Lyudmila Razumovskaya’s DEAR ELENA SERGEEVNA Director: Vailisa Teplyakova



Playwright: Lyudmila Razumovskaya
Director: Vailisa Teplyakova
Group: Nazarov’s Workshop Institute of Theatre Arts, Russia
Language: Russian
Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

The Play
After the final exams at a regular school, four school children realize that they will not pass the exams and the result would be disastrous to their future career. The teenagers enter the house of their teacher Elena Sergeevna and demand the key to the safe in which the examination papers are stored. At first, they try to persuade the teacher and then they try bribing her, and in the end threaten to blackmail her. But the principled teacher does not agree to the deal and tries to explain to the school children all the meanness and

baseness of their actions.

Director’s Note

In Dear Elena, the youth are four students and their hostage is their teacher, Elena Sergeevna. The student leader, Volodya, is a handsome and innocent looking kid, yet his mind is where his heart should be. He is ready to commit even rape to break Elena Sergeevna, and terrorizes her by saying that it would be out of ‘a purely sporting interest’. Complete rejection of morality and social norms has made him a sociopath. Part of the complexity of this play is that Elena Sergeevna herself is in a way compromised. She herself is a moral woman, but her fidelity is towards an indefensibly corrupt system. This story is not just about students and teachers, or kids and adults, it is about the modern Russian society and the conflicts between different type of people in Russia, and the conflict of different ways of upbringing in the modern society.

The Director

Vasilisa Teplyakova finished Gitis (Russian Institute of Theatre Art) as an actress in 2014. She works as an actress and director in different independent theatre projects, and as a teacher in the Institute Of Theatre Art, and is pursuing Ph.D. at Gitis.

The Playwright

Lyudmila Razumovskaya is a Russian playwright. She received an assignment from the Ministry of Culture to write a play about ‘difficult teenagers’. Hence she wrote Dear Elena Sergeevna. Although the ministry rejected it, the play was staged in Tallinn (in Estonian) in 1981 and in Leningrad Lenkom in 1982. The performance was a huge success, the play was accepted by more than 20 theatres of the country, but in 1983, by order of the Ministry of Culture, it was removed from the repertoire. Allowed again with the beginning of Perestroika in 1987, the play was staged a number of times abroad, including more than a hundred theatres in Europe. Since Lyudmila’s plays too

openly reflect the state of the society, the Ministry of Culture allowed the performances only after censoring parts of the original text.

The Group
Artem Nazarov’s Workshop is a community of young, talented actors who have just graduated from the Institute of Theatre Art. The artists are experienced in acting on different type of stages, from small rooms to big auditoriums and also street stages. The group has six different plays in its repertoire and is always ready to play for charity. The actors annually take part in the festival of theatre schools of the BRIC countries, in performances by Valentin Teplyakov. These artists are young, ambitious, and most importantly, in love with Theatre.

Cast & Credits
Elena Sergeevna: Evgeniya Rozanova
Vladimir: Ivan Nabiullin
Pavel: Vladimir Rogachevskii
Viktor: Alexander Laptev
Lyalya: Anastasia Nyshpora

Playwright: Lyudmila Razumovskaya
Director: Vasilisa Teplyakova

Anasuya Subasinghe’s MY SWEET ROTTEN HERITANCE

Playwright & Director: Anasuya Subasinghe

Group: Salt Theatre Company, Sri Lanka

Language: English

Duration: 2 hr 30 mins

The Play

Welcome to the extraordinary world of Kōlam! The past meets the present and strangely familiar stories unfold in a patchwork of bittersweet encounters. Lāli Kōlama, the man bearing a plank of wood, crosses the ocean to arrive on foreign shores with the hope of becoming a deity. In the wake of neo-nationalist ethos, Diyasēna Kōlama presents himself as a self-appointed saviour, equipped with a master plan to outplay the evil forces threatening his race and religion. Weighed down by her children and their children, Attamma Kōlama endures the adored burdens and fears of the archetypal Sri Lankan grandmother. Vanda Kōlama, the praying mantis, whose palms meet in habitual genuflection, has found a method of survival in the many interpretations of the namaskāra. Gandhabba Kōlama wanders between death and rebirth, seeking justice for those who have been disappeared through the troublesome history of the Island. Lǣli Kōlama returns to the arena, still hopeful of becoming a god. But urged by the Narrator, he has little choice but to take on the role of the Garā Demon responsible for ‘mopping up’ the arena and concluding the performance.

