AGARBATTI – THE SEXUAL INCINERATION ON STAGE – SO ARRESTING!

Sexually Explicit Content – Well, the phrase itself provokes many intelligent communities to either hide their face behind the four walls of the house or to protest against it in loud volumes. I must say, the opening scene of the play AGARBATTI - (**Directed By:** Swati Dubey **Produced By:** Samagam Rangmandal Written by Ashish Pathak, the play has bagged four awards at Mahindra Excellence in Theater Awards META)is been so intelligently devised by the director that it resists both these reactions in the most convincing manner. The scene is brutal in its explicit provocation of sexual act openly but, in spite of the same, it forces admiration for the craftsmanship that works behind making such a sensuous implication bold and yet appreciable in its own right.

Women who are the major participants of this scene inviting and enacting sexual insinuations manage to extract the susceptibility that stimulates sexual urge and receptivity towards sexual matters in the feminine gender. The most significant part of the reality about women especially those in the conservative Indian rural areas (now I am not generalizing here though) who despite being apparently uninitiated in the matters of sex, as the world knows it, display their repressed sexual urge through such innuendos. Primarily, this sort of depiction on the proscenium in front of an apparently cultured urban audience accompanies the predicament of these women being stereotyped as flagrant on account of the evident unconcern about propriety. The consideration that the lack of urban literacy in these ladies may provoke them to comply with blatant projections of the kind they choose to engage into in such private gatherings exclusively for women may or may not be the conscious level of

acceptance in the midst of the educated audience. The same being represented in a rural set up amidst village audience also may not offer a neat solution for the participants. This is because, the onslaught of orthodoxy may not give it a fair chance to explain the social reality that forces the play participants to opt for such depictions that escape revering societal taboos against phenomenon like sex.

Witnessing the scene, it seems the director makes a bold choice; the one that lets him the freedom to outdo inhibitions that often mar the essence of the play despite an interesting script. That sexual acts do often have the potential to be synonymous with brutality is the implication one explicitly gathers when one watches the sexual act being symbolically represented through the means of an enactment and gives a feel of the supposed theme (Now I need to watch the play to comment more on this) this play perhaps would be dealing with coercion the women often encounter with respect to overbearing masculine tendencies. It is this very intent that makes the apparent sexual content in the scene worth watching (particularly for those that know its content) as it emblematically proclaims the reason to justify its inception on the stage. It works as a foreboding of a gruesome massacre that is perhaps supposed to occur next. However, for someone (as I) who has no knowledge of the subject matter on which the play is based nor has access to the entire script of the play, this entire scene comes as a jolt for the manner and the extent to which a sexual intercourse is celebrated elevates curiosity to construe the reason that it has been done this way. Therefore, the scene appears relevant to those that know the reason and interests those that do not know the reason for the explicit proclamation of sex in the opening scene of this drama. This (I feel) makes it a justifiable attempt in spite of its radical nature and helps it survive the jeopardy of questions or objections that accompany a presentation of such an explicit kind. When you explicitly dramatize “let’s have sex” for the people, you are required to maintain a symbolic

decorum which does not exclude the need to be barefaced. This paradox is a difficult challenge and to a great extent it has been managed very well by making women participants cover their visage (full/half) with veils that douse their brazen nature in spite of its openness- and it's supposed to be so in conventional milieu(supposedly). Moreover, the mannerisms of theirs in terms of aping a sexual intercourse are well regulated in spite of the recklessness because every time you see the actor in disguise of a man attempting to assault, there is an obvious emphasis on the mode of representing it as a part of a dramatization than a realistic event. There is a dramatized attempt, extremely effective by the women to thwart him from the shameless act.

When you witness the entire dramatization, since it appears 'dramatic', it convinces that it is not ruthless in spite of obviously trying to show the ruthlessness that accompanies such acts which embody forceful subjugation of women. A well balanced attempt which certainly shows how tactfully a vigilant and responsible theatre practitioner can manage the repercussions that are invariably a part of such a portrayal which intends to upset many brand ambassadors of decency and propriety. Well, admitting the fact that sobriety is an essential responsibility to be observed in artistic endeavours, I also feel that the needful depiction of violence and sex may not be essentially curbed but rather could be exposed taking full advantage of the scope that theatre offers; to dramatize the dramatic content. I felt, this scene is a vital to construe the relevance of histrionics that must be in close proximity with reality but not lose connect with the genre of "performance". It is this distanced involvement of this scene with 'realism' that erases all issues pertaining to decorum instead of avoiding it entirely as a tabooed matter or criticizing its candour, watching it makes one rethink about the societal indifference towards certain realities that has ushered the need for art to penetrate into such explicit rebuttal of the so-called morality. As a result one cannot

help but admire its intensity apart from anything else…therefore; the dramatized sexual havoc on stage appears so arresting!

