

Jyoti Prasad Agarwala's Play: Manimugdha

Playwright: Jyoti Prasad Agarwala

Director: Himangshu Prasad Das

Group: Guernica Creatovista, Kamrup (Assam)

Language: Assamese

Duration: 1 hr 5 mins

The Play

Manimugdha is the central character of our version of Rupalim, a timeless play written by Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, one of the torch-bearers of the literary and cultural field of Assam. Originally, Rupalim is a play based on the love story of a pure hearted young girl, Rupalim, who becomes a victim of the complexity of relationships and its outcome, and is brutally put to death for being in the quagmire of love, obduracy and humiliation. Battered between the psychological dilemma of good and evil, the multi-dimensional character, Manimugdha, is one of the best creations of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala and has been widely discussed. We have made an effort to cast a glance around our surroundings through the dilemma of Manimugdha.

Director's Note

We have made an effort to depict the core theme along with a few additional scenes rather than staging the original one as it is. New dialogues have been incorporated considering the need of the hour. All the plays of Jyoti Prasad Agarwala are famous for their abundance in song and dance. We are trying to maintain the footprints of his direction in our play Manimugdha. The music has been composed with the salient features of his songs as the backdrop. We have made a sincere effort to capture the verse-like feature in the scene depiction, complying with Jyoti Prasad's literature.

The Director

Himangshu Prasad Das is an alumnus of the National School of Drama. He is known for his progressive outlook and varied approach. He has tried to strike a balance between works of critical acclaim and mass appeal. He is associated with the street-play movement and has done a thousand shows of a play in various locations in a single day. A popular play written and directed by him is *Moi Shah Rukh Khan Hobo Khuju*. Himangshu has conducted many workshops and training sessions through the length and breadth of Assam. He has established a theatre village in Mirza, 50 kms from Guwahati. In 2007 he formed his own drama group *Guernica*. Along with theatre excellence, he also has to his credit published volumes of poetry and regular contribution to newspapers on topics of social interest.

The Playwright

Jyoti Prasad Agarwala was a prominent modern Assamese literature writer in the pre-independence era who created history for Assam by writing, directing, filming, editing and producing the first Assamese film *Joymoti* in 1935. He wrote a number of plays including *Sonit Kunwari*, *Lovitaa*, *Karengar Ligiri*, *Nimati Koina* etc. He composed a unique style of songs in which every song starts with the same note. This is now known as 'Jyoti Sangeet'. A humanitarian, and harbinger of new and modern thought, he is popularly known as 'Rupkonwar'.

The Group

Himangshu Prasad Das started his own theatre group *Guernica* in 2007. This group has done quite a few plays, some of which are its original productions. A very successful production of the group is *Moi Shah Rukh Khan Hobo Khuju*. The group performed one thousand shows of a street-play in various locations in a single day. The group has a theatre village where the students have residential quarters, library and classrooms where various courses in theatre are pursued by students.

Cast & Credits

On Stage Narayan Baishya

Apurba Barman
Rupamjyoti Das
Pradip Kalita
Pranabjyoti Das
Ayub Ali Sarma
Paramananda Saikia
Anamika Sarania
Pranami Bora
Bandita Sarma
Mamata Das
Puja Kaibortya
Sikha Thakuriya

Off Stage Pranab Kalita, Jyoti Prasad Das, Prasanta Bora
Design & Choreography Pranami Bora
Music Design & Operator Arnab Bashistha
Light Design & Scenography Mintu Bora

Playwright Jyoti Prasad Agarwala
Director Himangshu Prasad Das

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Deepika Arwind's Play: I am

Not Here

Manohar Khushalani's Video Review of the Play. I am not here is designed as an 8-step guide in how to censor women's writing, which plays out in a boxing ring. In parts dark, funny and brutal, the dance-theatre production looks at the subtle, almost-invisible and insidious ways in which women's writing has often been flicked to the fringes. The two women performers enter the boxing ring, watching and being watched,

Samkutty Pattomkary's Play: Adayalam

Playwright: Samkutty Pattomkary

Director: T. Suresh Babu

Group: Natakagramam Kozhikode, Kerala

Language: Malayalam

Duration: 1 hr 50 mins

The Play

Adayalam is a play based on the rape case of Bhanwari Devi. Bhanwari Devi had been employed as a 'saathin' for the Womens' Development Project, run by the Rajasthan government, for two hundred rupees a month as salary. She was brutally raped by Gujjars in front of her husband. Bhanwari, along with her injured husband, decided to file an FIR at the Bassi police station, but the policemen rejected their plea and asked for a medical certificate. The couple went for the medical certificate to many hospitals in Jaipur. The government doctor asked for the magistrate's order as a prerequisite for the

medical certificate. One of the doctors even tried to rape her. After 52 hours they submit the certificate in the police station, only to be asked by the police to bring her clothes as a proof. Finally, the case reached the court and was dismissed on the grounds that upper cast men cannot rape low cast women. The judgment also questioned how her husband could be a mute spectator to his wife's rape.

