

Forget me not | Ojaswini Trivedi



As the rays of your beam
Transcend through our sheets
The creases collapsing with time
One after the other,
He, after him
after you
The blinding intoxicating power
A touch, innocent, eternal
A smile, banished, surrendered
Will you remember that we loved?
That we loved, despite knowing
Knowing it won't last.
So as long as you walk through life
Trying to find me the "Touch-me-nots"
Remember our macadam of broken dreams.
A life we never lived.

A life undone
Unfinished

Faiz Forever / Kanika Aurora



Gulon mein rang bhare

Baad-e-naubahaar chale

Chale bhi aao ki

Gulshan ka karobaar chale

Come bahaar or spring and we all end up quoting Faiz Ahmed Faiz conjuring up evocative and tantalizing images of a riot of flowers bursting with a million hues beseeching your beloved to come so the garden can get on with its business of blossoming.

Faiz Ahmed Faiz , the romantic, revolutionary poet extraordinaire was born in Sialkot a hundred and ten years ago

on February 13th, 1911 . He shared his hometown with Pakistan's national poet, Allama Muhammad Iqbal.

Linguistically, and culturally he belonged to Urdu, but Faiz Saheb was also well-acquainted with Punjabi and English; he composed some poetry in Punjabi and earned a Master's degree in English literature as well as served as a lecturer of English and British Literature for a time at the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College in Amritsar (in present-day Punjab, India). An uncle of mine was recently speaking about the junoon he caused when he came to visit.

Interestingly, during his time in Amritsar, Faiz also met his future wife Alys in 1938 at the house of a colleague at the college. Faiz and Alys shared the ideals of freedom and love for humanity and justice, and even though in some ways they had the opposing temperaments, they eventually fell in love. They married in Srinagar in October 1941 and their nikah was performed by Sher-i-Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, the leader of the National Conference. It is a little known fact that Alys had been christened Kulsoom, by Faiz's mother and 'Dast e Saba' which was written during his imprisonment with the above mentioned ghazal was dedicated to her making everyone wonder about the identity of this mystery woman.

Ishq dil mein rahe to rusva ho

Lab pe aye to raaz ho jaaye

Typical Faiz. Once an emotion or an idea is rendered into poetic expression, it perhaps acquires a multiplicity of meanings and gets shrouded in ambiguities,

During his lifetime, he was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature and even received the Lenin Peace Prize, awarded by the Soviet Union, in 1962. Posthumously, he was conferred his nation's highest civil award, Nishan-e-Imtiaz, in 1990 although during his lifetime he remained in conflict with the Pakistani government.

Faiz's early poems had been fairly conventional, romantic treatises on beauty and love, but while in Lahore he began to expand into politics and community concerns. In 1942, he left teaching to join the British Indian Army, for which he received a British Empire Medal for his service during World War II. After the partition of India in 1947, Faiz resigned from the army and became the editor of *The Pakistan Times*, a socialist English-language newspaper.

Poetry has the ability to rouse and soothe, lull and awaken our weary souls. Faiz's poems especially, have a remarkable ability and the potential to transcend borders, religions, language and culture. They are an important thread that attempts to suture the hopes and beliefs of peace seeking souls of the sub-continent helping us imagine how to create new futures.

Yeh daagh daagh ujaalaa, yeh shab gazidaa seher
Woh intezaar tha jiska, yeh woh seher to nahin
Yeh woh seher to nahin, jis ki aarzoo lekar
Chale the yaar ki mil jaayegi kahin na kahin
Falak ke dasht mein taaron ki aakhri manzil
Kahin to hogaa shab-e-sust mauj ka saahil
Kahin to jaa ke rukegaa safinaa-e-gham-e-dil

These immortal lines expressed his anguish and dismay at the colossal cost the Indian subcontinent had to pay for freedom from the British Empire in 1947. The poem is entitled *Subh-e-Azaadi*.

This stained blemished light—this dawn
Surely this wasn't what we've all been longing for.
Not the morning we had set out to find
In the wilderness of the skies, the stars final resting place
Somewhere there was hope that weary waves will find their shore
Our sorrow laden ship would at last come home to anchor...

