

About Charan Das Sidhu and his Plays by Manohar Khushalani

This article was supposed to be a book review, but because one had known the playwright, Dr. Charan Das Sidhu, so intimately, the personal note is unavoidable. My mind races back to 1978 when I started my theatre career with Badal Sircar's 'There is No End' an English rendition of his Bengali play 'Shesh Nei' directed by Tejeshwar Singh. Amongst the elite IIC Theatre Club audience was a stocky, dark, bespectacled professor of English from Hans Raj College, Delhi University, who spoke in what I later came to know as his irreverently rude but affectionate style

An Opportunity to Look East – IIC Experience | Manohar Khushalani

During the North East fest on Monday, the 29th October, at the Fountain Lawns, the audience was confronted by a disturbing solo performance by actor director, Lapdiang Syiem from Meghalaya, called A Being Human. Earlier on the same day we had a presentation by Soli Roy about a Manipuri play, Crimson Rainclouds, written by his own mother, Sahitya Akademi Awardee, Binodini Devi

Aurangzeb – a critique of the play by Manohar Khushalani

The story of Aurangzeb is well known. In 1657, Emperor Shahjahan fell ill, leading to a war of succession among his four sons, The main contenders were Dara Shuko and Aurangzeb supported by their sisters, Jahanara and Roshanara respectively, The Emperor favoured his eldest son Dara, who,

Romeo, Juliet and Seven Clowns | Manohar Khushalani

The only thing this play had in common with Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' is the story line on which the spoof is based. Thankfully, the names of characters had been kept the same as those in the classic, otherwise one would have been at a loss on how to relate to the title of the play. The story has been given the look and feel of a folk lore in the tradition of romantic tales, such as those about; Umar-Marvi, Reshma-Shera, Sasi Punoh

Diary of Anne Frank – a review by Manohar Khushalani

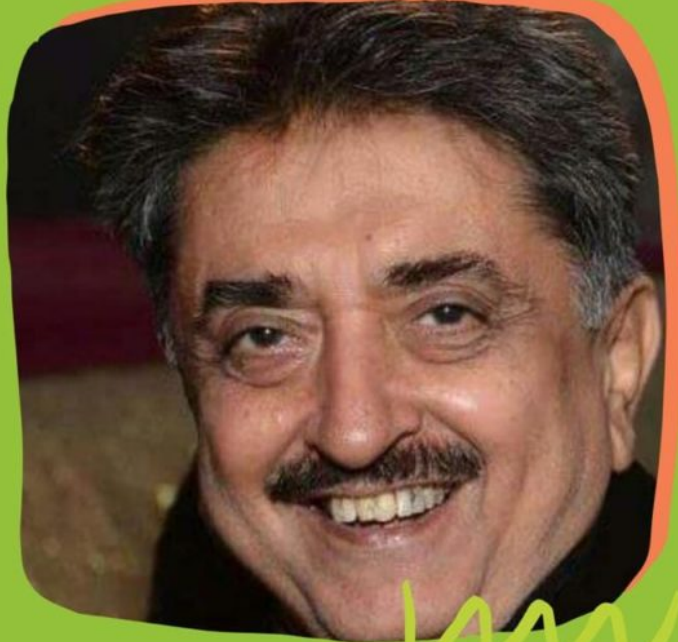
This is recreation of a review Manohar Khushalani wrote in Dec 2000: Ruchika Theatre Group is one of the oldest surviving theatre groups of Delhi. The reason is simple. It keeps regenerating itself. The Diary of Anne Frank was one such exercise in which, Feisal Alkazi, the director of the play, used an entirely inexperienced cast, inducted from the Little Actors Club. Obviously, therefore, there would be unevenness of talent, but viewed within those limitations The show put up at India Habitat Centre last week held together due to sheer sincerity of effort and excellent performance

Acting Tips by Prof. Manohar Khushalani on Instagram

The Acting Studio

FILM AND THEATRE APPRECIATIVE FROM FORMER NSD FACULTY

PROF. MANOHAR
KHUSHALANI



HOW TO
MAKE
ACTING
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BETTER ?

PRE- RECODED
INTERVIEW LIVE ON

Instagram

DATE:-16/05/2020
TIME:-7PM TO 8PM



Prof. Manohar Khushalani's Live Interview on Instagram
Was invited for this program by one of the new Lockdown
Channels

created by a producer from Colours TV Channel . They are
interviewing
celebrities informally to help people knock off their blues

Acting Tips with Manohar Khushalani. Spiced with hilarious
anecdotes from

my Theatre life. Please watch it live today 16th May 2020 on
Instagram.

7 pm India

2.30 pm UK

6.30 am LA

9.30 am NY.

Follow the link below. It will come live at times mentioned above.

https://instagram.com/theactingstudio_tausif?igshid=lvptrgojda9zv

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

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 Chaturvedi, 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 it's plays on

Manohar Khushalani

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

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), under the Category: Theatre

