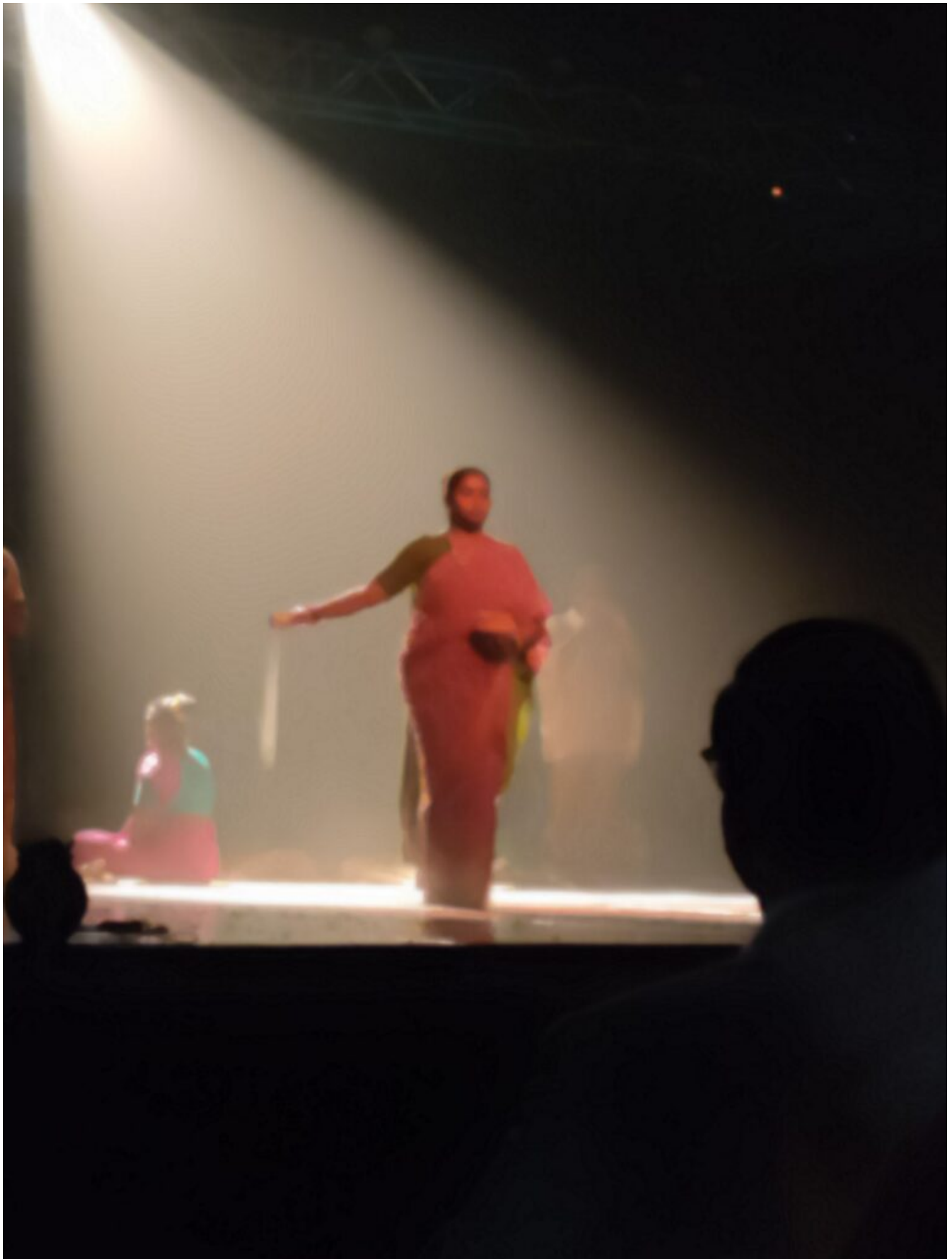


# **Dakṣakatha      Devikavya      – Provoking and Contemplative**



**A review by Manohar Khushalani for IIC DIARY**

Daklakatha Devikavya is an open ended play performed in an engagingly

informal folk style, evolved from the epic poetry and stories of K.B. Siddaiah's .

It was Directed by Lakshman K.P. It presents the inner workings and external experiences of the Daklas – a Dalit community.