For comments (if any) please post in the box below.
For more information on the play please visit:
Sources:
Agarbatti: The Play – http://metawards.com/plays/agarbatti

Dr. B M Shrikantaiah's ASHWATTHAMAN Director: Jagadeesh R.

Playwright: Dr. B M Shrikantaiah

Director: Jagadeesh R.

Group: Sri Shivakumara Rangaprayoga, Chitradurga

Language: Kannada

Duration: 1 hr 30 mins

The Play

This play is said to be the first poetic play in Kannada. In this play Ashwatthama, an immortal hero from *Mahabharata*, is transformed by the author to enable him to meet his tragic end. The play breaks from the traditional image of Ashwatthama as one blessed with the gift of immortality. Aswatthama in the *Mahabharata* is a bachelor while in the play he is married and has a son called Rudrashakti. Ashwatthama attempts to avenge the death of his father (who had been deceitfully killed by the Pandavas) by attacking them at night. However, he ends up killing their young children and is so embarrassed that he takes his own life.

Director's Note

Ashwatthaman throws light on how fate plays a vital role in the life of a powerful warrior and an honest human being named Ashwatthama, his character, personality, and his relationship with his father and guru Dronacharya. This adaptation of Sophocles' *Ajax* into Kannada by B M Shri is a wonderful attempt of blending the story of Ashwatthama with the famous Greek tragedy. Being a theatre practitioner I have attempted to bring this play on stage to express my views on war. A civilization evolves with the belief in harmony with everything around it. But in war, killing other people must somehow become acceptable—morally, legally and psychologically. One way to conceive this is to imagine that the enemy is a non-human entity. Ashwatthaman, in B M Shri's haunting adaptation of Sophocles' *Ajax*, comments on the hero's crazed attempt to massacre his own comrades-in-arms, and is a metaphorical interpretation of the cruelty of war, an ongoing phenomenon from the mythological world to the contemporary world. This play is an attempt to make one realise how war is

the wicked output of the human race and a paradox to the concept of civilization.

The Director

Jagadeesh. R graduated in Design and Direction from National School of Drama, New Delhi in 2013. He is also a sculptor and a musician. He won the state award for theatre music in 2006. He visited the 2nd Asian Theatre Festival at Beijing, China & NAPA (National Academy of Performing Arts) International Theatre Festival at Karachi, Pakistan. Currently he is working as the Director at Sri Shivakumara Rangaprayoga Shale, Sanehalli, Karnataka.

The Playwright

Belluru Mylaraiah Srikantaiah, known popularly as B. M. Shri, was an Indian author, writer and translator of Kannada literature. He was awarded the Rajasevasakta Award by the Maharaja of Mysore. He was the president of the Kannada Sahithya Sammelana in 1938 at Gulburga. B M Sri Circle, a circle in Bangalore, has been named after him.

The Group

Sri Shivakumara Rangaprayoga Shale is a residential theatre school established in 2008. The course is backed by 25 years of experience of Kalashangha and 15 years of the Shivasanchara Theatre repertory. This school is designed in the Gurukula system, with a broad syllabus adapted from the best theatre institutions of the country.

Cast & Credits

Ashwatthama: Chetan Dharwad

Krishna : Pinjar Aashif

Rudra: Prasanna Chalawadi

Bhargavi: Anupallavi G

Rudrashakti: Basavaraj

Draupadi: Sangeetha D M

Duryodhana: Varun Gowda K L

Eklavya: Vinayak Suresh Kalal

Bheema: Hanumantha

Messenger: Harish Kumar T

Chorus: Boregowda, Thippeswamy R Sarvesha, Niranjan Rao Pawar, Rajkumar, Dilip Kumar, Priyanka Somanatha, Shashank H M, Yashas Nagaraj Srivatsa

Light Design: Vinod Laxman Bhandari

Make-up: Kiran T C

Singer: Jagadeesh R

Percussion: Prakash Badiger, Raju L, Madhu E

Playwright: **Dr. B M Shrikantaiah**

Director: **Jagadeesh R.**

Harold Pinter's THE DUMB WAITER Director: Thawai

Thiyam

Playwright: Harold Pinter

Director: Thawai Thiyam

Group: Chorus Repertory Theatre, Imphal

Language: Manipuri

Duration: 1 hr 13 mins

The Play

Two hit-men, Abo and Tomba, are waiting in a basement room for their assignment. As the play begins, Abo, the senior member of the team, is reading a newspaper, and Tomba, the junior member, is tying his shoes. Tomba asks Abo many questions as he gets ready for their job and tries to make tea. They argue over the semantics of “light the kettle” and “put on the kettle”. Abo continues reading his paper for most of the time, occasionally reading excerpts of it to Tomba. Abo gets

