Mahasweta Devi’s Play: Bayan

BAYAN
Writer: Mahasweta Devi
Director: Usha Ganguli
Group: NSD Repertory Company, New Delhi
Language: Hindi
Duration: 1 hr 35 mins

The Play
Based on a story by Mahashweta Devi, Bayan is that play which creates awareness about the core expression of her writing, i.e. socio-economic disparities and the different shades of human life. Bayan’s Chandi Dassi is one who, at a very young age, is thrown into the work of burying dead animals. By invoking her responsibility towards the work of her ancestors, she is forced to live a life of great hardship. In time she decides to tie the knot with Malinder, a man who works in the government crematorium, and one who takes on her responsibility. However, the same Malinder later declares her to be a ‘bayan’ and Chandi Daasi loses all her rights to live a decent life. She starts believing that her life of inhuman exile is simply the norm.

Director’s Note
In my creative journey in field of theatre, along with the works of Rabindranath, Manto, Kabir and Premchand, the works of Mahashweta Devi have also struck me with a strange sharpness and intellectual perceptiveness that moves alongside their human aspects. Even before Rudali or Ganesh Mahima. Bayan’s Chandi Daasi had made a place for herself in my memory. Over the past few days, she has been helping this director search for a new vision, sometimes searching for a new theatrical language, shirking from the complexities of realism on the stage and trying to both give and take in the exchange of creative energies. For the past many years, the prop-less stage has appealed to me and attracted me for many

reasons. I believe that minimalism on the stage might be able to help in the search for a new theatre vocabulary as drawn from the power of the actor's body language, the internally developed characterization the symbolic imagery on stage, and the sounds of music- and this is what I kept trying for. Chandi Daasi and her creator Mahashweta Devi and those human shapes that get lost in the darkness and then remerge with strength and burn like sparks, are the ones who have been the sources of my inspiration.

The Director & Adapter

Usha Ganguli, a renowned theatre activist, known for her presentations like Lok Katha, Mahabhoj , Holi , Himmat Mai, Court Martial , Rudali , Mukti , Chandalika , Manasi , Hum Mukhtara and many others.

Rangakarmee, the Theatre troupe found by Usha Ganguli in 1976, remains the most active and prolific group, performing in Hindi, not only across India but also travelling abroad extensively. Usha Ganguli is perhaps the first and only theatre Director in India to be directing a play for a Pakistan theatre group Ajoka Theatre under their two-year long programme Theatre for Peace which includes theatre festivals, workshops, seminars etc. She has received the Best Production and Best Director Award (1993-94) by All India Critic Association and Paschim Banga Natya Academy for Rudali, Best Director Award for Lok Katha by Ritwik Ghatak Memorial Committee, Sangeet Natak Academy Award (1998), Girish Puraskar by West Bengal Govt in 2016 and several other awards from West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh State Academies. At present, apart from being the Director and President of Rangakarmee, Usha Ganguli is a member of SWAN (South Asia Women's Network) which is a wing of SAARC. She is also currently the Scholar in Residence at the Viswa Bharati University.

The Author

Mahasweta Devi (14 January 1926 – 28 July 2016) was an Indian Bengali fiction writer and socio-political activist.

Her notable literary works include Hajar Churashir Maa, Rudali, and Aranyer Adhikar. She was honoured with various literary awards such as the Sahitya Akademi Award, Jnanpeeth Award, and Ramon Magsaysay Award, along with India's civilian awards Padma Shri and Padma Vibhushan.

The Group

Established in 1964 with a membership of only four persons, the Repertory Company is the regular performing wing of the School. It was set up with the dual purposes of establishing professional theatre on one hand and continuing with regular experimental work on the other. Over the years it has produced a variety of plays ranging from stylized musicals to realistic contemporary Indian drama to translations and adaptations of foreign plays. In addition, several eminent persons of national and international repute have worked with the Company, and it has performed over one hundred and eighty one plays by ninety-eight playwrights and has worked with ninety directors. Quite a few of its actors have emerged as celebrities in theatre, cinema and television. The Company has toured extensively in India and abroad. It is celebrating fifty years of its existence this year.

Cast & Credits

Chandi Dasi Shruti Mishra
Joshi Sampa Mandal
Jhumu Anamika Sagar
Kali Suman Purty
Chumki Palak Jasrotia
Somari Sakshi Sharma
Puti Kaki Snehalata S. Tagde
Chorus Sampa Mandal, Anamika Sagar,
Palak Jasrotia, Suman Purty, Aparna Menon,
Snehalata S. Tagde, Debomita Sur
Malinder Deep Kumar
Bhagirath Sikandra Kumar
Ketan Kaka Shahnawaz Khan

Sutradhar (Debu) Ashutosh Banerjee / Shubham Pareek
Dhuna Virendra Singh
Ganju (Gajendra) Naveen Singh Thakur
Budhu Manish Dubey
Dulu Rahul Kumar
Kali Mata, Khokan Jitu Rabha
Mintu Parag Baruah
Tulu Shubham Pareek / Ashutosh Banerjee
Khokha Vishveshvar M. Gondhali

Set Design Sanchayan Ghosh
Set Execution Ram Pratap, Manoj Kumar, Brijesh Sharma
Music Kajal Ghosh
Light Design & Operation Souti Chakraborty
Light Operation & Execution Govind Singh Yadav
Assistance Md. Suleman, Pradeep Aggarwal
Sound Mukesh Kumar
Costume Design Usha Ganguli
Chief Costume Co-ordinator C.S. Bhatia
Properties Design Dipankar Ghoshal
Assistant Mole Kumar Jana
Property Incharge Moti Lal Khare
Make Up Sikandra Kumar, Shruti Mishra
Assistance All Repertory Artists
Tabla & Dholak Om Prakash
Shehnai Shakti Pada Matti
Octopad Narender Kumar
Harmonium Naveen Singh Thakur
Production Co-ordinator Sukumar Tudu
Stage Manager Govind Singh Yadav

