



**Prakriti
Foundation**

**Hamara Shakespeare
(2009)**

About Hamara Shakespeare 2009

The Hamara Shakespeare festival is an annual 3-day festival celebrating Indian theatre in Chennai. This festival features stand-out performances by artists from across the country who have created a mark in their respective fields.

We at the Prakriti Foundation have had long standing commitment to theatre, which brought us to the epitome of this arts form, Shakespeare. However, our intention with this festival was to explore and experiment with the Indian perspective - how have Indian individuals and groups, actors and directors chosen to interpret Shakespeare? The result of this thought process was Hamara Shakespeare – a unique festival that portrays the works of Shakespeare in Indian languages in the Indian realm.

The festival opens its doors to people all over the country and the world, inviting them to experience and enjoy the world of theatre in Chennai. The best part being that it is non-ticketed and is open to all!

The 2009 edition of the festival showcased an interesting repertoire of theatre artists and groups such as Anurupa Roy, K.V. Akshara, Rajat Kapoor, Parnab Mukerjee and so on.

Schedule

Anurupa Roy's Almost Twelfth Night:

Synopsis: Based on Shakespeare's immortal comedy about twin siblings separated in a sea storm and re-united after many adventures. Cross dressing, love triangles and much chaos are all in this story told with a small rod (bunraku style), with puppets and puppeteers as storytellers and actors.

Date: 9th September.

Venue: Asan memorial school, Anderson Road, Chennai

Date: 9th September 2009

Venue: PSBB School, K.K. Nagar

Date: 10th September 2009

Venue: Bala Vidya Mandir School, Adyar

Date: 10th September 2009

Time: 7:00pm

Venue: Spaces, no.1, Elliots Beach Road, Besant Nagar, Chennai

K.V. Akshara's Lear Lahari

Synopsis: The present version of *Lear* concentrates on the main character of the well known Shakespearean classic and has developed it into an intimate performance. The state of mind of Lear and his development in the play, form the focus of the performance. One prominent theme in King Lear is old age, and the way humans try to 'manage' it becomes a binding thread of the plots of the play. The play is a journey into a world of contradictions and reversals -- Lear loses his control over his State, to eventually understand his state of being; he also becomes wise after he gets mad. The play is a not just about managing old age and its, but also about the human desire -- especially of the modern west -- to postpone and avoid old age itself. Similarly the play is also about the contradictions between speech and silence. Speech enables people to express as much as it disables them to do the same. The present production attempts to bring all these contradictions out in theatrical terms.

Date: 11th September 2009

Time: 7 pm

Venue: Rama Rao Kala Mantap (Karnataka Sangha), 111 Habibullah Road, T.Nagar

About Caliban: Also About Colombo

Synopsis: Who or what is a Caliban? Is he this cross between a human and an animal or a manifestation of a desire?

What is that desire? It is the desire of the "other" to be counted. It is the desire of the fringe to be a part of the mainstream policymaking and the so-called mainstream sensitivity. This play is not just a re-working of a Shakespeare classic peppered with a collage of texts, but a text-body curated voyage to find Caliban amongst the dissident maps in India and Sri Lanka.

All over these countries, "traitors" are being identified. Traitors like people who legally question the government on the murder of Lasantha Wickaramatunge; like people who question the years of developmental apathy that led to the multiple flashpoints in Lalgarh, Singur, Nandigram and the fire that rages all along the Bandawan forest; like editors operating in the print-media who are shot dead in the north-east of India on an alarming regularity; like a marginal voice of a human rights activist arguing about the internment of 280,000 Tamils in relief camps in the north and east of Serendip, like people who question the wrist-cutting barbarity in Kalinganagar, like those who are speaking up against the plundering of the Niyamgiri mountains, like the poets who were waging war against aesthetics of the moral police, like the musicians who operate in claustrophobic set-ups where religion is invoked as a convenience to shoot down any possibility of artistic dissent, like an average Timorese street-fighting against the ghosts of the past...like the survivors of forgotten genocides in Nellie, Malom, Mokokchung.

The play identifies diverse Calibans waging their own battle in south-east Asia and tries to reclaim the Tempest for him. The play dissects, shreds and slashes open the Shakespearean structure and excavates the sub-text of Caliban from the debris of a Prospero-driven

Rhetoric.

In such times, it is his Tempest that would make us understand the difference between the rule of the law and the rule by the law. And maybe we would finally recognise the "other" as a part of the whole and not the whole of the part.

Using a series of object installations, protest rushes of unedited video footage and a rich mix of physical theatre, the play weaves in a series of internal monologues of Calibans trying to unshackle The Tempest. At the end it is the memories of another day that remains. Memories of the body grappling with the distractions of the text.

Date: 12th September 2009

Time: 7 pm

Venue: Spaces, no.1, Elliots Beach Road, Besant Nagar, Chennai.

Date: 14th September 2009

Venue: W.C.C. college

Date: 15th September

Venue: Stella Maris college and Loyola college.

