

# **SATYA KE PRAYOG (BASED ON THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF GANDHIJI)**

## **Director: Devendra Raj Ankur**



Hindi Translation: Kashinath Trivedi

Director: Devendra Raj Ankur

Group: Sambhav, Delhi

Language: Hindi

Duration: 1 hr 20 mins

### **The Play**

This play is based on some of the untouched aspects of the self-written autobiography of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Gandhiji divided his autobiography into five parts. The play has a few excerpts from Part one – Janm, High School Mein, Vilaayat ki Taiyari, Sabhya Poshak Main; Part two – Pehla Mukaddama , Netaal Pahuncha, Ko Jane Kal Ki?, Dharma Nirikshan, Ghar ki Vyavastha, Desh ki Ore, Hindustan Mein, Raj Nishtha and Shushrusha; Part three – Toofan ki Aagahi, Bachchon ki Shiksha, Saadagi, Desh- Gaman, Clerk Aur Beira, Dharma Sankat, Ek Punya Smaran aur Prayashchit, Patni ki

Dridhta; and from the last Part- Pehla Anubhav, Gokhale Ke Saath Mein, Ashram ki Sthaapna, Neel ka Daag, Mazdooron Ke Sampark Main, Mrityu Shayya Par, and Purnaahuti. The play follows the simplicity of Gandhiji's life. It portrays Gandhi as a common man, who is later established as a Mahatma.

### Director's Note

On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi we decided to prepare a play that had him in the centre. A number of different texts related to Gandhi were read. In the end it was decided to prepare a play on his own story, Satya ke Prayog. Many incidents related to his life have often been staged earlier. Our effort has been to select the sections that are less familiar or untouched. We have tried to stage the translation as it is. Yes, there has been an effort to give it a chronological sequence. The play is around one and a half hour in duration. We have tried to catch different aspects of Gandhi's life from childhood till the end.

### The Director

Devendra Raj Ankur did M.A. in Hindi Literature from Delhi University, and specialised in Direction from National School of Drama. He has directed many professional and amateur theatre groups all around the country. He is a founder member of the popular theatre group Sambhav, and the initiator of 'Kahani ka Rangmanch'. He has participated as a director in theatre workshops and his plays have been staged in numerous cities. He has translated many plays from English and other languages, and is a regular columnist of theatre in many magazines and journals. More than seven of his books on theatre criticism have been published. He has been the director of National School of Drama. He was awarded with the Sangeet Natya Akademi award for special contribution in the field of theatre.

### Cast & Credit

On Stage: Amit Saxena, Durgesh Kumar, Prakash Jha, Gauri Deval, Nidhi Mishra, Amitabh Srivastav

Music Compilation & Operation: Rajesh Singh

Light Design: Raghav Prakash Mishra

Concept & Direction: Devendra Raj Ankur

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# Siddique Mohammad's GOGA CHAUHAN KA KUCHAMANI KHAYAL



Director: Siddique Mohammad

Group: Pt. Ugamraj Khiladi Lok Kala Prashikshan Evam Shodh  
Sansthan, Rajasthan

Language: Rajasthani

Duration: 1 hr 15 mins

## The Form

Khayal is an all-night recital of the historic and Pauranic love-stories sung and enacted in the villages. Kuchamani

Khayal is the most popular form of Rajasthani folk art. Late Lachhi Ram Ji of Kuchaman was the father of this form, and had a strong voice. Around a hundred years ago he created this form for the village Kuchaman and thus it came to be known popularly as Kuchamani. Initially the performance was accompanied by Dholak, Nagara, Turri etc. but over the years Harmonium, Tabla Sitar and Sarangi also got incorporated. The costumes of the artists are often symbolic. For example, the king doesn't wear expensive clothes but puts on a crown or a kalangi over his regular clothes. By wearing a lehnga, kurti and kaanchali, and drawing a goonghat a man represents a woman. Pt. Ugamraj ji has contributed immensely in this folk form for the past 65 years, staging the message of patriotism, bravery and truth, in every nook and corner of the country. He has created a world record by staging more than 20000 performances of Kuchamani form of Khayal from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

### The Play

Mahapurush Goga ji is popular as a secular god of the middle ages who was above caste, creed, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh. Goga ji of Rajasthan, as per a famous story, was born as a blessing given by Guru Gorakhnath. His mother could not bear children and went to meet Guru Gorakhnath who was then meditating on a hillock. He gave her a boon that she will bear a son and gave her a fruit called Gogal as a blessing. On eating the fruit she conceived and later Goga ji was born. He was called Goga ji after the fruit Gogal. Qayamkhani Muslim society calls him Jahar Pir. He became a disciple of Guru Gorakhnath. To commemorate Goga ji, in the month of Bhadra, a fair is organised and is visited by all communities including Hindus and Muslims. This production is based on the life and works of the aforesaid Goga Chauhan.