Director's Note

The incident happened on 22nd September 1992, and she has been fighting for justice ever since. Bhanwari Devi, a Dalit by cast, became an icon of the women's movement when she decided to go public and fight her case following a gang rape by five upper caste Gujjar men, after her attempt to stop a nine-month old girl-child's marriage in her village of Bhateri located 45 km south of Jaipur. Potters by profession, she and her husband have been socially boycotted after the unfortunate turn of events.

This case led to the famous verdict on women's security at work-place. The question raised by the play is "Is justice in our country in safe hands?"

The Director

T. Sureshbabu is a dedicated artist who works with the ordinary village people of Kerala and tries to empower them using theatre as a tool. He completed his degree from Arts and Science College, Kozhikode. He works as a director, scenic designer, actor and light designer in the field of drama. He is the present director of Natakagramam Kozhikode, a well-known theatre group of Kerala. He has received recognition for his work in the form of three Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy Awards, Natya Bushan Puraskaram, Thalassery Shyama Award, Balan K Nair Award, Bankmens Club Award, and V.T Smaraka Award. He has directed more than 100 plays in various languages. Some of his known directorial works are House of Bernard Alba, Shadow of Glen, Riders to the Sea, Arthamanartham, Perumkollan, Nayattu, Maniyara, Soap Cheap

Kannadi, Suganidrakalilekk, Swapnavetta, Kozhikkariya, Orugandhavicharam and Adayalam.

The Playwright

Dr. Samkutty Pattomkary is a playwright, freelance director, designer and technical trainer in the field of theatre. Formerly, he was an executive member of the Kerala Sangeet Natak Academy, Government of Kerala. He has designed more than 350 amateur / professional theatre and dance productions in Kerala.

The Group

Natakagramam Kozhikode is a famous theatre group of Kozhikode district, Kerala which has been active for last twenty years. It endeavours to bring together various drama artists in the villages of Kerala. The group stages its productions in the villages and conducts theatre workshops and enrichment programs all over Kerala. The group has a total of twenty five members including 11 executive members. Natakagramam is also blessed with famous artists of Kerala which includes good actors, playwrights, musicians, light designers, directors, set designers and efficient organisers. Natakagramam has exhibited more than 30 plays in Kerala.

Cast & Credits

On Stage Sudhi

Vineesh P Vasu

Shyju P Olavanna

Rajesh Kakkoor

Girish Mannur

Saju Mokavoor

Kumar G Palath

Vinod Pilassery

M V Sureshbabu

R K Jayaprakash

Mirshad Salma

Mani Alampattil

Akash

Priya Sreejith

Ajitha

Prabha

Vijayamohan

Kavitha

Stage Assistant Mohandas P M

Coordinator Madhu M

Music Sasi Pookkad

Technical Support Chanduz T

Make-up Govind S

Scenic Design Samkutty Pattomkary

Associate Director Sreeshyju. K .P

Playwright Samkutty Pattomkary

Director T. Suresh Babu

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P. Melodi Dorcas's Play: Behind the Borders

Dramaturgy & Direction: Petrishia Melodi Dorcas

Group: NSD Student Diploma Production, New Delhi

Language: Non verbal

Duration: 1 hr 10 mins

The Play

Behind the Borders discusses the issue of 'rage' in an episodic manner. Throughout the play the issues of lynching, rape, land-occupation, honour killing, and writers'-murders are depicted in a visual vocabulary. This is a new medium of narration to communicate with the audience where each scene has strong images and each image is different from every other in the scene. The music instruments used in the play have a strong interpretation to every scene, depending on how the performer's body is transforming in every scene and how the bodies that deal with different characters and craft are a part of scene. There is no backstage or green room in Behind the Borders, and the idea of bringing the backstage musicians onto the stage has its own narrative in the scene.

Director's note

During the process, it was quite a task for us to bring out the visual language of the text we were dealing with. We started improvising each incident from the script. Each one of us came up with different ideas and we started exploring everything. As a collective, we explored different mediums during the process like sound, music, visual installation, durational images, digital narrations, drawings, five senses of the script etc. Behind the Borders is thus a production which is developed by each and every artist of this play collectively. We carried a responsibility of bringing out an ideal production, following the dramaturgy, but later we just went with the flow of the process.

