

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

Folk Theatre of India: Jatra

Sri Chaitanya, a prominent saint during the Bhakti moment is credited to be the inventor and the promoters of this music enriched form of theatre. It is widely believed that the first spectacle of the play was also done by Sri Chaitanya wherein he played the role of the Rukmini in the play, Rukmini Haran (the play was based on a story in the life of Lord Krishna).

Looking at Alternate Spaces for Performance in Delhi – NCR



Studio Safdar, 2253E, Shadi Khampur, Delhi 110008

Putting up any production can be most daunting for most theatre practitioners in India. It is customary for most Indian directors who many times, run small amateur theatre groups to not only foot all bills but also look after the needs of the artists involved. The most challenging of this cost is that of the auditoriums. Most proscenium auditoriums in Delhi and Gurgaon can cost anywhere between 15,000 (around \$220) to 1,00,000 (around \$950) depending on its size and capacity. Furthermore, there is a long waiting list to get the

required dates, most weekends getting booked almost a year ahead! Hence, the supply versus the demand is either beyond one's means or it requires tremendous patience for the group to perform.

The need for finding alternate spaces for performances hence is rapidly growing which is being met to some extent by a few in India. There are several around Mumbai but here the article will focus on two spaces created. The first one is that of the group, Rang Parivartan, in the growing rich cosmopolitan Gurgaon created by Mahesh Vasistha and the second one, the Teesri Manjil, of Ruchika Theatre group, created by Feisal Alkazi in South Delhi. It is important to focus on these two spaces, as the city of Delhi besides being the capital of India, is the Mecca of theatre training, while Mumbai largely focuses on film production and the thriving industry of Bollywood.

Delhi, has been timelessly known for its intense theatre training that is both affordable and also provides the correct knowledge to the aspiring actors. The prestigious National School of Drama is situated here, along with Sri Ram Centre, the school of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University that offers not only the masters course in performance studies but also a Ph.D in theatre and also the newly formed Ambedkar University that offers bachelors and masters in Performance studies are also located here. Besides this we also have an a diploma course offered in theatre by Indira Gandhi Open University, that is lesser than \$25 for six months, as an distance program.



Feisal Alkazi and his private rehearsal space – Teesri Manzil, South Delhi

As training in theatre is of high value in Delhi, there is a need for students to experience the stage as much as possible. It becomes impossible for students to do theatre without the experience of a stage, lights or sets. Both Mahesh Vashista and Feisal Alkazi have found the answers and that too within their own homes! Both these thespians have created beautiful auditoriums within the upper floors of their homes. Both these spaces are intimate and are not open for the public, which in other words means is not for commercial gains but rather for training and also for holding small intimate shows for a discerning audience.

Feisal is of the opinion that one must allow theatre to enter homes and allow the audience to become a part of his large family. He says, ' Most actors have been with me for as much as 25 years and above and they have been an integral part of my life, hence I see new audiences as the same. I am just extending the Teesri Manjil, or my third floor to my family who should not be taken as some disconnected people.' Radhika Alkazi echoes much the same as she receives each one of her guests with warmth and enthusiasm and both she and her son Arman take immense joy in serving each guests fresh home made kebab rolls, biryani and wine.



Mahesh Vashist's Private performance Space, Gurgaon



Mahesh Vashista

Mahesh Vashista whose students have painstakingly made the auditorium with him extends his performance space free of charge to theatre practitioners not only across Delhi and Gurgaon but anyone who wishes to perform there. Both these auditoriums might seem like one as small steps but careful attention has been given both by Feisal and Mahesh regarding the technicals of an auditorium. Feisal has painstakingly thought of the lighting (having over 20 set lights including pars and LEDS and a dimmer) and the correct sound proofing of the stage. Mahesh has not only kept the lights and stage

setting in mind but has also kept the make up rooms in mind of the actors, and also has carefully insulated the place.



Akshara Theatre – Baba Khadak Singh Marg, Delhi



Kaala Dibba

Actor Factor Studio

3rd Floor, 416/2 Ghitorni Market

It is heartening to see such magic being created and to be lucky even to have open access to these performance spaces. Such free flowing needs based training venues are going to bring more thespians to do the same with their homes. This will make as Feisal wishes and does, a family of theatre and

not mere disconnected spectators who come and do not feel the intimacy of theatre due to the daunting presence of the mighty auditoriums.