*Presented by Jangama Collective, Bengaluru with Bindu Raxidi (Dakla Devi, Kadiramma); Santhosh Dindgur (Dakla, Cheluvaiah)l; Bharath Dingri (K.B. Siddiah & narrator); Narasimharaju B.K. (Narasappa); and Ramika Chaithra (Gangavva, Munivenkatamma)*

*Accompanists who also added tone and tenor to the performance were: Poorvi Kalyani & Skanda Ghate (vocal); Bharath Dingri (tamate); and Narasimharaju B.K. (arevadya)*



### The Flower Sellers

*The setting of the play had **flower sellers** squatting in the background and rising in turns as actors with robust voices. The traditional Folk device, a half curtain, known as, **Yavanika**, was used to introduce the important characters. The actor would peep over the curtain which was lowered after he started speaking or singing.*



### The Traditional Yavanika

The most important aspect of the performance was that it retained the spiritual richness of the Dakla community, through its music. Two of the characters appear on the stage playing tamate (hand drum) and arevadya (urmi), instruments not seen in contemporary theatre. Daklas are people who are protected by the untouchables and hence are still lower in the social hierarchy. But whatever notions people have about Adivasis or Daklas being a backward community, better revise them forthwith. First of, the female roles were done by women and not female impersonators. These women unhesitantly lighted beedis, and were not coy about

using cuss words,  
which is true to their life. It is also true of contemporary  
OTT films, which claim  
to be more modern and truer to our life.

The author had a strong faith in mysticism as exemplified by  
his poetry which  
was the soul of the performance:

*O mother as you rock the world  
And rock the child  
Bear me again in your womb  
Walk this infant from the cave of your vagina  
Into the cave of contemplation.*

Here in the above context the poet brings out that once the  
mother bears him  
in her womb the stigma of untouchability will not be so  
strong. One recurring  
metaphor that has remained constant is hunger. The poet throws  
a direct  
question to the creator:

*O God! Take birth like me  
Then  
Try to touch and be polluted!  
Try to take like me, like me take birth!*

Untouchability does not generate self-pity in the play, in  
fact it is an instrument  
of self-awareness and enlightenment. Sheer magic was created  
in the dark  
night by luminous display of improvised spinning fire wheels  
urns with radiant  
charcoal cinders. All elements in the play contributed to an  
experience of a  
magical night to remember.

Watch the entire play on You Tube:



## Provoking and Contemplative

**PLAY:** *Daklakatha Devikavya: An Experimental Play Drawing from the Epic Poetry and Stories of K. B. Siddaiah's Selected Writings*

**DEvised AND DIRECTED BY:** Lakshman K. P.

**PRESENTED BY:** Jangama Collective, Bengaluru with Bindu Raxidi (Dakla Devi, Kadiramma); Santhosh Dindgur (Dakla, Cheluvaiah); Bharath Dingri (K. B. Siddaiah & narrator); Narasimharaju B. K. (Narasappa); and Ramika Chaithra (Gangavva, Munivenkatamma)

**ACCOMPANISTS:** Poorvi Kalyani & Skanda Ghate (vocal); Bharath Dingri (tamate); and Narasimharaju B. K. (areye)

**2 November 2023**

*Daklakatha Devikavya* is an open-ended play performed in an engagingly informal folk style, evolved from the epic poetry and stories of K. B. Siddaiah. It presents the inner workings and external experiences of the Daklas—a Dalit community.

The setting of the play was flower sellers squatting in the background and rising in turn as actors with robust voices. The traditional folk device, a half curtain, *yavanika*, was used to introduce the important characters. The actor would peep over the curtain which was lowered after he started speaking or singing. The most important aspect of the performance was that it retained the spiritual richness of the Dakla community through its music. Two of the characters appeared on stage playing *tamate* (hand drum) and *urumi* (hourglass drum), instruments not seen in contemporary theatre. Daklas are people who are protected by the untouchables and hence are still lower in the social hierarchy. But whatever notions people have



about Adivasis or Daklas being a backward community better revise them forthwith. First, the female roles were played by women and not female impersonators. These women unhesitatingly lighted beedis, and were not coy about using cuss words, which is true to their lives. It is also true of contemporary OTT films, which claim to be more modern and truer to our lives.