The Director

Petrishia Melodi Dorcas is a versatile artist who graduated from the National School Of Drama, Bengaluru centre, with specialization in Acting. Later she joined the National School of Drama, New Delhi and graduated with specialization in Direction in 2019. She has been working in theatre as a director and actress for the past decade. She is an active participant in social and cultural activities all over India. Currently, she is traveling all over India for her research in

the field of theatre to understand the roots and cultures of different parts of India to bring out the importance of various traditional and tribal forms and their contributions to the performer's body.

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

On Stage Anmol Guliani

Bhumisuta Das

Jitu Rabha

Manoj Thapar

Snehlata Siddartha Tagde

Tamilaasi Anandhavalli

Yashaswini R / Silpi Dutta

Recorded Vocal Palin Kabak

Scenography Ramkumar Kannadasan

Property Bhandari Arun

Drawings Elan Cheziyan

Video Vishala R Mahale

Sound Mayengban Sunil Singh

Chreography Petrishia Melodi Dorcas

Lights Sarthak Narula

Poster & Brochure Partha P. Hazarika

Stage Manager Sejuti Bagchi

Music Mayengban Sunil Singh

Dramaturgy & Direction Petrishia Melodi Dorcas

Contacts

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Mahasweta Devi's Play: Bayan

BAYAN

Writer: Mahasweta Devi

Director: Usha Ganguli

Group: NSD Repertory Company, New Delhi

Language: Hindi

Duration: 1 hr 35 mins

The Play

Based on a story by Mahashweta Devi, Bayan is that play which creates awareness about the core expression of her writing, i.e. socio-economic disparities and the different shades of human life. Bayan's Chandi Dassi is one who, at a very young age, is thrown into the work of burying dead animals. By invoking her responsibility towards the work of her ancestors, she is forced to live a life of great hardship. In time she decides to tie the knot with Malinder, a man who works in the government crematorium, and one who takes on her responsibility. However, the same Malinder later declares her to be a 'bayan' and Chandi Daasi loses all her rights to live a decent life. She starts believing that her life of inhuman exile is simply the norm.

Director's Note

In my creative journey in field of theatre, along with the works of Rabindranath, Manto, Kabir and Premchand, the works of Mahashweta Devi have also struck me with a strange sharpness and intellectual perceptiveness that moves alongside their human aspects. Even before Rudali or Ganesh Mahima. Bayan's Chandi Daasi had made a place for herself in my memory. Over the past few days, she has been helping this director search for a new vision, sometimes searching for a new theatrical language, shirking from the complexities of

realism on the stage and trying to both give and take in the exchange of creative energies. For the past many years, the prop-less stage has appealed to me and attracted me for many reasons. I believe that minimalism on the stage might be able to help in the search for a new theatre vocabulary as drawn from the power of the actor's body language, the internally developed characterization the symbolic imagery on stage, and the sounds of music- and this is what I kept trying for. Chandi Daasi and her creator Mahashweta Devi and those human shapes that get lost in the darkness and then remerge with strength and burn like sparks, are the ones who have been the sources of my inspiration.

The Director & Adapter

Usha Ganguli, a renowned theatre activist, known for her presentations like Lok Katha, Mahabhoj , Holi , Himmat Mai, Court Martial , Rudali , Mukti , Chandalika , Manasi , Hum Mukhtara and many others.

Rangakarmee, the Theatre troupe found by Usha Ganguli in 1976, remains the most active and prolific group, performing in Hindi, not only across India but also travelling abroad extensively. Usha Ganguli is perhaps the first and only theatre Director in India to be directing a play for a Pakistan theatre group Ajoka Theatre under their two-year long programme Theatre for Peace which includes theatre festivals, workshops, seminars etc. She has received the Best Production and Best Director Award (1993-94) by All India Critic Association and Paschim Banga Natya Academy for Rudali, Best Director Award for Lok Katha by Ritwik Ghatak Memorial Committee, Sangeet Natak Academy Award (1998), Girish Puraskar by West Bengal Govt in 2016 and several other awards from West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh State Academies. At present, apart from being the Director and President of Rangakarmee, Usha Ganguli is a member of SWAN (South Asia Women's Network) which is a wing of SAARC. She is also currently the Scholar in Residence at the Viswa Bharati University.

