Folk Arts of India: Madhubani

Madhubani paintings find their origin in the Mithila region of Bihar. The tale of Madhubani paintings goes back to the times of Ramayana where it is said that when King Janaka, the father of Sita, had asked the painters of his kingdom to create paintings for his daughter’s wedding, the art form came into existence.

Kavita Srinivasan’s Play: Kumari and the Beast

Playwright & Director: Kavita Srinivasan
Group: Sushila Arts Academy, Nepal
Language: English
Duration: 1hr 10mins

The Play
Satya Yuga (era of truth) was an era when gods, demons and humans cohabited the earth. Set in this time is the story of goddess Kumari who came to rule the kingdom of Kathmandu. The legend describes a young goddess Kumari, born to the gods Svet-Kali and Svet-Bhairav in the neighbourhood of Nardevi in ancient Kathmandu. To their alarm, she falls in love with an asura (demon), Chanda. Their tumultuous love story ends tragically, as Kumari ultimately sacrifices her love to in order to fulfil her duty. Her parents in return, make her the ruler of Kathmandu.
Kumari and the Beast is an interpretation of the story told by Maheswor Juju Rajopadhyay in his book of short stories Nepali Adhyaatma Jagat ko Itihas (History of Nepal’s Spiritual

World). The story is presented through a fusion of Nepal's classical Charya dance and contemporary dance-movement, with live music and vintage photography.

Director's Note

Three things attracted me to this story: First, the story provides a fascinating role model of how a female child can hold one of the highest positions of social and political power, and can remain unmarried of her own will. In a world where power has been known for eons to be held by the senior-most male, the relevance of such a figure is immense.
Second, the story's central theme of 'forbidden love' remains as relevant today as it was ages ago. Society's condemnation of certain kinds of love based on caste, creed, gender, race etc. continues to trample on the fundamental right to choose.
Last, the sacrifice of the beast is symbolic of the price that society extracts from each of us.

The Director & Playwright

Kavita Srinivasan has focused on stories of culturally iconic figures like Gautama Buddha and Goddess Kumari, reinterpreting and telling their stories in a way that fuses the classic and the contemporary, focusing on the human element, through movement, dance, music, theatre and visual art. She also created Nepal's first online sitcom P.S. Zindagi (Post Seismic Zindagi) which won local and international recognition. Kavita has done two Masters – in Architecture, and in City Planning – from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT, USA).

The Group

Sushila Arts Academy (SAA) is a theatre dance music and arts institution in Kathmandu, Nepal founded in 2012 with the aim to promote the Arts in Nepal. Since its establishment, it has been providing hundreds of scholarship seats to talented but financially limited or underprivileged Nepali students. The Academy has delivered numerous musical and theatre-dance productions, art exhibitions, shows and various art programs, all aimed at promotion of the arts in Nepal, as well as giving

a platform to young, talented Nepali artists to flourish further.

Cast & Credits

Kumari	Kripa Bajracharya
Chanda	Kiran Shrestha
Svet-Bhairav	Sudan Munikar
Svet-Kali	Vijaya Karki
Representation of Kumari’s feelings	Arpana Lama, Glory Thapa, Sunita Darnal
Representation of Chanda’s feelings	Srijan Bhattarai, Jerox Chaudhari, Nikesh Raj Chaudhary
Charya Dance Choreographer	Sudan Munikar, Kripa Bajracharya
Musicians	Chandra Man Shrestha (Drums, Percussion and effects), Prabesh Maharjan (Percussion and effects), Saroj Shahi (Guitar and effects), Rupesh Shakya (Flute, horn and effects)
Original Music and Sound Effects	Dimitris Giannopoulos
Recorded Music Sources	Various
Narration	Kavita Srinivasan
Costume Designer	Sammriddhi Mittal, Samita Kapali
Beast Make-up	Sunita Darnal, materials from Aesthete Studio
Lights	Dinesh Tuladhar
Sound	

Tuphan Thapa
Smoke/Projection Kanchan Pandey
Black and White Photographs Kiran Chitrakar (Poster), Dominic Sansoni, GTZ, A. Proksh, AFP, Ian Trower and others
Publicity Stills
Avishesh Raj Maskey, Shilu Jain
Behind the Scenes Photographs Suman Nagarkoti
Production Stills Bijay Tamrakar
Truss / Thermacol / Set Binod Pokharel (Stage Mind)
Producer
Sushila Arts Academy
Assistant Director/ Stage Manager Vijaya Karki

Special Thanks – Jagannath Dhaugoda (Djimbe), Brikchya Band (Khen, Dhimey, Taa, Ghungro), Shree Guru Nitya Baja Khala (Dhime, Taa, Bapucha, Bhusya), Vajra Kala Kunja (Charya music and costume support), Swarnim Maharjan (Flute Melody concept tips), Pawan R. Joshi (Projections)

Story
Maheshwor Juju Rajopadhyay
Playwright & Director Kavita Srinivasan

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Stars Shine in Himalayan Kingdom | Manohar Khushalani

Along with Dev Anand, Waheeda Rehman, Shahrukh Khan and Manisha Koirala, Manohar Khushalani was invited, by the Indian Embassy, to Kathmandu to attend the celebrations of 50 years of Indian Cinema as a Columnist of Pioneer, where he ran a column called "Footlights'. The clip of the review published on 2nd May, 1997 is shown in the attachment. Here is a small extract from the 7 column spread that Pioneer gave his piece.