Faiz ended the poem with these lines:
Abhi giraani-e shab mein kami nahin aai
Nijaat -e-deeda o dil ki ghadi nahin aai
Chaley chalo ke wo manzil abhi nahin aai.

The Night's heaviness has not yet lessened
The moment of salvation for our hearts and eyes has not yet
arrived;
So let us go on, that destination is yet to come....

He was imprisoned twice (1951-1955, then for over 5 months in
1958-1959) for his support of leftist politics in Pakistan. He
eventually fled to Moscow and spent some of his last years in
Beirut.

Woh baat saaray fasanaay mein jis kaa zikr na tha..
Woh baat unko bahut na-gawar guzri hai...

In his poem Intesab, he writes:
Aaj ke naam
Aur Aaj ke gham ke naam
Aaj ka gham ki hai zindagi ke bhare gulistaan se khafaa
Zard patton ka ban
Zard patton ka ban jo mera desh hai
Dard ki anjuman jo mera desh hai

Let me write a poem for this day
This day and the anguish of this day
The sorrow that does not acknowledge life's beauty
For the wilderness of dying. dry leaves which is my homeland
For the carnival of suffering which is my homeland....

Some of his finest work, however was written during his
imprisonment.

"Aaj bazaar mein pa ba jaulan chalo" ("Let us walk with
fettters in the street") which has a rather fascinating
incident associated with it.

It is said that when Faiz was being taken from the jail in
Lahore, in chains, to a dentist's office in a horse cart

(tonga) through the familiar streets, people recognized him and began following his tonga.

Chashm e nam jaan e shorida kaafi nahin

Tohmat e ishq e poshida kaafi nahin..

Tearful eyes and a restless soul are sadly not enough. Being charged for concealing love is also not enough, he wrote.

Another glittering gem of a poem, Zindaan ki Ek Shaam has been exquisitely translated by Agha Shahid Ali.

Shaam ke pecho-kham sitaron se

Zeena-zeena utar rahi hai raat

Yun saba paas se guzarti hai

Jaise keh di kisi ne pyaar ki baat.

Sahne-zindan ke be-vatan ashjar

Sar-nigun mahw hain banane mein

Daman-e-aasman pe naqsh-o-nigaar.

Shaan-e-baam par damakta hai

Meherban chandni ka dast-e-jameel

Khaak mein dhul gayi hai aab-e-nujoom

Noor mein dhul gaya hai arsh ka neel

Sabz goshon mein nil-gun saaye

Lahlahate hain jis tarah dil mein

Mauj-e-dard-e-firaq-e-yaar aaye.

Dil se paiham khayal kahta hai

Itni shireen hai zindagi is pal

Zulm ka zahar gholne wale

Kamran ho sakenge aaj na kal

Jalva gaah e-visaal ki shamein

Vo bujha bhi chuke agar to kya

Chand ko gul karen to hum jaane.

A Prison Evening trancreated by Agha Shahid Ali proceeds as follows:

Stars spiral into the evening –

staircase the night descends –

and the wind comes near, then passes,
as though someone spoke of love.
In the courtyard, the trees are exiles
who keep themselves busy
embroidering the sky.
The roof shines; the moon
scatters light with generous hands;

the glory of the stars mingles with dust
and light polishes the blue sky silver.
In every corner shadows ebb and advance,
as though the heart were lifted

by a wave of separation.
This is the thought the heart returns to:
that life, in this moment, is sweet.
Let tyrants prepare their poisons,
they will never succeed.
They may snuff out the lamps
in the rooms of lovers,
but can they extinguish the moon?

“Going to Jail”, Faiz once famously said, “was like falling in love once again”.

And lest we forget, very few poets express love in its myriad mysterious, mystical and mesmerizing moods as Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

Raat yun dil mein teri khoyi hui yaad aayi
Jaise veerane mein chupke se bahaar aa jaaye
Jaise saharaon mein haule se chale baad e naseem

Jaise beemar ko bewajah qaraar aa jaaye

Translated by Vikram Seth it reads:

Last night your faded memory came to me
As in the wilderness spring comes quietly,
As, slowly, in the desert, moves the breeze,
As, to a sick man, without cause, comes peace.

Other iconic poems such as Raqib se, Rang Dil Ka Hai Mere and Mujh se pehli si mohabbat Mere Mehboob na Maang have attained almost cult status in the hearts and minds of his followers.