The author had a strong faith in mysticism, as exemplified by his poetry, which was the soul of the performance.

*O mother as you rock the world  
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Bear me again in your womb  
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■ MANOHAR KHUSHALANI

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# Play ‘Couples Shuffle’ Conveys Message to Audience with Laughter

The husband-wife relationship is considered to be the most sacred in the world. Love and trust bind both, but many times husband and wife quarrel by finding shortcomings in each other and a third takes advantage of it. Something similar was seen in Anuragna Theatre Group's presentation "**Couples Shuffle**", written and directed by Ashraf Ali. The play was performed on December 24 at Black Canvas, L.T.G. Auditorium, Mandi House, New Delhi-01.



Sharma ji (Chirag) house where he lives with his wife (Shruti Aastha) Chawla. There is always a tussle between the two over small things. Meanwhile, their neighbor Dubey (Bilal Khan) enters, who tries to take advantage of the conflict between those husband and wife and put a string on Shruti. Meanwhile, Maya (Manisha Sharma) enters. Sharma ji is very impressed by seeing Maya and tries to increase friendship. This dilemma

goes on for a long time and finally it is revealed that Dubey and Maya are husband and wife, and they came to Sharma ji's house to investigate them in search of the Best Couple Award in which both of them failed.

Amidst laughter, this play also gives a message to the audience that 'husband and wife should never leave each other in any situation and should maintain trust in each other'. Chirag played his character well in the role of Sharma, as well as his wife Shruti's character had many shades, which she succeeded in keeping in front of the audience. In the role of Dubey, Bilal Khan kept the entire drama tied with his acting and put many laughs in it, as well as the performance of Manisha Sharma in the role of Maya was also praise worthy.

Behind the stage were Goldie in the music, lighting was done by Manik Sharma, Kamal Negi was in the costumes and Ankit was in the stage material as well as Shamsheer Khan and Avinash Tiwari in the set.



# Voicing Gender Fluidity

Maharashtra Sanskritik Sandhya at IIC

A review by **Manohar Khushalani** First Published in IIC Diary







**Maharashtra Sanskritik Sandhya**, is an annual feature at IIC. This year, they presented dramatized readings, *Beyond Gender*, on LGBTQ communities, from two plays: **Satish Alekar's 'Begum Barve'** & **Mahesh Dattani's 'Seven Steps Around the Fire'**. It was brilliantly and imaginatively directed by **Sohaila Kapur**, who has a knack for choosing very powerful and relevant themes. Six actors read the two plays. The event began with a mesmerising dance by Kaustav Ghosh, doing the role of Begum Barve, the female impersonator. The performance was also interspersed with carefully curated soulful marathi music played in the background.

