



A scene from Twelfth Night

New Shakespeare

CAN Shakespeare be Indianised, in addition to being modernised? It may seem like a far out question, but the answer was not far to seek. The Dramatic Circle Hyderabad (DCH), at its Sunday showing of Twelfth Night (February 18), answered with a resounding "yes."

With Moghul costumes and colours evocative of Hindu mythology, with a Holy Father seemingly straight out of Rishikesh, the bard of yonder land from medieval times was brought nearer our grasp.

Alan Moller's imaginative conception was amply justified notwithstanding the failure of some of the characters to live their role. B. S. Bedi as the bellowing, mirthful Sir Toby Belch and Chakravarty Mavillapalli as the trusting but foolish Sir Andrew Aguecheek stole the show. Myrna Dalal as Maria, a maid, and G. Rajagopal as Fabian, a

servant, lent able support, the former a vivacious leader in the plotting of many a practical joke.

Basheer Babukhan as Feste, the clown, and Shankar Melkote as Malvollo, the victim of most of the practical jesting each sparkled in very different roles. Among the other major characters, while Anju Bedi as Olivia, Jaya Abraham as the love-lorn Duke Orsino and Jaynsri Majumdar as Viola (the double role) were generally good. Paul Gunashekhar as Sebastian seemed unable to step out of his melancholic mood. The minor characters, with the exception of Shiv Sharma, the priest, and R. Srinivas, the sea-captain, left no impress.

The costumes and setting, designed by Deepa and Frank Handrich were exceedingly good and their handling, between scenes, exceptionally adept. In all, a satisfying evening.

Shakespeare comes to town

No drama group, amateur or professional, which produces plays in English, feels the special thrill of having come of age until it 'performs' a Shakespearean piece.

The particular appeal of Shakespeare to audiences around the world is not only in the enduring classical perfection of the plays themselves, but also in the way Shakespeare, perhaps more than any other playwright, lends himself to widely varying interpretations.

The Dramatic Circle, Hyderabad—known as DCH—with its production of Shakespeare's TWELFTH NIGHT or WHAT YOU WILL, has joined the select group of "Shakespeare-wallahs". Alan Moller, the director of the play, began to think of a Shakespearean play as far back as the summer of '78, hinting at a somewhat Indianized version of TWELFTH NIGHT "Traditional Moghul costumes, perhaps", he mused, "And of course, the sets will be flavoured with India..." While he mused, the rest of the DCH responded variedly. Some got an instant high at the thought of an Indian Malvollo—Oh! what you can do with yellow churidars!—and some openly smirked... strangley enough, at the very same thought.

But the idea was full of possibilities; and a group of people began to put their efforts together. The enthusiasm of drama addicts in Hyderabad was incentive enough, added to which was the encouragement DCH received from the Osmania University English Department.

With a cast drawn from

among some of Hyderabad's most talented amateur artists such as Jaynsri Majumdar who is familiar to the audiences of the English as well as the Bengali theatre here, Shanker Melkote, Basheer Babukhan, Anju Bedi, G. Rajagopal and Paul Gunashekhar, a firm foundation was laid. In true DCH tradition, several newcomers were encouraged to join reading sessions, so that the group could include fresh talent as well.

Thanks to the warm response the DCH has received over the years, it has become possible to take on the ambitious project of producing Shakespeare.

The play staged as a special programme for the delegates of Sarojini Naidu Birthday Centenary Seminar on Saturday was very well received by the distinguished audience. This is no small tribute to the DCH artistes and their combined effort.

—Kamakshi Balasubramaniam.

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