Black Box Theatre, A 68, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase 2, Delhi

The informal performance spaces have come up because theater is becoming un-affordable because of lack of revenue and astronomical cost of auditorium spaces in Delhi. Leaving you images of some of these spaces which offer hope for survival of Amateur theatre in Delhi. More about it in the next piece by Gouri Nilakantan

Playwriting for Children

10 golden pointers to be kept in mind while writing children's plays.

1) Do not be afraid of using contemporary language and one can even throw in few phrases in Hindi, if the need be. Make it Hinglish if you want.

2) Children love comedy. They might not have the same taste as adults and might find things like " farting" " throwing up" comic. Add them to the script, they just add to the flavour. Please do not become prudish.

3) Another thing that fascinates children is the idea of mystery and surprise, you can use them too.

Read the rest.....

Folk Theatre of India: Bhand Pather

The word 'Bhand' means the traditional and the age-old folklore entertainers from India, Nepal, Pakistan. The form had thrived and grown manifold during the peaceful times in the valley. However, with the rise of anti-societal elements, the art form has given the theatre form a huge setback. Society must progress towards peace and let the lost theatre form regain its formal glory.

Natsamrat NatyaUtsav Schedule March 2022

During the six-days there will be participation from ten different directors on one platform. The directors are: Chandershekhar Sharma, Vishaw Deepak Trikha from Rohtak, Rajesh Tiwari, Ashraf Ali, Varun Sharma, Sunil Chauhan and Shyam Kumar and the plays are 'Lajwanti' , 'Gadhe Ki Barat' , 'Kambakht Ishq', 'Jaanch Padtal' , 'Charandas Chor' , 'Aadhe Adhure' 'Digdarshak' , 'Shikasta Booton Ke Darmiyan' 'Chuhal' & 'Ek Ruka Hua Faisla'.

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.

Symbolism and Stanislavsky

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According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, Symbolism is defined as- the art or practice of using symbols especially by investing things with a symbolic meaning or by expressing the invisible or intangible by means of visible or sensuous

representations: such as

a: artistic imitation or invention that is a method of revealing or suggesting immaterial, ideal, or otherwise intangible truth or states.

b: the use of conventional or traditional signs in the representation of divine beings and spirits.

However, Symbolism signified something much deeper than its modern counterpart, for the

French, The Russians, and the Belgians in the 19th century.

Symbolism was an art movement

of French, Russian and Belgian origin in poetry and other arts seeking to represent absolute

truths symbolically through language and metaphorical images.

Symbolism was a reaction in favor of spirituality, imagination, and dreams. symbolism originated

in the revolt of certain French poets against the rigid conventions governing both technique and

theme in traditional French poetry, as evidenced in the precise description of Parnassian poetry.

The Symbolists wished to liberate poetry from its expository functions and its formalized oratory

in order to describe instead the fleeting, immediate sensations of man's inner life and

experience. They attempted to evoke the ineffable intuitions and sense impressions of man's

inner life and to communicate the underlying mystery of existence through free and highly

personal use of metaphors and images that, though lacking in precise meaning, would

nevertheless convey the state of the poet's mind and hint at the "dark and confused unity" of

inexpressible reality. Some writers, such as Joris-Karl Huysmans, began as naturalists before

becoming symbolists; for Huysmans, this change represented his increasing interest in religion

and spirituality. Certain of the characteristic subjects of the Decadents represent naturalist interest in sexuality and taboo topics. Still, in their case, this was mixed with Byronic romanticism and the world-weariness characteristic of the fin de siècle period.

Such masterpieces as Verlaine's *Romances sans paroles* (1874) and Mallarmé's *L'Après-midi d'un faune* (1876) sparked a growing interest in the nascent innovations of progressive French poets. The Symbolist manifesto itself was published by Jean Moréas in *Le Figaro* on September 18, 1886; in it, he attacked the descriptive tendencies of Realist theatre, Naturalistic novels, and Parnassian poetry. He also proposed replacing the term *décadent*, which was used to describe Baudelaire and others, with the terms *symboliste* and *symbolisme*. Many little Symbolist reviews and magazines sprang up in the late 1880s, their authors freely participating in the controversies generated by the attacks of hostile critics on the movement. Mallarmé became the leader of the Symbolists, and his *Divagations* (1897) remains the most valuable statement of the movement's aesthetics. In their efforts to escape rigid metrical patterns and to achieve freer poetic rhythms, many Symbolist poets resorted to the composition of prose poems and the use of *vers libre* (free verse), which has now become a fundamental form of contemporary poetry.