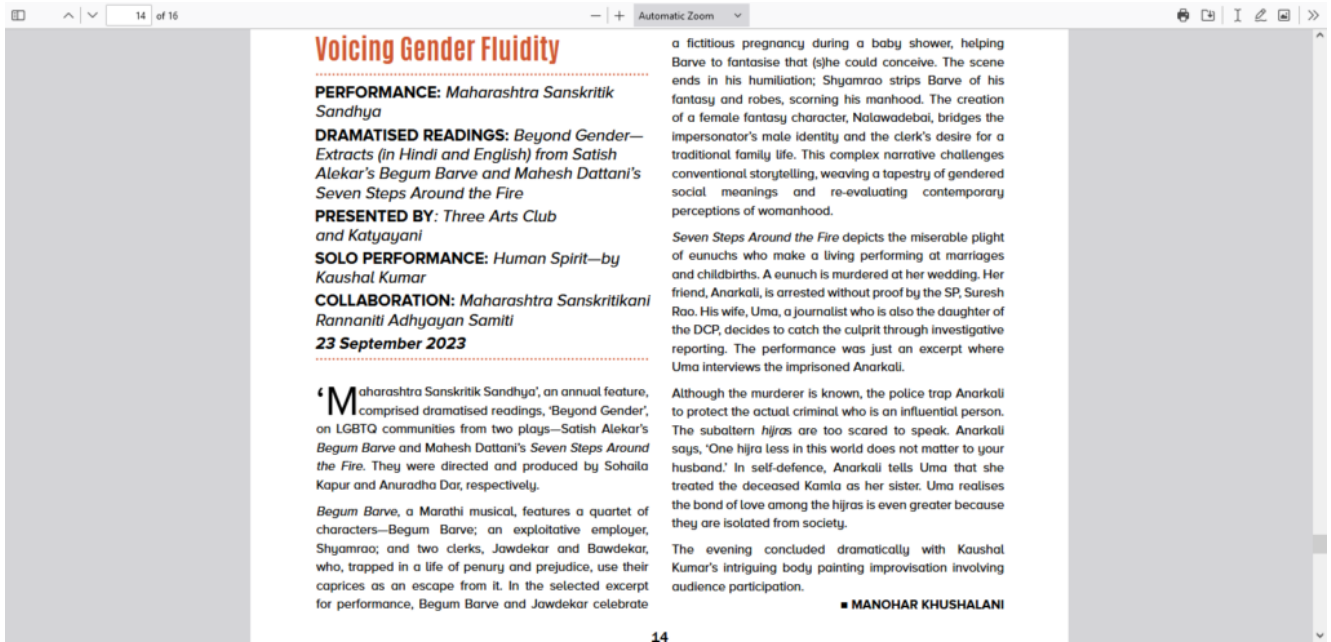
**Begum Barve**, the Marathi musical, features a quartet of characters: Begum Barve, an exploitative employer, Shyamrao, and two clerks, Jawdekar and Bawdekar, who, trapped in a life of penury and prejudice, use their caprices as an escape from it. In the selected excerpt for performance, Begum Barve and Jawdekar celebrate a fictitious pregnancy during a baby shower, helping Barve to fantasize that (s)he could conceive. The scene ends in his humiliation, **Shyamrao** strips **Barve** off his fantasy and robes and scorning his manhood. The script explores the intertwining of fantasies and reality through the creation of a female fantasy character, Nalawadebai, bridging the impersonator's male identity and the clerk's desire for a traditional family life. This complex narrative challenge's conventional storytelling, weaving a tapestry of gendered social meanings and re-evaluating contemporary perceptions of womanhood.



**Seven Steps Around the Fire**, depicts the miserable plight of eunuchs who make a living performing at marriages and child births. A eunuch is murdered at her wedding. Her friend, Anarkali, is arrested without proof by the SP, Suresh Rao. His wife Uma, a journalist, who is also the daughter of the DCP, decides to catch the culprit through investigative reporting. The performance was just an excerpt where Uma is interviewing the imprisoned Anarkali.

Although the murderer is known, the police traps Anarkali to protect the actual criminal who is a powerful person. The subaltern hijaras are too scared to speak. Anarkali says, "They will kill me even if I tell the truth. If I don't tell the truth, I will die in jail." The dramatist shows how the murder of Kamla has terrified other hijaras that they cannot reveal the truth and cannot get justice for the dead soul. Anarkali says, "One hijra less in this world does not matter to your husband.". In self-defense, Anarkali reminds Uma, that she treated the deceased Kamla as her sister. Uma realises the bond of love among the hijaras is even greater, because they are isolated from society.

The event was introduced by Suhas Borkar, Trustee IIC. It was concluded rather dramatically by Kaushal Kumar, a fine arts university professor with an intriguing body painting improvisation involving audience participation.



The 5th Tafarikh Festival  
Marks the Beginning of a  
Unique Journey of Literature  
and Art



The unique event of “**Fifth Tafarih**” festival organized by Sili Sales Foundation provides us with a beautiful opportunity to connect with literature, art and cultural literacy. Under this festival, eminent persons from various fields have given us an opportunity to have an in-depth discussion on literary and artistic topics by sharing their experiences and perspectives.

The fifth edition began with the lighting a lamp by Senior Theatre Personalies K.K.Kohli, Diwan Singh Bajeli, Shyam Kumar, Pratap Sharma Somvanshi and Sili Sales Foundation’s director Priyanka Sharma. It began with a discussion on ‘Growing distance between novels and stage’, in which senior theatre persons, journalists, and writers shared their vision. It is a platform where an atmosphere of deep discussion on literary and artistic topics has been created. The guests were Diwan Singh Bajeli, Pratap Sharma Somvanshi, Aditi Maheshwari and Rama Yadav. In the discussion, Rama Yadav said, “Today the novel is getting distant from the stage, for which we have to take important steps. We have to inspire the youth to read books and novels. Maybe this will make today’s youth aware.”





