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The Show Begins

A group of people huddle together in Delhi, playing a series of games on their laptops.

Written by Dipanrita Nath | January 7, 2014 11:07:31 pm

From re-invented classics to contemporary experiments, the 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsav will showcase the latest trends in theatre

A group of people huddle together in Delhi, playing a series of games on their laptops. In the UK, another set of players do the same at the National Theatre. Each group will be present at the other event through a variety of digital connections like Skype, email, SMS, Facebook and Flickr, says director Amitesh Grover, about the piece called Social Gaming that will feature at the 13th Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM), the annual theatre festival of the National School of Drama (NSD), that begins in Delhi on January 7. Are you wondering how Social Gaming, which will be held on January 20, qualifies for the stage? The performance, explains Anuradha Kapoor, director of NSD, depicts the new language of theatre, throwing light on how the world in which we live and do theatre in is changing.

The festival, the largest in the country, tosses together several other contemporary theatre experiments with reworked classics and age-old favourites in its line-up of around 83 plays, of which 23 are from other countries. Habib Tanvir's popular Charandas Chor opens the festival, this time enacted by Assam-based director Anup Hazarika. We wanted the festival to start with a laugh, says Amal Alana, chairperson of NSD. Hazarika's interpretation is very physical and ebullient, telling the celebratory tale of how the underdog gets the better of the bureaucracy, she adds.



A Guy From Delhi Has Become Rich Using This Method

BRM also pays tribute to Rabindranath Tagore on his 150th birth anniversary year through Street Patra (A Wives Letter) on January 22, an early piece of feminist literature, and Suman Mukhopadhyay's depiction of

Bisarjan (January 12), about the king of Tripura who bans blood sacrifices at the altar of the Goddess, a decision that angers the high priest. Protagonist Jaysingha, caught in a war between blind faith and a desire for morality, realises that there's only one way he can get out of the stalemate, by sacrificing himself, and thus satisfying the priest and saving the king.

Mythology and the classics, the mainstay of theatre groups across the world, are being re-invented to reflect modern sensibilities at this edition of the festival, says Kapoor. Reshmi Rumaal (January 10), draws a parallel between Othello's Desdemona and the actress playing the role. The Bengali and Santhali play Mahakabher Pare (January 9), presents an Eklavya, who is stopped from sacrificing his thumb, which is claimed as a right by the entire Shudra community that has always been victimised by the powerful Kshatriyas.

Sociopolitical commentary also surfaces in Mirel Masingkha (January 21), a non-verbal piece from Imphal, which highlights the struggle of Iron Sharma, while Kashmir Kashmir (January 16) uses a hotel as a metaphor of a disturbed state. This year will also see an enhanced number of foreign troupes performing at the festival. Theatre groups from countries like Chile, Bolivia, Egypt, Argentina, Serbia and Ukraine will perform at the BRM for the first time, says Kapoor. En Un Sol Amarillo recreates the aftermath of an earthquake in Bolivia in 1998.

Allana is excited about a group from the UK, Tara Arts, since the director Jatinder Verma, who will stage Miranda (January 13), is part of the diaspora.

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The festival will be on till January 22 at halls in Mandi House, Delhi. Contact: 23073647

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