### The Director

Born in 1958 in village Medhta, District Nagaur of Rajasthan, Dr. Siddique Mohammad is currently the chairman of Ugamraj

Khiladi Lok Kala Prashikshan Evam Shodh Sansthan. After completing B.A. (Hons), M.A. and Ph.D., and gaining popularity in the universities, he served as an associate professor. He has been an avid translator, publisher and researcher. During his research he was given a grant by the Department of Hindi by Jai Narayan Vyas University, Jodhpur; and Ambedkar Fellowship by Bhartiya Dalit Sahitya Akademi, Delhi. He has also received many awards and honours.

#### Cast & Credits

Team: Kachruddin, Sardar Khan, Chaman Khan, Mehboob Ali, Sishupal, Iqbal Khan, Raju

Nagadhchi, Janwru Khan, Prakash Mand, Shaukhat Khan, Nema Ram Roisa, Mangilal Kanoonga, Sarwan Sardi, Ayub Khan, Bilada, Shriniwas Sharma, Naryan Singh Peethal, Satyanarayan Sharma, Ramgopal Sharma

Director: Siddique Mohammad

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**Bhuvneshvar Prasad's KALA  
DHABBA BADAL KI TARAH AA RAHA  
HAI Director and Dramaturge:  
Avijit Solanki**



Playwright: Bhuvneshvar Prasad

Director and Dramaturge: Avijit Solanki

Group: N.S.D. Diploma Production, New Delhi

Language: Hindustani

Duration: 1 hr

### **The Play**

When Bhuvneshwar Prasad's story 'Bhediye' was first published it created quite a stir in literary circles of 1933 India. The story begins by asking what is a bhediya? (a wolf). Kharu says there's none other as dangerous as them, appearing in packs, nothing satiates their hunger. Kharu recites a story in which he, his father and three Nataniyas were traversing from Gwalior to Punjab when they were attacked by a hungry pack of bhediyas. Chasing and compelling him to abandon all his belongings/possessions behind. Running to save his life he loses his father. It story ends after Kharu spits and tells that the very next year he killed a pack of sixty bhediye!

## Director's Note

*Bhediye* is a narrative of a progressing violent swarm, being run over by it, and losing all one has to it. A new light of meaning emanates from this story every single time I read it. Its approach to language, structure and characterizations are cold and brutal. Like a hammer thumping onto a nail penetrating your bleeding soul. It has an odor of fear and terror – a topical subject to reflect upon as our country's crisis. An evolving society, whose minorities – are people who belong nowhere – are chased, lynched.

Survivors though saved but scarred for life holding anger, betrayal, loss, revenge and guilt within. Feelings, which compel him to attack the swarm that swept everything he called mine. Attacker and attacked let loose a trail of disaster and stories of inhumane horror.

It was quite challenging for us as a team to create performance out of this text because of its narrative nature. To cull out its visual elements, through the physicality and material expression it offers. We are thankful to all friends who kept visiting us during rehearsals and contributed to make the work what it is.

## The Director

Avijit Solanki is a Bhopali who debuted as a director with an adaptation of Tagore's *Daakghar* in Gondi dialect. After completing his diploma from Madhya Pradesh School of Drama (2012), he founded Other Theatre. Some of his directorial ventures are- *Daakghar*, *Antigone*, *Bade Bade Pankhon Wala Boodha*, *Kucch Vakya*, *Jaadui Macchi*, *Ismat ki Id*. He has worked with children from different backgrounds and communities.

## The Playwright

Bhubaneswar (1911 – 1957) born to a middle-class family in Shahjahanpur (U.P.). His periodic compositions exposed the

boundaries drawn between the ideal and real so that they started spearheading beliefs, traditions and a new voice.

Bhubaneswar was an outspoken and distinct literary voice, which was hitherto unknown and unspoken then. He exposed classic irregularities in the form of bitter truths through his writings. His contribution to literature and language was an enrichment brought to life with his courage to experiment with new technical compositions. Some of his path-breaking works were published in Hans, 'Shyama: A Marital Paradox', 1933 and a collection of one-act plays in 'Caravan', 1935, established him as a monolith in literature. The play *Tambe Ke Keede*, he wrote in 1946, found its honour of place as first incompatible and incomprehensible absurd drama written in any language of the world.

