

Tushar Sonu Naik's Play: Veer Babruvahan

Director: Tushar Sonu Naik

Group: Naik Mochemadkar Paramparik Dashavtari Loknatya Mandal, Maharashtra

Language: Marathi

Duration: 1 hr 40 mins

The Form

Dashavtar is a popular form of folk-art characterizing rural theatre of South Konkan region, the coastal Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra. Dashavtar is generally the presentation of different incarnations of Lord Vishnu, with 'akhyanas' (stories) from great epics Mahabharata and Ramayana, though these days more secular themes are also presented.

Dashavtar is an all-male performance. It has music, mime, colourful costumes, extempore dialogues, dance steps, and battle scenes. Dashavtar regales, instructs, and edifies the rural masses through the themes it presents. The music has harmonium, tabla or pakhawaj, and cymbals as accompanying musical instruments, and is based on the Hindustani style.

The Performance

Babruvahana, the king of Manipur, takes in his custody the horse of the Pandavas which they had sent as symbol of their supremacy over all the kings. Meghavarna, son of Ghatotkacha, and Rushiketa, son of Karna go in search of the horse but fail to find it and return. Chitrangi, mother of Babruvahana, reveals to him that he is the son of the great warrior Arjuna. Babruvahana goes to meet Arjuna, but Arjuna gets angry and insults him. This makes Babruvahana furious. He challenges Arjuna for a fight. In the battlefield Arjuna gets defeated and Babruvahana decides to behead him. Chitrangi and Ulupi, Babruvahana's stepmother order him get the divyamani, a

precious stone, from the head of Shesh Nagraj, to save Arjuna and other martyrs in the battlefield.

Babruvahana goes to Shesh Nagraj, who is also his grandfather, and succeeds in getting the divya Nagamani. Meanwhile Bheema, the elder brother of Arjuna, arrives on the scene and on seeing Arjuna beheaded, fights with Babruvahana. Chitrangi and Ulupi stop them and tell him what actually happened.

All of them pray to Shree Krishna who appears and brings life to Arjuna and the others by touching the Nagamani on their heads. Babruvahana and his father Arjuna embrace each other.

Director's Note

While directing this play, I have selected the artists who are able to portray the character assigned to them. I have worked on the dialogues, costumes, make-up, and hairstyles, especially of males who perform the role of females. I thank the music director of this play for his single-handed contribution in this production.

The Director

Tushar Sonu Naik is a Matriculate. Though he is young, he has directed many plays, such as Veer Babruvahana, which is most popular among all. Most of the plays directed by him are in the traditional folk form of Maharashtra – Dashavtar.

The Group

The troupe known as Naik Mochemadkar Parmparik Dashavtari Loknatya Mandal is headed by Sonu alias Babal Shripad Naik, and managed by his son Tushar Sonu Naik, who is also a musician.

The family resides on the picturesque sea-shore in a small village called Mochemad, in Maharashtra. Dashavtar, a traditional folk art of this area, has been practiced by the family for more than six generations. The performers and musicians of the troupe come from different villages of Sindhudurg district and a few also from the nearby state of Goa. They all are from poor, rustic, rural areas, mainly farmers, agriculturists or artists dedicated to this folk art

with devotion and love. Naik Mochemadkars are frequently invited to perform their plays in annual festivals, rural fairs in the courtyards of temples, and these days even in urban areas. More than 240 performances are staged by this group every year.

Cast & credit

Ganesh	Gajanan Vengurlekar
Riddhi	Akshay Naik
Siddhi	Dipak Mayekar
Babruvahana	Nitin Asayekar
Hansadhvaja	Sudhakar Parab
Arjuna	Narayan Asayekar
Meghvarna	Nilesh Naik
Rushiket	Sagar Gaonkar
Ulupi	Ratnakar Manjarekar
Chitrangi	Mahesh Dhuri
Bheema	Krishana Naik
Shesh Nagraj	Guru Varadkar
Shrikrishana	Aatmaram Sawant
Harmonium	Rajan Gawade
Mrudang or Pakhvaj	Piyush Khandare
Cymbals	Snatosh Gudulekar
Singer	Mahadev Dalvi
Backstage Artists	Sitaram Gawade, Pravin Tandel,
Raman Parab, Harishchandra	Manjarekar
Music Director	Jayram Shripad Naik
Head of the Troupe	Sonu Shripad Naik
Research	Vijaykumar Phatarpekar
Director & Manager	Tushar Sonu Naik

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Snehasish Bhattacharyay's Play: Anahuta



Playwright: Snehasish Bhattacharyay
Director: Sima Mukhopadhyay
Group: Samstab, Kolkata
Language: Bengali
Duration: 2 hrs 20 mins

The Play

Nirupam Goswami, an ex-army man, who has now become an entrepreneur, is living a contented life with his wife Sujata Goswami and son Debopam Goswami, when one afternoon all of a sudden, there appears a stranger, and intruding into their house claims to be the real Nirupam Goswami, who had fought as a Major in the Dras Sector, 237 battalion, during the Kargil War. He claims that Sujata is his wife, and says that this

Nirupam Goswami is actually Mainak Ghosh, who had fought under his domination in the Kargil War. Surprised and astonished by the attitude of the 'uninvited guest', Nirupam and Sujata struggle to fight against all odds. The case is then taken to the police, who is also taken aback, when the stranger presents proof after proof. Lawyers from both the sides look into the matter, and finally, the case reaches the court.

Director's Note

I feel every director wants to work on a play that goes beyond its words and delves into a deeper philosophy of life. Anahuta (The Uninvited) compelled me to look within me while presenting it on the stage. The known tactics of executing plays went topsy-turvy while working on Anahuta. The more I faced these challenges the more I felt zealous about it. Not only was it me but the actors too went through all these challenges while playing their parts. In fact, the different selves that inhabit our being remain, for the most part of our lives, unknown, unrecognized and uninvited to the fore. When these selves come to the fore and confront us, the familiarity with life vanishes instantly. Everything legal and illegal, true and false, the victorious and the defeated, stand on an unstable ground. Here, in this play, we too have faced something unknown and been on a journey with it. That the journey of life is the only truth is what our team has tried to present through this play on stage.

The Director

Sima Mukhopadhyay (born 5 December 1959) is a director, playwright and actor from Kolkata. She made her stage debut as a child artiste with M.G. Enterprise, a professional theatre ensemble. She received Master's Degree in Drama (Acting) from Rabindra Bharati University in 1985. At present she heads Rangroop. As an actress Sima has acted in productions directed by eminent directors, beside her own. She has written twelve full-length plays, and six short-length plays for children. Besides the ones written by her, Sima has directed works of

Rabindranath Tagore, Oscar Wilde, Tripti Mitra, Arthur Arbuzov, and many other world renowned writers. She is a recipient of Senior Fellowship from HRD Ministry for the year 2002, Ritwik Ghatak Smriti Puraskar, Paschim Banga Natya Akademi award, Dishari Puraskar, Kalakar Award, Bengal Shrichi Award, and Anukul Samman.

