



DELHI IBSEN FESTIVAL

Henrik Ibsen's influence on contemporary theatre in India, and on playwrighting, was indeed seminal in inspiring a trend towards Realism on the stage from the 1920's onwards, and gave shape to a form of theatre that had no precedence in India. The resurgence of Ibsen worldwide, in the 21st Century, had different echoes. His plays instantly found resonances in the social, political, cultural and psychological spheres of newly emerging democracies, espousing the cause of freedom of thought, liberation of the underdog, and emancipation.

To celebrate, and explore the new dimensions of Ibsen's re-birth in the 21st century, the **Delhi Ibsen Festival** has planned a wide range of activities, to re-position and maximize the impact of Ibsen's plays, and link up with some of the present needs of Indian theatre.

A: Three productions of Ibsen's plays by Norwegian directors. This highlights how Ibsen's own milieu responds in contemporary terms to Ibsen:

1. A production of "Lady from the Sea" by the Centre for Asian Theatre, Dhaka, Bangla Desh, directed by Un-Magritt Nordseth. December 10 - 11, 2008 at The Little Theatre Group Auditorium Copernicus Marg, New Delhi 110001, at 7 pm.
2. "White Horses" by Theatre Ibsen in Skein, Norway, directed by Jon Tombre on December 12 - 13, 2008 at The Little Theatre Group Auditorium, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi 110001, at 7 pm.
3. "Ibsen Women" by December 18, 2008 - Juni Dahr directed by Juni Dahr, a very famous Norwegian actress, at the Chinmaya Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003, at 7 pm.

B. My thinking was that if we were looking afresh at Ibsen, it would be more interesting to do new productions of his plays, rather than reviving older productions. The idea thus, of commissioning plays became important. We selected 3 established Indian directors from different parts of India, whose work was stylistically different. Hence the festival will include:

1. Commissioned play, "John Gabriel Borkman" directed by Anuradha Kapur from Delhi on December 15, 2008 at Kamani Auditorium Copernicus Marg, New Delhi 110001 at 7 pm.

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2. Commissioned play "Little Eyolf", directed by Neelam Mansingh from Chandigarh, on December 16, 2008 at Kamani Auditorium, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi 110001 at 7 pm

3. Commissioned play, "When We Dead Awaken", directed by Ratan Thiyam Imphal, Manipur on December 17, 2008 at Kamani Auditorium, Copernicus Marg, New Delhi 110001 at 7 pm.

C. A discussion on Ibsen became imperative in order to explore what could, if any, be the relevance of Ibsen's work in the Indian context today. **A seminar** positioned after the performances, would serve two purposes. On the one hand, the discussion, essentially by scholars and academicians would be seen directly in the context of the work of theatre directors, actors, designers etc.

Secondly, by involving scholars to work with and observe the work process of the three Indian directors, possibly a new dynamics between scholars and directors would emerge. It would provide the possibility of dramaturgical support for the directors, by scholars. The results would only be known later, but the idea that dramaturgy in Indian theatre was an integral part of the work process, seemed inevitable. It was finalized that 3 scholars from Delhi would work with the three directors.

Seminar: A two-day seminar which would be structured as follows:

Day 1: Keynote address: Dr. Frode Helland, Head, Centre of Ibsen Studies, Oslo University, Norway.

Papers: Dr. Samik Bandyopadhyaya, Dr. Krishna Sen; Dr. B. Ananathkrishnan
One scholar/playwright from Maharashtra (to be finalized).

Day 2:

Discussion and presentation of the interactive process between the directors and scholars.
Open discussions.

I hope you will be able to make time to join us in contributing with your comments during the general sessions of the seminar. A detailed programme will be sent in late November, 2008.

Yours Sincerely,

Nissar Allana
Director, The Dramatic Art & Design Academy (DADA)