## **The Group**

This is a diploma play presented as a part of National School of Drama's graduate showcase (class of 2018), which aims to provide a platform, for emerging theatre practitioners, allowing them to share their work with wider audience.

## **Cast & Credits**

Actors: Sarfaraz Ali Mirza, Bhagyashree Tarke, Rachna Gupta, Susheel Kant Mishra, Meenakshi Thapa, Ravi Chahar, Paramanand.

Chasers: Mahadev Singh Lakhawat, Parag Barua, Pradeep Gautam, Akshay Wadera, Kamalpreet Singh, Jordan, Vishal, Ankit Ambavat, Tejendra, Suraj Kumar, Dhananjay Sharma, Tapan Kosh, Akshay Kumar, Ramjeet Yadav, Ashish Kumar Nayak, Tushar Karan, Deepak Pandey, Pankaj Verma, Sahil Khanna, Abhishek, Manjeet Kumar, Akash Shrivastav, Rajai Thakral, Abhay Kumar, Shivam Bansal, Nidhi Singh.

Cart Pullers: Akash Shrivastav, Akki, Rajat Thakral, Abhay Kumar



Sceneography: Nitish Arora

Light Design: Sarthak Narula

Costume Design: Rachna Gupta

Video Projection: Saras Kumar

Saxophone :Rahul Kumar

Drums: Vikesh Bisht

Publicity Design: Nitish Arora

Sound operation: Ankit Gupta

Dramaturgical Advice: Sandeep, Nitish Arora

**Original story: Bhuvneshwar Prasad**

**Dramaturgy & Direction: Avijit Solanki**

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# **Buddhika Damayantha's THE DEPARTMENT**



Playwright & Director: Buddhika Damayantha

Group: Red Wings Theatre Group, Sri Lanka

Language: English / Sri Lankan

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

### The Play

The Department is a play inspired by Harold Pinter's The Hothouse. The director of the department, Roote is stressed to the point that he is losing his sanity. His subordinate Gibbs is so ambitious that he undercuts his authority; subordinate Lush is an alcoholic; and his mistress, Miss Cutts, is scheming and having an affair with Gibbs. One of the patients at the house is supposedly murdered, and another is raped and impregnated, so Roote assigns Gibbs to investigate the matter. However, all evidences point to Roote as the perpetrator, and Gibbs takes over, leading to further mayhem.

### Director's Note

The play is wrapped around a disoriented officer in a certain department of a powerful state where the rulers are all out to remain in power using unacceptable ways and means. The psychiatric unit run by this department calls patients by numbers and not by names. A retired dictatorial army officer

by the name Roots is in charge of this unit and its officers are called by indicative short names such Gibbs, Labb, Kates, Tubb, Pate etc... Patient number 6457 passes away in a mysterious suspicious manner, and in a very short time an employee of the institute gives birth to a child. Murderers and rapists are freely moving in the society. At the end Gibbs who is meeting with the superior higher officers of the department complains that all the officers except him were murdered by the patients. This raises the suspicion that Gibbs himself did these...

### The Director & Playwright

Buddhika Damayantha is one of the few theatre directors in Sri Lanka who is engaged full-time in this profession. He has directed 18 Sinhala plays, out of which 17 are adaptations of world renowned classics, such as the works of Beckett, Albee, Williams, Schisgal, Fugard, Pinter, Arbuzov, Tendulkar, Ibsen, Simon, Rivera and Shakespeare. During his illustrious career, Buddhika Damayantha and his plays have won many significant awards at the state drama festivals held annually in Sri Lanka. Buddhika Damayantha is a dedicated theatre enthusiast who strives to uphold his responsibility as an artiste and works for the betterment of his profession and the quality of Sri Lankan theatre. He dedicates a lot of his time conducting workshops and various other activities to enforce theatre education among youth in Sri Lanka and to invoke the enthusiasm for thought-provoking theatre in society.

### The Group

Red Wings is a theatre group actively contributing in the field since last decade. It makes efforts to promote plays in the country by conducting workshops for beginners and introducing various new trends and significant changes in the field. Being a trainer as well as an ardent learner, the group has conducted many training sessions and workshops in the past. During the period when the country was severely affected by civil war, Red Wing made a tremendous effort to preserve

Sinhala stage and attract the audience. One of the main objectives of the group is to inculcate love for the stage among the people.