The Playwright

Dr. Snehasis Bhattacharyya, started his journey as a playwright with Swapnoparosh which was staged by Natyaranga theatre group in 2011. After that, he was selected in the International Playwrights' Workshop held the same year with the playwrights of West Bengal and Bangladesh, and the Cultural Ministry of India. He is also an actor and has performed many plays for Bangla theatre.

The Group

Samstab was formed in 1982 under guidance of Guru Sri Dwijen Bandyopadhyay. Its first production was Abhimukh, a poetic play written by Shri Navendu Sen and staged in 1983. The group has tried to encourage new, and not-too-well-known playwrights too. With Naak, Kalpomon and Dhuni Stambha, we introduced a new author Kajal Sengupta and also produced Sokratisher Jabanbandi by Dr. Sisir Kumar Das, which was later telecast through Kolkata Doordarshan.

Cast & Credits

Stranger	Sanjib Sarkar
Sujata	Amrita Mukherjee
Nirupam	Susnata Bhattacharjyay
Police Officer	Srikanta Manna
Yudhistir	Parthasarathi Chandra
Menoka	Kankabati Bandyopadhyay
Prasenjit	Ashish Mazumder
Raghabendra	Parthasarathi Sengupta
Peon	Sanjoy Das
Light	Badal Das

Music	Disari Chakraborty
Set Design	Sandipsuman Bhattacharjya
Sound	Pinaki Mukherjee
Playwright	Snehasish Bhattacharyay
Director	Sima Mukhopadhyay

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Curtain goes up on National School of Drama's 21st Bharat Rang Mahotsav



The annual theatre festival, that will open with veteran actor-director Amol Palekar's **KUSUR**, *will showcase a mix of Indian and international plays*

New Delhi, February 1: The 21st edition of the Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM) – the annual theatre festival organised by the National School of Drama (NSD) is all set to bring an assortment of plays, interactive sessions, and other cultural events to cheer up winter afternoons of theatre enthusiasts in the Capital.

The inaugural function for BRM 2020 kick started at the Kamani auditorium with ***Panchvadyam* – a South Indian devotional music**. The dignitaries present on the occasion included **Chief Guest Prof. Vidushi Rita Ganguly**, eminent theatre artist and vocalist, **Guest of Honour Dr. Mohan Agashe**, renowned theatre and film personality and **Special Guest Ms. Nirupama Kotru**, IRS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India among others. The function was presided over by **Dr. Arjun Deo Charan**, Acting Chairman, NSD Society.

Prof. Suresh Sharma, Director In-charge, National School of Drama, welcomed the guest at the inaugural function and appreciated all the participants from National & International theatre fraternity who came all across. Also, he specially expressed his gratitude to the Actor Amol Palekar who came & graced the occasion by presenting his play at the inauguration ceremony. He also said through the years, Bharat Rang Mahotsav has presented some masterpieces from the world of theatre. The idea is to reach out to a much wider set of audiences with works from post-modern and regional theatre. We hope to highlight the importance of theatre and plays and promote the culture of appreciating various forms of performing arts.

Chief Guest Prof. Vidushi Rita Ganguly, present at the event said “Eventual expression of human race is theatre, I give credit to all these honours that I receive to Ebrahim Alkazi. NSD treats everyone equally and in theatre everyone has their own place.”

Guest of Honour Dr. Mohan Agashe, renowned theatre and film personality who was present at the event said “theatre

occupies the highest place in art forms. I am really elated to see that year after year NSD is giving this living art a stage.”

Present at the event the **Special Guest Ms. Nirupama Kotru**, IRS, Joint Secretary, and Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India Said “NSD is one of the nine gems that we have in our country. We should encourage more participation and spectatorship of theatre.”

Echoing his thoughts, **Dr. Arjun Deo Charan, Acting Chairman, NSD Society** said, “Theatre brings meaning to people and the position of an actor is held highly in theatre of our country. An actor should be mindful of their own emotions and the emotions of their character and this understanding if conceived can help anyone and everyone.”

Like each year, this year too, BRM promises a diverse experience featuring a host of plays depicting various shades of emotions along with masterclasses by stalwarts from the theatre fraternity. The festival will stage 91 plays that include a combination of post-modern and regional theatre by Indian and international thespians. It will open with veteran theatre and film personality **Amol Palekar’s crime-drama *Kusur – The Mistake*** that revolves around the life of retired Assistant Police Commissioner Dandavate, whose life changes overnight when he volunteers to serve at the police control room. Besides, the festival will also showcase a mix of romance, suspense, comedy and music along with international plays, interactive sessions and allied events.

Independent Study on Folk Theatre by Ishita Ahlawat and Mansi Panwar

FOLK THEATER

Folk Theater is a Theater which originated, evolved among and has been transmitted through the common people. Its relationship with the common people is deep, multiple and multi layered. It carries within it the entire culture with all its social religious institutions. We find reflection of customs, rituals and beliefs of common people. It aims at common man, the common man is emotionally and intellectually involved with this Theater, for him the Theater is not something external or superficial. It is part of his tradition with which he has lived for generations. Italo Calvino's define folk Theater India Today: Folk Theater is "a work which persists as background noise even when a present that is totally incompatible with it holds sway".

HISTORY

According to some historians, it was during the 15th and 16th century that folk Theater emerged in local dialects in different regions, and the themes it borrowed were Sanskrit epics and the Puranas, historical events, local folk tales of romance and bravery and biographical accounts of local heroes. The traditions of Indian folk Theater are not fully documented, for they stretch back into distant prehistory right from aboriginal cave dwellers who have left some record of their Theater in the form of wall and cave paintings. Even Buddhist and Vedic literature-works such as Arthashastra- tell art historians about rich traditions of Indian folk Theater. The classical and regional forms of Theater revolved around

religion, legends and myths. There are indications of the impact of folk Theater even on the classical Sanskrit Theater. It thus became imperative to include Sanskrit Theater in this issue.

TYPES OF FOLK THEATER

- Jatra of Bengal
- Nautanki
- Ramlila of North India
- Raslila of North India
- Bhavai of Gujarat
- Tamasha of Maharashtra
- Terrakoothu of Tamilnadu
- Yakshagana of Karnataka
- Chhau of seraikella







MY CONTRIBUTION

I went to “Bharat Rang Mahotsav”15” which takes place in National School of Drama. I attended few folk plays there and out of all the plays following are the two I liked most.