increasingly animated, and Tomba's questions become more pointed, at times nearly nonsensical. In the back of the room is a dumbwaiter, who delivers occasional food orders. This is mysterious and both characters seem to be puzzled why these orders keep coming; the basement is clearly not outfitted as a restaurant kitchen. Tomba goes to the bathroom. Abo listens carefully—we gather from his replies that their victim has arrived and is on his way to the room. Abo shouts for Tomba, who is still out of the room. The door, that the target is supposed to enter from, flies open. Abo rounds on it with his gun, and Tomba enters, stripped of his jacket, waistcoat, tie and gun. There is a long silence as the two stare at each other before the curtain comes down.

Director's Note

The play is an expression of absurdity of life portraying the psychological contrast in human behaviour and analysis of inner truth and freedom.

The Director

Thawai Thiyam was born in Imphal on 15 August 1982. He received training in Dramatics and Performing Arts at the Chorus Repertory Theatre, Imphal. This included stagecraft, design, martial arts, direction etc. Because of his passion for theatre-arts he joined the prestigious Institute of Calcutta Puppet Theatre, Kolkata to study theatre design, theatre architecture, scenic design, property and mask making, and a section of puppetry and performance under the able guidance of Padmashree Suresh Dutta. He has participated in quite a number of major national and international theatre festival held in India and abroad. Thawai Thiyam has directed many plays in his debut including *Bachae, Shaknaidaba Waree, Maharaj Indrajit, Rajya Abhishek, Punaragomon, Andha Yug,* and *The Dumb Waiter.*

The Playwright

Harold Pinter (10 October 1930 – 24 December 2008) was a Nobel Prize-winning British playwright, screenwriter, director and actor. One of the most influential modern British dramatists, his writing career spanned more than 50 years. His best-known plays include *The Birthday Party* (1957), *The Homecoming* (1964), and *Betrayal* (1978), each of which he adapted for the screen. His screenplay adaptations of others' works include *The Servant* (1963), *The Go-Between* (1971), *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), *The Trial* (1993), and *Sleuth* (2007). He also directed and acted in radio, stage, television, and film productions of his own and others' works.

The Group

The Chorus Repertory Theatre was established in the valley of Manipur, a small hill state in the easternmost part of India, in April 1976 under the able and dynamic guidance of Ratan Thiyam. Located on the outskirts of Imphal, Manipur's capital city, Chorus Repertory Theatre's two acre campus has been slowly built (and six times rebuilt after disastrous monsoons) to accommodate a self-sufficient way of life with housing and working quarters for the company. It is now an important regional and national centre for contemporary theatre. On its 25th anniversary, the company dedicated its first permanent theatre called 'The Shrine', a 200 seat auditorium conceived and designed by Ratan Thiyam with space for set construction and storage.

Cast & Credits

Abo: Ibomcha Sorok / Robindro

Tomba: Somo

Stage Manager: Jilasana Meetei

Set & Props: Tarpon, Lokendra

Costume: Somo, Tarubi

Light: Angoutombi

Music: Tomba, Basanta

Production Manager: Ibomcha Sorok

Administration & Publicity: Dolendro

Back stage: Vijay, Tarpon, Tarubi, Rahul, Ajitkumar

Front of the House: Sandhyarani, Rojita, Russia

Playwright: **Harold Pinter**

Adaptation in Manipuri: **Ratan Thiyam**

Design & Direction: **Thawai Thiyam**

Sapan Kumar Acharya's CHHAU (SERAIKELLA & MAYURBHANJ)

Directors: Sapan Kumar Acharya

Group: Acharya Chhau Nrutya Bichitra, Jharkhand

Language: Non- Verbal

Duration: 1hr 15 mins

The Forms

Seraikella Chhau – Based on martial arts, the Seraikella Chhau follows the tenets of *Natya Shastra* as propounded in our scriptures. The use of masks is its uniqueness and the dancer uses these to clarify and depict the theme of the dance. The dancer expresses different emotions, notions and ideas with the drum beats (Tal) and musical rhythms. The dance runs in

three phases i.e. Sthayee (Permanent posture), Madhyala (Intermediate movements), and Drut (Faster movements). Various topics from Ramayana and Mahabharata, abstract ideas, and common social incidents form the subject matter of these dances.

Mayurbhanj Chhau – Mayurbhanj Chhau dance form has a long history. Originally a tribal dance, which originated from the forests of Mayurbhanj, Odisha, in the 18th century, it got the status of a martial art form in the 19th century.

