Welcome to a magical world

EVENT The Little Festival will feature plays for children from Korea, Germany and the city.
AYSHA RAU, founder, Little Theatre, is all set to unveil the first international theatre festival for children in Chennai. Christened The Little Festival, it will showcase three productions, including plays by German and Korean theatre groups.

Rau says that she has always been eager to put together a theatre festival for kids. “I want to bring quality theatre to India from different parts of the world and here’s my chance,” she smiles. She approached groups from Japan, Singapore, America, France, the UK, Korea and Germany for the fest, and expects the number of participating nationalities to rise to seven next year, she tells me.

The line up
Rau is especially excited about The Little Theatre’s original production, The Kingdom of Joomba. “It is a musical that has all the elements needed to entertain children — a princess and an evil chef named Avocado, for example,” she laughs.

The German Fliegenderes Theater group meanwhile, will perform a puppet play titled Matti, Patti, Bu. Meant for children between the ages three and six, the play chronicles the adventures of little Matti and his big friend, Totto.

The Korean delegation is a big one — think 26 artists of which 19 are kids. “This will be the only play in the fest enacted by children themselves,” admits Rau. The group, Theatre Seoul, will put up an English musical, Choon Hyang — it is an adaptation of a popular Korean folk tale. So the festival has just one performance by kids? “It’s very difficult for children to travel from one country to another — they would need adult chaperones, acquire permission to miss school, etc. “Besides, The Little Festival is about putting together good entertainment for kids, not by them,” she adds.

Not just kids
When I mention the criticism faced by Little Theatre’s Pantomime production, for including innuendoes inappropriate for children, Rau dismisses it with, “Pantomimes have always had language filled with double meaning. Most children will not understand it and if they do, then they are not as innocent as we might think!” Does she condone it then? “Definitely not. I think kid’s plays can entertain both children and adults alike, without resorting to such tactics,” she declares.

The Little Festival is on from June 10 to June 19 at Museum Theatre. Passes (Rs 200) will be available at Landmark, Oxford Bookstore, Gatsby and ProMusicals. Details: 28211183.
Of love and dances

The idea of an operatic performance, or at least one that involves an aesthetical and meaningful mixture of song, dance and dialogues, is what Choon Hyang is about. We bring you a tête-à-tête with Natia Lee, Artistic Director, Theatre Seoul...

Choon Hyang: True Love, is the story, told partly in song and partly in dance, of Choon Hyang and her true love, Mong-Ryong, rendered by children (some as young as nine years) as faithfully today as it was several centuries ago, when it was passed down orally. The Little Theatre, in association with the InKo Centre, will stage this classic example of Korean theatre in the city, later this month...

Can we begin by talking a little bit about yourself and how you wound up working with Theatre Seoul?
I majored in Educational Theatre, while in Graduate School. I went one further and took a full major in Theatre, while at university. Throughout this period, I was always very interested and very excited at the chance of working and producing performance pieces with children. Somehow, when you work with children, your creative processes seem to work that much better. Also, I think, people across the world are starting to realise that theatre is a great learning tool for the child. I believe that very much and that's why I've been working in this field for 15 years now.

Theatre Seoul, if we're not mistaken, was formed in 1993. What was the purpose behind the group?
Our motto has always been - Of the children, by the children and for the children. Our aim is to produce a theatrical experience that the entire family can enjoy together. More importantly, we also strive to ensure that all those kids who do act with us take something away from the experience. You can actually see them grow in confidence. What fills me, and all of us who work together, with happiness is that, apart from the children who act, even those who come and watch the show get that little bit of self-confidence.

At the end of the day, we're all about delivering education through theatre.

This will be the first time you're performing in the city. However, you have already performed Choon Hyang in Bangalore. What was the experience like, from the group's perspective?
We've performed in several countries across the world and we've taken several productions to different places. Few countries, however, have been as passionate about the performance as Indians have been. It is always touching that every time we perform, the audience gives us a standing ovation. The first time, we actually cried a little because we did not expect such a welcome.

Choon Hyang is a bit like Romeo and Juliet, so understanding the story (even if one does not understand the language) will never be an issue. In Bangalore, in our last show, there was a small group of blind children who were listening intently to every word. It didn't matter to them that they couldn't see the show. At the end of the evening, there were smiles on their faces and we were very touched to see that.