The Author

Mahasweta Devi (14 January 1926 – 28 July 2016) was an Indian Bengali fiction writer and socio-political activist. Her notable literary works include Hajar Churashir Maa, Rudali, and Aranyer Adhikar. She was honoured with various literary awards such as the Sahitya Akademi Award, Jnanpeeth Award, and Ramon Magsaysay Award, along with India's civilian awards Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan.

The Group

Established in 1964 with a membership of only four persons, the Repertory Company is the regular performing wing of the School. It was set up with the dual purposes of establishing professional theatre on one hand and continuing with regular experimental work on the other. Over the years it has produced a variety of plays ranging from stylized musicals to realistic contemporary Indian drama to translations and adaptations of foreign plays. In addition, several eminent persons of national and international repute have worked with the Company, and it has performed over one hundred and eighty one plays by ninety-eight playwrights and has worked with ninety directors. Quite a few of its actors have emerged as celebrities in theatre, cinema and television. The Company has toured extensively in India and abroad. It is celebrating fifty years of its existence this year.

Cast & Credits

Chandi Dasi Shruti Mishra

Joshi Sampa Mandal

Jhumu Anamika Sagar

Kali Suman Purty

Chumki Palak Jasrotia

Somari Sakshi Sharma

Puti Kaki Snehalata S. Tagde

Chorus Sampa Mandal, Anamika Sagar,

Palak Jasrotia, Suman Purty, Aparna Menon,

Snehalata S. Tagde, Debomita Sur

Malinder Deep Kumar
Bhagirath Sikandra Kumar
Ketan Kaka Shahnawaz Khan
Sutradhar (Debu) Ashutosh Banerjee / Shubham Pareek
Dhuna Virendra Singh
Ganju (Gajendra) Naveen Singh Thakur
Budhu Manish Dubey
Dulu Rahul Kumar
Kali Mata, Khokan Jitu Rabha
Mintu Parag Baruah
Tulu Shubham Pareek / Ashutosh Banerjee
Khokha Vishveshvar M. Gondhali

Set Design Sanchayan Ghosh
Set Execution Ram Pratap, Manoj Kumar, Brijesh Sharma
Music Kajal Ghosh
Light Design & Operation Souti Chakraborty
Light Operation & Execution Govind Singh Yadav
Assistance Md. Suleman, Pradeep Aggarwal
Sound Mukesh Kumar
Costume Design Usha Ganguli
Chief Costume Co-ordinator C.S. Bhatia
Properties Design Dipankar Ghoshal
Assistant Mole Kumar Jana
Property Incharge Moti Lal Khare
Make Up Sikandra Kumar, Shruti Mishra
Assistance All Repertory Artists
Tabla & Dholak Om Prakash
Shehnai Shakti Pada Matti
Octopad Narender Kumar
Harmonium Naveen Singh Thakur
Production Co-ordinator Sukumar Tudu
Stage Manager Govind Singh Yadav

Story Mahasweta Devi
Dramatization, Design
& Direction Usha Ganguli

Contacts

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Anagha Deshpande's Play: Ved Haran



Playwright: Anagha Deshpande

Director: Saish Deshpande

Group: Abhivyaktee, Panaji

Language: Konkani & Marathi

Duration: 1 hr 15 mins

The Form

Kaalo is a popular folk-art of Goa, dedicated to the village deity and lord Vishnu. Traditionally it is performed in the mandap or matov, a roofed structure just outside the temple. Each character's entry is announced by the Hardas through a melodious song. Kaalo is presented in two parts – Poorvarang (The first half) and the Uttararanga (the later part consisting of an episode from Puranas). The entire performance is supported by classical vocal music to the accompaniment of two Mridangas (now replaced with Pakhawaj) and a number of Jhanj i.e. cymbals.

The Play

Vedharan is a Kaalo that depicts the story of Shankasura

stealing Vedas from Brahma dev. After stealing the Vedas, Shankasur comes back to his kingdom and makes his half-witted aides, Chimo and Poklo in-charge of the 'Institute of Vedas'. This leads to a sense of discomfort and unrest amongst commoners while their political representatives struggle to use Vedas for their political gains. Shankasur annoyed with this development decides to meet his political Guru, Brihaspati, for a solution. Brihaspati informs him of the misuse of powers by his ministers and the adulteration of knowledge that is being done in the Asurnagari for selfish interests due to which Shankasur is fast losing support of his people.

The play ends with Lord Vishnu getting the Vedas back from Shankasur, and the artists singing the traditional hymn, thus expressing the hope that each one may get an access to education which is everyone's right.