PANDWANI (DUSHASHAN VADH)



'Pandwani' is a form of play from Chhattisgarh. The Director of the play is Teejan Bai. It depicts the story of the Pandavas, the leading characters in the epic Mahabharata.

It is narrated in a very lively form. The lead artist narrated one episode after another from the epic in a very forceful manner. She enacted the characters in the scenes to produce a more realistic effect. Occasionally, she also breaks out into a dance movement. During the performance she even sang along the rhythm produced by the ektara held in his hand.

There are two styles of narration in Pandwani; 'Vedamati' and 'Kapalik'. In the Vedamati style the lead artist narrates in a simple manner by sitting on the floor throughout the performance. The Kapalik style is livelier, where the narrator actually enacts the scenes and characters. Teejan Bai has been the most popular artist of the Kapalik style in the past five decades.

MADALYA

This form of play is from Gujarat the following three skits were performed. The very first script was on socio-economic aspects of the forest-based agrarian society. The tribes believed that the forest belonged to them and no-one else. Not even the government had any right over it. But British took control of the forest with the Forest Law of 1842, prohibiting the free usage of forest by natives. This skit was created in order to express the anger and protest against the law.

Another play performed was Sautish; Sautish in Dangi translates as 'Sautan' in Hindi or Polygamy. Polygamy was not socially accepted by a large part of the society. This skit in the most hilarious way portrayed the position of a husband with two wives. This universal story of a man with two women

and their eternal quarrels remains the same for each society.

The last one was; Vagh-bokadi. It was quite common to encounter wild animals like tigers and bears in Dangs. Many a times they lost their cattle too. This skit refers to the everyday presence of wild animals in Dangi life and how they bump into these animals. Vaghdev was feared and yet worshipped. These contradictory emotions of love and fear are expressed in this skit. It is a comedy depicting an incident of a tiger eating the wandering goat of a careless Dangi farmer.

BHAVAI

Bhavai is the folk Theater of Gujarat, the homeland of Mahatma Gandhi. Backward inhibited the people are known for their shrewd business acumen. The rich and middle class are colorless. But the farmers, craftsmen, village artisans, poor and less inhibited bring color to their folk arts.

Gujarat state has two extremes. The upper class are prudish and preach and puritanism. The lower strata derive energy from the worship of Amba Mata, the Goddess of Power. The bhavai is performed during Navratri in form of shrine of Amba Mata. The players are convinced that the goddess attends the performance. That word bhavai has several interpretations. 'Bhav' means 'life' , 'bhava' means 'sentiments' and 'vai' means 'carrier' or a 'diary'. So bhavai could mean "carrier of life" or "expressive of sentiment" or "diary of life".



HISTORY

It was started in the early fifteenth century by Asita Thakur. A Brahmin of the Audichya Clan. He recited scriptures singing the texts and explaining their meaning to the devotees in the precincts of a temple in town of Sidhpur. An unusual incident turned Asatia into the originator of a new form of drama. Ganga beautiful daughter of the farmer of a neighbouring village was abducted by Muslim Chief. The villagers were infuriated, but no one dared challenge the Muslim Chief. Asaita Thakar went to him and pleased him with his singing. In return he asked him to set Ganga free, claiming that she is his daughter. The Chief knowing that Hindu orthodoxy did not allow a Brahmin to eat from the same plate as a farmer's daughter put the poet singer to the test and asked him to eat with Ganga. Asaita ate and thus brought her back, but he was ostracized by his community. This turned him against Brahmins. He left with his three sons and decided to earn his living by singing and acting. He composed play let's attacking social injustice, prudery and the caste system.

The three sons were boycotted by the society, their families were called 'Trigala'. Today trigala is itself a caste and inheritor of Bhavai. The village headmen were grateful to Asaita and promised that in future

village headmen would look after the needs of Asaita's son and grandsons wherever they performed.

Asaita's plays are an integral part of every troupe's repertoire. A famous one is 'Joothan Mian, others are Kajora, Chhail Batau etc.

In spite of the deep devotion of its players to the goddess, the bhavai is secular at its roots. Its jokes, dances, themes and songs deal with the life of common people. Mythological heroes are rare. It is the saucy maid, the miserly merchant, the betraying wife, the romantic stranger, the lascivious old man, the braggart, who regale the audiences.

PERFORMANCE

A Bhavai troupe consists of fourteen people, the Naik who is the director, stage manager and the leader of the party, who holds license to perform on other districts. The two male actors (Veshgor and Veshacharya) playing the hero and the secondary hero, the female actors (Kanchaliyas) of heroin and secondary heroine, the clown (Rangalo) and the instrumentalists. The troupe members are expected to observe celibacy for six months during performance time. Hindus generally believe that celibacy contributes to willpower and physical energy.

The Bhavai, like Tamasha is down to Earth. Women do not go to see it and this allows actors more freedom in vulgar jokes, abuses and off colour remarks. The women in Gujarat observe purdah an influence of century's old Muslim rule and Hindu orthodoxy. She draws ghunghat across her face and looks through the fine muslin or silk as she talks. She speaks even to her husband behind the veil. Because of her purdah, men always take part of women in the Bhavai.

The lamp is placed on two bricks near the wall on which Amba Mata's trishul (trident) is symbolically drawn with the white dots around it. The actors pass their hands over their eyes

and foreheads to incorporate light. The sputtering lamp is the incarnation of Amba Mata. A symbol of power, it gives light and dispels darkness. The actors worship it. They put incense, fruits, camphor and coconut in front of it.

After putting on their makeup, the players sing a devotional song, garbi, invoking the goddess, and then walk to the arena, where the Naik draws a circle with a ten foot radius on the ground using the point of his sword. This is the acting area (paudh or chachar), sacred place only the performers can enter it. The actors and singers sitting in the paudh sing 5 devotional songs. Then they rise and invoke the mother.

The instrumentalists are placed on one side. The Pakhawaj has a drum slung horizontally around his neck. The narghan player has a pair of small drums tied around his waist, and he plays them standing. One man jingles the sarangi, producing the subtlest undertones and overtones. The cymbal player adds metallic rhythm and clang. The most dramatic and unusual instrument is bhungal, a five foot long pipe with the tapering mouthpiece and a large bell shaped end. The bhungal folds up like a telescope. Its trumpet like sound is used for entries, exits and climaxes. The two bhungal players must have good breath control and stamina.