Slowly & steadily Mayurbhanj Chhau left its martial character and got mellowed. Under the royal patronage it received proper attention & direction and showed a bright future and utmost perfection as a dance of excellent style in the field of eastern art and culture of India. Mayurbhanj Chhau is performed without masks and is technically similar to the Seraikella Chhau.

The Performances

Jatraghat – It is a musical offering that evokes the gods and marks the beginning of a Seraikella Chhau & Mayurbhanj Chhau dance performance.

Radhakrishna by Govind Mahato & Veena Choudhary (Seraikella Style)

In this particular dance composition Krishna's mellifluous flute forms an intrinsic part of the love imagery.

Hansa by Satish Kumar Modak

This depicts the beauty of the stately swan as it swims in its natural habitat of water.

Dandi by Niroj Kumar Mohanta & Phudan Majhi (Mayurbhanj Style)

This episode is taken from the Upanayana ceremony of a Brahmin boy.

Mayura by Sukant Acharya (Seraikella Style)

The peacock is a bird known for its grandeur and beauty. This bird of extraordinary beauty- its feelings of joy and vanity, and the qualities of grace in its movements are given an anthropomorphic representation.

Geeta by Bibhuti Bhusan Mohanta & Rajkapur Mohanta. (Mayurbhanj Style)

The dance depicts an episode from the Mahabharata, the epic based on the concept of Shrimad Bhagavad Geeta's Sainya Darshana Yoga.

The Director

Representing the fifth generation in a family of traditional performers who have significantly contributed in the evolution and development of Chhau dance, Sapan Kumar Acharya is steeped in the tradition of Seraikella Chhau. He has inherited the knowledge of this art form from his father Guru Lingaraj Acharya. He has been awarded with Junior and Senior Fellowships from Ministry of Culture, Government of India. He is a visiting faculty of Chhau at Attakalari Movements of Arts, Bangalore, an Artistic Director of Acharya Chhau Nrutya Bichitra, Seraikella, and a Teacher at Triveni Kala Sangam, New Delhi. He has been training students of both dance and theatre for the past 15 years.

The Group

Acharya Chhau Nrutya Bichitra was founded by Late Guru Lingaraj Acharya in the year 1980. Since then the institution has been training several artists in Seraikella Chhau dance. Guru L.R. Acharya was one of the last gurus of the Purthosahi Akhada, one of the eight Akhadas of Seraikella Chhau dance schools.
Apart from training dancers, the institution has participated in various national and International dance festivals in India

as well as abroad like India International Mask Dance Festival, the first international festival and seminar on Dance and Martial Arts of Asia, Yuva Mahotsava, a festival of all styles of Chhau dance, and Chidambaram and Ikeri temples. It has also been selected as one the training centers by the Sangeet Natak Akademi under its project to support to Chhau dance.

Cast & Credits

The Team: Sukant Kumar Acharya, Satish Kumar Modak, Ranjit Kumar Acharya, Shubham Acharya, Govind Mahato, Veena Choudhary, Bhibhuti Bhusan Mohanta, Rajkapur Mohanta, Niroj Kumar Mohanta, Phudan Majhi, Surendra Nath Soren, Yogesh Kumar Shankar, Bhagaban Behera, Shashadhar Acharya

Guru: Sapan Kumar Acharya

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. Lāeli 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

Læli 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

William Shakespeare’s CROWNLESS PRINCE Director: Bhaskar Boruah

Playwright: William Shakespeare

Director: Bhaskar Boruah

Group: Replica, Jorhat

Language: Assamese

Duration: 1 hr 28 mins

The Play

Crownless Prince is the story of prince Hamlet whose father is murdered by his uncle, Claudius who, soon after the funeral marries his sister-in-law. Hamlet is unable to accept the

sudden death of his father and the hurried re-marriage of his mother. The ghost of King Hamlet commands his son to avenge his death by killing his uncle. Hamlet affects madness and with the help of a troupe of players stages a play, the plot of which is told by the ghost. The performance finally leads to the death of the whole family.

Director's Note

It is a common saying that as soon as one gets attached to Hamlet, he/she can't evade it, as his way of seeing life changes after that. Same was the case with me. I got associated with Hamlet during one of my classes while I was studying at N.S.D. I played the role of Hamlet then and I don't think his psychology ever left me. For me, there is no place for Hamlet and his emotions in the beautiful facade of the world that surrounds him. The revenge that prince Hamlet is called to wreak upon his uncle by his father's spirit dispirited Hamlet. Hamlet's situation can be traced to the untimely death of our political figures as well. When I started the work, it was meant to be a solo piece. But as I went along I realised that Hamlet cannot exist without the crisis of the world that he lives in, as each character brings out a different face of the crown prince. His 'madness' is as much due to external factors as it is due to his internal conflicts. These are the views regarding Hamlet which I have tried to present in front of you in this stylized piece.

