

# Celebrating 150 years of the Mahatma | Manohar Khushalani

Gandhi Ki Dilli at IIC, featured plays films and the festival was also replete with discussions on topics and ideas ranging from Sustainable Living, Sparrows to Gandhi's favourite Bhajans and

even his nutritional philosophy expressed through a lunch curated by Pushpesh Pant, with unfamiliar cuisine, like Bajre ki Khichri, Methi ke Theple and many such minimalistic gourmet items

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## Plays of Social Relevance and on Feminist Issues / Manohar Khushalani

Firstly on Women's Day it is important to recall the innumerable **street plays** we did on women's issues mostly under the banner of **Theatre Union** and **Workshop Theatre**

'*Om Swaha*' was about dowry and bride burning. It contributed towards sensitizing the media and the nation on this issue.'

'*The Rape Bill*' was about custodial rape and insensitive cross examination of victims in courts. It was performed when a select committee was examining the new rape bill before it became an act in the parliament. It also informed women about their rights.

'*Pardon ka Parcham*' was prepared by us after Roop Kanwar an

18-year old Rajput woman committed **Sati** on 4th September 1987 at Deorala village of Sikar district in Rajasthan. These plays were collectively evolved by our group **Theatre Union**.

I would also like to recall my brothers and sisters in arms, an endless procession of street theatre co-warriors who came, sometimes stayed for a while and sometimes stopped briefly for a production or two and moved on. In no particular order they were: **Sudhir Mishra, Sushmita Mukherji, Bina Pal, Meenu Chatutvedi, Anamika Haksar, Nandini, Anil Mehta, Anuradha Kapoor, Ravi Shankar, Umesh Bisht, Maya Rao, Vandana Bisht, Sushil Prashar, Sujasha Dasgupta, Chandrashekhar, Urvashi Butalia, Ragini Prakash, Vibhuti Nath Jha, Dr. Harivansh Chopra, Krishan Tyagi, Kumkum Sangaria, Ein Lal, Dr. Ravi Mahajan, Satyajit Sharma, Tapush Chanda** and me, **Manohar Khushalani**. If I have forgotten anybody then please remind me.

I also directed Dario Fo's '**Can't Pay Won't Pay**' for TU, it was a proscenium play. The play Kanthi Tripathy's '**Kurukshetra and After**' which I directed for StageBuzz was also a proscenium play based on the **Stree Parv** of **Mahabharat**. Which takes up the issue of women's plight during War. And of course how can I forget that as an actor I acted in Henrik Ibsen's '**Dolls House**' and Tendulkar's '**Khamosh Adalat Zari hai**' ! Both monumental plays in their own right.

With **Workshop Theatre** which emerged out of a workshop conducted by the Theatre Giant **Badal Sircar** at Sri Ram Center in 1979-80 we did a few plays on social issues, the most important amongst the was Badal Sircar's, **Bhooma**. It took us 6 months to develop the play, which we translated from Bengali to Hindi collectively. We were young and sentimental, and broke down before the audience and audience too became sentimental about the plight of the villagers and farmers of Sunderbans who had to till and plow a land made fallow by salinity. Other plays we did was William Hinton's **Fanshen**, Bertolt Brecht's, **Measures Taken** and a children's play; **Kaddu Ram** evolved by Workshop Theatre

Would also invite the readers to a conference being conducted by Natrang Pratisthan to discuss our memories of Theatre Union and its plays on

Manohar Khushalani

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# **Raunaq & Jassi: Watch Out Thespians, Bollywood is Here / Manohar Khushalani**



The Legendary Balcony scene,  
in **Raunaq and Jassi** inspired  
from **Romeo and Juliet**

The show of **Raunaq & Jassi** at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium was a blockbuster, though, not as big as Director **Feroz Abbas Khan's** earlier hit, **Mughal E Azam**. What appears to be a new trend or perhaps a solution for the beleaguered Amateur Theatre, about how to make the ends meet. The approach is to be commercially savvy. Have a big budget production with all the frills that technology demands, get a sponsor and launch it on a big scale. Designed by John Narun, the Cyclorama had the digital projections of luminescent landscapes and skyscapes with a wow appeal. Lighting by David Lander was in sync with the background projection just as Fali Unwala's set was. The arches and balustrades seem to flow out of the landscapes. Piyush Kanojia has given the foot tapping melodious music, and Mayuri Upadhyia choreographing the play with Bollywood style vigorous dances, Yes, one is giving credits to the technical crew first because they were largely responsible for the bells

and whistles which made the production stand up and be noticed. Talking about the technical crew, one cannot ignore audio projection, which was flawless with the actors using Bluetooth microphones to be heard loud and clear. This is where some discomfort is felt by traditional actors who have been trained in mikeless voice projections. The nuances and earthy qualities of human voice are lost and actors tend to ignore making the effort to modulate their speech patterns. This was clearly visible to a trained ear when the actors tended to declaim rather than emote. So let's not get carried away by the glitz and glamour.