When the first invocation is sung, only the bhungal notes accompany it. No drum or cymbal is allowed. No one dances. Everyone is in meditation. During the invocation all the players are in paudh. The actors who are part of subsequent scene suddenly disappear. The actors slip into the dressing room in turn as their cues approach. Other actors are part of chorus. Every one of them can sing and dance and can play an instrument.

After this God Ganesha is invoked. The actor playing role of Ganesha wears ankle bells, a yellow silk dhoti, a silk jacket, garlands, and a cap. He holds a shining brass plate and moves

it horizontally and vertically before his plate. The brass plate is there to hide his face since no one is expected to impersonate Ganesha.

When the prayer to Ganesha is over, The village barber walks through the passage carrying a big brass torch. In olden times the torch was invariably of silver if the Bhavai troupe was prosperous. When an important character is to strike a pose, the barber promptly rushes to him with his flaming torch and moves along with him, highlighting his facial expressions.

The performance starts about 9 in the evening and continues until eleven in the following morning. A sequence of dialogue completing a thought process or an incident is marked by a brisk dance phrase. The Naik speaks out the drum syllables: tata-thai thai, tata-thai thai, tata thai ta. The characters dance to the rhythmic syllables which are repeated three times. This breaks the monotony of the spoken word and stitches together the rambling dialogue.

COSTUME, MAKUP and PROPS

Each character carries his own costume and does his own make up. The colours mostly used in makeup are white, red and black.

The characters of humbler social status like a barber, a farmer, a merchant, a scavenger or a gardener do not use any makeup or period costumes. Kings and Chiefs have exaggerated moustaches, eyebrows and a faint reddish paint over their face. A king's costume is a mixture of the Mughal and the local Gujarati folk style. The tunic is tight at the waist and flares below. The pyjamas are narrow at the knees and bulge at the thighs.

The Brahmin is dressed in a thin, red bordered white dhoti. The sacred thread (janiyau) runs from his left shoulder across his bare chest down to his waist at the right. On his forehead

three lines of sandalwood paste with two crimson spots in the centre. Wearing a tilted cap on his close shaven head, he carries a brass jug in his hand and scriptures under his arm.

The actors have very few costume changes. The same actors may play different characters. By tilting their turban, changing his gait, changing position of the scarf etc.

MADALYA

Another folk form of Gujarat. The term Madalya is derived from Madal, a large tribal percussion instrument, similar to dhol. Madalya plays central role in the play. This form is thus named after it.

The body language, gestures as well as movements of the body are self-expressive. The imaginative use of makeup is really impressive.

HISTORY

The Dangi is a small district located in southern Gujarat. It shares more than 50% of the border with Maharashtra and this has influenced its culture and language a lot. Dangi is a tiny forest area. However from 1818 onwards, it came under the British. The British had realised importance of its rich forests of teak and bamboo and wanted to exploit these. Until this arrival the dangs were divided under four rulers of the tribe of Bhils, the original inhabitants of this area.

In order to own the forests, British struck a deal with these kings. They were given a meagre 'privy purses' in exchange for the ownership of the forests. The property rights of the forests were transferred to the Indian Government after Independence.

The transfer of forests did not affect Dangi's much at first.

But later on the restrictions imposed by the British authorities and subsequently by the Indian Government too, brought it home to them that they no longer had any rights on the forest produce. This irritated the Dangis. These tribes indulged in their traditional habits of cutting the trees etc. This seemed to flout the 'rights' and 'laws' of authorities, who then beat them, punished them and even jailed them at times. They were doing what they had been doing for centuries. But that was no longer legal and so the chastisements. This disrupted their understanding and they could not reconcile to the new phase of life. This led to irritation and resentment against these restrictions, for these affected their sources of income adversely too. It was the forest department which was earning profit from the forest produce instead of them, and they turned into mere labours for the forest department.

The Bhils felt displaced and alienated in their own land. Their anger and frustration, resentment and protestations found expression in Theater. The Madalya form proved a proper medium for airing their helplessness and resentment against the new set-up. It has an innate strength of expressions and can communicate their innermost feelings, thoughts using humour and laughter to bring the message to fore.

This form has the capacity to advocate the social changes needed in their own society by exposing its evil practices. Several skits reveal the major characteristics of the socioeconomic life of the Dangis as it used to be and how it was jeopardized. Madalya form of Theater acted as a 'safety value' to let off their steam of frustration and resentment which otherwise could have resulted in open rebellion.

PERFORMANCE

Madalya is a night long affair. It is performed from late evening to nearly early morning. The audience

surrounds the performing area and the actors face in all the directions. In an open plot, the vesh is performed with lightning provided by the petromax lamps or torches or electricity if available.

A Madalya team belongs to a village and is named after that village. The performers are usually numbered between 14 and 20 with 4-6 Madal players, 2-3 Gamars (lead singers), 5-7 Chorus singers, 1-2 Sohanguis one Rambha Patra (female character) and one Sutradhar or Patil. Four to six huge Madal drums are used simultaneously in Madalya. The performance is inaugurated by the Madal players, The singers stand in either a straight line or in a semi-circle. They open the performance by Naman Geet, a kind of prayer to Ramdev, Mahadev, Krishna's Dwarka, Unaidevi, Pandavas etc. The Madal drum players give the beats and also dance in rhythm in a linear or circular movement. The movement patterns are of seven types and these are selected according to the skit. Madal has to be played in a particular taal. There are three basic taals Thirsya, Dobing and Madal. The Thirsya taal is used at the times of marriages and is similar to Dadra Taal of Indian music. Dobing taal is used when the Madalis are playing the drum and dancing. The Madal Taal is most frequently used like when the performance begins.

The lead singer or singers (Ganar) sing the songs and the chorus repeat the lines together, The song gives a brief idea of what is to follow in the next phase of performance or another skit that would be coming up.

One can recognize this Theater form not only by the madal drum but also some typical arrangements of characters in them. The common characters are Sohangu (Vidushak or the fool), Gandey Natwa (Sutradhar or Patil) and Rambha Patra (female character) played by men only.

COSTUMES, MAKEUP and PROPS

It is interesting to note the costumes and makeup in this character, as they are prominent by their simplicity and sometimes totally without any special provision. Sohngai wears only a loincloth, the usual dress of Dangi. Others may wear pants and shirts. Patil wears a shirt and dhoti along with a cap to show his power. The Rambha Patra wears a saree and blouse, sometimes jewellery too and always covers his head with the loose end of the saree.

Make-up is also minimal and used only to heighten expressions. the usual theatrical make-up is not used at all. Some sohngis paint their chest and face with soot and lamp black. A beard made of string of jute is used to indicate old man, old woman. Dark glasses, tiger masks, artificial moustaches are used to and when needed in a skit.