Television actress Reena Agarwal and cinematographer Naresh Sharma shared their views on the impact and challenges of social media. The stage was moderated by Priyanka Sharma, Director, Silly Sales Foundation. Natsamrat director Shyam Kumar and senior theatre personality Himanshu B Joshi also shared their experiences.



The play "Stree Subodhini" brought the festival to life in an entertaining and cultural form. The solo presentation 'Stree Subodhini' written by Mannu Bhandari and was directed by late Tripurari Sharma. Munmun Singh was the winner of sangeet natak akademi award captivated the hearts of all the audience with his acting.





The last highlight of the first day of the festival was 'Mehfile Sukhand', which tied a different parallel and was directed by Shamir Khan. The fifth Tafarih Festival is being held from 2:00 pm to 9:30 pm on November 18th at 29/1 Civil Lines, Delhi, where there will be a confluence of art and culture.

In the same way, an atmosphere of partnership has been created in the world of experience, art, and literature associated with various aspects of the festival. This is a time when together we can fill our cultural heritage with richness by connecting with literature and art.



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# Celebrating Art and Culture: The Vibrant Tapestry of 5th 'Tafreeh' Festival in Delhi



“Tafreeh” is a unique celebration of the world of art and theater in Delhi organized by Silly Souls Foundation. It is the first garden arts festival known for plays, readings, mushairas, interviews, and musical performances. Its fifth edition is taking place from 16th November to 18th November at Silly Souls Studio, 29/1 Civil Lines, Delhi.

This year's event is dedicated to the memory of Tripurari Sharma and will run from 2 pm to 9:30 pm every day. The main attraction this time is the plays performed every evening,

including the comedy play “Stree Subodhini” on the first evening. Apart from this, this time “Mushaira” is also going to be held for the first time in “Tafreeh”.

The festival will have daily conversations with renowned personalities from the field of theater and art, including Silly Souls directors Priyanka Sharma and Naveen Choudhary. The first day’s discussion is “The Growing Distance between Novel and Stage”, which will feature Devendra Raj Ankur, Diwan Singh Bajeli, Pratap Sharma Somvanshi, Aditi Maheshwari and Rama Yadav. The guests on the first day of Pratyaksha will be Reena Aggarwal and Naresh Sharma.





The Mushaira to be held on the second day will include Farhat Ehsaas, Tarkash Pradeep, Vikas Sharma Raaz, Irshad Khan Sikandar and Pallav Mishra. Professor and motivational speaker Vijendra Tafrih will be the guest of Pratyaksha. On the second

day of the festival, you will experience a special and unique musical performance in the form of “Wife’s Letter”. After the open mic on the last day, our direct guests will be Hema Singh and Kushal Dubey.

The evenings of ‘Tafreeh’ are famous for their musical performances. Presentation by Subhradeep Sahu and musical rendition of poetry by Sahir Ludhianvi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Kaifi Azmi by Raabta Group are the attractions of this time. Watching the “Tafreeh” festival will be a unique and enjoyable experience. At Tafreeh Utsav, you will not only immerse yourself in the roots of theater but also enjoy sharing the wonderful art and literature of Delhi.





Director Priyanka Sharma

Silly Souls Foundation



SILLY SOULS FOUNDATION PRESENTS



Dedicated To:



