‘Oriental Idiosyncracies’: a Review by Manohar Khushalani

WEDNESDAY MARCH 31, 1993 THE PIONEER 13

Oriental idiosyncracies

FOOTLIGHTS

Manohar Khushalani

Mugaddar by

Delhi Art Theatre

The Delhi Art Theatre presented *Mugaddar*, a musical play by Girish Karnad on French philosopher Voltaire's theme. The production was written by Girish Karnad and directed by the ground old lady of Delhi theatre, Sheila Bhatia. He has been formidable and encouraging guide.

For over three decades now, the D A T has been consistently producing talented talent in Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi (it has also had and been near to where are few trained singers who can for dialog theatre). Practically none would interested in theatre to an opted walk over Sheila. The double of these units, a highly prolific actress, director and producer, Sheila's contribution to the Delhi cultural Theatre movement has been immense.

The only impression one can have about her recent works is that her style of presentation has been conservatively simple. Once one sees this meaningful artist, one sees a wide variety in terms of the subject matter, a commitment to a cause, coherent manner, and much of beauty.

Although the production gained up gradually, *Mugaddar*'s story moves fast from the very beginning. Voltaire the hedonist when he was in exile and living under the fear of arrest, the story of his chief protagonist, Zadig, reflects a philosophical approach to the life of the author, which was probably accompanied by the situation he found himself in.

Although Voltaire is a European writer, he appears to have had a deep understanding of the Oriental mind. The play examines the rituals, beliefs, superstitions and basic simplicity of the common people and the idiosyncracies, selfishness and greed of the ruling class.

Before the story of the moral dilemma of a philosopher in the court of Baghdad (Raja Iran so much for India or for that matter any other Asian nation).

Zadig, the protagonist, is in love with Semire's. He is an honest and sensitive man who would not lie to them materially. He begins to be quite in repetition as his pursuit is to bring them while defending his life degeneration of justice in India in the popularity amongst the masses and in the court. The system develops a self-centred for him and the king becomes jealous. Zadig is either to escape from the king's wrath. Here is another subject where he ends up as a priest in a monastery.

He wins the confidence of both the king and becomes his companion. Zadig also narrates a fantasy about to be heard after. He ultimately returns to his land only to discover that the king was dead. He wins the crown by a competition of wit and valour and marries the queen.

Unchanging style: *Mugaddar*

The story has a very narrow, Sheila Bhatia has underlined the production with haunting ghazals. The Darvish played by Mangat Ram worked with his singing and contributed to the philosophical content. As performers, only Ravi Chauhan as Sadduk, Jalal Khan as Zahid and Ashok Kanwal as Hakim were impressive. The sword dance sequences were well rehearsed by Ravi Singh although the women were overdressed in several short dresses, making up with heavy jewels.

Lighter point productions by Sheila, the costumes by Bhanubhai were nothing to write home about. The colours in the costumes, were a mixture between a Bombay dancers and a Gujarati dance, were highly unflattering and eye-catching for them. The make up was very inferior. On the other hand, the costumes for the main characters, Semire, Zahid and some girls in general, a wild and unpredictable image of the fairly men of the area.

The sound effects and light design were flawlessly executed by Abbey Mangaru and Farrukh Sharma. Credit is also due to Rajeshwar Puri and Vidur Prakash Wazir for their pleasant and music compositions through the singing of the two other from amongst them was the late Mr. Puri was brought. Jalal Khan and Ravi Sharma both gave an excellent performance. Ravi Singh could have done with a trifle less costumes for the dance sequences.