

MEDEA

(Hindustani, 55 mins)

Directed by Anuradha Marwah

‘Samtal’ (on level ground) by pandies’ theatre and Euripedes’ ‘Medea’

‘Samtal’ has two goals: to make the experience of great theatre accessible to everyone equally and to highlight the humanitarian message of classics of world theatre. ‘Samtal’ is attempting a new theatre language with the audiences literally on the same level as the actors, who are in costume of another era and space. The entire space transforms into a democratic forum where, following the performance, the audiences interact with the Director and the cast about life and play.

Euripedes’ ‘Medea’, our first offering, goes to diverse settings (15 shows in 2019):

Shaktishalini Shelter Home for Women; Nithari Basti, Studio 81, Vasant Kunj (2 shows); Gargi College for Women; Ambedkar University; Indraprastha College for Women (UNHCR collab.), and the India Habitat Centre in Delhi.

Arain; Mangliawas; St. Mary’s Convent; Government Girls’ College; Khwaja Model School in Ajmer District, Rajasthan (collab. Ajmer Adult Education, Ajmer).

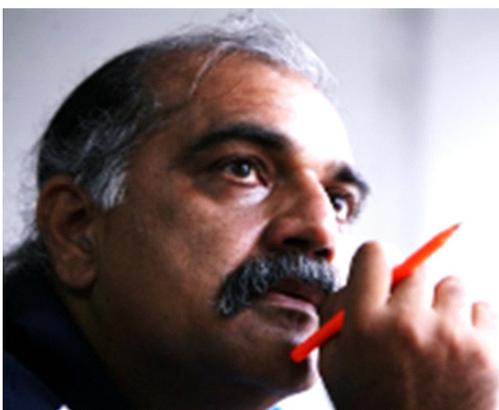
We are selected for the Shadipur Natak Utsav, the first theatre festival curated by the community, and have two shows in Studio Safdar, Delhi.

The Director Anuradha Marwah, inspired by the work of 'Ten Thousand Things' dreamed-up of 'Samtal' while in Minneapolis on a Fulbright-Nehru Academic and Professional Excellence (FNAPE) Fellowship in 2017.



Michelle Hensley, Founder of the theatre company 'Ten Thousand Things' came to pandies' theatre, Delhi in Feb 2019 on the Fulbright Specialist Scheme and trained the creative team of 'Samtal' for performance in the round.

Kira Obolensky, an award-winning playwright, partnered Michelle for workshops with pandies' theatre



Sanjay Kumar, Founder of pandies' theatre, without whose support and guidance 'Samtal' would have been very uphill indeed!



Janees as 'Medea': "I, as Medea, am undergoing a process of revealing layers of the character where I seek meaning with every interaction. I have time and again realized I cannot keep Medea confined to my interpretation of her, or relating her to my personal background. There are millions of women out there, each have their own story and remarkably they carve a Medea of their own through their own primary or passive experiences."

Zeeshan as Jason: "There were many cute, innocent yet powerful comments like "Jason Bhaiya Ko Aisa nahi karna chahiye tha" (Jason-bhaiya should not have done this) to "Arey Didi! Jason Bhaiya akele mard thodi the, kisi aur Ko pasand kar leti" (Medea-didi, Jason was not the only man in the world; why didn't you look for someone else?) at Khwaja Model School, Ajmer... Considering space, each was different and felt different beneath our feet. Somewhere the floor was slippery, at other places, uneven; and that itself gave us all, or at least me, a different energy and style. It moulded my acting, body language and performance. The overall aura of each of the different spaces was incredible."

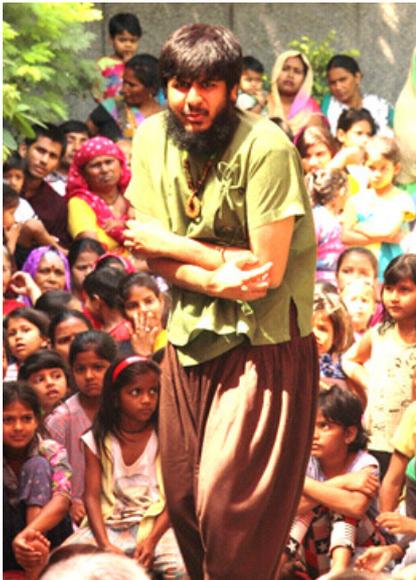


Priya as Medea's breaking heart and Chorus: "...all five performances and the ones before Ajmer opened a passage for a public discourse that was democratic. There were several moments during the discussions after the play, when I realized that during our playing out of Medea's life we were building a parallel stage for the audience to listen to different sides of a conversation or argument."

Sameer as Creon: "These five shows in Rajasthan also exposed me to the daily reality of different kinds of audiences and I often found myself fighting on behalf of Medea...(but) deep down I feel that killing her children was a mistake she made. If she could have levitated into the sky beyond human reality, she could have done so with her children alive and not dead and tied to her back."



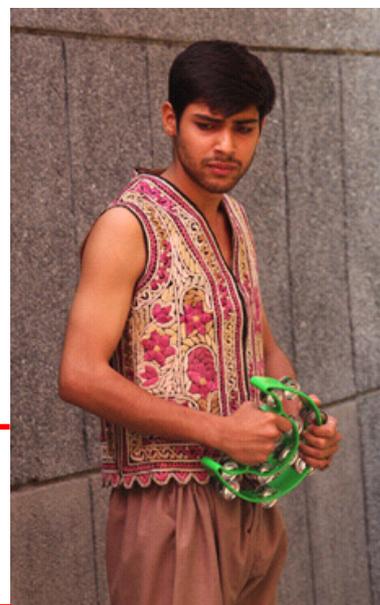
Arham as Nurse and Chorus: "Through this project Samtal, I have realised the power of the audience and how it has an impact on ones acting too. Before this, I hadn't directly looked into the people's faces while performing but when they are so close to me, I have no relief for the duration of the play and that challenges me as an actor so much. I have also felt the power of touching people's hearts (as many said the discussion after) and the amount of love one receives with it."



Nirbhay as Teacher and Messenger: "The discussion after the show at a school in Ajmer district's Mangliawas village...really impressed me. Especially the fact that a certain lady from the audience, probably a teacher at that school, considered Medea an admirable woman even though she condemned the murders of the children - a perception the discussant very sensibly didn't feel the need to reconcile! A certain elderly jerk in the audience speculated with stereotypes about a problem with Medea that caused "her man" Jason to remarry but the lady's rejoinder silenced him effectively."



Robin as Chorus: "Euripedes' story inspires us to critique gender relations in society. Playing 'Medea' in diverse spaces enabled me to understand the differences between a big city like Delhi and provincial areas like Rajasthan. (Translated from Hindi.)"



Aakash as Chorus: "I love this play. It is really effective and audiences relate to it very well."



Four Afghani youth leaders, Ibrahim, Sakina, Shazia and Asadullah, from the UNHCR Don Bosco project. They join the cast for the performance at Indraprastha College.



A story of heartbreak and after