing actor shines and emanates with the energy of sound, of the song that lies within.

#### Cast & Credits

Women Kamila Klamut / Ditte Berkeley

Man Matej Matejka

Others Nini Julia Bang, Przemysław Błaszczak,  
Alessandro Curti, Jarosław Fret, Aleksandra Kotecka,  
Ewa Pasikowska, Orest Sharak, Tomasz Wierzbowski

Music Collaboration Mariana Sadowska

Collaboration on the

Movement Score Vivien Wood

Realization of Lights Jarosław Fret

Director Jarosław Fret

#### Contacts

Teatr Zar

Stowarzyszenie Teatr ZAR,

Rynek-Ratusz 27,

50-101 Wrocław, Poland

M: +48 693 927 324

E: [magda@grotowski-institute.art.pl](mailto:magda@grotowski-institute.art.pl)

A clip from the play:

[https://youtu.be/kvsf\\_0i0iC0](https://youtu.be/kvsf_0i0iC0)

---

# Inauguration of Theatre Olympics today at Red Fort

Sujata Prasad, from Ministry of Culture addressing Journalists at the inaugural press conference. Waman Kendre, Director NSD can be seen in the foreground



The 8<sup>th</sup> Theatre Olympics is being organized by National School of Drama under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India from 17<sup>th</sup> February to 8<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

- \* The world's largest theatre festival would be held in 17 major cities of the country.

- \* The inaugural ceremony will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> of February in Red Fort at 6 PM.

- \* The Honorable Vice-President of the country and Chief Guest Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu would grace the occasion at 6: 25 PM.

- \* The scheduled arrival of Guest of Honor Minister of Culture (I/C) Dr. Mahesh Sharma is at 6: 20 PM.

- \* The official inauguration begins at 6:30 PM.

- \* The performance of cultural program 'Geet Rang' would begin at 7:10 PM.

---

# Mohan Se Mahatma – a review by Manohar Khushalani

As a Part of IIC's 'Festival of the Arts' 2017, Pierrot's Troupe presented 'Mohan Se Mahatma', directed by Sayeed Alam. It was a play about the Champaran Satyagrah, an episode that happened a century ago. It introduced Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to the Indian rural milieu. The performance was dedicated to the memory of the late Tom Alter, who had played this role, just before he passed away.

---

## Nostalgia Street

by

Manohar Khushalani

Having been associated with Street Theatre from late seventies my memories of Jan Natya Manch are equally old. It was way back in 1977 that I first met Safdar Hashmi. Our group, Workshop Theatre, which was formed after a workshop with Badal Sircar was rehearsing for William Hinton's, Fanshen, a play about communist revolution in a village in China. Safdar had come to meet the late Sudhanshu Mishra. He sat through our rehearsal and gave many suggestions. Our group contained people, most of whom later migrated to Television – Sudhir Mishra, Sushmita Mukherjee, Bina Pal, Anil Mehta. Only Anamika Haksar and I stuck on to theatre. But the two years that we did street theatre were full of intensity. Our most memorable

production was Badal Sircar's Bhooma, for which Badal Da himself came specially to Delhi to do a workshop with us. Often people wept in our shows, and so did we, shamelessly, while performing. Although I was also performing in the Proscenium Arch, this liberty one could only take in a street play. When we came in touch with M.K. Raina, most of Workshop Theatre members opted to work in his Street Production of Julos and later in Spartacus & Mother.

Our first test of our beliefs came when Raina took our performance of Mother to the Brecht International Festival held in Calcutta in 1978. There we were greeted by the biggest floods in the last 100 years of the city. While our street plays dealt with the underdog and deprived sections of society we were confronted with a dilemma. The floods created a pool of neck deep water around the Dharamshala that we stayed in. The water remained for three days and we were holed up on the first floor at the same time that the pavement dwellers were living all around the Dharamshala with their aluminum utensils floating before their eyes . We were helpless – unable to offer them refuge in our own rooms. What kind of street theatre were we doing? We often debated on whether doing plays was enough and whether it should not be supplemented with social work. The answers came much later when Maya Rao, Anuradha Kapoor and myself met by chance at SRC and decided to form Theater Union. Later we co-opted fellow Prayog members like Vinod Dua , Ein Lal and Ragini Prakash, along with women activists like Urvashi Butalia and Sudesh Sehgal.

Our first play was prepared in association with several women's groups. It was called Balatkar Kanoon . The Rape Bill was before a Select Committee, whose recommendation would be considered before it became an Act. We examined the bill, discovered the lacunae as well as the strengths. We created a play which would warn the select committee about the loop holes while educating the common women about their rights as per the Bill. During this play we had an opportunity to



interact with social workers who worked in the very communities that we performed in. Needless to say this gave us more satisfaction. Much later TU prepared a play on Multinational Drug Companies who were dumping in the Third World, all those drugs which were banned in the Developed World. This play we prepared in association with Voluntary Health Association of India and got lot of information from Mira Shiva. This information we used to create an educative play in a comic vein. This play too was a useful supplement for medical workers. We also did our bit by distributing printed literature at the end of the show. However, by now the debate on whether a street theatre group should also do social work had resolved itself. It had now dawned on us that we were performers and we should stick to that. If we created a consciousness in just a few people it would spread to others by conduction.