Director's Note

Vedharan was conceived in a special theatre festival, Lok Rang, which involved research and production of plays based on Goan folk theatre styles. It was a dream project which helped us to seek and learn the possibilities of our traditional theatre form Kaalo. The word 'kaalo' in Konkani means a mixture of various items, and here it refers to the blend of various theatrical elements like dance, song, music and dialogue which are aptly used in this production to weave an impressive story of misuse of powers for political gains. Vedharan , while incorporating the elements of Kaalo, has been designed for the proscenium and utilises the benefits that the modern performing space offers. While maintaining the authenticity, like the elaborate Poorvarang, the presentation later takes freedom of the theatrical reality which I feel is a step towards exploring the form.

I am grateful to Shri Vinayak Khedekar and Pt. Ulhas Velingkar who guided us during the process.

The Director

Saish Deshpande, alumnus of Kala Academy's School of Drama and founder member of Abhivyaktee-Panaji, has designed and directed more than 100 full-length plays since 1986, comprising of professional, semi-professional, traditional and experimental productions in Konkani, Marathi, Hindi, English and Sanskrit. He is a recipient of the National Award for Programme & Technical Excellence by Prasar Bharati, Govt of India.

The Playwright

A versatile theatre personality from Goa, Anagha Deshpande has written several plays in Marathi, Hindi, Konkani and English. Her recognized works include Teen Da, Swapnavasavadatta and Nagananda, Dashavatar Darshan and Face Off-line. Two of her plays Chitralekha and Vedharan have been published.

The Group

The cultural organization Abhivyaktee was formed in the year 1997 at Panaji by the alumnus of Kala Academy's School of Drama. Its regular activities include theatre classes and workshops. Abhivyaktee designs and produces issue based plays and theatre festivals.

Cast and Credits

Shankasur Dnyaneshwar Govekar/Raghuvir Govekar
Hardas Sachin Naik
Mahabal Abhijit Ekawde
Chhota Bhataji Anish Deshpande
Chimo Saurabh Karkhanis
Poklo Gautam Gaude
Brahmadev & Brihaspati Raghoba Parab
Vishnu Sagar Haldonkar
Narad Shounak Deshpande
Piso Abhishek Dhawaskar /Rhutvik Sawant
Ganapati & Mahamantri Raghuvir Govekar/Dnyaneshwar Govekar
Saraswati & Nartaki Prerna Palekar
Maharani Priyanka Verekar
Mantri & Chorus Shambhavi Deshpande

Rhutvik Sawant, Abhishek Dhawaskar,
Anish Deshpande, Chaitra Deshbhandari,
Sriya Bandodkar, Manjusha Bandodkar

Vocals & Taal Varad Tari and Sachin Naik
Pakhawaj Mahanand Kawlekar, Abhijit Ekawde
Set Sandip Deshpande
Lights Vaibhav Naik
Costume Anagha Deshpande
Make-up Eknath Naik
Property Manjusha Bandodkar
Choreography Priyanka Verekar
Special thanks to Shri Vinayak Khedekar, Pt. Ulhas Velingkar,
Dr. Pramod Pathak, Prabhakar Sanskritik Sanstha, Caranzale

Script Anagha Deshpande
Music & Direction Saish Deshpande

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Govind Ballal Deval's Play: Mruchchakatik

Playwright: Govind Ballal Deval
Director: Ravindra Khare
Group: Bharat Natya Sanshodhan Mandir, Pune
Language: Marathi
Duration: 3 hrs 10 mins

The Play

Originally, Mruchchakatika (The Little Clay Cart) is a ten-act Sanskrit drama written by Shudrak, an ancient playwright, sometime around the 2nd century. The play is set in the ancient city of Ujjayini during the reign of King Pālaka, The central story is that of a nobleman Charudatta, who falls in love with a wealthy courtesan Vasantasena. Despite their mutual affection the couple's lives and love are threatened when a vulgar courtier, Samsthānaka, also known as Shakara, begins to aggressively pursue Vasantasena. We would like to mention that this Marathi play Mruchchakatik had been written by Govind Ballal Deval in 1887. The characters are drawn from the mundane world. It is peopled with gamblers, courtesans, thieves, and so on. Though Vasantasena is a courtesan, her exemplary attitude and dignified behaviour impress the audience. The nobility of the characters does not stem from their social conditioning but from the inner virtues and behaviour.

Director's Note

The subject of Charudatta – Vasantsena from Shudrak's Sanskrit play, although translated in Marathi but with the same name Mruchchakatik, is very attractive & appealing to the audience in general. Many traditional singing forms & ragas add to the popularity of this production. This musical is interestingly woven with traditional Kathak dance which is the highlight of the play. It also depicts the earlier traditions of Central India, sometime in 3rd century, and also the politics in that particular era, bearing similarity to the contemporary one.