#### Cast & Credits

Roote: Mahendra Weeraratne

Miss Cutts: Kithmini Hemachandra

Gibbs: Sumith Rathnayake

Lobb / Tubb: Nandun Alwis

Lush: Arunodh Wijesinghe

Lamb: Buddhika Damayantha

Make-up: Shiran Lakshitha

Lighting: Kapila Kithsiri

Set /Costume Design: Buddhika Damayantha

Production Manager: Pamoda Wimalasiri

Sound Mixing: Pamoda Wimalasiri

Stage Management: Chandana Irugal Bandara

Assistant / Prompter: Dhanushka Chinthaka, Mihili Punsala

Publicity/Photography: Pamoda Wimalasiri

Director / Writer: Buddhika Damayantha

Watch Meet the Director segment for this play

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## **M. K. Raina's STAY YET AWHILE**

Playwright & Director: M. K. Raina

Group: Peoples Television, NOIDA

Language: English

Duration: 2 hrs

#### The Play and Director's Note

This is a dialogue between two great minds of the 20th century

– Mahatama Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. A dialogue, which has direct bearing on the future of India and the rest of mankind. The quality of the dialogue is intense, philosophical, spiritual, aesthetic and highly political. Yet this dialogue of agreements and disagreements through letters and articles between the Mahatama and Gurudev, never lowers itself to the realm of anger, negativity or animosity. There is tremendous love, admiration, camaraderie and respect for the other's point of view, which unfortunately is not a quality we find in the political class of today's world. Hence, this dialogue between the Mahatama and The Poet is of great significance, an eye-opener and absolutely relevant to the present debate on the global world with neo-liberal modules of development and open market economy.

#### The Director & Playwright

Graduate of National School of Drama with Best Actor's Award is an actor, director, writer and media person. He has been working in theatre, cinema, television and media for the last five decades. He has directed more than 200 plays in various Indian languages. These productions include the works of Bhasa, Shakespeare, Gorky, Chekov, Bertolt Brecht, Tagore, Premchand, Badal Sircar, Bhishm Sahani, Dhramvir Bharati, Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, Manto, Moti Lal Kemmu and many more. Terror and violence ridden Kashmir has been his working space for more than 15 years, where he has revived and revitalized the traditional Kashmiri theatre called "Bhand Pather" which was disappearing under the pressure of violence and fundamentalism. Raina has travelled widely across globe for his theatre work, as a guest director and as a guest teacher. He has been working with National School of Drama, Hyderabad Central University, Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad and Bhilai. He has been Fellow at University of Hawaii (U.S.A.) and at Stanford University (U.S.A.). He has been scholar in residence at Jamia Millia Islamia Central University. Raina is a trustee of Safdar Hashmi Trust and South Asia Foundation, India. He has been recipient of many

national & regional awards like Sanskriti Award, JK Gold Medal, Sahitya Kala Parishad Samman, Shikhar Samman (Hindi Academy, Delhi), B.V. Karanth Lifetime Achievement Award and Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

#### The Group

Peoples Television's journey started with the making of socially relevant documentaries, plays and cultural events. It has been a platform for the exchange of ideas on the burning issue of culture cutting across disciplines of arts. Our video films on the cultural heritage of Kashmir have been screened in many parts of India and in many countries of west and central Asia. People Television has also performed its theatre plays at major festivals in India like Kerala National Theatre Festival, Kashmir National Festival. Our work with children through workshops at various centres in India has earned Peoples Television a prestige position in the field of theatre in education.

#### Cast & Credits

On Stage: Avijit Dutt, Oorun Das, Preeti Agarwal Metha

Light: Govind Yadav

Videography: Anant Raina

Costume: Kriti V. Sharma

Stage Manager: Vipin Sharma

Performance Text & Direction: M.K. Raina

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# D. Sunil Kumar's MAZE



Playwright & Director: D. Sunil Kumar

Group: Department of Theatre, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kerala

Language: Malayalam

Duration: 1 hr 16 mins

## The Play

Maze tries to establish the relationship between a servant and an old man who are connected inside the web of memories and realities. The servant takes care of the old man and even tries to pretend as the old man's wife in order to make him eat food. The attire of the servant wearing his wife's cloths makes the old man sexually attracted to him and he starts expressing his longing. The memory of his wife leads him to a dream but he recognizes the servant's smell and comes back to reality. In that unreal space there are moments in which both of them find happiness and comfort. Finally it is revealed that the old man was only a memory of the servant.