Faiz shall continue to be celebrated for his poetry, his ideology and his unmatched talent to include political and social issues within the traditional frameworks of ghazals and nazms brimming with passion and rebellion.

Words that can galvanize us into action and wake us up from our complacent stupor. Words matter. Words that ought to be spoken in defence of the downtrodden. Words that heal, words that nurture, words that continue to inspire and encourage us to speak up.

Bol ke Lab Azaad Hain Tere, said Faiz.

Speak up – for your lips are free!

Viva la Love. Viva La Revolution. Viva La Faiz.

NULL & VOID | OJASWINI TRIVEDI

You're lost in a fantasy

A dream maybe

Where I cease to exist.

You seem peaceful,

I seem greedy.

SLING SHOT: Let's say we loved each other! Ojaswini Trivedi

"Let's believe
the two birds
lived in a
seamless crave for freedom,
where the abyss
melted into the horizon"

The stranger across my mirror- Have we met? | Ojaswini Trivedi

The continuous falling back into the comfort, the familiar sensation, the treaded path we walked for weeks together. We feel the urgency to crawl back into that. Our memory cells aching to sprint through those lanes, actions and people. Again.

Henrik Ibsen's WHEN WE DEAD

AWAKEN Director: Sankar Venkateswaran



Playwright: Henrik Ibsen

Director: Sankar Venkateswaran

Group: Jangama Collective, Singapore

Language: English

Duration: 1 hr 25 mins

The Play

The play consists of a few final episodes from the life of an ageing sculptor, who achieved fame at the expense of personal happiness. The artist in his old age has lost his inspiration, he wanders around aimlessly, has stopped producing art works and his marriage with his young wife is at the verge of a breakdown. He comes across a deranged stranger lady, who claims to be dead. He comes to realize that the strange lady was once his muse and model to his most famous work of art.

His interests were only artistic while she suffers a certain death of soul due to the unrequited love. His wife breaks free from him to find life and love in a bear hunter, while the artist and the model dredge up and dig through a difficult past to realize that the life they led is irretrievable.

Director's Note

The questions are, why should we care about this play and the characters today? And how do we approach them? The answer to the first question, I think, is that these characters are like us, in their selfishness, denials and egos. My answer to the second question leads to another difficult question and is rather harsh. What if we deny the author his words, his rhetoric, the way the sculptor denies acknowledging a life beneath his model which then turned her into a statue! And when we do that to this play, we are left with a phantasmal envelope of silence where bodies move like ghosts and speak their silence. This might start to provoke our imaginations beyond the spoken, and we might start to see the irretrievable. We may begin to ask questions such as- are we awake? Are we dreaming? Or, are we dead? Do we need to wake from the dream or death? What happens when we dead awaken?

The Director

Sankar Venkateswaran is a theatre director and dramaturg from Kerala, India. He graduated from the Calicut University School of Drama and Fine Arts, and pursued his post-graduate training at Theatre Training and Research Programme (now Intercultural Theatre Institute), Singapore. Currently, Sankar has set up a cultural space in Attappady, Kerala, and works with the indigenous communities of the region. He is a recipient of the International Ibsen Scholarship 2013 (Teater Ibsen, Norway) and Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar 2011, and was a jury member for Zurich Theater Spektakel 2016.

The Playwright

Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) was a Norwegian playwright, theatre director, and poet. He is considered by many as the 'father of realism' and remains one of the most influential playwrights of his time and is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare. Ibsen's dramas have a strong influence upon contemporary culture, and continue to be staged in different languages around the world today.

The Group

Jangama is a collective of five actors/performance-makers that strive to create work that may speak across cultural and linguistic barriers through their own forms and languages. The collective comprises of Lakshmana KP (India), Pooja Mohanraj (India), Hau Guei Sze (Malaysia), Caroline Chin (Singapore) and Alexander Beard (Australia). The five have been undergoing training at the Intercultural Theatre Institute in Singapore, an actor training institution that focuses on immersing actors in both Western and Eastern theatre forms. Each of them is working as independent artists in their own countries, while continuing to connect with each other and create work around the world.