The Director

Bhaskar Boruah is an upcoming playwright, director, and theatre trainer. He graduated from National School of Drama, New Delhi in 2015, with Specialization in Acting. He has directed many stage plays like Junakirkothare, Dhemalirkothare, Xastirxondhanat, Karnaittyadi, Monai, Tetontamuli, Bharmi, Ravan, Hamlet, Rjardeul, Kekoni, Oi…Who am I? etc. He established his group Joonak (a group of little stars) in 2008. He has worked with acclaimed theatre directors

from India and abroad. As an actor, he has acted in 45 stage plays and participated in 18 National/International theatre festivals including Shakespeare’s International Theatre Festival held in China and Serbia, and Colombo International Theatre Festival in Sri Lanka.

The Playwright

William Shakespeare was an English poet and playwright who is considered one of the greatest writers to ever use the English language. He is also the most famous playwright in the world, with his plays being translated in over 50 languages and performed across the globe for audiences of all ages.

The Group

Replica was established in 1997 and has taken part in various all India cultural activities. It has received appreciation for its street plays, musical plays, stage dramas, mono-acts, etc. It also organizes The North-East India Drama Festival, a 45 days Residential Drama Workshop and stages the workshop production for 30 days at a stretch.

Cast & Credits

Hamlet: Bhaskar Boruah

Ghost: Bhaskar Tamuly

Claudius: Nitu Gogoi

Gertrude: Neelakhi Gohain

Ophelia: Dorothy Bhardwaj

Polonius: Kaushik Hazarika

Horatio: Bijit Borgohain

Laertes: Himanshu Gogoi

Marcellus: Ajay Mech

Grave Digger : Debajit Bhuyan

Bernardo: Bijit Kumar Das

Players: Mitali Saikia, Nitu Gogoi, Ajay Mech, Bijit Kumar Das, Rosey Mudoi, Kaushik Hazarika

Light Design: Bharat Chutia

Set Design: Bhaskar Boruah

Assistant Set Designer: Shivam Saikia, Ajay Mech, Nitu Gogoi

Music Direction: Bhaskar Boruah, Raktutpol Bharadwaj

Costume Design: Bhaskar Boruah

Assistant Costume Designer: Apsara Khan, Mitali Saikia

Properties: All Team Members

Set Design: Bhaskar Boruah

Subtitles Projection: Sanjib Pathok

Assistant Set Designer: Bharat Chutia, Ajay Mech, Nitu Gogoi

Make-up: All Actors

Stage Setup, Co-Make-up & Wardrobe Stylist: Rupjyoti Mahanta, Satyam Kushwaha, Modhusmita Goswami

Movement Choreography: Bijit Kumar Das

Stage Manager: Nipen Bora

Team Leader & Secretary: Rupjyoti Mahanta

Playwright: William Shakespeare

Assamese Adaptation, Design & Direction: Bhaskar Boruah

Koumarane Valavane’s KARUPPU

Director: Koumarane Valavane

Group: Indianostrum Theatre, Pondicherry

Language: English

Duration: 1 hr 5 mins

The Play

Karuppu is a dance-drama representation of the movement of

Purusha and Prakriti energies through the birth, destruction and rebirth of the universe. The separation of Purusha from Prakriti destroys the universe; but the destruction is not permanent as nothing is. Only in the powerful destruction of the world and all its constituent materials and forms, by Karuppu (Dark) energy, is the reunion of Consciousness and Nature possible, giving rebirth to all of existence. Karuppu depicts a universe absorbing all imbalances making itself a black hole from which rebirth of everything anew is possible.

Director’s Note

Karuppu, this is the black spot that we put on the cheek of a newborn. . .

Karuppu, is the nocturnal silhouette that will try to seize us at the corner of a deserted street. . .

Karuppu is the spirit that keeps the man alert. . .

Karuppu is the goddess Kali, the ultimate form of energy, the one needed to destroy everything. . .

Karuppu is also a world without God, without a creator, without the paternal guru omnipresent where the Man, alone in the face of his destiny, learns to tame the dark forces.

Karuppu is not evil but the darkness contained in him of whom he is wary, he conjures the hold through rituals. . .

Karuppu is the vision of a world born simply from the union between Pakriti (the feminine) and Purusha (the masculine). This union between energy and consciousness, dynamic of a whole universe is as fragile as the relationship between man and woman. . .

In the form of a dance-theatre we make and break the bonds that unite Purusha (the man) and Pakriti (the woman) through mythical characters including Iphigenia, Ophelia, Clytemnestra, Medea and Kali.