Story Mahasweta Devi
Dramatization, Design
& Direction Usha Ganguli

Contacts
NSD Repertory Company
Bahawalpur House

Bhagwandas Road
New Delhi – 110 001
Ph: 011 23383420
W: www.nsd.gov.in

Ravindra Tripathi's Play: Pehla Satyagrahi

Playwright: Ravindra Tripathy
Director: Suresh Sharma
Group: NSD Repertory Company, New Delhi
Language: Hindi
Duration: 1 hr 50 mins

The Play
Pehla Satyagrahi is about the life and struggle of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, known as Mahatma Gandhi around the world. This is the story of Mohandas's journey of truth and non-violence as well as the story of the independence of India. He fought a political war for almost twenty years in South Africa and when he returned to India, he, through his non-violent crusades like Quit India movement, Champaran Satyagraha and Dandi March, made it difficult for the British government to rule India.
Gandhi had said, "My life itself is my message." What kind of life did the Mahatma lead, what were the challenges he faced, and what were the difficulties he encountered, is what we have attempted to express and showcase through this play. Gandhi's life is larger than life and his personality quite dramatic. He was a walking and fasting saint-politician. He was spiritual and religious. And his death too was dramatic.

Director’s Notes

While working on a production for the 150th birth anniversary of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, I thought of a play which brought to light incidents from his life about which we have often heard but haven’t seen being presented earlier, and the younger generation of our country doesn’t know about.

Ravindra Tripathy and I discussed this project. What finally emerged was a narration of the story through Sonia Schlesin, Mahadev Desai, Pyare Lal, Colin Bach and Joseph K. Dock. The first three were associated with Gandhiji as his assistants, Joseph wrote Gandhiji’s first biography, and Hermann Kallenbach was a very close friend.

I have to confess that one of the scenes in this play is fictitious (the creative liberty we are allowed to have). It is in the end where Gandhiji is interviewed by Gandhi and answers some unanswered questions to himself; the questions which till date are buried deep somewhere under the rubble of history.

The play is the story of the making of Mahatma from Gandhi. It isn’t just history but also today’s voice and necessity of being ‘Swadeshi’ and ‘human’.

The Director

Suresh Sharma did PG diploma with specialization in Acting from National School of Drama in 1985.

In 1987-88 he established the only non-government repertory in the district of Mandi (Himachal Pradesh). From 1996-98 he worked as the Artistic Director of Sri Ram Centre for Performing Arts, Delhi. In 1998 he established the first non-government fully residential Theatre Academy in Mandi, Himachal Pradesh. Mr. Sharma has been felicitated by Sahitya Kala Parishad. Sangeet Natak Academy awarded Mohana, a play written and directed by him, under the Young Director’s Scheme.

Playwright

Ravindra Tripathy is a senior print and TV journalist,

cultural critic, playwright, satirist, documentary film-maker, columnist and editor. Tripathy has directed two documentary films and scripted a popular news-satire show Pol-Khol for Star News and ABP News. He is currently associated with Swaraj TV as consultant. He was awarded Sahityakar Samman by Hindi Akademi, Delhi in 2001.

The Group

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Cast & Credits

Gandhi-1 Shanawaz Khan
Gandhi-2 Raju Roy
Mahadev Deep Kumar
Pyare Lal Parag Baruah
Sonia Schlesin Aparna Menon
Meer Alam Rahul Kumar
Attendant/Duda Bhai/ Muslim Sikandra Kumar
Train Officer, Kallenbach Shubham Pareek
Mr. Duke Jitu Rabha
Rajkumar Shukla Ashutosh Banerjee
Aabha Ben/ Dani Ben Suman Purty
Manu Ben Anamika Sagar
Sushila Ben Sakshi Sharma

Kasutrba Gandhi Shruti Mishra
Brij Kishore Vishveshvar M. Gondhali
Multi-Character (Female) Sampa Mandal
Multi-Character (Male) Naveen Singh Thakur
Chorus Sampa Mandal, Sikandra Kumar, Aparna Menon, Rahul Kumar,
Sakshi Sharma, Shubham Pareek, Ashutosh Banerjee, Anamika Sagar,
Virendra Singh, Snehalata S. Tagde, Suman Purty, Manish Dubey,
Vishveshvar M. Gondhali, Jitu Rabha, Palak Jasrotia

Set Design Rajesh Bahl
Set Execution Ram Pratap, Manoj Kumar, Brijesh Sharma
Light Design & Operation Govind Singh Yadav
Assistance Md. Suleman, Pradeep Aggarwal
Costume Design C.S. Bhatia
Costume Coordinator Sampa Mandal, Anamika Sagar
Sound Operation Mukesh Kumar
Sound Design Rajesh Singh
Properties In-charge Moti Lal Khare
Video Design Sourav Poddar
Music Kajal Ghosh
Tabla Om Prakash
Harmonium Naveen Singh Thakur
Key Board Kishore Kumar Malhotra
Flute Anurag Sharma
Sitar Matluf Husain
Tabla, Percussion Pankaj Banai
Dholak Sanjeev Kumar
Make-up Sikandra Kumar, Shruti Mishra
Assistance All Repertory Artists
Stage Manager Govind Singh Yadav
Production Coordinator Sukumar Tudu
Special Thanks for
Dance Choreography Bharat Sharma
Associate Director Pravin Kumar Gunjan

Playwright Ravindra Tripathy
Design & Direction Suresh Sharma

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