Director’s Note

Kōlam, once a popular secular Sinhalese dance-theatre tradition of Sri Lanka, was performed in the outdoors, incorporation a large repertoire of masks, traditional low-country dance, yak-bera percussion, song, satire, Buddhist cosmology, and the influence of exorcism rituals. Both didactic and entertaining in nature, the Kōlam practitioner was inspired by his social and political landscape in bringing narratives to life in the arena. My Sweet Rotten Heritance is a political satire that attempts to reimagine this moribund

Kōlam practice beyond its ‘fixed’ repertoire, by introducing new masks and narratives familiar to the contemporary spectator. Inter lacing political, historical and mythological accounts, and reinterpreting them in today’s context, the play explores the perform ability of Kōlamas a ‘living’, ‘evolving’ performance practice.

The Director & Playwright

Anasuya Subasinghe is a Sri Lankan academic in performance studies, a playwright, theatre practitioner, and film actor. She has received the award for Best Female Performance at the National Festival of Theatre in Sri Lanka and has won several national awards as Upcoming Female Actor for her role in the international award-winning Sri Lankan film, Ho Gānā Pokuna (The Singing Pond). Anasuya has worked in both the Sinhala and English language theatres of Sri Lanka over the past 20 years, and has interests ranging from masked theatre, physical theatre, solo performance, autobiographical performance and Sri Lankan traditional theatre and ritual performance. Anasuya completed her Doctoral degree in Performance Studies at Victoria University Melbourne Australia where she was awarded a Postgraduate Research Scholarship. She has since returned to her home country to continue her work as an academic and performance practitioner and is currently employed as a visiting lecturer at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts in Colombo.

The Group

Salt Theatre Company was established by playwright, director and actor Anasuya Subasinghe as an independent theatre ensemble that engages in practice as research. My Sweet Rotten Heritance, the debut theatrical Endeavour of the Company, was originally produced in 2017 as the performance component of Anasuya’s Doctoral Degree. Well received by a multicultural audience, Salt Theatre returned to Melbourne in July 2018 for two more successful performances of the play. Composed of an

ensemble of young, dynamic performers, Salt Theatre aims to present theatrical works of high standard that are socially and politically incisive, creatively challenging, and most certainly entertaining.

CAST AND CREDITS

Narrator: Anasuya Subasinghe

Lǣli Kōlama: Jithendra Vidyapathy

Diyasēna Kōlama: Ishara Wickramasinghe

Attamma Kōlama: Stefan Thirimanne

Vanda Kōlama: Stefan Thirimanne

Gandhabba Kōlama : Dinupa Kodagoda

Musician: Nadika Weligodapola

Music: Nadika Weligodapola

Choreography: Jithendra Vidyapathy

Mask Design: Anasuya Subasinghe

Mask Illustrations: Trevor Stacpool, SujeewaWeerasinghe

Mask Design Development & Painting: Sirimal Sanjeewa Kumara, Sujeewa Weerasinghe

Mask Carving: Thuresh Manjula

Backdrop Art: Sirimal Sanjeewa Kumara

Costume Design: Dinushika Senevirathne

Puppet Mask Carving: Sumith Jayawarnana

Puppet Making: Tilaka Subasinghe

Set Design: Anasuya Subasinghe

Set Construction: Gamini Ranasinghe

Lights Design & Operation: Anuradha Mallawarachchi

Production Managers: Malith Hegoda, Sadhani Rajapakse

Playwright & Director: Anasuya Subasinghe