The script which was obviously inspired by Shakespeare's, **Romeo & Juliet**, was written by Iqbal Raj. The poetic adaptation was indeed remarkable and played a major role in success of the production. The lyrical quality of the verse did full justice to the bards tale. Like the original 16th century play, "Raunaq and Jassi" too explores a long-standing hatred between two feuding families the Jagirdars and Chaudharys, and a chance encounter leading to an intense romance between young Raunaq (Omkar Patil) and Jassi ( Neha Sargam) who belong to either clans, leads to a compelling tale of helpless but hapless love. The two lovers are torn between loyalties to their own clans and the fatal attraction to each other.

Khan, however, insists his production was an original script told in an Indian context."It is kind of a homage to Shakespeare, but it is a completely original piece of writing, and the fact that we are doing a musical, that's the fresh aspect of it," He is reported to have said. There is some truth in that because, very simply, while **Romeo and Juliet** can be considered a tragedy as the protagonists – the young lovers – are faced with a momentous obstacle that results in a horrible and fatal conclusion. On the other hand Iqbals play has a happy ending because Raunaq is able to convince both families to give up their decades old rivalry

and allow them to marry.

The play has a huge cast of 30 artistes including dancers and actors, It has 11 songs including two original compositions by the playwright. The performers have done a remarkable job. Dancers were agile and their steps were in perfect sync with the music. While the character of Jassi is played by Neha Sargam, actors Omkar Patil and Mahendra Singh Pal took turns to play Raunaq. One does not know who was playing Raunaq,s role on the day of the show. Neha's performance stood out for her intensity laced with live singing. What is remarkable is the fact that all performers sang live, there was no playback except for the background scores which were played behind the crooner's voice in Karaoke style. The lead singer Mirande Shah was like the spine of the play her matchless singing held the play together as she doubled up as a Sutradhar. The audience was applauding clapping and tapping their toes with memorable folk songs such as 'Dama Dam Mast Kalandar', 'Kala Sha Kala' and 'Tumhe Pyaar'. This review would be incomplete without a word for performers who played supporting roles.and gave substance and flesh to the story. Dhai Maa (Sonal Jha) and Gurdip Mama (Jeetendra Shastri), who had a romantic history of their own in the play gave a peppy performance and drew huge applause. Gurneet in the role of Jarnell, the antagonist suitor of Jasssi with his remarkable stage presence was impressive. Farhan Fatema gave a robust enactment as the Chaudhraen with her clear diction and energetic voice.

This entire production became successful because of the visionary approach of the Director **Feroz Abbas Khan** with his out of box ideas in Production design and in booking **Ashish Hemrajani** of **Book My Show** to produce the play

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# Schedule: 21st Bharat Rang Mahotsav Feb 2020

If you are at wits end on which play to see, just check out the preview in this E-Mag itself ([www.stagebuzz.in](http://www.stagebuzz.in)), under the Category: Theatre



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## Godava and Shruti's Play: A Case of Clairvoyance or Executing Miss K

Dramaturge: Godavar & Shruti

Director: Shruti

Group: NSD Student Diploma Production, New Delhi

Lang: Hindi

Duration: 1 hr

### The Play

K, a gender queer writer living a reclusive life with his brother, is visited one evening by two police officers. In the Kafkaesque interrogation that follows, K finds that the police has resorted to Orwellian measures – it has hacked K's Wog to discover their whereabouts. The subsequent interrogation is an attempt to determine the connection between K's stories and two murders, although other motivations flit around like shadows telling their own tales – and foretelling K's destiny. A Case of Clairvoyance or Executing Miss K is a sketch of the questions that need to be asked, rather than those asked – and

perhaps answered during K's interrogation. Questions also surface from the palimpsest of memories unravelled through the interrogation and K's stories. The play is presented as a dystopian drama inspired by Martin McDonagh's *The Pillowman*, Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, the works of Jorge Luis Borges, and colloquial folk narratives, besides drawing from the vast pools of real life incidents. Its production also digs deep into various traditions of storytelling thus paying homage to a long, rich literary history.