Kudkas is an instrument to indicate the power of the Patil who uses to hit the Sohngi for his pranks throughout the vesh. Other props are adapted from whatever material is at the hand. Even human bodies are made use of. For example, they substitute logs by rolling human bodies or men arrange themselves in such a fashion that we can see a stone wall made of them.

CLASSIFICATION

Madalya Vesh can be classified based on the themes into

- Social
- Nature- Related
- Protest
- Occupational

The Social Skits deal with the problems of their own community. These are full of humour and laughter even when sarcastic. Popular social skits are Be Bairi no vesh (Tale of two wives) and Pahana (Guest) Environment being an integral part of their lives, it is seen in their vesh too. For

instance, in Wagh Bakdi , The goat of Sohangi is eaten up by a tiger in the forest. Such incidents are common in their lives. This experience was converted into comedy of errors. It is a popular skit.

Rebellion against authorities is strongly expressed. When the tribals lost control over their forests, the restrictions imposed by the authorities were resented by the Dangis and they voiced their protest through Theater.

Some themes are even related to special occupations that are connected with environmental needs such as hunting, castration of oxen, grazing cattle, goats in the jungle The occupational hazards the face are also shown in a way that generates laughter in the audience.

There are few skits that are both related to occupation and nature. For instance, skits of Harpin and Murain revolve around female characters that have to go into the jungle due to their occupation or duty.

Undoubtedly, Madalya Theater provides interesting entertainment and voices the feelings of Dangis very well. But it's not that popular now. Modern sources of entertainment such as television, radio and films make Theater no longer thrilling or enjoyable. A small number of scripts repeated over time, also lose power to entertain the new generation of Dangis. Especially when no new skits are coming forth. It is an all-night affair but now-a-days people prefer spending their night time with television.

Even the visual attraction is lacking in this Theater. as their costumes remained simple. It does not have mythological or epic stories that find acceptance even in the modern times. The artists so not have a good income from their performances, this also discourages the new generation from joining the team of their village and continuing the art. The advent of other forms like Tamasha

from Maharashtra, diminished the popularity of Maharashtra. The music of Tamasha is based on Hindi films which attracts large crowd.

Utpala Desai has written in Horizon'03 " In spite of such a strong capacity and structure, this form of Theater has not received the attention it deserves. If taken seriously it can be a competition to even modern Indian Theater. I think because it makes no little use of props. It lets imagination run riot and achieves easily aim of all performing arts where the audience feels one with the performers. It is high time that we study this form and develop it so that it receives acceptance and gives us an opportunity explore another form of folk entertainment. Instead of treating it as a museum piece, it should be brought to life with new techniques and themes of current interest and shouldn't be left to die, as we have done with so many other inherited art forms."

TRADITIONAL THEATER OF INDIA – CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

It is believed that Theater and drama are gift of west to India. We have some popular entertainments like Nautanki or the Jatra but these had little to do with drama which was introduced by British. Indian Drama is more of dramatic poetry even that had become extinct and was rediscovered for India by the western scholars. Nothing could be further more truth.

The distinctiveness of Indian Theater tradition in the dramatic cultures of the world- its antiquity as well as its imaginative and aesthetic quality is more or less indisputable today. The roots of Theater in our country are very old and deep. It had undergone wide ranging, fundamental changes during the last two to three thousand years.

It can be safely asserted that some kind of theatrical activity with elements of music, dance, acting had been in vogue in the country for at least a thousand years before

the Christian era. With the appearance of more favourable socio- cultural conditions, it gradually acquired more regular and complex forms, such as those of Sanskrit drama and Theater from sixth to fourth century B.C. Thus began that fascinating period of the unique flowering and achievements of the Indian dramatic tradition.

In this new phase plays of different kinds, styles and artistic excellence were written in Sanskrit, the language of literary expressions of that time. Many innovative and often highly sophisticated styles for the presentation of those plays were also developed. This burst of energy was not confined to creative exploration dramatic writing and staging.

But this Theater, established on such a strong base of theory and practice had disintegrated gradually by 10th century A.D. There are many reasons for this decline: social and political instability created by foreign invasion and internal conflicts, loss of creative energy in the Sanskrit language gradually confined to a small elite, fall in the standard of dramatic writing due to lack of talent, loss of appeal for common spectators too. And this Theater gave way to another Theater tradition that flowered in different regions of India.

We thus came to the next phase of Indian Theater which took place not in Sanskrit but in different regional languages carrying with the distinct social, cultural, literary milieu and flavour of each region. This phase of Indian Theater is spread over a period of about one thousand years, and many of its strands and forms have continued up to the present day. The activity in this entire phase is often called 'folk Theater' today, because unlike the town based classical Sanskrit Theater it has flourished in the countryside.

A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

If one were to look for a gender identity for theatrical forms, then clearly folk Theater would be feminine as against

the masculine classical form. As Rubees observes, "a feminist dramaturgical aesthetic spurns these structures based on conflict and resolution. Where everything gets built up to one screaming point and then everything is released. Women often write in waves, repeated climaxes, collages.."

Despite the ongoing efforts of groups of women in India to Indianize the feminist movement, the popular conception of the term Feminism remains both ignorant and imitative. Sociological studies outline a movement that is at best skeletal, too amorphous and rambling to have any meaningful impact in any but a sporadic way. Most importantly, the reach of feminism is restricted to an urban upper class. India's urban rural divide intensifies the problem of disparity between women of varied socio economic backgrounds, problematized further by the aspect of caste. Women's class „economic grounding, family and geographical locations" have a direct bearing on their intellectual leanings. Work is not a common yardstick of liberation for urban and rural sisters. For a woman belonging to the elite class, a job spells economic independence and therefore liberation while for rural women belonging to the lower classes; work is a reminder of their economic bondage. Gender in their context is not a distinguishing factor since both sexes have an economic responsibility to fulfil. The status and position of women within the Indian patriarchal system however, leaves a lot to be desired. If Indian society is to become truly modern and progressive, the concept of equal rights and awareness of social realities must reach all women but particularly rural women who are the most exploited. For the feminist quest, folk Theater displays an almost natural propensity. When compared, the features of the sub genres of folk Theater and feminist Theater (as it exists in the West) divulge a large number of similarities in both form and structure. The parallels between folk Theater and the feminist quest are undeniable. Balwant Gargi in Folk Theater of India listed out

certain characteristics of folk Theater. He stated that some precepts of folk Theater remain common, regardless of state and cultural identity. Primarily rural, it is rustic, unselfconscious, spontaneous and boisterously naïve. Folk Theater does not offer a slice of life, but a panoramic view of existence and elicits enthusiastic audience participation.