Probably the best public relations exercise between two country is to establish a people to people interaction through cultural activity. Raj Kapoor was probably the best Indian Ambassador of good will for the soviet Union. Nobody perhaps known it better than the snake Indian Ambassador to Nepal. K.V. Rajan. By organising a festival of Indian films at Kathmandu he proved that what Raj Kapoor did at USSR Dev Anand can do in the Land locked Himalayan State. The incredible love and affection of Nepalese common men for Indian actors was brought home by the adulatory response to four Indian sorry three Indian and one Nepales star; Waheeda Rehman, Dev Anand, Shahrukh Khan and Manisha Koirala.

"I am very fond of nature & open spaces. In Bombay it was difficult. What I noticed was that when they retired from cinema long ago, my son was still in school. When someone asked him, where the milk came from. He said Mother Dairy. That's when we decided to move to a Farm and expose our child to that aspect of life as well."

Waheeda Rahman who is leading a more or less retired life & last asked nearly seven years ago is willing to perform only

of she gets a central role. “Unfortunately most of the roles available for performers of my agee are stereo typed roles of Aunts or mothers, I would rather not perform than take up such roles”

Waheeda shifted bag & Baggage to a farm house in the outskirts of Bangalore because of she put it her children were not even aware about how the milk come they only knew that it come from a machine in the milk booth. Being a lover of nature she preferred to shift close to it….

“I am very fond of nature & open spaces. In Bombay it was difficult. What I noticed was that when they retired from cinema long ago, my son was still in school. When someone asked him, where the milk came from. He said Mother Dairy. That’s when we decided to move to a Farm and expose our child to that aspect of life as well.” She told me, this too when we were flying later over the everest and I was seated next to her. Both of us were admiring the pristine beauty of nature

Dev Anand despite his severely years displayed such energy and enthusiasm that he would put many younger people to shame. He said that he was greatly in love with this Country and would never forego an opportunity to come to Nepal. He had always advocated that this Country was a good location of or shooting films but not many producers were willing to come due to difficulties of terrash & communication. Dev to probably the most active amongst the stars of his generation. Right now he was making a film in which he was acting as himself © Dev Anand as the actor. A teen age female fun follows him around the counting observing him as an action. She finally manges to meet him. The story appeared to be similar to Guddi.

Later at a function to felicitate the stars. Dev held the audience spellbound with his half hour long talk which was special with experiences of Nepal, tales of the role of the King in shooting of his films and personal advice on how to lead a dynamics life like him.

Manisha Koirala’s entering was greeted by compliments to her beauty and brains in Dev’s inimitable style. The local scribes were most comfortable with Manisha in her native tongue. Ms Koirala had no plans to act in a Nepali film in the near future she left it vaguely to events and occassions.

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FRIDAY MAY 2, 1997

ARTS

12 THE PIONE

Manohar Khushalani accompanies Indian filmstars on a recent trip to Nepal for a celebration of the golden jubilee of India's independence

Stars shine in Himalayan kingdom

As the Royal Nepal Airlines Boeing 737 circled over the Himalayan ranges to get a clearer view through the dense cloud layers of the Jewel of the Himalayas — Kathmandu — our hearts thumped in anticipation. At the very first sight of the toy-like township nestled in the mountain ranges, gone was the fatigue of the two sleepless nights due to the 48-hour flight delay, caused by the lightning all-India ATC strike. What awaited us was the first official celebration of 50 years of Indian independence in Nepal. Thankfully there were no political speeches on the cards, only entertainment and more entertainment.

Probably the best public relations exercise between any two countries is to establish a people-to-people interaction through cultural activities. Nobody perhaps knows it better than the suave Indian ambassador to Nepal, K V Rajan. By organising a festival of Indian films at Kathmandu he proved that what Raj Kapoor could do for India in the Soviet Union, Dev Anand can do in the land-locked Himalayan kingdom. Later this year, the ambassador is also planning an NSD theatre festival in Kathmandu.

The incredible love and affection of the Nepalese common man for Indian actors and actresses was brought home by the adulatory response to the four filmstars: Waheeda Rehman, Dev Anand, Shah Rukh Khan and Nepal's own Manisha Koirala, of whom the valiant Gorkhas are extremely proud. The streets around the Birendra International Convention Centre were jam-packed with fans as the four stars waded through the milling crowds to attend a function organised to felicitate them.