Cast & Credits

Maia Rubek: Pooja Mohanraj

Arnold Rubek: Lakshmana KP

Ulfheim, a bear hunter: Alexander Beard

Irene, a stranger lady: Caroline Chin

Sister of Mercy: Hau Guei Sze

Translator: William Archer

Original cast of Ulfheim: Yazid de Jalil

Movement consultant: Lim Chin Huat

Voice and Speech consultant: Simon Stollery

Production photographer: Bernie Ng

Headshot photographer: Gabriela Neeb

Supporting Institution: Intercultural Theatre Institute

Playwright: Henrik Ibsen

Director: Sankar Venkateswaran

Dwija Kanai's MOIMONSINGHA GEETIKA Director: Goutam Halder



Story: Dwija Kanai

Director: Goutam Halder

Group: Naye Natua, Kolkata

Language: Bengali

Duration: 2 hrs 20 mins

The Play

The ballads of Moimonsingha Geetika belong to a matriarchal society. Some of the characteristics of the matriarchal society are – choosing a husband, freedom of love, and marrying in old age. Love in this society is like a divine wild flower which the vices of city life cannot destroy. In this society, selecting one's partner is valued over marriage. This folk literature is like the history of mankind. According to Dinesh Chandra Sen, a schedule caste brahmin Dwija Kanai created these ballads, now known as Moimonsingha Geetika. The ballad starts with a beautiful secular form. Far in the north is Gara Mountain. There lives a Brahmin with his six-month old daughter. The leader of a gypsy group Hoomra steals (kidnaps) the beautiful child one night. When the girl turns sixteen she falls in love with the prince Nader Chand. Hoomra does not like this love affair and ordered Mahua to kill Nader Chand. But Mahua kills herself instead of killing her husband. Afterwards the Gypsy Group killed Nader Chand. In Bengals folk literature Mahua (A ballad of Moimonsingha Geetika) has been representing womanhood of our society.

Director's Note

While reading Moimonsingha Geetika, the ballad of Mohua and Nader Chand had inspired me. We have performed many serious, political and social plays dealing with complex problems of existence. The ballad of Moimonsingha Geetika explores Love, along with the complexities, that mankind can treasure. This story speaks of ideals, norms and ethics of the society, the status difference and its effects on human relationships.

The Director

President and founder member of theatre troupe Naye Natua, Goutam Halder was awarded State Award of Best Production for Meghnad Badh Kabya, State Award as Best Director for Chile

Kothar Sepai, and Aditya Vikram Birla Kala Kiran Award. He has directed and acted in many plays for Nandikar, Naye Natua and other theatre troupes of Kolkata. He is trained in Kathak, Bharat Natyam & Classical Vocal Music, and is an actor – trainer in various institutions in India and abroad.

The Playwright

Dwija Kanai wrote and sang Bengali folk ballads of Moimonsingha around 350 years back. He belonged to the scheduled caste, but his works influenced the people of the society and they upgraded his status to that of a brahmin. There were times when these songs of Mohua were sung by everyone in east Moimonsingha in the undivided Bengal. It was the initiative of Sir Ashutosh Mukhopadhyay and the University of Bengal which officially appointed Chandra Kumar Dey to collect the ballads of Dwija Kanai. Sri Dinesh Chandra Sen collected these songs from Chandra Kumar Dey in 1921 and later published them as a book Moimonsingha Geetika.

The Group

Naye Natua, a theatre troupe of Kolkata, has around 40 young talented actors, dancers and musicians, including casual and regular artists who are working tirelessly throughout the year. The group has performed in USA (New Jersey, Baltimore, Los Angeles, San Diego, Kansas, Nashville, Washington etc.), Canada (Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton, Calgary – Alberta), Oman (Muscat), Bangladesh (Dhaka), Kuwait, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Assam, Kolkata, West Bengal and many other places.