## Director's Note

Maze portrays the repetitive aspect of human life that there is no beginning or end to what we call life. But we still consider death as the full stop to it. The dead continue to

live within the minds of the living. Memory and reality can't be separated and they always give rise to the question, what is real? This moment ends with the next. Every relationship creates a circle from which the process of 'coming out' or 'leaving' is impossible. Here the old man and the servant create a space within their relationship that questions the material existence of each other. This interlocked space makes it difficult to have an individual existence. The old man continues to live in the memory of the servant and it is the memory of the old man that makes the servant live in his solitude.

### The Director & Playwright

Sunil Kumar S., born and brought up in Angamaly, is a graduate in Commerce and is now pursuing his Masters in Theatre and Performing arts at SSUS, Kalady, Kerala. In the past five years he has been an active figure in the realm of theatre with his contributions in direction, acting and other important aspects of theatre. It is his passion for theatre that made him choose theatre as his career. He has worked with many prominent theatre practitioners in Kerala including Kumara Varma, Ramesh Varma, Vinod Kumar, Gopan Chithambaran, Adrian Schvarzstein, etc. He has also acted in various student productions including Dhojoji, Riders to the Sea, Procession, Christmas Night, Chakka, Interview, Machine, Kudukka, Group Photo etc. Maze is his first production and has gained the attention of many theatre practitioners and critics. Currently he is conducting theatre camps and workshops for students and theatre-lovers all over Kerala.

### The Group

Department of Theatre, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, Kerala has witnessed a number of inevitable changes. The department has introduced several changes in the graduate courses, admitted a number of research students, received substantial research and infrastructure grants, and brought new areas of research activity together, making it a vibrant



and cohesive entity. Within a span of 17 years, we have become a prime department of theatre in India. Alumni of this department are showing their excellence in their respective fields and are now known all across India. Students are participating in all major international theatre festivals across the country. Moreover, many popular actors and directors of Malayalam film industry are former students of this department.

#### Cast & Credits

On Stage: Midhun M P, Rakesh P

Light design and Execution: Anoop K V

Light Assistant: Jamshid Jamal

Music Direction and Execution: Akshai K A, Abin Davis, Manu M K

Make-up: Vipin Kumar

Costume: Anooja Ravi, Neethu Velayudhan

Art-Design and Execution: Sarathkumar M R, Amal Deep P

Stage Managers: Prasob Prakash, Abhinav Prasad P

Technical support: Devendra Khattana, Febin Ummachan, Sharon Shaju, AkhilVijayan, Dinanad S R, Sherin Varghese, Sagar K B

Story, Design & Direction: Sunil Kumar S.

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**Rabindranath Tagore's  
JAKSHAPURI Director: Pradip  
Bhattacharya**



Playwright: Rabindranath Tagore

Director: Pradip Bhattacharya

Group: Berhampore Repertory Theatre, Murshidabad

Language: Bengali

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

### The Play

Nandini, the protagonist of the play, is an individual, not an abstraction, but is pursued by abstraction, like one tormented by a ghost. Nandini knows that wealth and power are nothing but 'maya' (illusion), and that the highest expression of life is Love, which she manifests in this play in her love for Ranjan. But love-ties are ruthlessly molested by the megalomaniac ambition, while an acquisitive intellect piles its psychological curiosity, probing into the elusive mystery of love through vivisection.

### Director's Note

It is a vision that has come to me in the darkest hour of dismay. I have a stronger faith in the simple personality of man than in the prolific brood of machinery that wants to crowd everything. This personality – the divine essence of the infinite in the vessel of the finite – has its last treasure –

the woman's heart. The joy of this faith has inspired me to pour my heart into painting the portrait of Nandini as the bearer of the message of reality, the saviour through death.

### The Director

Pradip Bhattacharya did M.A. (Drama) from Rabindra Bharati University. He received the National Scholarship and Senior Fellowship by CCRT, Department of Culture, Govt. of India. He is the founder, director, and Guru of Berhampore Repertory Theatre. He has written 10 full-length plays, 6 short plays, and 10 plays for children (Published in Bengali Theatre Journal of West Bengal). He has directed 40 Plays in the last 48 Years. 4 of his plays have won the Best Production of the Year 1988, 1990, 1998 & 2006 awarded by Paschimbanga Natya Akademy, Govt. of West Bengal. He has been conducting Theatre Therapy in Prison for the last 12 years at Berhampore Central Correctional Home (Jail) Govt. of West Bengal. He has directed three plays Tasher Desh, Tota Kahini, and Jakshapuri (Rakta Karabi) by Tagore. Pradip has acted in around 45 to 50 Plays. Some of the memorable characters that he has played are Socrates, Arturo Ui, etc. He has been acting in Television serials from 1994 till date, and has acted in 12 telefilms and 58 Feature Films including a foreign film Shadows of Time. He has organised several theatre workshops with Nandikar, National School of Drama (Delhi) and Max Muller Bhavan; children's theatre workshops with local schools and orphan boys; and has been organising a National Theatre Festival from 1983 onwards. He has also made two documentary films (Diaha and Prisoner's Dayout).