#### Director's Note

The title of this play is a reverent salaam to the various tropes and traditions that have enriched and informed our worldview and gone a long way in lending flesh and blood to the characters whose lives we trace through our play. It highlights the theme of foreknowledge, which is woven multiply into our narrative. The play's title also underscores the perception of our protagonist, K, by the State, as a delinquent needing to be silenced. In Brechtian sense, the title foreshadows the play's conclusion, but leaves us wondering as to the whys and the wherefores of the impending execution.

#### The Director

Founding Director of The P[ART]licle Collective, a multidisciplinary artists collective, Shruti is an English (Hons.) graduate (gold medallist) from Delhi University, a Postgraduate-Diploma holder in Acting (gold medallist) from Jamia Milia Islamia University, and a graduate in Dramatic Arts with specialization in Direction from the National School of Drama, New Delhi. She also holds a Senior Diploma in Hindustani Classical Music (vocal) from Prayag Sangeet Samiti (Allahabad). With an amateur and professional theatre background spanning eight years and over twenty productions, she has donned the hats of an actor, director, designer, as well as significant managerial posts for which she has been awarded at various events and competitions. She has appeared

in cameo roles in full-length feature and short films.

### Dramaturg

Godavar, formally known as Raghuram S Godavarthi, is a writer focusing primarily on poetry and stage plays, with one published collection of poems to his credit (A Turn of Poetry, Brown Critique-Sampark, 2013). As a student at the University of Alabama in Huntsville in the USA, he participated extensively in amateur theatre, writing, adapting, and translating – as well as directing (and acting in) as many as 12 productions (4 full-length) between 2006-2010 in Hindi and English. He lives with his family on the outskirts of Mumbai.

### The Group

This play is a part of National School of Drama's graduate showcase of class 2019. It aims to provide a platform to encourage emerging theatre practitioners to share their work with a wider audience.

### Cast & Credits

K Aditi Arora

K's Alter Ego Yashaswini R.

Tilottama Tukaram Aditi Arya

Abhigyan Atmaram Salim Husen Mulla

Taher K. Kamm Sayan Sarkar

Chorus Ayush Awasthi, Indra Bhushan, Vishesh Bajpai, Deepan Singh, Himanshu Pal, Sachin Jha,

Arpit Chauhan

Associate Director & Light Designer Greeny Francis

Art Director Argha Kamal Ganguly

Associate Art Director Shiv Swaroop

Documentation & Media Designer Amresh K. Anand

Movement Director Yashaswini R.

Live Music Ramesh Hembrams

Abhishek Kaushal

App. Developers Immersive Stories Pvt. Ltd

Costume & Make-up Abhilasha B. Pout

Stage Manager Arpit Chauhan

Floor Manager Sachin Jha

Production Assistants Akshay Singh, Animesh Barman

Scenographer Shruti

Dramaturg Godavar

Co-Dramaturg & Director Shruti

Contacts

Shruti

M: +91 9650555377

E: shruti.officialid@gmail.com

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# **Binod Sharma's Play: Murta Murta Neel Dipali**

Playwright & Director: Binod Sharma

Group: Gandharba, Guwahati

Language: Assamese

Duration: 1 hr 45 mins

The Play

The play is based on the lives of the acclaimed Assamese singer Dipali Borthakur and fine artist Neel Pawan Baruah. The couple had lived a life of eternal love. The conjugal bliss of the couple was plagued by a rare motor-neuron disease that Dipali Borthakur had been suffering from before her marriage. After the demise of Dipali, Neel Pawan is left in solitude with an array of memories of his beloved wife. A journalist visits Neel Pawan for an interview and Neel Pawan speaks about his beloved wife Dipali, their heavenly love and life. He speaks what his art is all about, remembers great artists and eminent persons of all times for their contribution to their

specific fields of work. Neel Pawan Baruah, the son of a great Assamese poet Binanda Chandra Baruah, recalls his childhood. He tells how he was fascinated towards fine arts since he was a child. The play showcases the achievements earned by both the artists in their specific fields.