Cast & Credits

On Stage: Goutam Halder, Dyuti Ghosh Halder, Santanu Ghosh, Parthib Roy, Tamsuk Routh, Pronay Biswas, Tanmoy Maji, Alamin Amin, Mousumi Ghatak, Teesta Mondal, Swati Dasgupta, Sanghita Dutta Chakraborty, Swaralipi Chakraborty, Sujana Sikdar

Music Associates: Satyajit Chowdhury, Nilansuk Datta, Probir Das, Niraj Mondal, Joydeep Biswas

Costume: Dyuti Ghosh Halder

Light Operation: Debashish Chakraborty

Associates: Chandan Mitra, Bhola Chatterjee

Make-up: Samir Ghosh

Backstage & Technical Management (Sound): Soumitra Bhandari

Story: Dwija Kanai (Moimonsingha Geetika)

Dramatization, Music, Choreography, Set, Light & Direction:
Goutam Halder

Peter Brook & Jean-Claude Carrière's CHARAHARUKO SAMMELAN (Conference of the birds) Director: Deeya Maskey



Playwright: Peter Brook & Jean-Claude Carrière

Director: Deeya Maskey

Group: Actors' Studio, Nepal

Language: Nepali

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

The Play

Birds from all over the world gather together for a great conference. The nation of birds is in crisis, and urged by one of their flock, the Hoopoe, they have to chart a path to find their king Simurgh. For this they need to travel a long way towards the mountain called Kaf. During this journey, some die, some drop out, while others continue their quest of discovery, love, understanding, disappointment, destruction, unity and death. At last the survivors come into the presence of the great one, and discover that they themselves are the embodiment of the divine.

Director's Note

Seven years ago, I came across Conference of the Birds while attending a physical theatre workshop jointly organized by Actors' Studio and Embassy of US in Nepal. Description of the seven valleys seemed mythical and ancient on one hand and new and ultra-modern on the other. It was the perspective and relevancy that enabled me to stage the ancient masterpiece in today's context. Through physical gestures and dialogues, each actor has tried to convey different unexplored meanings of the text. I have left a few things as mystery.

The Director

Deeya Maskey is a renowned actor, dancer and TV personality in Nepal. She initially trained as a professional Indian classical dancer from Allahabad, India and later completed her training in acting at Actors' Studio, Nepal. Since then she has been practicing contemporary dances to explore a unique style by using the body, spatial relationship, kinesthetic responses and voice. Some of the famous films that she has acted in are Kagbeni, Soongava, and Fitkiri. She has worked as

a choreographer for several theatre and film productions. She is also a judge in the Nepali edition of MTV Roadies show, Himalayan Roadies.

The Playwrights

Peter Brook contributed significantly to the development of 20th century's avant-garde stage. He established the International Centre of Theatre Research in 1970 in Paris. He has won multiple Tony and Emmy Awards, a Laurence Olivier Award, the Praemium Imperiale, and the Prix Italia. He has been called 'The greatest living theatre director'.

Jean-Claude Carrière is a renowned French novelist, story-writer and actor. He is known for his works as writer and actor in Luis Buñuel's films Unbearable Lightness of Being, The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie, and Birth. He has received Best Live Action Short Film Award (1963) as well as Academy Honorary Award (2014) for lifetime achievement. He has also been honoured with the Padma Shree, award in India.

The Group

The Actors' Studio has been performing in Nepal and abroad for more than one and a half decade. It has carved a niche in Nepali theatre by staging artistic yet committed and socially relevant plays, and establishing the presence of Nepali theatre in the international arena by producing radical and experimental works.

Cast & Credits

The Hoopoe: Suraj Malla

Heron Aayushman: Pyakurel

Partridge/Slave 2: Arjun Neupane

Sparrow: Roshani Tamang

Falcon: Gaurav Bista

King 1/Dervish/Slave 1: Sudam CK

First Exotic Bird: Anup Neupane

Second Exotic Bird: Manoj Thapa Magar

King 2/Walking Bird/ Bat: Anoj Pandey

Old Man/Mahatma: Anup Baral
Duck/ Thief 1: Prakriti Rayamajhi
Nightingale/Cal bird/ Slave: Binita Thapa Magar
Princesses: Sadhana Bhandari
Parrot: Anu Dahal
Peacock: Deeya Maskey
Owl: Keshav Thagunna
Thief 2: Aashish Shrestha
Chamberlain/Executioner: Suryaman Limbu
Double Bird: Shiksha KC
Hermit: Bikas Neupane
Guilty Bird: Ranjana Bhattarai
Dove bird: Hena Nagarkoti