The Director

Ravindra Khare is a well-known actor on Marathi stage & media. He has also composed a musical Nishabda Majgharat, which won prizes at state level and also in Marathi drama competition in Delhi. He is closely associated with Bharat Natya Mandir Group for more than 40 years now and is the Trustee of the institution. He has directed more than 15 Marathi musicals and

lends his voice to many ad-films, and also acts in TV-serials by renowned directors. He has produced, directed & edited many plays for AIR Pune.

The Playwright

A well-known Marathi playwright, Late Shri Govind Ballal Deval (1855-1916), has written Durga, Sharada, Shapsambhram, Sanshayakallol, Zunzaarao, Vikramorvashiya and many other plays. He composed the lyrics and music of many songs in Kirloskar's play Shakuntal. Deval worked for a few years at Kirloskar Natak Mandali as a playwright, actor, and director. After his move to Pune in 1894, he founded Aryoddharak Natak Mandali; and also worked with Bal Gandharva's newly established Gandharva Natak Mandali. He was the first drama guru of legendary Bal Gandharva.

The Group

Bharat Natya Sanshodhan Mandir is known to be the oldest Marathi theatre education institution since its foundation in 1894 in Pune. It is producing, organising, performing dramas & conducting dance & music classes since then. The institution completed 125th year of its existence in October 2019. It has a well-stocked library with many rare manuscripts, old photographs, material related to drama and several rare drama scripts which have been written in the past 150 years.

Cast & Credits

Maitreya Ram Sathaye

Sanvahak Sanjay Dole

Sutradhar / Sharvilak Sanjeev Mehendale

Veet Rajan Kulkarni

Karnapurak / Nyayadhish Abhay Jabde

Rajshalak Shakaar Anand Panse

Shodhanak Vishwas Pangarkar

Radanika Aparna Pendase

Madanika Kavita Tikekar

Dancers Maitreyi Nirgun, Radhika Bhinge, Bhagyashree Kulkarni, Revati Sant, Samrudhdhi Pujari

Vasantsena Gauri Patil
Charudatta Charudatta Aphale

Music Accompaniment Rahul Gole (Organ)
Omkar Deodhar (Tabla)
Lights Shubham Kute
Sound Jayadeep Nemade
Drapery Rakesh Gholap
Make-up Madhav Thatte
Back Stage Viththal Hulawale, Abhijeet Gaikwad, Jitendra Sutar
Team Manager Vijay Kumar Potdar

Playwright G. B. Deval
Director Ravindra Khare

Contacts

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Sarthak Narula's Play: Ruins in Reverse

RUINS IN REVERSE
(A devised performance based on the poems of 'Pash')

Poet: Avtar Singh Sandhu 'Pash'
Director: Sarthak Narula
Group: NSD Student Diploma Production, New Delhi
Language: Multilingual
Duration: 1hr

The Play

The process of this collaboration started with reading aloud the poetry of Pash in Hindi and Punjabi. A piece without any script or characters but with people, a site and the words of Pash. Sieving through poetry and oscillating from selection to rejection of the text multiple times; engaging with protest music; reading critical material written on Pash; and staying with the site for long hours, the idea of this piece was to revel in what would emerge when people come collectively to produce a performance on the poetry of Pash. On developing a scene on poetry, the performers were wary of not getting into plain recitation or a visualisation of the written word. There was an attempt to delve into the how, why and what is Pash communicating through his poems; its significance in the times we live in being a crucial aspect of the play.

Director's note

One image of lynching shows up on our Facebook screen and all our senses are captured by it. Soon the number goes up and one sees 16 lynching in a span of two months, and then it becomes a scroll. One scrolls and scrolls till the geography of fear gets etched on our forehead and we become immune to a 'fact' to which bowing down seems like an option which, if not opted for, shall lead to serious consequences. What are those moments of encounter wherein we interrogate the self and the other and what are those repetitions that make violence a routine?

The summoning of Pash's poetry in the current socio-political context of the spaces we inhabit is a provocation to unearth the silences that have been buried underneath the official, documented and visible discourses which have made the repetition of violence so inevitable that even yearning for a near-utopia seems as a task that is unrealistic. The ruins of what remains of the alternate discourse though, are potential sites wherein a traversing into the past has led to the future of these silences. Rummaging through the silences and staying with them, these ruins seek to take things in reverse and then

starts the commencement of the trial of the portrayal of a robust entity through Pash's poetry.