#### Director's Note

I have designed the play to ensure lucidity in different sequences while the scenes are being enacted by artists. A child born in Sonari of Sivasagar, a small place in the eastern part of Assam, comes in touch with the greatest contemporary artists of her time in Assam and India, and struggles throughout her life to uphold the interest of the masses in the matured stage of her life through her songs and in the long run, makes a name for herself. The characters are given original touches through their dialogues, behaviour and costumes. In many of the scenes, indigenous folk art forms are used to choreograph stage blocks.

#### The Director & Playwright

A graduate of NSD, Binod Sharma is currently working in theatre and films, acting and directing plays for Gandharba, a Guwahati (Maligaon) based institute of acting and music. He has had acting experience under reputed directors like Kirti Jain, Ram Gopal Bajaj, Devendra Raj Ankur, M K Raina, Anuradha Kapur and Raj Bisaria. He has worked as an actor in NSD Repertory and as an instructor in camps across the country. He has 25 plays to his credit as a playwright. Binod has received training at Kanhaiyalal's theatre camp in Manipur. He is the founder secretary of Antaranga Natya Gosthi, Assam's Mirza-based drama group.

#### The Group

Gandharba is an acting and music institute based at Boripara, Maligaon in Guwahati which was founded in 2004. It has been imparting lessons to students on music, acting and fine arts, and conducting workshops on drama including that of NSD, and pursuing research works on folk culture. Gandharba's recent

production Murta-Bimurta Neel-Dipali has been successfully staged at Baan Theatre in Tezpur, at Shankardev International Auditorium at Kalakshetra in Guwahati, and at Jonaki Kareng Naat Utsav, Nalbari in the state of Assam.

#### Cast & Credits

Neel Pawan Baruah (Young/Old) Jagadish Deka

Neel Pawan Baruah (Child) Suraj Das

Dipali Borthakur (Child) Harshita Das

Dipali Borthakur (Young) Dipannita Das

Dipali Borthakur (Old) Santana B Thakuria

Nabakanta Baruah Chandra Shekhar Choudhary

Tribeni Jha Bulen Bharali

Bhaben Borthakur Pradyut Bikash Das

Mukul Baruah Dhiraj Mazumder

Nirmal Prabha Bardoloi Chandamita Goswami

Rudra Baruah Dhrubajyoti Kumar

Dipika Borthakur/ Jonali Nilakshi Sarma

Sunil Pawan Baruah Prasanta Kumar Das

P.C. Goenka Gautam Kumar

Journalist Bhupen Deka

Rikshawala Hirendra Kumar Pathak

Light Dimpal Das

Music Arnab Bashistha

Projector Himjyoti Baishya,

Voice & Vocal Dr. Amarjyoti Choudhary, Hiranmoi Goswami,

Bhaskar Jyoti Acharya & Rinki Thakuria Kumar

Costume Bishwajyoti Misra & Pankaj Kalita

Make-up Tibrajyoti Boiragi

Set Design Manik Kakati/Mintu Bhuyan

Concept & Design Dhrubajyoti Kumar

Asst. Director Akhilesh Hazari

Playwright & Director Binod Sharma

#### Contacts

Director, Gandharba (Acting and Music Institute)

Boripara, Maligaon, Guwahati, P.O. Pandu  
Dist. Kamrup (Metro) Assam 781012  
M: +91 9864133245, 9365343195  
E: gandharba2004@gmail.com

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# Girish Karnad's Play: Bhanga Bhanga Chhobi



Playwright: Girish Karnad  
Translator: Srotoswini Dey  
Director: Tulika Das  
Group: Kolkata Bohuswar, Kolkata  
Language: Bengali  
Duration: 1 hr 10 mins

## The Play

The play opens with Manjula Ray in a television studio, giving one of her countless interviews. Manjula is a successful Bengali writer whose first novel in English has got favourable reviews from the West. She talks about her life and her darling husband Pramod, and fondly reminisces about Malini, her wheel-chair bound sister. After the interview, Manjula is ready to leave the studio but is confronted by an image. Gradually Manjula starts unfolding her life showing two facets of the same character. The conversations between the character on stage and the chhaya-murti go on and Manjula peels layer after layer, revealing raw emotions and complexities of the relationship between Manjula, Promod and Malini. We can relate to both Manjula and Malini... all of us being flawed in some way or the other, and that's what makes us human.