Choon Hyang will be staged on June 10 and 11, at the Museum Theatre. Tickets are available at the Gatsby Village, Oxford Bookstore and all Landmark outlets. For bulk bookings, call 26211115

s.chandrashekhar@timesgroup.com
Chennai's first international theatre festival for children!

THE LITTLE THEATRE presents

the little festival

June 10 - 19, 2010 MUSEUM THEATRE, EGMORE

Kingdom of Joomba

A musical fantasy in an enchanted forest
June 10, 11, 12, 15 & 16 (7 pm)
and June 12 (3 pm)

by The Little Theatre

MATTI, PATTI AND BU

An exciting puppet theatre from Germany
June 13 & 14 (4 pm)

By Fliegendes Theater, Berlin

Choon-Hyang True Love

A beautiful musical in English with Korean music & dance
June 18 & 19 (7 pm)

by Theater Seoul

DONOR PASSES Rs.200/-

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For bulk bookings call 28211115 or email littletheatre@gmail.com.
Just a little theatre

A theatre festival just for you. There are shows from Chennai, Korea and Germany, so don’t miss out.

This is the first international theatre festival for children in Chennai. “The Little Festival” from The Little Theatre is a wonderful platform for various countries to strengthen ties with the youth of India.

What’s on

The Little Festival’s first edition began on June 10. It is on till June 19 at the Museum Theatre. While the first performance will be from The Little Theatre, “Kingdom of Joomba’ the other two are courtesy the cultural wings of Germany and South Korea.

Kingdom of Joomba is a musical by The Little Theatre

The musical is a fantasy that takes place in an enchanted forest.

Matti, Patti, Bu is a puppet theatre for children, from Germany by Fliegendes Theater, Berlin.

Choon Hyang is an English musical from Korea by Theatre Seoul. It is based on a famous Korean folktale and it incorporates Korean music, dance and movement. The costumes are made of Hanji paper and are a visual treat.

Tickets available at Landmark, Oxford bookstore, Gatsby, ProMusicals

For bulk bookings call 28211115 or email littletheatre@gmail.com

The Little Theatre in collaboration with Goethe-Institut, Max Mueller Bhavan, Chennai and Inko Centre
Choon Hyang

An English musical based on a popular Korean folktale that incorporates Korean music, dance and movement, with vivid Korean costumes made of traditional Hanji paper and authentic props.

June 18-19
ART, ARATTAI, AARPATTAM 2010
THE CHILDREN’S FESTIVAL OF DANCE, DRAMA, MUSIC AND FILM
16 JULY - 1 AUGUST

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16 to 18 July
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CHILDREN’S FILM FESTIVAL
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BULK BOOKINGS FOR SCHOOLS
Call Upasana at 8056212458 or email upasana@nalandaway.org
For the full schedule, visit www.nalandaway.org/aaa2010

Watch this space for other entertaining and exciting events coming up this July!
FINDING TRUE LOVE

Children's theatre isn't a new concept by any stretch of imagination. After all, theatre is a form of storytelling. But when was the last time you attended a theatre festival in Malaysia?Although theatre festivals are not yet a common phenomenon, the Little Theatre Festival in Kuching has been showcasing children's theatre productions for the past three years. This year's festival was held at the Sarawak Performing Arts Centre and featured a variety of shows, including "Cheese Hungry True Love," a production by the Little Theatre Company of Kuching.

The festival featured a number of productions, including "The Little Red Hen," "The Three Little Pigs," and "The Gingerbread Man." Each production was directed by a different company, and the audience was treated to a diverse range of artistic styles and approaches. The productions were all performed by local children, and the talent on stage was truly impressive.

One of the highlights of the festival was the production of "Cheese Hungry True Love," which was directed by Dato' Zairil Kassim. The production was a modern twist on the classic fairy tale, with a cast of young actors who brought the story to life in a fresh and entertaining way. The production was well received by the audience, who were captivated by the performers' energy and enthusiasm.

The Little Theatre Festival has been a great success, and it has helped to raise awareness about children's theatre in Malaysia. With more festivals like this, we may see a greater interest in children's theatre in the future. The festival has also helped to promote local talent and provided a platform for young performers to showcase their skills.

Overall, the Little Theatre Festival was a great success, and it has set a high standard for future festivals. With more productions and a greater focus on children's theatre, we may see a bright future for this art form in Malaysia. The festival has shown that children's theatre can be both entertaining and educational, and it is a great way to introduce young people to the world of theatre.