### The Playwright

Rabindranath Tagore (7 May 1861 – 7 August 1941) was a Bengali polymath from the Indian subcontinent. He was a poet, musician and artist. He reshaped Bengali literature and music, as well as Indian art with Contextual Modernism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Author of Gitanjali, he was the first non-European to win the Nobel

Prize in Literature in 1913.

### The Group

Berhampore Repertory Theatre was set up on 1st January 1986. It has held many theatre festivals and almost every theatre group of India has visited Berhampore. N.S.D. Repertory Company of Delhi, Naya Theatre of Habib Tanbir, Nandikar, Bahurupée and many other groups have visited Berhampore. It has also arranged many workshops, seminars on theatre, and has introduced school students to theatre by conducting workshops for them. In 1991 a month-long N.S.D. workshop was held at Berhampore.

### Cast & Credits

Raja: Shyamal Das

Sardar: Nitai Chandra Saha

Bishu Pagol: Buddhadev Meta

Adhyapak: Uttam Das

Fagulal: Nakul Nandi

Gokul: Bidhan Das

Kishor: Nimai Halder / Sariful Sk.

Morol: Subodh Mandal

Paloan: Kashinath Mal / Azad Sk.

Praharī: Subodh Das, Abhai Mandal

Ranjan /Jharudar: Tapas Das

Gosai: Swaminath Roy

Workers: Azad Hossain, Shariful SK, Dilip SK, Firdosh Alam, Rajesh Das, Sabu SK, Tala Hembram, Jatin Mondal

Nandini – 1: Helama Bibi

Nandini – 2: Runa Bibi

Nandini – 3 / Workers Wife: Uma Dey

Chandra: Chandana Mandal

Worker's Wife: Tultuli Bibi

Light: Srabon Saha

Music Execution: Premankur Bhattacharya

Production Controller: Keka Bhattacharyya

Asst.: Tunin Kanti Dey

Playwright: Rabindra Nath Tagore

Design & Direction: Pradip Bhattacharya

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# Sukracharjya Rabha's TO' POIDAM



Playwright & Director: Sukracharjya Rabha

Group: Badungduupa, Assam

Language: Rabha

Duration: 1 hr

## The Play

To' Poidam is based on a Rabha folk-tale, and the literal meaning of the term is 'the bird named Poidam'. The story revolves around a mother and her five sons. One day while collecting vegetables from her kitchen-garden the mother notices the droppings of an unknown bird. When the vegetable is cooked it turns out to be extremely delicious. After hearing about the indications of the presence of a strange

bird, the four elder sons decide to hunt it, assuming its meat will be exceptionally tasty and might even make them immortal. Despite the warnings of the wise younger brother and mother, they go to hunt it. The bird, which is an evil presence, takes over their minds completely, consuming their souls and making them dance to her tune. Meanwhile, the mother has a dream and persuades her youngest son to go to the rescue of his brothers. He does so and manages to save their lives. However, one of the brothers strikes him unconscious and they lie to their mother on reaching home, that they never met their brother. When the youngest son regains consciousness he returns home and kills his eldest brother.

#### Director's Note

We the Rabhas, has been listening to this story for generations, though, none seems to look into it from a different perspective. Lately the changing political environment, erosion of human values and globalization has threatened the socio-cultural identities of different ethnic groups. One group of people has totally forgotten the relationship between the nation, the society and an individual. They are concerned only with fulfilling their personal need. Whereas some others are struggling to preserve their socio-culture identity. But the question is –what are the causes of this turmoil? Some are satisfied with accepting 'external forces' as the root cause, some blame our inherent weakness. The story summarizes these and many other social conflicts. The play is a theatrical expression of this symbolic story as per my understanding and feelings.