## Director's Note

I wanted to explore the text of Girish Karnad's Broken Images with my own understanding of Manjula, the lady portraying two facets of the same character. Despite all her shortcomings and flaws, she did not degenerate into a stereotypical vamp. Although she had made unforgivable mistakes, wasn't there enough reason for her to exercise duplicity and betrayal? I found myself asking this question and wanting to see the larger picture through another prism. It has taken years for the Bengali stage to come up with an adaptation of the 2004 play. The Bengali translation by Srotoswini Dey Bhanga Bhanga Chhobi helped me to stage it. Theatre, I feel, should not be just entertainment. It should encourage a bit of soul searching too. I am thankful to Mr. Karnad, Srotoswini and the team of Bhanga Bhanga Chhobi of Kolkata Bohuswar to help me do just that.

## The Director

Tulika Das is an actor and director of Kolkata Bohuswar. After her M.A. in Theatre, she joined Bohurupee and acted in several plays under the direction of Kumar Roy and also directed four plays, which received a lot of appreciation. In Kolkata Bohuswar, she directed Choturthir Jor, Bhanga Bhanga Chhobi, Agnipaak and Anandamath. Tulika is working with under privileged children and young adults, using theatre as a tool to build their capacity to overcome the barriers around them. She is actively involved in Human Rights movement of people with disabilities.

## The Translator

Srotoswini Dey, M.A., MPhil, is an Assistant Professor of English Language in a college of West Bengal. She is a theatre lover and is trying her best to enrich the Bengali theatre through the translation of scripts of famous playwrights who have written in other Indian languages. She has also published a book Re-reading of Vijay Tendulkar's Ghasiram Kotwal: a Critical Study of Vijay Tendulkar.

## The Group

Kolkata Bohuswar was established in January 2017 in order to create and promote innovative theatre. The word 'Bohuswar' means a collective of different kinds of voices. True to its name, Bohuswar is home to individuals of different ages, genders, religious identities and places of residence. The group has produced the play Choturthir Jor, based on a story by Ismat Chughtai (selected for 8th Theatre Olympic), Bhangra Bhangra Chhobi, based on Girish Karnad's Broken Images (selected for 21st BRM), and Agnipaak, based on a play by Mahesh Dattani. The group had organised a November theatre festival (2018) along with a theatre workshop for young theatre workers with Ruchika theatre group, Delhi. The group facilitates inclusive theatre workshops for the under-privileged children in the rural areas of West Bengal.

## Cast & Credits

On stage Sukriti Lahori Sinha, Piyali Guha Roy, Tulika Das

Off stage Mayukh Dutta, Monomita Chaudhury, Rashmi Natua, Sampreeti Chakraborty

Sumita Basu, Biswajit Roy, Arka Ranjan Bhattacharya, Tanmoy Das, Bobby

Kar, Arko Roy, Tapas Roy, Indrajit Mukhoty

Music Kalyan Sen Barat

Set & Light Gagandeep

Make-up Piali Samanta

Playwright Girish Karnad

Translator Srotoswini Dey

Director Tulika Das

## Contacts

Kolkata Bohuswar

18, Deodar Street, Kolkata- 700019

West Bengal

M: +91 9830262165, 9830872209

E: bohuswar.kolkata@gmail.com

# **Sheshpal Singh's Munshiganj Golikand urf MookBalidaan**

Playwright: Sheshpal Singh 'Shesh'

Director: Atamjeet Singh

Group: Individual, Lucknow

Language: Awadhi

Duration: 1 hr 40 mins

## The Play

In 1886, the British made the Avadh Rent Act and implemented it. In the Act, the Kings and Talukedaars got the right to collect Rent. Since their tax collection was arbitrary, the poor farmers opposed this recovery and under the leadership of Baba Ramchander, this movement spread in the districts of Rae Bareli, Barabanki, Sultanpur, Pratapgarh and Faizabad. Baba Janaki Das took over from Baba Ramchander, and was later captured along with his companions and put in the Rae Bareli Jail. Till then the Kisan Sabha had been formed. In 1920 farmers gathered in Munshiganj, across the Sai River, to free their leaders from jail. The farmers were fired on and hundreds of them were killed. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru came to Rae Bareli to meet the farmers, and the District Magistrate took him into custody. The commissioner, Colonel Founteray, realizing the gravity of the incident of the Munshiganj firing, ordered the injured to be shot as well so that they do not become witnesses of the massacre. Some of the dead bodies were loaded into Ikka-Taangas and drowned overnight in the

Dalmai Ganges River. For the remaining corpses, four big pits were dug in Munshiganj, and a hundred corpses each were buried in them. Munshiganj is also called the second Jallianwala incident.