The Symbolist movement in poetry reached its peak around 1890 and began to enter a precipitous decline in popularity about 1900. Symbolist works had a strong and lasting influence on much British and American literature in the 20th century, however. Their experimental techniques greatly enriched the technical repertoire of modern

poetry, and Symbolist theories bore fruit both in the poetry of W.B. Yeats and T.S. Eliot and in the modern novel as represented by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, in which word harmonies and patterns of images often take preeminence over the narrative.

Symbolist painters favoured works based on fantasy and the imagination. The Symbolist position in painting was authoritatively defined by the young critic Albert Aurier, an enthusiastic admirer of Paul Gauguin, in an article in the *Mercure de France* (1891). He elaborated on Moréas's contention that the purpose of art "is to clothe the idea in sensuous form" and stressed the subjective, symbolical, and decorative functions of an art that would give visual expression to the inner life. Symbolist painters turned to the mystical and even the occult in an attempt to evoke subjective states of mind by visual forms.

Dramatists also took their lead from the French Symbolist poets, especially from Mallarmé. As drama critic for *La Dernière Mode* during the 1870s, Mallarmé opposed the dominant Realist theatre and called for a poetic theatre that would evoke the hidden mystery of man and the universe. Drama, for Mallarmé, should be a sacred rite in which the poet-dramatist revealed the correspondences between the visible and invisible worlds through the suggestive power of his poetic language. For the Symbolist playwright, the deeper truths of existence, known instinctively or intuitively, could not be directly expressed but only indirectly revealed through symbol, myth, and mood. The principal Symbolist playwrights were Maurice Maeterlinck in

Belgium and Auguste Villiers de L'Isle-Adam and Paul Claudel in France. Also influenced by Symbolist beliefs were the Swedish playwright August Strindberg and the Irish poet and dramatist W.B. Yeats.

In 1904, Stanislavski finally acted on a suggestion made by Chekhov two years earlier that he stages several one-act plays by Maurice Maeterlinck, the Belgian Symbolist. Despite his enthusiasm, however, Stanislavski struggled to realize a theatrical approach to static, lyrical dramas. When the triple bill consisting of *The Blind*, *Intruder*, and *Interior* opened on 15 October, the experiment has deemed a failure. Meyerhold, prompted by Stanislavski's positive response to his new ideas about Symbolist theatre, proposed that they form a "theatre studio" (a term which he invented) that would function as "a laboratory for the experiments of more or less experienced actors." The Theatre-Studio aimed to develop Meyerhold's aesthetic ideas into new theatrical forms that would return the MAT to the forefront of the avant-garde and Stanislavski's socially conscious ideas for a network of "people's theatres" that would reform Russian theatrical culture as a whole. Central to Meyerhold's approach was the use of improvisation to develop the performances.

When the studio presented a work-in-progress, Stanislavski was encouraged; when performed in a fully equipped theatre in Moscow, however, it was regarded as a failure and the studio folded. Reflecting in 1908 on the Theatre-Studio's demise, Stanislavski wrote that "our theatre found its future among its ruins." Nemirovich disapproved of

what he described as the malign influence of Meyerhold on Stanislavski's work at this time.

Folk Theatre of India: Ankiya Naat

The history of Ankiya Naat goes way back into medieval times. It is widely believed that saint and social reformer Srimata Sankardeva was the brain behind these beautiful and intricate one-act plays.

Girish Karnad – Remembering A Multifaceted Mesmerising Actor, Writer, Director

He became a film actor and give a resounding performance as the school master driven mad by the kidnapping of his beautiful wife by the lustful brothers of the local Zamindar. He also gave a fine account of himself in Swami directed by Basu Chatterjee. He appeared as an actor in films and Television, not only because he could test himself in another medium but also to buy the freedom to pursue his activities in the Theatre, namely writing plays.