Dharamvir Bharati's Play: Andha Yug

Playwright: Dharmavir Bharati
Translation: Sukesh Panda
Director: Chavan Pramod R.
Group: Department of Dramatics, M.S. University, Vadodara
Language: Gujarati
Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

The Play
Prologue: The prevailing fight between power and survival in the world, the wrath of the blind age.
Act 1: Dhrutarashtra and Gandhari crying for their dying sons and eagerly waiting for Sanjay. The Vrudhha Yachak enters with his predictions.
Act 2: Ashwatthama transforms himself into a destructive being and tries to kill Sanjay and Vrudhha Yachak, Krutvarma and Krupacharya question Ashwatthama's intentions.
Act 3: Yuyutsu enters Hastinapur after winning battle with Pandvas, and Gandhari dishonours him. Ashwatthama justifies his intentions, and Krutvarma and Krupacharya join his struggle.
Interlude: The Vruddha Yachak explains Andha Yug and the characters give a description of their world.
Act 4: Vidur and Sanjay narrate the details of Ashwatthama's cruelty to Gandhari. Ashwatthama releases Brahmastra. Sanjay leads Gandhari to the corpse of Duryodhan. Gandhari blames Krishna and curses him.
Epilogue: Question – "How to save humanity?"

Director's Note
This piece of work focuses solely on the thematic content of the play, rather than abiding by the conventional structure. It attempts to look beyond the barriers of time and space and emerges subtly and symbolically. The questions raised are

regarding human tolerance and the atrocities of war, where women, children and youth are the major victims. “When will the world be peaceful?” is the quintessential quest. I have attempted to depict my perceptions about how various systems drive a region and its inhabitants into insoluble problems of restless society and political turmoil, where the sole sufferers are the common people.

The Director

A recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi Ustad Bismillah Khan National Award for Theatre Direction, Dr. Chavan Pramod R. is a disciple of Guru Kavalam N. Panikkar, under whose guidance he pursued training of Natyashastra and Sanskrit Theatre. He also underwent the basic training of Kutiyattam at Kalamandalam and worked in-depth on different forms of Kerala. Dr. Chavan Pramod has done Ph.D., Masters and Bachelors in Theatre with 4 gold medals from the Dramatics Department, M. S. University of Baroda. Some of the plays designed and directed by him are Andhayug, Uttararmcharitam, Venisamhara, Ashadh Ka Ek Din, Waiting for Godot, Vikramorvashiyam’s fourth Act, Dak Ghar, Juloos, Hayavadan etc. His book Rang Saptak – An Anthology of Panikkar’s Plays Translated in Hindi has been published by Rajkamal Prakashan.

The Playwright

Dharmavir Bharati was a renowned Hindi poet, author, playwright and a social thinker of India. He was the chief editor of the popular magazine Dharmayug. Bharati was awarded the Padmashri for literature in 1972 and Sangeet Natak Akademy Award in playwriting in 1988. Prominent works by him include Gunahon ka Devta, Suraj ka Satwan Ghoda, Andha Yug etc.

The Group

Department of Dramatics, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda has nurtured a number of aspiring artists wanting to pursue theatre as profession. Along with the academic experience it also creates a platform for art events, festivals, workshops, seminars and research. It has started

“Satur Theatre” to inculcate performance skills in the students and orient audiences for the Theatre Movement. It has been conducting the Manch Parva – National Theatre Festival since 2011.

Cast & Credits

Gandhari 1	Mallika Lokhande
Gandhari 2	Riya Doshi
Gandhari 3	Vaidesha Lobiyal
Dhrutarashtra	Shashank Jha
Ashwathama	Bhavesh Thakarel
Yuyutsu	Priyank Gangwani
Sanjay	Saket Chouhan
VruddhaYachak/ Western Dance	Prashanjit Dey
Vidura	Mohammad Nawaz Khan
Krutvarma /Western Dance	Akhil Nair
Krupacharya	Hardik Soni
Prahari 1	Nirav Popat
Prahari 2 /Fashion Show	Himadri Vyas
Vyasa/Fashion Show	Ivan MD Khan
Chorus 1/Western Dance/ Fashion Show	Parth Nair
Chorus 2	Sanket Chouhan
Garba Dance	Nupur Thaker, Shweta Jain

Music Composer & Vocal	Vipul Barot
Music Composer & Instrument	Manish Barot
Music Arranger	Birju Kanthariya
Music Operator	Sanket Chouhan /

Riken Chokshi	
Light Design	Rishikesh Karanjgaokar
Make-up	Gaurav Chaturvedi
Playwright	Dharmvir Bharati
Director	Chavan Pramod R.

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Shabd Leela – The Interplay of Words / Manohar Khushalani



Mystical Piety

PERFORMANCE

Text of The Review by Manohar Khushalani Published in IIC Diary

Directed by K K Raina, conceived, scripted and narrated in Hindi by Ila Arun, '***Shabd Leela***' is a partially dramatized reading of the script, which contains selected extracts from the works of the well-known poet and playwright **Dr. Dharamvir Bharti.** Picking up prose from his works, such as, *'Kanupriya','Ek Sahityik Ke Prem Patra'* and *'Andha Yug',* Ila Arun created a biographical sketch of Bharti, focusing on his relationship with two women. Trying to see a resonance from Krishna's life, wherein, even though Rukmani was his wife, yet, only Radha's name is linked with Krishna and taken together with his. Ila justifies Dharamvir's simultaneous dalliance with his first wife, Kanta Bharti and Pushpa Bharti, his paramour, who became his spouse in an informal unconventional ceremony. The three, Dharamvir Kanta and Pushpa, took a vow on the banks of Ganges, that they will always be inseparable. That is why the unconventional consensual bigamous wedlock had a certain mystical piety about it. Yet, in the construction of the play, Kanta, his first wife, and the third arm of the triangle, was largely ignored.

Ila took up the role of the '*Sutradhar'*, allowing Raina to dramatize the play, unsuccessfully though, because the

blocking had a static quality about it. A symmetrical set consisting of two desks on either side of the stage and a covered bench in the middle added to the monotony.

However, the visuals projected on the cyclorama were really beautiful and carefully chosen by the Director to enhance the beauty of the poems. The script was well crafted, interspersing quotes from the letters, poetry and drama, with Ila's own critique about them. Actors Rajeswari Sachdev, Varun Badola and all the others read out the pedantic Hindi verses and prose with well punctuated, clearly pronounced dialogue delivery.

The finale of the play was a performance of Andhayug. It highlights the last day of the Mahabharata war, when Kurukshetra was covered with corpses, the ramparts were in ruins, the city was in flames, while vultures hovered menacingly above. The few hapless survivors of the defeated Kauravas were overcome with grief and rage. Written immediately after the partition of the India, the play is a profound commentary on the politics of violence. True, Andhayug showcases Bharti's versatility as a writer craftsman, but, the conclusion appeared to be a departure from the overall theme of the enactment of a complex relationship between three creative and sensitive souls.

Despite everything, the pristine beauty of Bharti's Shabd Leela is what remains with you after the performance

Let the whole world know that Radha;
was not merely a note in your Song-
Radha was The Melody, The Music;
I have come to you my Dearest!
You who weaved fiery blossoms into my tresses!
Tarry not anymore;
To weave meaning into History!