#### Director's Note

I had read about the Munshiganj shoot-out about 30 – 35 years ago, and the writer of our Nautanki, Sheshpaal ji, had also told me about it. Since then the design of staging it has been in my mind. Since this incident was from Awadh region, the idea was that it should be performed in Awadhi language. Since I have experimented in Nautanki area, I decided to get it written in Awadhi language. I asked Sheshpaal ji to take up the responsibility of writing which he gladly accepted. In this Nautanki, about 30 young artists have rehearsed with complete dedication. It was a difficult task for city artists to memorize dialogues in Awadhi but they did well. I think this is the first full-length Nautanki written in Awadhi language.

#### The Director

A theatre group Meghdoot was formed in 1974 in Lucknow by theatre lovers and young people. Atamjeet associated himself with this group right from its inception. It was under the aegis of Meghdoot that he acted in a number of plays. In 1977, Atamjeet Singh acted in Aala Afsar. The play was in nautanki form, written Mudrarakshash and directed by Bansi Kaul.

Later Atamjeet Singh started directing nautankis independently. He has directed around 20 Nautankis; some of these are Laila Majnu, Bhaand Charitram and Shaheed Bhagat Singh. Nautanki Baje Dhindhora urf Khoon ka Rang was performed in Bharat Rang Mohatsava. Apart from acting in a few movies and T.V. Serials, Atamjeet Singh has toured countries like Finland, Norway and Pakistan on theatre projects. He has been honoured by different institutions in India, and has been awarded an Honorary Diploma by International Amateur Theatre Association. In 2003 U.P. Sangeet Natak Academy also honoured

him for his contribution in the field of theatre.

### The Playwright

Sheshpal Singh 'Shesh' was born on 20th December 1958 in village Kasna, Dist. Raebareli

He has written and directed a number of plays and nautankis for various government and semi government offices of Uttar Pradesh. He has written full-length proscenium nautankis Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Bhand Charitram and staged them in Lucknow under the direction of Sri Atamjeet Singh.

### Cast & Credits

Sootradhar/Ahelkaar/Grameen Sandeep Kumar, Saurabh Kumar Mishr

Munshi Kalika Prasad/Grameen Aditya Vishwakarma

Sootradhar/Zileदार/Pagal Sujeet Singh Yadav

Mangloo/Durga/Grameen Shivakant Awasthi

Sheetlu/Binda/Grameen Manoj Singh

Grameen/Isri Kaka Adarsh Singh

Raja Veerpal Singh Gagandeep Singh

Raja Tiloi/Ram Narayan Ramesh Chandra Saini

Raja Rampal/Mayor/Grameen Ashutosh Jaiswal

Raja Arkha/Sherif Vinay Kumar Mishra

Raja Tribhuvan Devasheesh Misra

Sootradhar/Zileदार/Grameen Subham Singh Chauhan

Gayika/Baandi Shreya Awasthi

Gayika/Grameen Pallavi Singh, Shubhra Pandey

Baba Ramchander/Kedar Pandit/Grameen Vikesh Bajpai

Siphai/Grameen Sarabjeet Singh

Siphai/Grameen/Daak Babu Abhishek Yadav

Amol Sharma Harsh Jaggi

Acchi Jaan/Gayika Supriya Chaterjee

Chapراسي/Grameen Ravindra Nath Yadav

Nasrullah Khan/Grameen Shubham Tiwari

Shivbalak/Badri Narayan/Grameen Shivam Singh

Gangadeen/Grameen Avinash Kumar Singh

Ram Awtar/Grameen Gaurav Dhingra

Baba Jankidaas/Grameen/Commissioner Abhishek Singh

Nehru Ji/Grameen Akshat Sunil

Stage Design Gagandeep Singh/ Manoj Singh

Stage Décor Abhishek Singh/ Ramesh Chanra Saini

Stage Property Aditya/Shubham/Shivakant

Rehearsal In-charge Devasheesh/Rozy Dubey/ Abhishek/Sujeet

Costume Karamjeet Kaur

Music Harsh Jaggi

Make-up Shaheer Ahmad

Harmonium Zubair

Nakkara Md. Siddiqui

Dholak Md. Imran

Light Assistant Nitish Bharadwaj

Light Design Devasheesh Misra

Dance Choreography Rozy Dubey

Presentation Controller Assistant Sujeet Singh Yadav

Presentation Controller Sarabjit Singh

Playwright Sheshpal Singh

Concept, Sound Design & Direction Atamjeet Singh

Contacts

H.No. 11 Lane No. 5,

Hans Nagar Colony,

Near Purana Para Thana,

P.O- Manak Nagar,

Lucknow – 226017

M: +91 9335313104

E: atamjeetsingh1949@gmail.com

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**August Strindberg's Play:**