Rajat Kapoor's Hamlet-the Clown Prince

Synopsis: A bunch of clowns are putting up a show of hamlet- they sometimes misinterpret the text, sometimes find new meanings in it, sometimes try and understand it, very often make a mess of it.

They choose to use some phrases from the play and mix it with gibberish. They even edited the text, threw out some important scenes, and made a mess of the order of things as if the pages got mixed up. But through this all they are simply looking for the essence of hamlet, and trying to find a context in their own times.

Date: 13th September 2009

Time: 7:00pm

Venue: the Museum Theatre, Egmore

Artiste Profile

▪ ***Akshara K.V.***

Born on 4th April 1960, Akshara K.V. got his BA in literature at Sagara, then got theatre training at National School of Drama, New Delhi and MA in theatre arts from the Workshop Theatre, University of Leeds, UK. He is associated with the Ninasam group of organizations as a teacher and theatre director as well as administrator. He also heads Akshara

Prakashana, a prominent publishing house in the Kannada language. He has written directed plays in Kannada, has taught theatre at Ninasam and elsewhere, and has presented papers in various seminars. He has published more than 15 books in Kannada, related to drama, theatre, cinema and has translated essays and books related to culture and society from English. Three of his books have received the Karnataka Sahitya Akademi award, and he is also a recipient of the Karnataka Nataka Academy fellowship. At present lives at Heggodu, with his mother, wife and son.

▪ **Rajat Kapoor**

Rajat has been an actor, a model and a director. He forayed into Bollywood by playing in 2001's super hit *Dil Chahta Hai*. His popular roles include corporate, bheja fry and *Khoya Khoya Chand*. He has directed mixed doubles, raghu romeo and mithya to critical acclaim. He is also remembered for playing a leech in monsoon wedding. He hosts a show on NDTV Lifesyle called Lounge, discussing socially relevant issues. From the age of 14 he wanted to be a filmmaker. In his graduation days he started a successful theatre group called Chingari in Delhi. Later, he joined FTII, Pune, in 1983 to study film direction, which was a big high for him. After graduating from the institute, he assisted Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani, whom he regards as his mentors besides being great film makers.

Rajat's tryst with theatre goes a long way back where he directed plays like the maids, deathwatch, fire raisers, baal and c for clown. He has also translated many plays into hindi-like Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are dead, the chairs, the maids, deathwatch, taming of the shrew, baal. His present production hamlet- the clown prince has recently done full house shows at Prithvi theatre running for two weeks.

• **Anurupa roy**

Anurupa Roy is a puppeteer by profession. She has Diplomas in Puppet theatre from DI (Dramatiska Institute for Film, T.V, Drama and Radio) at The University of Stockholm, Sweden and in Guaratelle, traditional glove puppetry, from the Scoula Della Guaratelle (School of Traditional Glove puppetry) in Naples, Italy. She has been a research scholar at the Institut de la Marionette at Charleville Mezeires. She is a puppet designer and performer and has directed over 14 full fledged performances (Almost Twelfth Night, About Ram, Virus ka Tamasha, The Kashmir Project to name a few) which have toured festivals in India and abroad. She is the founder and managing trustee of the Kat-katha Puppet Arts Trust, New Delhi. She is the co-founder of the 15 Minute Fringe Festival and has been the recipient of the Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar 2006 and the WISCOMP Fellowship of Peace in 2005.

▪ **Parnab Mukherjee**

A media analyst and a performance consultant by profession, Mr Parnab Mukherjee is one of the leading alternative theatre directors' of the county. He divides his time between Delhi, Kolkata and the Darjeeling hills. Currently, a consultant with a publishing journal, Parnab has earlier worked for a sports fortnightly, English daily and a Bengali daily. He is an acclaimed authority on Badal Sircar's theatre and specializes in theatre-for-conflict-

resolution.

He is considered as a leading light in alternative theatre in the country having directed more than 50 productions of performance texts including three international collaborations. He has also performed 10 full-length solos, which includes an acclaimed River series of plays on trafficking, HIV and segregation and Foothills to Hills-a series of plays with Darjeeling as the living inspiration. As one of the leading exponents of third theatre, Parnab has created a personal idiom of using spaces for theatre exploration. He has extensively worked on a range of human rights issues which include specific theatre projects on anti-uranium project struggles in Jadugoda and Turamdihi, Save Tenzin campaign, rehabilitation after Bhopal Gas tragedy, shelter issue of the de-notified tribes, a widely acclaimed cycle of seven plays against Gujarat genocide, and a range of issues on north-east with special reference to Armed Forces Special Powers Act.

Four of his most major workshop modules: Freedom speak, The Otherness of the Body, City as a Text and The Conflicting Body has been conducted with theatre groups' and campuses all over the country. He has written four books on theatre.

Press

The Hindu, Chennai, 8th September, 2009

<https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-metroplus/Shakespeare-the-desi-way/article15921398.ece>