Inside, Dev held the audiences spellbound with his half-hour-long talk which was spiced with his experiences of the hill state, tales about the part King Birendra played in easing the way of Dev Anand's shootings in Nepal, the guitar-toting hippie girl who inspired the creation of a role for Zeenat Aman in *Hare Rama Hare Krishna*, and of course some personal advice on how to lead a dynamic life and remain young like himself.

Representatives of cultural camaraderie: Dev Anand meets Queen Aishwarya (left); Shah Rukh Khan mobbed by female fans in Kathmandu

As far as Shah Rukh Khan was concerned, great as the confluence of two generations of performers may have been, he was too busy warding off the bevy of Himalayan beauties out to mob him. "Oh no, not here too!" he smirked.

The programme was anchored by none other than the inimitable imitator, Jaaved Jaffrey, who interspersed the audio-visual on Indian cinema with his pet, often heard and sometimes unheard of jokes. While Jaaved did his best to liven up the proceedings, what was really a treat were the nostalgic numbers segmented decade-wise.

The first decade from 1947 to '57 had songs like *Awara hoon, Jeevan hai agar zahar to, Chhor do aanchal zamana kya kahega, Mera dil ye pukare aa ja,* and *Ai mere pyare watan*. What a comedown it was moving into the present decade with songs like *Chhoo le chhoo le, Choli ke peeche kya hai* and *Chumma de de*.

Earlier at an informal Press conference the Nepalese and Indian scribes had the opportunity to talk to the Bollywood stars and one particularly got an interesting glimpse of the mindsets of the older legends and how they were coping with the new trends in cinema. Waheeda for example was surprisingly positive about modern Indian cinema.

She disagreed with the suggestion that there was too much exposure in today's films and quoted examples of many films which were wholesome like *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* and *Kabhi Ha Kabhi Na*. Waheeda herself is leading a more or less retired life and last faced a camera nearly seven years ago.

She was willing to undergo the ordeal again only if she got a satisfying role. "Unfortunately, most of the roles available for performers of my age are stereotyped ones of aunts or mothers," she clarified. "I would rather not perform than take up such assignments."

Talking of the time when she lived in Bombay, Waheeda said that her children there worked hard in school and watched television rest of the time. They were not even aware about where the milk on their table came from. They only knew that it came from a machine in the milk booth. That was enough for her and she shifted bag and baggage to a farmhouse in the outskirts of Bangalore. Being a lover of nature she thus got an opportunity to get close to it.

Dev Anand, despite his 70-odd years, appears to be getting younger — if not in appearance, then in intensity. He displayed such energy and enthusiasm that would put many younger people to shame. As he said, he is greatly in love with Nepal and will never forego an opportunity to come to this country. He had always advocated that this place was a good location for shooting films but not many producers were willing to come, due to difficulties of terrain and poor communications.

Unlike Waheeda, Dev Anand will like to work right till his last breath. Currently, he is making a film in which he is acting as himself — Dev Anand, the actor — who is followed by a teenage female fan around the country until he awards her an audience. Although the thespian would not admit it, the story sounded similar to *Guddi*.

Manisha Koirala's entry to the Press conference was greeted by the evergreen Dev in his own inimitable style. While she felt awed by the presence of performers whom she admired as a youngster, he proclaimed that now he was her admirer. "You know, I kept my hand close to my heart when I shook hands with you the first time," he confided to the giggling star.

The local scribes were most comfortable with Manisha as she switched to her native tongue. Manisha has no plans to act in a Nepali film in the near future. She left it vaguely to events and occasions. Manisha was happy to come to her country but she had no desire to settle here, she said. Living in Mumbai suited her.

Dev Anand was not bothered by the repeated box-office failures of his recent films. He claimed that he never lost money in any film and that if any of his films were appreciated for their quality, that was enough of a reward for him. When this correspondent asked Manisha Koirala if she would prefer to make a good film or a box-office hit — she said she would rather have both, but if it came to a crunch, she would opt for a role in a good film.

Dev Anand put it more succinctly: Many times a good film succeeds at the box office and many times it doesn't. Many times an average film also succeeds. But if a film succeeds it must have some merits — it cannot be ignored even if the critics think it should be.

Shah Rukh Khan had very little to say except that he would not act in an art film and would no longer do the anti-hero roles. Of course, once upon a time he acted in a Mani Kaul film, because he understood it. Most art films according to him were pseudo-intellectual.

A special flight over Mount Everest with Waheeda Rehman and Jaaved Jaffrey, however, struck an ominous note. The Everest was not visible due to heavy clouds, even while we were in the midst of a golden jubilee celebration. A government had fallen in New Delhi and the future was equally cloudy.

Fortunately, the clouds in Indian politics shifted a little just before the curtains were drawn over the festival in Nepal, with the installation of a new government in India.