#### The Director & Playwright

Sukracharjya Rabha (10 April 1977- 8 June 2018) was born in Rampur village of Goalpara District, Assam. In 2001, he founded a theatre group, Badungduppa, a rural based theatre centre in his village. Using Badungduppa as the platform, he directed 26 plays in Rabha, Bodo and Nepali languages during his lifetime. Through his work in theatre, he promoted the

cultural heritage of Rabha community as well as other ethnic groups of North East India. He was the brain behind the prestigious “Under the Sal Tree”, a unique research oriented theatre festival. He was the recipient of many a prestigious award and recognition including Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar, 2009 for Direction from Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi; Aditya Bikram Birla Kala Kiran Puruskar, 2010 from Sangeet Kala Kendra, Mumbai for his outstanding performance in the field of theatre; and many more. He posthumously received Doctorate in Philosophy in the year 2018 from Guwahati University, a place where he also worked as a Guest Lecturer at Human Resource Development Centre under UGC.

### The Group

Badungduppa was established in 1998 in the Goalpara district of Assam by the initiative of theatre lovers within Rabha community. It is the only rural based tribal theatre group actively engaged in making plays with contemporary meaning. Under the artistic leadership of Sukracharjya Rabha, the group has produced 20 plays in last 20 years. The group is regularly organizing workshops for rural artists and a research oriented theatre festival named “Under the Sal Tree”, and Children Theatre Festival annually.

### Cast & Credits

Youngest son: Dhananjay Rabha

Second son: Himeswar Rabha

Third son: Uddhab Rabha

Fourth son: Bijay Kr Rabha

Eldest son: Basanta Rabha

To’ Poidam (birds): Bijay Rabha

Narrator: Kamil Rabha

Mother: Nirmali Rabha

Co-actors: Minakhsi Rabha, Bhanima Rabha, Sameli Rabha, Janki Rabha

Chorus: Sameli Rabha, Nirmali Rabha and All Artistes

Settings: Dhananjay Rabha, Dibakar Rabha

Costumes: Madan Rabha, Cheena Rabha

Music: Lakhikanta Rabha, Madan Rabha, Binanda Rabha, Dibakar Rabha

Light: Nilim Chetia

Script, Concept & Direction: Sukracharjya Rabha

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# Ingrid Bonta's THOUSAND AND ONE NIGHTS (BARBARIAN NIGHTS)



Director: Ingrid Bonta

Group: Theatre Coquette, Romania

Language: Romanian

Duration: 1 hr 20 mins

The Play & Director's Note

We have decided to approach the classical Thousand and One



Nights with a contemporary eye and abstract theatrical techniques (dance, physical expressions etc.). It is a delicate, yet intense performance. Scheherazade is the only woman to have become the wife of cruel and feared Shahriar, of her own free will and choice. The main question was 'why is she sacrificing herself?', 'does she run willingly in the arms of Death?' But there is more to her than the first sight. She is no martyr nor does she want to become one. Just like the mythical Sheherazade takes the cruel tyrant on a journey of fantasy and imagination through unknown worlds – in which the extremes of the human soul entwine like the lights and shadows of the Yin and Yang- we wish to take the audience through 1001 states of mind, 1001 fantasies, 1001 mysteries – only to come to the thought that wisdom and love can conquer it all, even cruelty. Theatrical dance, gracefully mastered by the two actors' body expressions, gets more intense as the story starts to unravel and makes the invisible seen to the audience: their bond grows stronger. With only two actors, the play focuses on the male and female harmony, emphasizing the empowerment of women through wit. It also aims to bring to light the importance of art and the subtle power of theatre.

### The Director

Ingrid Bonta was born in 1984 in Arad, Romania, in a small Saxon community. She decided to take up theatre courses at the age of 16 and pursued a short acting class at The School of Arts, in Arad and later joined the Arad Puppet Theatre as a puppeteer for a year. Ingrid studied Foreign Languages and Literature (German) at the National University of Bucharest and took a Master's Degree in Theatre Direction. After graduating she staged various plays in theatres across Romania and took part in several theatre festivals in Romania and Europe. In 2015 she joined the initiative of Romanian actress Ruxandra Balasu and together they found Theatre Coquette, in the heart of Bucharest. This was the beginning of a constant directing career. Ingrid staged various successful performances at Theatre Coquette, and other state theatres in

Bucharest.