Production Manager: Dev Neupane
Set Construction: Hum BC / Sagar BC
Stage Props: Suryaman Limbu / Anil Subba
Marketing Manager: Aayushman Pyakurel
Costume Design: Sunu Rai / Binita Thapa Magar /Sadhana Bhandari
Finance Manager: Keshav Thagunna
Light Design: Anup Baral
Light Operator: Dev Raj Sunuwar
Sound Craft / Operator: Devendra Neupane
Stage Manager: Anoj Pandey / Roshani Syangbo
Documentation: Sushil Paudel
Translation: Pushpa Raj Acharya

Playwrights: Peter Brook and Jean-Claude Carrière
Direction: Deeya Maskey

Anil Saha's Director: Chakraborty

ARSHINAGAR Debasish



Playwright: Anil Saha

Director: Debasish Chakraborty

Group: Tala Dhruvad Natya Sanstha, Hooghly

Language: Bengali

Duration: 2 hr 10 mins

The Play

Arshinagar speaks about love and true emotions. In this era, where love has been commoditized, this story talks about the real definition of love and the magic it can create. Chaya Kumar, son of a rich merchant has to leave his wife on the next day of his marriage for business expansion. The newly wedded bride, Lilabati, lives with her in-laws, but feels a vacuum. But the power of love brings joy in Lilabati's life and helps her overcome the void.

Director's Note

Presented in a folk form, the flight of imagination in the

play soars without any bondage of religion, cast or culture. To express the language of love and fathom its power, music is a vital character in this play. Various folk songs in the traditions of Jhumur, Bhadu, Tusu, Sari, Jari and Sufi are wonderfully tuned in the atmosphere through which the story runs smoothly. Various workshops and endless brainstorming sessions on choreography, costumes, light, set and editing resulted in this brilliant play.

The Director

Debasish Chakraborty, a theatre student of Sri Bivas Chakraborty since 1998, is a promising director of this generation. He joined Annya, a theatre group, under the direction of Sri Bivas Chakraborty and acted in numerous plays. He started his own theatre group Dhrupad in 2002 at Serampore. He has acted in many tele-serials. He has also acted in the feature film One, directed by Birsa Dasgupta, and performs in other theatre groups of Kolkata as well.

The Playwright

Anil Saha was born in Bagbazar, Kolkata. He is a retired employee of State Bank of India. He joined a theatre workshop and is now a full-time theatre worker. He has acted in many plays and has been writing plays for 30 years.

The Group

Tala Dhrupad Natya Sanstha started its theatre journey in 2002. The group has produced Simantika written by the eminent dramatist Chandan Sen, Hastabud dramatized by Pradip Moulik and based on the story of Sahajad Firdous, The Numbers based on Nikolai Gogol's story, Ranger Haat by Manoj Mitra, Bodli by Anil Saha, Bhan by Amiya Chattaraj, Uro Megh by Mohit Chattopadhyay, Punajjanma by Dwijendralal Roy and many more.

Cast & Credits

Chaya Kumar: Dhruvo Adhikari

Lilabati: Shreya Biswas

DebokiNandan: Arup Manna

Surobhi Devi: Mita Roy
Sarkar Mosai: Jayanta Chattopadhyay
Bhnaru: Biswanath Saha
Kanai: Parikshit Chattopadhyay
Maya Kumar: Jayanta Chakraborty
Raja & Sutrodhar: Debasish Chakraborty
Paharadar Gautam: Bikash Chandra
Panchir Maa: Mausumi Goswami/Sanchita Singha Roy
Sokhi Dol Poulobi: Sarkar Gupta, Moumita Chakraborty Basu,
Priyanka Dey, Sukla Pal, Sanchari Singha Roy
Grambasi: Abhijit Chatterjee, Tanay Banerjee, Wasim Ali, Suman
Chakraborty, Utsab Chattopadhyay, Iman Das, Jayanta Dhar
Baul: Sourabh Dutta