Ann Saddlemayer, eminent feminist critic, says of Feminist Theater, "that's how our art should be all encompassing, sucking in, surrounding, embracing, not linear, not clear cut, not sequential...film, slides, music, puppets actresses, dancers, everywhere on top of you., below you, around you. That would be women's Theater•a circus feeling throughout the play, a circus that people could enter. Ideologically then, there is a definite match but structurally too, similarities between folk Theater and feminist Theater are too many to ignore. Both defy the linearity of time and space favored by classical (male) Theater, in an effort to achieve timelessness. Both refrain from the concept of linear time and may build up a montage of varied dramatic episodes. Because both are performed by the marginalized, there might be a paucity of funds, so the same set is often transformed via word or action. Props are also minimal. Furthermore, the actor/character is chameleon•like. One actor sometimes plays several roles. The feminist protagonist plays several roles to heighten the sense of female perspective of various incidents. Feminist Theater by definition is drama that embraces transformation, inspires and asserts the possibility for change. Its emphasis on role playing implies that we (human beings) are what we do and what we become and that no one, neither man nor woman, is restricted from becoming the other.

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17th Bharat Rang Mahotsav – A Report



Bharat Rang Mahotsav was established a decade ago by the National School of Drama to stimulate the growth and development of theatre across the country. Originally a national festival showcasing the work of the most creative theatre workers in India, it has evolved to international scope, hosting theatre companies from around the world, and is now the largest theatre festival of Asia. The 17th Mahotsav included several national and international performances, and various associated events in a wrap-around program.

[Click here for the list of plays.](#)

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

The Play

Dr. Stockmann discovers that the source of drinking and spa water is riddled with pathogenic micro-organisms, caused by industrial effluence. Stockmann wants to publish the findings in the newspaper and demands that the city council re-route the water pipes. Influential citizens and local journalists promise their support. However, his brother Peter, the councilor of the city, raises some serious concerns. The economic prosperity of the spa town will be threatened and the citizens will have to bear the brunt of the high repair costs. Suddenly the support for Stockman from the town's policymakers begins to wane. They spread seeds of doubt about his plans and try to cover up the fact of the contaminated water. But Stockmann insists on transparency and intends to go public on the matter. In an all-important speech, he hopes to win the town over to his way of thinking. He accepts that this will cause a permanent rift between himself and his brother and that he also runs the risk of being ostracized by the community. For him the affair has long since ceased to be about the polluted health spa, his target is society as a whole. Ibsen's drama wavers on a fine line between honesty and fanaticism. What is the potential for transparency in a commercialized society?

The Director

Thomas Ostermeier was born in 1968 in Soltau. He spent his youth in Landshut. From 1992 to 1996 he studied directing at the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Art Berlin. From 1996 to

1999 Ostermeier was Artistic Director of the Baracke at the Deutsches Theater in Berlin.

Since September 1999 Ostermeier is a member of the Artistic Direction and Resident Director of the Schaubühne. He has been awarded with numerous international prizes. Ostermeier has been appointed Officier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture. In 2010 he was announced as president of the German-French Council of Culture. His productions are touring worldwide and have been shown in cities such as Adelaide, Athens, Avignon, Barcelona, Bordeaux, Brussels, Caracas, Copenhagen, Dublin, Hong Kong, Krakow, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Marseille, Melbourne, Moscow, Naples, New York, Omsk, Oslo, Ottawa, Paris, Prague, Québec, Reims, Rennes, Seoul, Sydney, Taipei, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, Venice and Vienna.

Playwright

Henrik Johan Ibsen (20 March 1828 – 23 May 1906) was a major 19th-century Norwegian playwright, theatre director, and poet. He is often referred to as “the father of realism” and is one of the founders of Modernism in theatre. His major works include *Brand*, *Peer Gynt*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Emperor and Galilean*, *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, and *The Master Builder*. He is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare, and *A Doll's House* became the world's most performed play in early 20th century.

The Group

The Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz was founded in 1962. Since 1999 it has been led by artistic director Thomas Ostermeier. The foundation of his tenure was laid in the formation of a new ensemble of permanently employed actors, who essentially have been working together ever since, regularly extended by new appointments. The Schaubühne premieres a minimum of ten

shows per season alongside a repertoire of over 30 existing productions.

Dreams of Talim – A Tribute to Chetan Datar

Ravindra Tripathi's

theaterama



Last year in BRM (the 12th Bharat Rang Mahotsav) when I saw *Sex, Morality and Censorship*, directed by **Sunil Shanbaug**, I was quite impressed. And not only me, the entire Kamani auditorium was electrified when the performance was over.

This year Sunil Shanbaug has brought another production ***Dreams Of Talim***, written by Sachin Kundalkar. But there is also a story behind it, which is essential to be told if you want to fully understand this. Actually, before the play starts, the story is told before the audience. It is about late Chetan

Datar, a talented theatre person who died young in 2008. Chetan had written a monologue title 'No I Madhavbagh' around 2004. It was never staged during his lifetime.

After Chetan's death Sunil decided to do one of Chetan's text on stage as a tribute. Then came **Sachin Kundalkar** for his support. Sachin wrote a full length play based on Chetan's monologue. The result is ***Dreams of Talim***.

It is a play about alternative sexuality, an emerging discourse in Indian society. The problem of alternative sexuality is that it is taboo. Despite that it has won a legal battle, the society at large doesn't accept it, the family abhors it. The play deals with this 'taboo', the issues, questions and passions associated with it.

It has four characters, Anay, Yash, Sita and Sita's mother. Anay is a young theatre director. He is abandoned by all his colleagues and friends except one, Yash who still admires him. Both the boys are in special relationship (gay) with each other. Meanwhile, Sita, an actress come in their life. She showed her willingness to act in play which Anay wants to direct a play. When the rehearsal get started the problems of alternative sexuality arise on different planes. Anay is individually facing the problem and Sita is finding it difficult to come to terms with it on emotional level. Simultaneously many issues about love, theatre and relationships emerge.

The strength of ***Dreams of Talim*** is its acting. All the actors, Anand Tewari as Yash, Suvrat Joshi as Anay, Geetanjali Kulkarni as Aai and Divya Jaddale as Sita, give commendable performances. There is an element of fantasy also in the play which makes it a little bit surrealistic. The play was multi-lingual with a mix of Hindi and English.