## The Group

Theatre Coquette is a young independent company in Bucharest, established in 2015 by a young group of theatre makers, at the initiative of actress & director Ruxandra Balasu. Since then, the group has been selected in various theatre festivals in Romania and abroad, and its productions have quickly entered the Independent Theatre movement in Romania and its performances have been showcased in various festivals and staged around the country. The group was awarded Best Foreign Group at the Nova Drama Festival, Bulgaria in 2016 with the performance The Colonel and The Birds. In 2017 it has been the only Romanian theatre to be selected at the largest theatre festival in Asia, receiving excellent reviews, being endorsed by the Romanian Cultural Institute. Our group is led by Ingrid Bonta, theatre director and puppeteer, and Ruxandra Balasu, actress, director and cultural manager, along with Daniel Divrician, visual artist and stage designer. The production Barbarian Nights had been invited to open the International Independent Theatre Festival in Bucharest in November 2017. Since 2017, Theatre Coquette has been a founding partner for the Association of Independent Theatres in Romania, thus becoming a strong supporter and active member in the indie Romanian arts.

## Cast & Credits

Sheherazade: Ruxandra Balasu

King: Shahriar Ovidiu Usvat

Stage design: Daniel Divrician

Choreography: Andreea Novac

Direction: Ingrid Bonta

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# KATHIVANNUR VEERAN (THEYYAM)

## Group Leader: Sasikumar V



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Group: Story Teller's Grove, Kerala

Language: Malayalam

Duration: 4 hrs 30 mins (with rituals)

### The Form

Theyyam is a socio-religious ritual in the north Malabar region of the Kerala state in India. The mythological, divine, ancestral, animal, serpent or heroic characters are represented in it, each with its distinct physical shape, and a story of its origin. It is a subaltern performing art as the performers of Theyyam belong to the lower caste community, and have an important position in Theyyam. People of north Malabar consider Theyyam itself as a God and seek his blessings.

### The Play

Kathivannur Veeran has earned an indomitable place in the memory of the local folk, both as an accomplished warrior and an excellent lover. Mandappan was the son of Chakki of

Parakkayillam and Kumarachan of Meathali Illam, in Kannur district, born with the blessings of Chuzhali Bhagavathi. While enjoying life as a carefree youth, he happened to quarrel with his father once. In rage, Kumarachan stamped on Mandappan's bow, and broke it into two. Upset with his father, and convinced that a warrior who was bereft of his weapon was as good as dead, the boy left his house with his friends, to join his uncle. On the way, he was cheated by his friends. Finally, he reached his uncle's house in Kudagu where he settled down to a life of farming and trading. He happened to see the beautiful Chemmaruthi of Velaarkotta Veettil and married her. The young couple was so much in love that their ardour and possessiveness often led to quarrels. One day, she picked up an argument with him because he had returned late. He was not able to convince her that he got delayed trying to sell sesame oil. As soon as he sat down to eat, he heard the sound of the war bugles announcing the beginning of the war between Muthaarmudi Kudagar and Malayaalees. Mandappan got up and rushed to the battle field, not heeding Chemmmaruthi's words and curses. During the battle he lost his little finger and the ceremonial ring. He got worried that his wife would pick up an argument about his lost ring. So, he returned to the battlefield, and the Kudagars ambushed and shot him to death. Mandappan's grieving friends, gathered the strewn pieces of Mandappan's body and took them to Velaarkotta Veedu, and got the pyre ready to cremate the remains. The grief stricken Chemmaruthi, who divined her husband's death beforehand, ended her life, jumping into her husband's burning pyre. The efforts of her brothers proved of no use as she distracted them before immolating herself. It is this hero and his love who are celebrated through Kathivannur Theyyam performance. It is said that the Chemmaruthi Thara, built in the name of Chemmaruthi, famed for her excessive love, is symbolic of Kathivannur Veeran's enduring affection for his beloved wife. The panthams (lighted torches or flames) on her Thara, are said to commemorate Kathivannur Veeran's loyal friends, and evoke the atmosphere of the battlefield.

Mandappan and Chemmaruthi continue to live in the hearts of the people as the unforgettable lovers of Thayyattam stories. Lengthy thottams, sword fights, acrobatics, martial moves and Urumi fights keep the spectators spell bound during Kathivannur Veeran Theyyam performance. Its ritual practices last for three days. Hence, as far as the viewer is concerned, Kathivannur Veeeran is not an easy Theyyam to enjoy.

#### Cast & Credits

Karmi: Sanil Peruvannan

Theyyam: Shanu Peruvannan

Thottakkaran & Singer: Biju Vengara

Thottakkaran: Sudev Pallikkara

Chenda & Singer: Adarsh

Chenda: Abhiram

Veeku Chenda: Aswanth

Artistic Coordinator: A Sreekanth

Theyyam Attendent: Vignesh

Team Leader: Sasikumar V