# Babai



Playwright: August Strindberg

Adapter & Director: Ishita Mukhopadhyay

Group: Ushneek, Kolkata

Language: Bengali

Duration: 2 hrs 10 mins

## The Play

Babai is a trans-creation of August Strindberg's *The Father*. Taking inspiration from the original, playwright Ishita Mukherjee has adapted the play into an Indian locale and has given it a relevance to the socio-economic reality of today. The play is about an extremely complex relationship between a husband and a wife, which culminates when it comes to the question of the future of their only child. Not wanting to lose her custody over the child, the wife induces suspicion in her husband's mind about him not being the real father, thus pushing the husband into an abyss of doubts, and taking over the household and making everybody believe that the husband's sanity is under question. The husband, unable to bear this painful predicament, gradually loses his mind and in the end the family, under the vigilance of his wife, sends him to an asylum. The play talks about the eternal power politics between man and woman, state and religion, and society and individual.

## Director's Note

Strindberg's *The Father* is considered as one of the finest naturalistic psychological drama. Often it is seen as a tragedy of a husband falling into the trap laid by his wife. As a woman director I have a different take on that. To me, Strindberg created sympathetic characters. He created a strong impression of male dominant society of his era which is quite relevant even today. To me, the wife is also a victim of

patriarchy just like her husband is. The proof of fatherhood is instrumental to form a social-respectability which is inspired and instructed by the voice of patriarchy. I found that the play not only speaks about the gender politics but also speaks about the mistrust, unfaithfulness, loss of trust and the general lack of communication between man and society, society and politics, politics and religion, religion and concept, concept and individual.

### The Director & Playwright

Active in Bengali theatre for more than three decades, Ishita Mukhopadhyay has created her place as an important theatre director of our times. As a director, she brings a sensibility in her work that is the result of her experience as a woman. She has well-formed views about group theatre, the economy of theatre and the challenges of being political in theatre. Over the years, Ishita Mukhopadhyay has directed a host of plays of which Ghar, Kamalkamini, Gawaharjan, Khela Bhangar Khela, Kallu Mama, Ora Tinjon and Agnijatak deserve special mention. Ishita has received numerous awards as the best director, some of which are Uttam Kumar Award, Pramathesh Barua Award, All India Critics Award, All India Women Association Award, Kalaratan Award and many more.

### The Group

Ushneek was formed in 1984 by enthusiastic young theatre lovers and was registered in 1991. Till date Ushneek has produced 14 full-length plays, 5 one-act plays and 3 audio plays. Ushneek has participated in all the major theatre festivals in India like Nandikar Natya Utsav, Natya Academy Natya Utsav, Yuva Utkal International Festival, Sangeet Natak Academy festival, and 8th Theatre Olympics etc. Ushneek has travelled with its productions to almost all the major cities of India, not to mention the small towns. Besides staging plays Ushneek has also organised seminars and held workshops to enhance its capability to do better theatre. Ushneek has organised theatre workshops for mentally challenged children

for two NGOs and has also worked with the male and female sex workers of Kolkata.

### Cast & Credits

Professor Dipankar Bose Debshankar Halder

Doctor Samanta Subhasish Mukherjee

Maya Srijata Bhattacharjee

Mashi Chhanda Chatterjee

Mimi Arunika Dey

Dinu Thakur Prabir Dutta

Nakul Majhi Saptarshi Bhowmick

Light Designer Debabrata Sarkar

Music Ablu Bhattacharjee

Make-up Alope Debnath

Set Designer Sanchayan Ghosh

Sound Operation Kalyan Sarkar

Crew Sujit Chottopadhyay, Subhojit Bakshi,

Chitra Dey, Shreyashi Barua,

Ayan Debnath, Deepan Roy,

Parthosarathi Ghosh, Arnab Acharyya,

Sourav Ghosh Roy, Sushmita Halder,

Soumen Halde, Pinaki Das,

Sumitra Das, Debabrata Sarkar,

Ritesh Kumar Mondal

Playwright & Director Ishita Mukhopadhyay

### Contacts

Director, Ushneek

6, Ashutosh Chowdhury Avenue,

Kolkata – 19, West Bengal

Ph: 033-22810326

M: +91 9433582323

E: ushneekishita@gmail.com

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# Atul Satya Koushik's Play: Ballygunge 1990