The Director

Koumarane Valavane, a Franco-Indian, who left for France in his early years for studies, started practicing theatre at a very young age. In the University of Marseille, he along with his friends created a cultural association which was called Centre Culturel de Luminy, and which made theatre its primary element. After completing his research in Theoretical Physics, he founded his own theatre company Natya. For 3 years he worked as an actor at Theatre du Soleil, the renowned theatre company in Paris, before returning to India in 2006. With the rich experience of contemporary theatre gained in France, Koumarane returned home with a decision to continue exploring theatre at home. His thought began to spread its roots when he met a few young people at Alliance Francaise de Madras. This small group connected by the passion to do theatre, decided to form a theatre group and created Indianostrum in 2007.

The Group

Indianostrum Théâtre was founded by Koumarane Valavane, a French-Indian director in the year 2007, along with few young actors who were ready to gamble their flourishing careers in conventional fields for their passion for theatre. Indianostrum's core aim is to expand the role of modern theatre in the cultural life of the country, by developing new modern texts, finding the specificities of Indian modern theatre, exploring its relationship with traditional forms, and transcending political, social and historical divides.

Cast & Credits

On Stage: Abinaya Ganeshan, David Salamon P., Mani Bharathi G., Priyadarshini Chakravarty, Ruchi Raveendran, Santhosh kumar. C, Saranjith N. K., Vasanth Selvam

Music: Jean – Jacques Lemetre, 'Requiem' by Mozart, Tribal Oppari, Tibetan ritual music, 'The rite of spring' by Igor Stravinsky, 'Therenody for the Victims of Hiroshima' by

Krzysztof Penderecki

Voice-Over: Kalieaswari Srinivasan (The Seagull by Anton Chekhov)

Light Design Execution: Baby Charles

Administration: Priti Bakalkar, Sudheesh K

Direction: Koumarane Valavane

Sumbel Gaffarova's ALIEN Director: Farid Bikchantaev

Playwright: Sumbel Gaffarova

Director: Farid Bikchantaev

Group: Galiaskar Kamal Tatar National Academic Theatre, Russia

Language: Tatar

Duration: 1 hr 20 mins

The Play & Director’s Note

After the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the USSR, the peoples of the former autonomous republics started to look into the blank pages of their history. One of these sad topics for Tatars, the second largest nation of Russia, was the fate of the captured Second World War soldiers and officers who refused to cross over to the side of fascist Germany and passed all the hardships of Hitler’s concentration camps, and after the collapse of the Third Reich became prisoners of the Stalin’s GULAG. Those of them who were lucky enough to return home in the fifties only recently received the status of participants of the Second World War. However, there were some of them who, sensing a new arrest, did not return to their homeland and scattered all over the world…Naqip, the main character of the play, after the war, stayed in Canada by the will of fate and started his life with a clean slate. In a small town in the Canadian outback, he arranged a kind of a Tatar village, started growing potatoes and ….

The Director

Farid Bikchantaev was born in Kazaninin 1962. In 1991 he graduated from GITIS (Russian Institute of Theatre Arts) with a degree in Theatre Direction, a course run by Maria Knebeland Boris Golubosky. In 2002 he became the Artistic Director of Galiaskar Kamal Tatar National Academic Theatre. In 2011 Farid took on the role of head of the Republic of Tatarstan Theatre Union. In addition to his directing career, Farid has taught in the Kazan State Institute of Culture since 2002, first as the Head of the Acting Department, then as a Professor. Farid has also delivered two acting courses in the Kazan Theatre

School.

He has received the Laureate of the Gabdulla Tukay State Prize of the Republic of Tatarstan. He was a nominee for the NationalTheatre Award ‘Golden Mask’ and is the winner of the XXII InternationalStanislavskyPrize ‘For the contribution to the Russian theatrical art development’. He is the Chairman of the Theatre Union of Tatarstan.

The Playwright

A prose writer, journalist and playwright Gaffarova Sumbel Gabdulahatovna graduated from the classical Tatar grammar school named after Sh. Mardzhani. Then she studied at Kazan State University (now KFU), Faculty of Tatar Philology, Literature and English. She has authored a collection of children’s fairy tales Long ago, recently …and a children’s novel A dream that will come true. She is a member of Kazan Opera Laboratory – Kazan Opera Lab. Sumbel collaborates with the youth creative organization Caleb. She writes in both Tatar and Russian languages.