Some times people had created doubts amongst us about the reach of street theatre. Television was cited as a medium with a greater reach. One still remembers a talk that Safdar Hashmi gave at the Jawahar Lal Nehru University City Auditorium which was so prophetic. At that time few people owned TVs. There was only one Doordarshan channel and no private channels. Hashmi warned that TV will create antisocial vibes. While performing arts are a community affairs and bring many people under one roof the television will divided people by restricting them to their homes. He cited the example of people who visit homes of Television owners. Often the host spoke to his guest by using his ear as his mouth. Since his mouth was turned away as he himself had his eyes glued to Television. Ofcourse he saw a deliberate conspiracy in this and felt that television had been created to divide people, to break up communities and to destroy the collective spirit. So inspired was I by what he said that I went up to the stage to congratulate him.

But the real truth about TV having a greater reach has been resolved in my mind by history. The answer lies in

credibility. A human being looking into your eyes and delivering a messages has greater credibility than an electronic media supported by vested interests and money power. When we did the play against Bride burning, just 200 shows were enough to create Media & Government attention on the issue. Soon the issue was seen everywhere in newspapers on television in and in films. Mera Devan's award winning film on Bride Burning, used our play's sound track interspersed with her own visuals. Theatre Union performed shoulder to shoulder with Jan Natya Manch at many venues. There we got to see each others plays – appreciate and criticise each others work. While Safdar appreciated the choreography and aesthetics of TU productions, he felt that the message was not direct. We felt that Janam plays were hard hitting but some times (not always) there was a poster effect. Though I must say Janam productions have been changing over the years and the last play that I saw looked like a Theatre Union play to me. Since TU had performers who also acted on the proscenium stage our productions were bound to be different. However this I am talking about the eighties. Now Janam has also performed on stage – it is alive and kicking while Theatre Union has gone into hibernation.

I still remember how it was considered a taboo for a street theatre worker to perform on stage. The first time I remember Safdar showing an interest about problems of Proscenium theatre was when the Bombay police act was introduced in Delhi and theatre workers were up in arms against it. Said Hashmi in a seminar specially organised against it; "this was the first step towards government censorship of theatre". I was particularly agitated about it since I felt that police was ill equipped to understand the nuances of theatre. Little did I realise at that time, that in effect, given the usually inefficiency of the official machinery, getting a police license, irritating though it may be, was just another formality to be completed. Also, street theatre, which had the maximum potential of a political irritant was outside the

purview of a performance license since these performance were not in an auditorium. Yet Hashmi spoke most ardently followed by M.K. Raina who had a foot in both the boats.

Street theatre does not mean just taking up any issue , assembling a bunch of enthusiasts, and converging the first street corner one comes across. It may take months to write a nukkad natak script. Workshop Theatre took three months to translate Badal Sircar's Bhooma and six months to further evolve the play! An issue may arise from a slum. It may be wife beating, or a drunkard husband, or a middle class dowry problem. It is chosen, by a general consensus, workshop sessions are organised and a script is evolved keeping in mind the target audience. Few people know that Badal Sircar's Juloos has been performed in Pakistan as well. Street theatre has attracted a few people because of the romanticism involved in the whole exercise. Since they are often exposed, the police which never, likes references to its own brutalities, often tries to stop the performances. Sometimes even the audience gets pulled up because of the personal, one to one relation ship that this medium tries to establish. When the police tried to stop a performance of Juloos by Prayog at Connaught Place's central park, more than a decade ago, the audience intervened on behalf of the performers and battled with the police. Similarly, during the Emergency, when the police stopped a street performance at Curzon Park, Calcutta, the common people responded by turning up in thousands to watch the same performance the next day. The romanticism, however, wears off after some time. Only a few who are genuinely committed stick to the movement. "If ever you do street theatre, forget that you will be happy, forget that you will be famous, forget that you will be rich," warns Badal Sircar. However, Safdar Hashmi's unfortunate martyrdom has changed all that. "people have become more conscious of a performer's right to perform. But Street Theatre which appeared to be on the decline is bound to rise up again and fight the menaces of social evils. Be it with plays like

Janam's unforgettable Aurat or Theatre Union's similarly memorable Toba Tek Singh.

(This Article was first published by Jan Natya Manch and is being republished to commemorate the IFA event at Studio Safdar titled *An Evening on Street Theatre in Delhi* on Friday, June 23, 2017)

---

## **Theatre – The Way Forward : A discussion between Prof. Waman Kendre (NSD) and Prof. Manohar Khushalani**