Paresh Pasad Parit’s Play: Mahishasur Mardini

Director: Paresh Prasad Parit
Group: Purulia Chhau Dance Academy, Jharkhand
Language: Bengali
Duration: 1 hr 15 mins

The Form
Chhau is a traditional dance-drama performed during the Chaitra festival (April-May) in the adjoining districts of the three bordering states of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Ramayana and Mahabharata, as well as stories from the Puranas, and those from everyday life, are portrayed through this masked dance form. A Chhau troupe consists of 15-20 artists. The musical instruments used are drums (dhol) and flute (shehnai).

The Play
The performance begins with an invocation to Lord Ganesha, and then to Lord Kartikeya.
Mahishasura, a demon who has created terror in the world of the gods, has captured heaven, earth and the nether world. Goddess Durga, who rides a lion and has been bestowed upon with weapons from Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh to fight Mahishasura, after a long battle slays him.

The Director
Paresh Prasad Parit is a well-known artist of Purulia Chhau and is popularly known as Guru Paresh Kumar. He is an M. A. in History and a trained dancer, musician, composer and choreographer who is dedicated to this art since childhood. His inspirations have been Padma Shri Gambhir Singh Mura, Padma Shri Nepal Mahto, Ustad Juru Kumar, Ustad Laal Mahto,

Ustad Rasu Sahis, Ustad Gopal Suri (Mandal), and his own parents. He was trained under Chhau Guru Sudhir Kumar who is an international famed artist of Purulia Chhau. He has struggled for the preservation and promotion of Purulia Chhau in the borderlands of West Bengal & Jharkhand, hoping for a bright future of this traditional form. He has received the Fellowship for Purulia Chhau from the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. He has also been awarded the Panchal Ratna Award from All India Cultural Association (Regd.), Chhau Guru Award, MRD cultural award, and Jharkhand Sanskritik Samman. He is a member of CCRT Regional Selection Committee under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.

The Group

Purulia Chhau Dance Academy was founded in 1985. The group is based in the village Jamdih, under Tila Panchayat, Nimdih block of Seraikela Kharsawan, a district state of Jharkhand in India and a border-land area of West Bengal. It is a troupe and training centre aiming to preserve and promote Purulia Chhau. The dancers and musicians of the group are farmers, farm labourers and students. Although the academy is dedicated to Purulia Chhau, it actively participates in social service as well. It is registered under the Govt. of Jharkhand and empanelled under Indian Council for Cultural Relations. It has performed in cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Patna, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Ahmadabad, Gurgaon, Bareilly, Agra, Jaipur, Baripada etc. The academy has received many prizes and awards in festivals and fairs held at different places in India.

Cast & Credits

Lord Ganesha Swapan Machhua
Lord Kartikeya Gunadhar Kumar
Goddess Durga Falari Kumar
Demon Mahishasur Dhiren Singh
Devil Lakhindar Machua, Parmeshwar Majhi,
Alang Chand Kumar, Sudip Yogi

Laxmi Gansh Karmakar
Saraswati Gayapati Mahato
Lion Ram Nath Singh, Ram Charan Singh
Peacock Bhut Nath Machua
Dhol Dhar Kalindi
Shahnai Shikant Kalindi
Maracas Bibhuti Singh
Tasa / Nagara Purna Kalindi
Casio Bhism Dev Machhua
Prompter Udai Mahali

Director & Group Leader Paresh Prasad Parit

Contacts
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The Dilemma of Chhau – Problems of Being Folk by Gouri Nilakantan

A new identity are thus being assumed by the participants while there is a fair amount of continuity in the subject and it has seen some amount of stability in its dramatic content, costumes, music, plot and carefully choreographed movement. At the same Chhau can be said to be traditional as