NSD's 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsav Theatre Festival to open Festival featuring 81 productions



Still from Charandas Chor the Opening Play

National School of Drama, 6th Jan 2010

The National School of Drama is one of the foremost theatre training institutions in the world and the only one of its kind in India. Set up by Sangeet Natak Academy in 1959 as one of its constituent units, it became an independent entity in 1975 registered as an autonomous organization, fully financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

The school has two performing wings; Repertory and Theatre-in-

Education. In 1999, the school organized its first National Theatre Festival, which was christened Bharat Rang Mahotsav, generally held during January each year. The festival, since it is hosted by a training institute such as the NSD, in fact works as training tool, by offering drama students an opportunity to view national and international performances, on one platform. Since there are very few functioning repertories in India and many productions do not enjoy long run, the festival is a rare opportunity to see so much together.

13th BRM

The 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsav, marks the beginning of the New Year with another milestone for the prestigious National School of Drama (NSD), as its annual national and international theatre festival opens with concurrent shows at multiple venues in Mandi House over two weeks from 7 to 22 January 2011. The BRM or Theatre Utsav, as it is popularly known, has come to be regarded as one of the largest and most important theatre festivals in Asia.

In keeping with the tradition of presenting outstanding theatre that allows for meaningful engagement, this year also the BRM will be presenting a rich fare of 81 productions selected out of nearly 450 proposals received from across India and from around the world. Taking forward the 'Young Experimenters' component of last year, BRM 13 also includes productions by graduates of the school in a synthesis of experience, new energy and vision.

Indian Component

The 13th BRM is inaugurated this year with an energetic and lively production of Habib Tanvir's *Charandas Chor* from Assam directed by one of NSD's alumni, Anup Hazarika. The works of eminent contemporary Indian playwrights like Girish Karnad's

Bikhre Bimband Dharamveer Bharati's *Suraj Ka Saatwan Ghoda* are presented in striking new productions, alongside classics like Ibsen's *Lady of the Sea* (*Sagara Kanyaka*) and *Some Stage Directions for Henrik Ibsen's John Gabriel Borkman*, Alexander Pushkin's *Little Big Tragedies* and Tagore's 'A Wife's Letter' and '*Bisarjan*'. Shakespearean texts are re-explored in *Macbeth and Othello* (Reshmi Rumaal) while the human predicament in times of political turmoil is seen in *Hamlet Machine*, *Samanadraba Mami*, *Gaddi Charan Di Kaahal Bari Si*, *Sharel Sha* among others. Wishing to pay respects to Shyamanand Jalan, one of the most eminent of the 70's generation of theatre director/actors who passed away recently, we have an evening devoted to him entitled *Homage* which showcases scenes from some of Jalan's most outstanding productions produced by Padatik, Kolkata.

In dance/choreographed pieces like *Grey is Also a Colour* and *Sweet Sorrow* the focus is on inventing a movement based visual language. *Zindagi Madhur hai Kumansenu mein*, *Quality Street*, *Khatijabai of Karmali Terrace* and *Salaam India* revisit and reinterpret the received texts; While original scripts form the basis of *Before The Germination..*, *Dreams of Taleem*, *Park*, *Mathemagician* and *Tritiyo Anko* among others. From puppet plays to mime to dance/choreographed pieces to devised and experimental work in new media; the festival offers something for everyone.

International Dimension

This year the Festival will be hosting 23 productions drawn from 20 countries – China, Pakistan, Chile, France, UK, Bolivia, Chile, Japan, Egypt, Argentina, London, Germany, Sri Lanka, USA, Poland, Bangladesh, Nepal, Serbia, Ukraine, Italy and Norway.

At the forefront of the international section this year we have three theatre productions from France. The classic opera by Beaumarchais, *Le Barbier de Seville*, will be seen in a

spectacular adaptation with a French director, Eric Vigner, directing a group of Albanian actors of the National Theatre of Tirana. Also from France is *In Vivo*, a dance piece, “*Silent Words*” a mime performance by Laurent Decol, as well as a photographic exhibition on the Footsbn Theatre.

It is for the first time that there is such a large component from Latin America. We have the opportunity to see some contemporary works with *Santa Maria de Iquique: Revenge of Ramon Ramon* and a puppet performance *Pueta Peralta* (Chile), *En un Sol Amarillo* (Bolivia), *Muare* (Argentina). The foreign component like the overall festival is as eclectic as it is diverse. From China we have “*The Amorous Lotus Pan*” based on the original Sichuan opera of the same name. *My Country, Life for Remembrance & The Quest* (Egypt), *Miranda* (UK), *He who Burns, Forest* (USA), *Surprised Body Project* (Italy/Norway) are all fine examples of physical theatre. One can also find unique conceptualization in *Ugetsu Monogatari* (Japan) and *All About Love* (Ukrainian), while plays like *Songs of Euripides*, *Brecht-The Hardcore Machine* revisit received text. From the SAARC countries we have *Khariko Ghera* (Nepal), *Khwabon Ke Musafir and Dara* (Pakistan), *Makarakshaya-The Dragon* (Sri Lanka), *Aroj Charitammrito* (Bangladesh) and *Stones and Mirrors* (Afghanistan).

Festival in Chennai

In keeping with the practice started four years ago of sharing the fare invited for the festival at Delhi with another city, a part of the repertoire for BRM 13 will travel to Chennai with 19 of the invited productions for the Festival slated there from January 11 to 20, 2011. BRM Chennai will be presented at two venues Sir Mutha Venkatasubba Rao Concert Hall and Museum Theatre in the city.

Other Allied Events

The Festival, as a melting point of different cultures

provides a unique opportunity for enjoyment of theatre as well as professional interaction. A series of synergetic wrap around programmes that have been organized around the Festival comprises 'Meet the Director' which includes talks & interactive sessions with some of the directors/designers on Performance Language/Scenography/Set & Light Design. Three Photographic exhibitions include Abhi-Vyakti, an exhibition celebrating the actor, working methodologies of Asian theatre schools (part of Asia-Pacific Bureau of Drama Schools meet); and an exhibition on the Footsbarn Company, France. There will be other programmes like, a special performance of dance and music by Min Tanaka & Aki Takahashi, French mime by Laurant Decol, solo performances based on African themes, four improvised performances on garbage called *The Garbage Project* and a performance on *Social Gaming*. The Asia Pacific Drama Schools' Workshop and Festival will also be a part of the allied events.

The Scale

The 81 performances and dozens of associated events in Delhi take place at seven venues – the Kamani Auditorium, the Shri Ram Centre, the LTG Theatre and the four venues within the premises of the NSD–Abhimanch, Sammukh, Bahumukh and Open Air besides its studio spaces like Abhikalp and TIE Space.

