



**Prakriti
Foundation**

Hamara Shakespeare (2012)

About Hamara Shakespeare 2012

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 2012 edition showcased an interesting repertoire of theatre artists and groups which included Vayu Naidu, a Chennai based storyteller and playwright, Indianostrum Theatre is a Pondicherry based professional theatre troupe and Chennai's popular theatre company, Theatre Nisha.

Schedule

Play by Vayu Naidu

Synopsis: 4 Seasons of Shakespeare is a new work by Vayu Naidu inspired by the themes of oppression, abandonment and insight from William Shakespeare's A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM and THE WINTER'S TALE and inventively combines contemporary lives from London and Chennai. This play is about the significance of story and how art is a vital part of all our lives in understanding how to be human across time and civilization.

Date: 3rd February 2012

Time: 7 pm

Venue: Kalakshetra, Rukmini Arangam

Play by Indianostrum

Synopsis: In Hamlet, arguably Shakespeare's finest tragedy, by the end of the first act, the young hero has started to believe that he has been divinely ordained to kill the man married to his mother. Shakespeare makes it clear that Hamlet's fury is driven not so much by the fact that his father is dead as by the jealousy aroused at his mother's hasty

marriage to his uncle. If Hamlet is indeed motivated by a filial duty to avenge his father,



then why does he not like Laertes, swiftly seek out his father's murderer? Does Hamlet wish to kill his uncle because he has murdered his father or does he wish to kill him for murdering his father and marrying his mother, in other words, for realizing Hamlet's own Oedipus complex? And what of Oedipus himself? Destined to kill his father and marry his mother, he spends nearly all his life, fleeing his fate. Ironically, these very attempts to thwart his destiny end up causing him to fulfil it. This is not very unlike Hamlet who, disinclined to murder, relentlessly delays his revenge and in the process, sets off a chain of events that ultimately cause him take his revenge in the aftermath of a bloodbath.

The play 'Alfonsina' asks the same questions but by placing an artist at the centre of the tragedy. Is an artist destined to kill as well? The work of forefathers, an inherent penchant for conformity and the ties that bind him to his family, must all these be destroyed if he is to fulfil his destiny?

And what of an artist who attempts to flee such a destiny?

Date: 4th February 2012

Time: 7 pm

Venue: Kalakshetra, Rukmini Arangam

Play by Theatre Nisha

Synopsis: Hamlet and Ophelia express the endless diversity of their passion in a work which takes the form of an epistolary play in verse. Steven Berkoff's startlingly original drama plans the lovers' legend underneath the plane of Shakespeare's play. With a brawniness of words tempered with softness, Berkoff's play is injected through with images of courtly love, sexual desire and warnings of future tragedy. The chill of the finale absolutely offsets the earlier violent heat in what is a unique piece of work.

Date: 5th February 2012

Time: 7 pm

Venue: Kalakshetra, Rukmini Arangam

Artiste Profile

▪ ***Vayu Naidu***

Vayu discovered Storytelling along the South Eastern Coast of India and in Chennai, her home city. She came to England in 1988 to study at the University of Leeds for her doctorate, which was on Indian Performance Oral traditions and their interpretations in contemporary western theatre. Her subsequent career has covered many fields including teaching, writing and performance. In 2001 she founded Vayu Naidu Company, to promote storytelling as theatre, with a signature style combining text, music and dance. Its inaugural production was *South*, which she wrote and performed together with musician Orphy Robinson and three dancers in a UK national tour directed by Chris Banfield (2003).

Other productions include *Future Perfect*, a storytelling performance collaboration with director/composer Judith Weir, which toured nationally (2000) as part of Contemporary Music Network, and did an All-India British Council tour with Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in 2002; and *Nothing but the Salt* (2005), written by Vayu and combining live 'cello with storytelling and video. The company commissioned a new play *Mistaken.. Annie Besant in India* from Rukhsana Ahmad which was co-produced with Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and toured the UK in 2007. The production was then very warmly received in India, at the University of Allahabad, and theatre festivals in Delhi and Chennai in Dec 2007, with Vayu playing the role of the Storyteller.

Her playwriting work includes: *There Comes a Karma*, and *When* both directed by Vanessa Whitburn, BBC Radio 4 Drama; *Playboy of the Asian World*, (1999); *Nine Nights*, directed by Chris Banfield; and *Guess Who's Coming to Christmas?* - BBC Radio 4 (2003). Vayu's books for children are published by Wayland Publishers, Collins UK and Tulika Books in Chennai, India.

▪ ***Indianostrum Theatre***

Indianostrum Théâtre is a Pondicherry based professional theatre troupe that was founded in 2007 by Koumarane Valavane. They have produced seven full length plays in the last five years, all of which have received widespread critical acclaim, notably for the innovative *mise en scène*.

Apart from regularly publishing books and theatre literature through their publishing wing, they also conduct an annual three day theatre festival in Pondicherry that hosts around twenty performances at multiple venues in the city. This festival which brings in artists from all over India and France, has grown to become the most important event in the cultural calendar of Pondicherry.

Indianostrum Théâtre has so far received support from the Kalakshetra Foundation - Chennai, the Alliance Française of Madras, the Embassy of France in India, Prakriti Foundation - Chennai and the National School of Drama - Regional Resource Centre,

Bangalore.

▪ ***Steven Berkoff***

Steven Berkoff was born in Stepney, London. After studying drama and mime in London and Paris, he entered a series of repertory companies and in 1968 formed the London Theatre Group. His plays and adaptations have been performed in many countries and in many languages. Among the many adaptations Berkoff has created for the stage, directed and toured, are Kafka's Metamorphosis and The Trial, Agamemnon after Aeschylus, and Poe's The Fall of the House of Usher. He has directed and toured productions of Shakespeare's Coriolanus also playing the title role, Richard II, Hamlet and Macbeth, as well as Oscar Wilde's Salome

▪ ***Theatre Nisha***

Theatre Nisha formed in 2000 has more than 35 plays to its credit in the last ten years, apart from working with schools, colleges and other institutions. More than 1000 persons have worked and participated with Theatre Nisha in the same time. Its productions of last year were Rashmi Rathi, Asghar, The Woman King, and Notes to a young actor, Kadaigal, The Ramayana.

• ***V. Balakrishnan, Director***

V.Balakrishnan graduated from the Sri Ram Centre for Performing Arts and the National School of Drama (Acting Specialization). He was awarded the Charles Wallace scholarship to work as a Director in the Royal Court Theatre's International Residency Programme in London. He has taught over two thousand students in the past decade with his chosen method of teaching acting - the Meisner Technique. As an actor, he has acted in over 150 plays since he started his career in 1994.

Press

The Hindu, Chennai, 7thFebruary ,2012

<http://www.thehindu.com/features/friday-review/theatre/staging-shakespeare/article2868845.ece>