Playwright & Director: Atul Satya Koushik

Group: Films & Theatre Society, Delhi

Language: Hindi

Duration: 1 hr 20 mins

## The Play

The play Ballygunge 1990 is a thriller. The place is Ballygunge, Calcutta and the year is 1990. Kartik and Vasuki had been in a passionate relationship for more than ten years, before Kartik left Vasuki behind to chase his dreams in Mumbai. Vasuki is now married to a famous painter and is living a life full of regrets and vendetta. She holds Kartik, and their failed love, responsible for her miserable life. Now she has invited him over for a coffee at her mansion. Kartik is a bit confused and happily surprised to see the same ten-year-old passion and love in Vasuki's eyes. Vasuki is unpleasantly surprised to see the same hostility and detachment in Kartik's eyes. A well-crafted plan is going to change the course of their lives forever.

## Director's Note

Having successfully presented grand historical productions, musicals, comedies and social satires, I wanted to take up a subject which has not been explored much, especially in Hindi Theatre. Suspense and thrill was for sure one genre which I personally had not seen much in my theatre viewing memory of about ten years. Therefore I coined the idea 'Ballygunge 1990' and started writing it. As I went deeper into the process of

writing and designing the show, I realized that this play is more than a mere suspense plot. It is more of a love story... a story full of emotions and passion. All the regrets, complaints and vendetta that appear in the story, have roots in love which flowered between the two protagonists over a decade.

#### The Director & Playwright

Atul Satya Koushik is well-known in the field of modern Hindi commercial theatre of India. An alumnus of Sri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC, Delhi) and a qualified Chartered Accountant, he also holds a degree in Law. He is in his early 30s and has already written 15 full-length theatre plays, and produced and directed them with over 700 shows in different parts of India. Atul is a recipient of many awards including the Times Entrepreneurship Award and the Yuva Natya Nirdeshak award by Sahitya Kala Parishad. He has been one of the flag-bearers of commercial theatre in Delhi, running many ticketed shows to full houses and casting celebrities in his theatre productions. His popular productions include The Legend of Ram, Chakravyuh, Raavan Ki Ramayan, Dad's Girlfriend, Ballygunge 1990, Pajama Party, Draupadi, Wo Lahore etc. He writes his own plays and is emerging as an important modern playwright of India.

#### The Group

Established in 2009, Films & Theatre Society, Delhi is one of India's leading theatre companies which has its own original scripts and in-house direction, production and marketing. The group has performed more than 700 shows of its 15 productions in over 30 cities of India. Many of its productions feature famous film, TV and theatre personalities, and put together, they offer a wide range of themes, genres and presentation styles. FTS conceptualises and organises various theatre events and art festivals, like Rang, at a large scale, bringing artists, sponsors and audience together for larger-than-life art extravaganzas.

Some of the group's popular productions are Chakravyuh, Ballygunge 1990, Raavan Ki Ramayan, Pajama Party, The Legend of Ram, Dad's Girlfriend, Wo Lahore etc. which have been staged at various prestigious festivals and platforms such as Jaipur Rang Mahotsav, Kala Ghoda Festival, Parliament House auditorium etc.

#### Cast & Credits

On Stage Anup Soni

Nishtha Paliwal

Kunal Kaushik

Background Score & Music Rajesh Das

Creative Design Ashwani Kumar

Graphic Design Kunal Kumar

Production Manager Sumit Negi

Backstage Manager Sonam Kanotra

Music Operation Latika Jain

Light Operation Tarun Dang

Backstage Team Devansh Gulati, Rajeev Sachdeva

Set maker Mohd. Gulpham

Producer Ishaan Yadav, Aditi Chauhan

Concept Atul Satya Koushik & Nipul Malik

Playwright & Director Atul Satya Koushik

#### Contacts

Films and Theatre Society

113/2, Baldev Park Krishna Nagar- 110051

M: +91 9910606476

E: [sumit.negil@gmail.com](mailto:sumit.negil@gmail.com)