The Director

Sarthak Narula is a graduate of National School of Drama, with specialisation in Direction. Before joining NSD, he had completed his Masters in Theatre from Academy of Theatre Arts, University of Mumbai. His area of interest is the intersection between Scenography and Light design. He has designed lights for more than 30 productions in the last two years. Presently, he is doing a fellowship at NSD in the field of technological advancements in lighting in context to the alternative spaces of performance.

The Poet

Pash (9 September 1950 – 23 March 1988) was the pen name of Avtar Singh Sandhu, one of the major poets of the Naxalite movement in the 1970s. He was killed by Khalistani extremists on 23 March 1988. His strongly left-wing views were reflected in his poetry. The poetry of Pash invokes dissent and rebellion against the violence and marginalization that takes place on the basis of class. In his poems he protests against the idealistic portrayal of folk life; interprets love as an expression of pain, which surfaces as one gives it up for a more important or substantial cause. His poems split open the game of 'democracy' and yearn for dreaming towards a world where equality and freedom shall make the ground fecund for progress.

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

On Stage Aditi Rora, Anmol Ghuliani,
Ashlesha Phad, Bhumisuta Das,

Hari Shankar Ravi, Jitu Rabha,
Manoj Kumar Thapar, Pallav Singh,
Salim Hussain Mulla, Snehalata Tagde,
Snigdha Mondal, Suman Purty,
Mujib Takhmeer, Rizwan, Imran

Lights Sarthak Narula

Scenography Nitish Arora, Vidur Sethi

Video Sourav Poddar

Costume Bhumisuta Das, Snigdha Mondal

Property Nitish Arora, Manoj Kumar Thapar

Poster & Brochure Mehak, Divyangana, Vidur, Saras

Sound Vishala R Mahale

Music Composition Navdeep Singh, Masood Malik, Manoj Kumar Thapar

Percussion Sayan Sarkar, Paalin Kabak, Bhaskar Jha

Vocals Navdeep Singh, Manoj Kumar, Snehalata Tagde, Ayushi Masood

Dramaturgy Vidur Sethi, Bhaskar Jha, Pallav Singh

Dramaturgical Guidance Avijit Solanki, Vicky Maheshwari

Poet Pash

Director Sarthak Narula

Contacts

Sarthak Narula

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Maya K. Rao's Play: Loose

Woman



Playwright & Director: Maya Krishna Rao

Group: Vismayah, Delhi

Language: English

Duration: 1 hr 15 mins

The Play

Loose Woman is about the travels of a woman – into and out of herself. To make this show, a performer, a video & sound designer, and a singer, through a series of improvisations, ‘looked for her’ in different places, in different manifestations. The stories that emerged were given an episodic form. They each stand alone, though a loose thread connects them all. We see her at home getting ready for office and then, on a whim, stepping out of her cab and disappearing altogether. In ‘Dancer’ she discovers what it means to not walk the straight and narrow but to ‘side-step’. ‘The Line’ jolts her into the realization of how precious her own looseness really is. And so on...

She looks for, she muses, she discovers the possibilities of ‘looseness’ in her life – of new directions she can create. The very ground beneath her seems to shift when she reacts with objects and characters from the world around her. She rediscovers her own mother. Even Gandhi enters her universe.

With humour, yet serious introspection, Loose Woman has been conjured, coaxed and driven by different mediums – theatre, sound, dance and the camera. Of course, the underlying reference here is to the heavy irony in the throwaway expression ‘loose woman’, whose application is rampant in a skewed familial and social setting crafted by just one sex.

For the purposes of this show, though, she’s not loose enough....not yet!

Director's Note

Way back in 2002, I had made a show called A Deeper Fried Jam. In trying to recreate it, I found myself veering towards this woman – the ‘loose woman’. Possibly, it’s the sign of our times – it is by looking through a woman’s gaze that we see, in sharp relief, currents and under currents at play in society. The one person who carried over from the 2002 show is Gandhi – he seems to have travelled over the years and found a firm place in the ‘loose woman’s’ universe. This performance derives in its entirety from improvisations with a guitar player and a singer. Musically too, we wanted to keep it open – traverse a range of musical references – from rock to blues to sounds closer home. For each show we change the mix of episodes, to keep her fresh and alive.

The Director & Playwright

Maya Krishna Rao is a theatre artist and teacher. Her shows range from dance-theatre to cross media collaborations to comedy. She is her own performer, writer and director. Some of her celebrated performances are, Khol Do, The Job, A Deeper Fried Jam, Heads are Meant for Walking Into and Ravanama. Walk was created in response to the horrific gang rape in a moving bus and eventual tragic death of Jyoti Singh in 2012. Her latest, Loose Woman, are explorations of the extents to which a woman can stretch and redefine herself.