Tripurari Sharma

**16 Nov**



**STREE SUBODHINI**

**Dir: Tripurari Sharma**

**Writer : Mannu Bhandari**

**6:30 PM**

**MEHFIL -E- SUKHAN**

**Dir: Shamir Khan**

**Musical Shayri**

**8:30 PM**



**DAASTAAN -E- GURU NANAK**

**Dir: Kuljeet Singh**

**Writer : Kuljeet Singh**

**6:30 PM**

**PATNI KA PATRA**

**Dir: Priyanka Sharma**

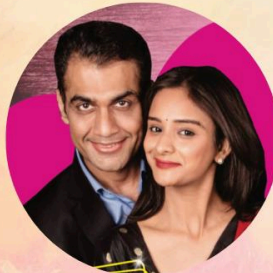
**Writer: Rabindranath Tagore**

**8:30 PM**



**17 Nov**

**18 Nov**



**JAB WE SEPARATED**

**Dir: Rakesh Bedi**

**Writer: Rakesh Bedi**

**6:30 PM**

**GHAZAL**

**Vocalist : Subhradeep Sahoo**

**8:30 PM**



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**Seasoned With Humour: Ajib  
Dastan Hai Ye!**



**Ajib Dastan Hai Ye!**

**A Review by Manohar Khushalani**

Originally published in IIC Diary

Wings Cultural Society presented, at IIC, Ajib Dastan Hai Ye, which was a collection of two dramatised soliloquies, in Urdu and Hindustani, that lampooned the absurdities of human behavior. The humour was created because of the imaginative craft of the authors, and the punctuated timing with which actors narrated the tales.

Bey is a hilarious anecdote penned by Shaukat Thanvi about a gullible protagonist who is warned by Tripathi, an astrologer, to beware of the Urdu alphabet 'Be' as his impending death will be caused by it. Thus begins, the narrator, Rajguru Mohan's, roller coaster ride to avoid anything and anyone remotely connected to this alphabet, only to discover, that the whole universe was nothing but 'Be'. It included objects he handled, his family members, friends and even strangers he came across. This first performance had the audience in splits and set the pace for an equally well paced and uproarious next performance

True to the style of the production of investigating comic text through soliloquies, the performance of Patras Bukhari's, Marhoom Ki Yaad Mein was engagingly delivered by Tarique Hameed. The tale, as told, begins with an uninspiring conversation between two friends who have known each other for decades and have said it all, so there is nothing new to communicate. To spice up the conversation, the protagonist decides to impress Mirza Sahib, by boasting that he intends to buy a motor car. Amused and knowing his limitations, Mirza advises the narrator to think more realistically about buying a humble bicycle instead, which too it appears was way beyond the narrators means. At what appears to be a bargain, Mirza offers his own bike at a steal of a price. Thus, unfolds a hilarious series of disasters, when the author discovers that he has been taken for a ride on a contraption that he can't even ride. So, ends his fantasy to be the owner of a motorcar, when he couldn't even afford to repair the antique bike, in which each part had a mind of its own



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## Seasoned with Humour

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**PLAY:** *Ajib Dastan Hai Ye!*

**PRESENTED BY:** Wings Cultural Society

**DRAMATISED NARRATION IN URDU AND**

**HINDUSTANI BY:** *Rajguru Mohan (Bey); and  
Tarique Hameed (Marhoom ki Yaad Mein)*

**25 July 2023**

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■ MANOHAR KHUSHALANI

A Scene from the play *Ajib Dastan Hai Ye* performed at IIC on 25th July 2023

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# Natsamrat's plays Captivated the Audience



It would not be wrong to say that the audience always waits for Natsamrat's plays. Something similar was seen at Black Canvas (LTG Auditorium) where two different plays by Natsamrat were staged on 30th September and 1st October at 3:30 pm.





The play **Doosra Aadmi Doosra Aurat** written by Vibha Rani was staged on 30 September at 3:30 pm and directed by Rajesh Bakshi. The acting talent of two actors, Munmun and Rajesh Bakshi, was commendable on the stage. The play depicts the problems arising from the disintegration of personal relationships due to modern materialistic lifestyle. In the drama, Shoma Das comes to Mumbai for a job and is attracted to her office colleague Sambhav Singh. Both of them try to move forward by taking support from each other in the difficult web of life. This two-character play based on the psychology of men and women was presented by Natsamrat.



The play **ChandraLok.Com** was staged on 1 October before a houseful audience. Two different stories were staged in this play. The first story was on earth and the second story was on Chandralok. The first story was based on “Bank Manager” written by Anton Chekhov and the second story was based on Harishankar Parsai’s famous story Inspector Matadin Chand. The director of this play is Rakesh Kodinya and the creative director is Shyam Kumar.