There are simultaneous performances and events spread over five to six venues each day during the two week run in Delhi and 18 productions at the two venues in Chennai during an eight day run there. BRM 13 will host around 3,000 theatre people from across India and the world. As in the past, the festival shows are expected to run to full houses, attracting nearly 70,000 spectators in Delhi and about 10,000 viewers in Bhopal.

To design, mount and coordinate a festival of this size in two cities involves a logistical feat that the NSD manages with élan because of its highly trained technical personnel,

faculty and staff and the commitment they bring to the cause of theatre worldwide.

The mega event is an opportunity for the professionals, public and students alike to engage with the process and practice of contemporary theatre arts.

Complete Schedule Bharat Rang Mahotsava January 2011

13th BRM – Festival ([Click here to view schedule](#))



**Burqavaganza – Banned in
Pakistan staged in BHARANGAM
– Compiled by Manohar**

Khushalani



At the recently concluded **BHARANGAM**, the Theatre Fest organized by the National School of Drama, a Pakistani play, ***Burqavaganza***, produced by **Ajoka** Theatre Group, was staged at Kamani Auditorium, New Delhi. The play had been banned in Pakistan last year, because of its irreverence to the *Burqa*, a traditional veil and gown worn by conservative Muslim women. The play is especially relevant and contemporary because the controversy over women covering either their head with a *Hijab* or also their face and the whole body with a *Burqa* rages even in the Muslim majority countries which were known for their secular ideals.

For example, *Hijab*, an obligatory code of dress in Islam, was banned in public buildings, universities, schools and government buildings in Muslim-majority Turkey shortly after a 1980 military coup. Prime Minister of Turkey, **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** (whose wife and daughters are veiled) had promised before his first electoral victory in 2002 that the “unfair ban” would be abolished. Turkey’s ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) and the far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP) opposition party have thrashed out a deal on a

compromise head-cover to be allowed on campus after decades of an all-out ban. Under the deal agreed to by the two parties, a day earlier, women at universities are permitted to cover their heads by tying the headscarf in the traditional way beneath the chin.

While the Turkish PM insists that respect for basic human rights is his sole motivation in pushing through the amendments, some believe that the move would cause immense problems and deal a blow to the separation of state and religion, one of the founding principles of the modern Turkish Republic.

Told in a rollickingly funny mode, ***Burqavaganza*** laughs at the pointless rigidity of customs and dress code and ridicules the system that upholds their sanctity. The play follows the story of the young lovers: the progress of their romance, the wedding and the birth of the first child. Meantime, the police, looking for the terrorist leader Bin Batin, and the *Burqa* Brigade who suspect that their *Burqas* are too colourful and revealing constantly bicker because of their conflicting agendas. An unveiling ceremony follows where the Minister for *Burqa* Affairs makes a passionate speech about the significance of the *Burqa* and everyone celebrates with song and dance.

The charismatic scholar Hijab Hashmi inspires her devotees to keep their eyes open for the traitors in the *Burqa* Brigade. Bin Batin carries on his bloody fight against the helmet-covered enemy. The stage action is accompanied by telecast of '*Burqavision*' programmes which include a soap, a documentary '*Burqa* Though the Ages', News, Sports, a fashion show and 'Breaking News'. While *Burqas* of all shapes and sizes create images and situations reminding the audience of the socio-political situation in Pakistan, two *maulanas* sitting on the edges of the stage, in a TV show, respond to the questions from their viewers about apparently important questions about interpretation and application of religious teachings. The statements of the *maulanas* are in fact extracts from '*Beheshti*

Zaiver', a book given to girls at the time of their marriage.

Denouncing the ban on the play **Madiha Gauhar** had then said that the ban was imposed because of pressure from the "*burqa* brigade", and that it proved that the government's enlightened moderation policies were a farce. It was in the early eighties that I had first met Madiha, when I was hanging around with Badal Sircar, Ragini Prakash and Vinod Dua at the Sri Ram Centre Canteen in New Delhi. We were told by Mrs. Acharya, the owner of the canteen, that a Pakistani actress wanted to meet us. We were accosted by this strapping young and beautiful lady who told Badal Sircar that their group had performed his play **Juloos** (Procession) in Pakistan despite the censorship. A little later, Shahid Nadeem with his Ajoka Theatre Group, performed with our group, Theatre Union, at JNU. Shahid even recorded our play **Toba Tek Singh** and took it back with him to Pakistan.

Set up by a small group of cultural activists in 1983, during **General Zia-ul-Haq's** politically and culturally repressive regime, **Ajoka** has struggled with determination against very heavy odds to produce socially meaningful art. It has addressed vital, sometimes taboo subjects through its hard-hitting and innovative productions. Committed to the ideals of peace and tolerance within Pakistan and in the neighbouring regions, it has frequently collaborated with theatre activists from other countries of South Asia particularly from India, viz. Indian directors such as **Badal Sircar, Safdar Hashmi, Anuradha Kapur and Kewal Dhaliwal**.

Founder-playwright of **Ajoka** Theatre, **Shahid Nadeem**, known for his commitment to human rights and peace, is the author of more than 35 original plays and several adaptations. His plays have been performed in Pakistan, India, USA, UK, Norway, Bangladesh, Nepal, Iran and Oman. He is currently the Director of PTV Academy; and Co-director of Panjpaani Indo-Pak Theatre Festival, a festival pioneering interaction between theatre activists of India and Pakistan. He has also worked as

Communications Officer of Amnesty International, based in London and Hong Kong. He was awarded **Feuchtwanger/Getty** fellowship in 2001 and has lectured at various universities in the US.

(Sources: *Islam Online*/NSD/Reuters/ANI)

Cast and Credits

Minister/ Bin Batin/ Chambeli/ Cameraman: Sarfraz Ansari

Maulana 1: Ziafat Arfat

Maulana 2: Imran-ul-Haq

Haseena: Samiya Mumtaz

Khoobroo: Furqaan Majid

Brigade Commander: Khola qurashi

Brigade 1: Asif Japani

Brigade 2: Azaan Malik

Police Officer: Usman Zia

Constable 1: Shahid Zafar

Constable 2: Shehzad

Chorus/Dancers: Taqoob Masih, Nadeem Abbas, Waseem Luka, Meena

Hijab Hashmi/ Mother: Samina Butt

Guitar Player: Vicky

Play and Direction: Shahid Nadeem

Sets and Lighting Design: Kewal Dhaliwal

Music: M Aslam

Costume: Zahra Batool

Assistant Director: Malik Aslam

Production Manager: Imran-ul-Haq

Research: Ziafat Arfat

Video recording / editing: Nadeem Mir, Shakeel Siddiqui