The Group

Galiaskar Kamal Tatar National Academic Theatre was founded in 1906 and is the oldest national theatre in the Russian Federation. It is the winner of the national theatre award Golden Mask. The theatre is located in the heart of the city of Kazan, which is recognized as the ‘Third Capital of Russia. The repertoire of the Kamal Theatre harmoniously combines the classics of world literature and drama, and works of Tatar playwrights and contemporary authors. All performances are in the Tatar language, as is the tradition. A simultaneous interpretation of all the performances in English and Russian is also provided. Since 1998 the theatre, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture of Russia and the Republic of Tatarstan, has held the International Theatre Festival of Turkic people ‘Nauruz’, the main theatre festival of the

Turkic world. Since 2010 the same collaboration has held eponymous international theatrical and educational forums which consist of seminars, training sessions, and lectures by leading theatre professionals from around the world.

Cast & Credits

Naqip: Radik Bariev

Naqip in youth: Rail Shamsuarov

Joanna: Lyutsiya Bikchantaeva

Samuel, Sergeant: Minvali Gabdullin

Zeytuneh, Mariambikeh: Aigul Abasheva

Khairullah, Head of the Concentration Camp, Captive,Military in the Cafe: Ilnur Zakirov

Hismatulla: Almaz Sabirzyanov

Production Designe: Albert Nesterov

Light Designer: Taras Mikhalevsky

Managing Director of the Theatre: Ilfir Yakupov

Playwright: Sumbel Gaffarova

Musical Design & Direction: Farid Bikchantaev

Jit Sarkar’s BAPU Director:

Samir Biswas

Playwright: Jit Sarkar

Director: Samir Biswas

Group: Mangolik, Kolkata

Language: Bengali

Duration: 1 hr 50 min.

The Play

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was one of the prime leaders at the forefront of India’s fight for freedom from British rule. He was a leading architect, who eschewed violence in every form, of non-violent civil disobedience that would influence the world. When the protest at Chouri Choura against using British goods and attires, became violent Gandhi shouldered its responsibility and called for a cease of Non-co-operation Movement and Satyagraha and began five days fast subsequently. He was arrested and interned to the Sabarmati jail for six years on charges of instigating public through his anti-establishment literature. From the jail in South Africa Gandhi wrote on Satyagraha to spread the message of peaceful protests. Madeleine Slade, daughter of British Rear-Admiral Sir Edmond Slade, was an ardent admirer of his and was inspired enough to live in the ashram. Gandhi renamed her, Mirabehen. The British prime minister, Winston Churchill cast aspersions on BAPU’s attire referring him as “half-naked fakir”. Followers reacted but Bapu accepted it to describe the true condition of Indians under the British rule. He was left alone after wife Kasturba, his partner and fellow-fighter in the freedom struggle, passed away. We hereby try to recreate the essential relevance of Mahatma Gandhi’s vision for coming generations in, Bapu.

Director’s Note

The entire world is now a victim to intolerance which is a painful cause of concern for us. Our vast India is in panic by acts of violence. The warmth of father – son relationship is corroding and an icy coldness is spreading across the nation. We are meant for reviving the warmth of human values whereas factors of jealousy and brutality prevail. At this crucial juncture we refresh our collective memory by invoking an inspiring life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi also called, Bapu, as a reminder to our society. This Indian activist through his honesty, dedication and perseverance handled the non-violent movement and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world winning hearts of the common masses. This flash back is a tribute to our freedom fighters.

The Director

Born on 12th April, 1947 his career on stage started as child artist in Tagore’s play, Dakghar in the role of Amal. His fascination for drama and allied arts grew with age joining a theatre group in 1962. He started his group, Mangolik on 12th December, 1968. He has also worked with other major groups like Rangarup, Chetna, Samabeta Prayash etc. as an actor and director in last 50 years. He acted in the lead role in film, Manush Bhoot and the play Bapu.

He has received the Drama Academy of India’s Jyosthna Makha Das Smarak Samman and Lebedev Drama awards.

The Playwright

Jit Sarkar has consistently scripted several radio dramas, TV documentaries, telefilms, serials and films in Hindi and Bengali ever since his career as writer began in 1982. Some of his acclaimed works are – Dayen (The Witch) and Sundari (Quest for Beauty) Hindi feature films selected in children’s film section of the 4th Kolkata Film Festival 1998 and Samporko in Bengali selected in the 9th Kolkata Film Festival

2003 under telefilm section.

The Group

Formed on 12th December, 1968 Mangolik, is one of the few groups that have managed to sustain their creativity in Bengali theatre. Its founder, veteran actor-director, Samir Biswas has devoted his entire life to acting and designing serious theatre. They do not gather performers for their own sake rather believe in doing responsible theatre for social change and harness new talents. It seeks encouragement and inspiration from the audience. It grooms members towards struggle that is an inherent nature of theatre. The group celebrated its golden jubilee last year only.