Backstage: Suman Mukhopadhyay, Subhankar Mukherjee, Tapan
Mallick

Lyrics & Music: Bhaskar Choudhury

Choreography: Abhijit Mahato

Light: Debabrata Sarkar

Set: Moni Shankar

Make-up: Pratap Roy

Title: Utpal Ghosh

Harmonium: Subir Sanyal

Rhythm: Tanmoy Sashmal

Sound: Control Bivas Gupta

Photograph: Sumanta Bora

Playwright: Anil Saha

Director: Debasish Chakraborty

Satish Georgy Kashyap & Sandhya Sharma's PHOOL SINGH – NAUTANKI (SWANG)



Directors: Satish Georgy Kashyap & Sandhya Sharma

Group: Swang, A Folk Art Academy, Haryana

Language: Haryanvi

Duration: 1 hr 15 mins

The Form

Swang is a folk dance drama of Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. It incorporates suitable theatrics and mimicry accompanied by song and dialogue. It is dialogue-oriented rather than movement-oriented. Religious stories and folk tales are enacted by a group of people in an open area or an open air theatre surrounded by the audience. The themes are drawn from subjects like morality, lives of inspiring personalities, folk-tales,

stories from Indian mythology and in recent times, more current themes like health and hygiene, literacy, etc.

The Play

This is a hilarious romantic love story of Sialkot province and Multan State, now in Pakistan. King Gaje Singh is the ruler of Sialkot. He has two sons, Bhoop Singh and Phool Singh. Once, Prince Phool Singh returns home after a hunting expedition and asks his sister-in-law (Bhabhi) for water. She retorts by saying, "If you really want to dominate this way, go and get married to the beautiful Nautanki, so that you can ask her for water more gracefully". Young Phool Singh feels insulted and is determined to marry Shehzadi Nautanki. How he marries Nautanki is a beautiful narrative of Swang/ Nautanki tradition.

Director's Note

It is always a great pleasure for us to associate ourselves with Swang whenever we get a chance. Folk music and folk dances are the main ingredients of Swang. Phool Singh-Nautanki is a fantastic love story on morality and governance and leaves an impact on the contemporary world. The content of the story inspired us to work on this script. It came as a blessing in disguise. Shortage of an actor changed the design of the play in such a creative manner that it became an original Swang. Swang means to imitate, 'Rang bharna, Roop bharna'. The final design is a classic example of Swang. Costume design was kept in its original mythological form. Nakkara, clarinet, dholak, harmonium and the singing chorus made this a memorable production.

The Directors

Dr Satish Georgy Kashyap got initial education from his father Pt. Shiv Kumar Kashyap. A trained surgeon, Satish left the field of Medicine and joined the family tradition and his passion. For further training he went to Denmark and learned

Commedia dell'arte at Copenhagen. Under the leadership of his mentor Ole Brekke, he has performed as a clown in Sweden, Norway and Finland. Back in India, along with his partner Dr Sandhya Sharma, he became a disciple of Pt. Suraj Bhan Shastri and started performing the Swangs of Pt. Lakhmi Chand Gharana.

Dr Sandhya Sharma learnt the wonderful art of folk drama, Swang, from her mentor and Guru, Dr. Satish Kashyap, while performing Swangs like *Jaani Chor*, *Pingla-Bharthri* and *Nautanki*. She is a trained folk dancer and has won various National awards. Presently, Dr Sandhya Sharma is working as Asst. Prof. of Culture in CCS Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar and contributing in the research and development of Haryana Folk Lore and Culture, especially Swang.

The Group

Swang – A Folk Art Academy, is an amateur group formed by artists of the region and led by Pt. Shiv Kumar, an eminent Swang performer. Pt. Suraj Bhan Shastri, a disciple of Pt. Lakhmi Chand Gharana, and Dr Ram Kumar Yadav, a pioneer art promoter, are patrons of the group. Swang – A Folk Art Academy is primarily working for the preservation of Swang, an ancient folk theatre form of Northern India. The group has produced many ancient, mythological stories in Swang form and staged them all over India.

Cast & Credits

On Stage: Satish Kashyap, Sandhya Sharma, Vinod Goldi, Hawa Singh, Rajesh (Nagada), Om Parkash (Clarinet), Pankaj Bhardwaj, Richa Valecha, Chanchal Goyal, Ashish Sharma

Back Stage: Anil Saini, Shri Niwas, Mahesh Sufi, Ram Narayan, Ram Nivas

Directors: Satish Georgy Kashyap & Sandhya Sharma