The Group

Vismayah was founded in 1993 under the chairpersonship of Shri P.N. Haksar, diplomat and iconic policy maker. On a regular basis Vismayah attempts to create new theatre, drawing upon our traditions of dance, music and the other arts. Among it’s celebrated productions are Khol Do, A Deep Fried Jam, Heads are Meant for Walking Into, Are You Home, Lady Macbeth? and Ravanama. Vismayah also works in the area of education, conducting workshops for teachers and students on drama as a methodology of education. Vismayah performances have travelled to various places, both across the world and in India and have been received with critical acclaim.

Cast & Credits

Performer Maya Krishna Rao

Sound design Sumant Balakrishnan,

Video design Santana Issar

Lights Sujay Saple

Costume Pratima Pandey

Concept, Creation

& Direction Maya Krishna Rao

Contacts

Director, Vismayah

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Atik Rehman's Play: Mrityu Ghar

Playwright: Dea Loher

Adaptation: Atik Rahman

Director: Mukul Ahmed

Group: Mukul Ghetto Tigers, Bangladesh

Language: Bengali

Duration: 1 hr 5 mins

The Play

In this play an hour takes us inside the heads of Asha,

Kalpana and Bina as they pit themselves against their torturer, Zafar, who has the power to decide their fate in the jail. Eventually Asha will be placed in a gas chamber. Asha's resistance and ability to turn the tables on her torturer provide one of the most compelling stories. The central question of the play relates to what someone should sacrifice for their relationships, dignity and political affiliation. Asha's story is a searing tale of survival as she, along with her fellow prisoners, struggles to hold onto her disintegrating sense of self.

Director's Note

Mrityu Ghar is an adaptation of Dea Loher's first play Olga's Room (published in 1992). Dea Loher is one of the most celebrated playwrights of Germany today. Special thanks to Shameem Chawdhury for a fluid translation. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Atik Rahman for accepting the offer to adapt Olga's Room into a new play.

The Director

Mukul Ahmed grew up in Bangladesh and was taught at home till the age of 10 by his mother. His early memory is filled with ritual festivals, open-air music concerts, chaotic street markets, tropical calamity and community living. The dual heritage and displacement help him being unreasonably optimistic and rationally helpless, someone with love for classics and modernism, rebellion and discipline. He likes to explore the role of arts and imagination in creating new connections between people and the community in order to strengthen participation in community life. In 2007 he completed the Birkbeck MFA Theatre Directing programme. He has since directed a series of classics, new writing and play readings. Mukul has Staff Directed at the National Theatre, England. He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, UK.

The Playwright

Atik Rahman is a theatre practitioner (performer, script writer and light designer) based in Bangladesh. He completed

B.A. (Hons.) and M.A. in Theatre from the Department of Theatre, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. He has participated in numerous national and international theatre festivals in Bangladesh, India and the UK as actor, designer and musician. He is currently working as a script writer, performer and light designer for Mukul and Ghetto Tigers (Bangladesh), and is also a freelance theatre worker and a performer for 'theatreX' in Bangladesh.

The Group

Mukul and Ghetto Tigers is a UK and Bangladesh based theatre company that offers story, relationship and entertainment to the regular and non-theatre going audience. We take genuine interest in new writing and world classics. MGT is a platform for emerging talents. Our aim is to mentor and nurture the new comers and offer them the opportunity to excel in their respective fields. Our mantra is re-imagination, innovation and collaboration. We aim to develop a community-oriented, quality training service in a fun and safe environment by staff committed to continuously developing their skills. We also strive to create new audiences of performing arts from non-theatre going and disadvantaged communities.

Cast & Credits

Asha Usha Ganguli

Kalpana Lopamudra Guha Neogi

Beena Swagata Biswas

Zafar Biswajit Das

Light Designer Mirza Shahkhesep Sakib

Set Designer Sabiha Ambereen Haque

Sound Designer Tarun Jasani

Sound and Video Projection Operator Atik Rahman

Stage Manager Polash Rahman

Documentation Shishir Karim

Subtitles Shubhaluxmi Mukherjee

Production Manager Tahmina Shaily

Publicity Material Mong Mong Sho

Video Projection Material Shishir Karim, Shishir Imran
Video Performer Novera Yesmin

Playwright Atik Rahman

Director Mukul Ahmed

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