Cast & Credits

Bapu: Samir Biswas

Nathuram Godse: Shouvik Majumdar

Mahadev Desai: Soumya Biswas

Kasturba Gandhi: Upali Ghosh Bose

Madeleine Slade (Mirabehn): Debjani Mukherjee

Harilal: Debashish Ganguly

Md. Ali Jinnah: Samiran Mukhopadhyay

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel: Ujjal Biswas

Jawaharlal Nehru: Partho Roy Chowdhury

Lakhan: Nanigopal Pramanik

Manu Gandhi: Sanchita Chowdhury

Abha Chatterjee: Satabdi Bose

Nayar: Sudip Chatterjee

Rioters, Revolutionaries & Ashramwasi: Murari Chakraborty, Adrija Basu, Tanish Chatterjee, Priyotosh Dhar, Khokan, Biswas, Ashim Bose, Sanatan Hari

Lights: Bablu Sarkar

Music: Shanto Adhikary

Make Up: Ramen Chakraborty

Set: Swapan Das

Watch The Director’s Meet for the play

Probir Guha’s TITAS EKTI NODIR NAAM

Playwright & Director: Probir Guha

Group: Alternative Living Theatre, Kolkata

Language: Bengali

Duration: 2 hr 10 mins

The Play

On the centenary year of Adwaita Mullaburman, we decided to prepare a play based on his momentous novel, Titas Ekti Nadir Naam. The play talks about fishermen societies residing on the banks of Titas in Bangladesh. The play talks about Titas's change throughout years and its effect on the socio-economic structure of societies around. The love and loss of the main characters is the central attraction of this play. The play enters into climax when the fishermen society finds out that Titas is drying up. What will the fishermen do now? How will they survive? How does it really feel to lose the only means of life? How does it feels to lose a river?

Director’s Note

The plan of making Titas Ekti Nadir Naam was there since my college days. The novel had a great influence on me, and I always wanted to express those elements with my language, my way of understanding. The first attempt at this play was in Tripura some years ago. Then in 2015, I directed this play but due to some unexpected situation we could not work with the play anymore, but the urge stayed. In 2017 I remade, rearranged, and rejuvenated the play in my style under the banner of my theatre group Alternative Living Theatre. Hope my attempt at this classic piece will be acceptable to the audience.

The Director & Playwright

Born on 5th May, 1947, acclaimed playwright and director Probir Guha embarked on his career as a street theatre activist after graduation from Calcutta University. Initially he began working in Kolkata but soon becoming disillusioned with elitism, he established his own company, the Living Theatre, in 1977 at Khardaha. In 1991, Living Theatre was renamed as Alternative Living Theatre. From then till now he has been working as a writer-director of this group of rural-urban thought. He has worked with many renowned directors of theatre and dance worldwide. He is also a lecturer and teacher at several theatre schools and universities. Guha has been a common name among Alternative Theatre activists. He has received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for his excellence, along with other felicitations and awards for his contribution in alternative theatre practice.

The Group

Living Theatre was formed by Mr. Probir Guha in 1977 at Khardaha, a suburb in West Bengal. Later in 1990 it was renamed and re-registered as Alternative Living Theatre. It was formed with an earnest resolution to break the clichéd

rules of theatre. It was determined that it would not merely entertain people, but will work towards waking them, as it believes that not just entertainment but theatre can also be the voice of the grass-root people. It dealt with difficulties of marginal people so instead of heading for the city it started penetrating into the interior of the villages and has performed in a small class room for ten years. Hence it has discarded monotonous grammatical acting and has experimented and evolved a new aesthetics of theatre where physicality is the language. Later on, it built its residential workshop and rehearsal space named Akhara at Madhyamgram, where theatre lovers from all over the world come to learn.

Cast & Credits

On Stage: Aftar Ali, Bikash Bose, Arkajyoti Ganguly, Avijit Biswas, Dhiman Bhattacharya, Pritam Chakraborty, Debobrata Banerjee, Raja Biswas, Santanu Sarkar, Chirantan Chakraborty, Sujoy Chakraborty, Anasua Das, Mousumi Sengupta, Anushka Sen, Ria Das, Ankita Ghosh, Abheepsha Ghosh, Sylvia Sharma Bhattacharya, Swagata Sen

Live Musicians: Subhadeep Guha, Chakrapani Dev, Madhuparna Debnath, Sushruta Goswami

Art & Set Designer: Arpita Burman

Costume Designer: Arpita Burman

Light Designer: Sadhan Parui

Light Execution: Samar Parui

Music Designer: Subhadeep Guha

Choreography: Sanchaita Basu

Production Controller: Shilpi Sarkar

Novelist: Adwita Mullabarman

Script & Direction: Probir Guha