

C SHARP C BLUNT

The Play

Meet Shilpa, an attractive, interactive and user-friendly mobile phone application that has been projected to be the most popular mobile applications of 2013. Created, incorporating the latest technology, Shilpa will sing for you – in the flesh. She will sing what you want to hear in her sugary and husky voice, and shake her hips when you want her to, dancing to your favourite tune. Best of all, she behaves exactly the way women are supposed to behave in the eyes of men; that is, until the next update is released.

C Sharp C Blunt is the latest offering by Germany's, Flintheater, in an Indo-German collaboration that explores the realms of digital dramaturgy, repetition and user choices to create a new hybrid form of theatre-meets-performance art.

Director's Note

Our team comprises of working women in the entertainment/art industry today and we felt the need to say something about its limits for women, the small sexism, the twisted images we have to battle and the glass ceilings – but we wanted to do it in an entertaining and satirical way. This play has been devised from the realm of our shared experiences, but certainly lays more focus on the experiences of women performers in India than in Germany. Swar Thounaojam, Ritu Bhattacharya and Irawati Karnik contributed to this play in different ways, but the centre was certainly Pallavi and the disparate worlds she occupies in one day. I consider myself more of a frame worker than a director in the classical sense. I am interested in performers that have a need to express a certain issue. I try to frame this issue and give it an exciting and contemporary form that the audience would like to watch and engage in. We had nothing, but some secondary text

material, when we started. About five lines from Donna Haraway's, *A Cyborg Manifesto* made it into the play. But the rest of our script is based on wild improvisations and after a while some ideas, scenes and performance oriented moments prevail. Then we had to weave this into a performance that had logic in recurring themes, symbols and ideas as well as an energetic dramaturgy, that would keep the audience engaged although they are not following a linear narrative.

As technology and the media shape the way we perceive and interact with the world, I like to reflect this in my theatre. The concept of user inputs and user choices has been intriguing me for a while because it is contradictory to the theatre set up, where there is a group of people instead of only one user. It is an experiment, all I can say is: Come and use the App and 'C' for yourself.

The Director

Sophia Stepf lives in Berlin and has an MA in Dramaturgy for Theatre and Media from Leipzig and Toronto. She has been involved in theatre for the past fifteen years, as a director, dramaturge, critic and scout and is the Artistic Director of the company, Flinntheater that has produced acclaimed performances with writers and performers from India and Nigeria. Her play *India Simulator* won several awards in Germany and her documentary play *A Small Small World* travelled to Dhaka, Bangalore, Bremerhaven and Hamburg. Her new play *The Power Play* was invited to Lagos/Nigeria in December 2012..

The Group

Flinntheater Company was found in 1992 in Kassel /Germany and has produced and co-produced seventeen plays. Since 2007, the sisters Sophia and Lisa Stepf are the artistic directors of the group and work with professional teams of actors, writers and musicians. Since 2009, their productions take up globally relevant issues and are devised with the input of writers, performers and musicians from countries, like India,

Bangladesh and Nigeria. Flinntheater has an education branch too and puts up its productions for schools and young people. Flinntheater was awarded the art award of the city of Kassel and the culture award of the Dr.-Wolfgang-Zippel-Foundation. The play, *India Simulator* (2009) has won several awards. The group has toured India, Bangladesh, Germany and Nigeria with its productions.