All the artists on stage made the audience laugh a lot with their acting and also gave a message through the elephant. The actors were Munmun, cipf-es.org Vishwajeet, Arun Prakash, Sudhir Khanna, Mohd. Zaheed, Abhishek, Himanshu, Aman. Music was conducted by Shivangi and lighting was conceived by Vikrant Sharma. Stage props were by Rohit Prasad, set props were by Suraj Singh and Lokesh, makeup by Payal Rani and costumes by Rekha Joshi and Chhobi Saha and stage assistants were Vansh Rathore.

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# Amazing Presentation of the Drama “Dootvakyaam” written by great poet Bhas



Bhopal – The students from different states of the country, who worked day and night in the nine-day drama workshop (2nd to 9th September), made the presentation of the drama **“Dootvakyam”** written by Mahakavi Bhas unforgettable with their lively acting.

By **Rabindranath Tagore University’s** Sanskrit, Prachya Bhasha Shikshan Evam Bhartiya Gyan Parampara Kendra’s PG Diploma in Natyashastra Evam Vishwarangmanch and Master in Performing Arts students enthralled the audience with their wonderful presentation of “Dootvakyam” under the direction of Shri Manoj Nair (Director of Tagore National School of Drama).

It is noteworthy that in ‘Dootvakyam’ the character of Lord Shri Krishna was played by three actors and the characters of Duryodhana and Sudarshan Chakra were played by four actors each. Everyone, with their acting, brought life to the characters on stage and kept the audience engaged till the end.

On this occasion, Senior Poet-Storyteller, Director Vishwa Rang and Chancellor of Rabindranath Tagore University, Shri Santosh Choubey said that ‘Dootvakyam’ is a difficult play. Its presentation is a very challenging task in itself. It is a very happy occasion that the students of Natyashastra accepted this challenge and gave this unique presentation.



Dr. Radhavallabh Tripathi, a well-known litterateur and advisor to the Center of Sanskrit, Prachya Bhasha Shikshan Evam Bhartiya Gyan Parampara Kendra, said that I have seen the presentations of many Sanskrit plays, but I had never imagined such a presentation of 'Dootvakyam'. It was truly an unforgettable performance. This experiment of playing one character by four actors at the same time is a welcome innovative initiative in the direction of theatrical productions.

At the beginning of the drama presentation, the subject of 'Dootvakyam' was highlighted by Sh. Vinay Upadhyay, Director of Tagore Vishwa Kala Evam Sanskriti Kendra. Professor Sangeeta Johri, Dr. Ruchi Mishra Tiwari was also on the stage.



It is noteworthy that the successful coordination of the seven-day drama workshop and the unforgettable event of priesthood ritual workshop and drama presentation were done by Dr. Sanjay Dubey, Co-ordinator, Sanskrit, Prachya Bhasha Shikshan Evam Bhartiya Gyan Parampara Kendra. Great support by Deepak Tiwari, Savitri Singh Parihar, Sanjay Singh Rathore, Abhishek, Sharad Mishra etc.

On this occasion, all the artists and students of priesthood rituals were honored by presenting them certificates and insignia. Tagore National School of Drama had special support in this.

On stage in the play Dootvakyam – J.P. Singh, Nagendra Kumar Sharma, Uma Shankar, Vaidyanath Sharma, Mandeep Kumar Nemewal, Vashishtha Upadhyay, Shraboni Saha, Surendra Kumar Pandey, Tarun Jalota, Sachin Verma, Sanjeev Sharma, Ansh Rathore, Namrata Mali, Vansh Rathore, Neha Rani, Jyoti Upadhyay, Ganesh Madulkar, Ashfaq Noor Khan Pathan lent their talent.

Dr. Sanjay Kumar Dubey and Vikrant Bhatt were the stage

managers, Abhishek Deshman was the assistant stage manager, Dr. Anand Kumar Pandey did the stage decoration, Sharad Mishra was in the stage props, Smita Nair and Rashmi Acharya were in costumes, Tagore National School of Drama student's did the stage decoration. Flute player Nitesh Mangrole, Harmonium player Aagya Dubey, Rhythm and musical support were given by Abhi Srivastava and Jai Ravare, Light Design & Co-Director were Shyam Kumar and the Director of this play is Manoj Nair.

