Tales from Korea

'Tuida', the Korean theatre troupe shares its experiences with Metrolife

Inside everyone, there is a whole world filled with love, fantasy, sacrifice, desire and taboo. Bringing that to light is the Korean theatre troupe Tuida, who are in the City for the first time with their heart-warming children's play The Tale Of Harak.

Known for their award-winning children's plays, Director Yu Sup Bae says that there is a whole new challenge when it comes to directing a play for kids. "As artists, we must all be in tune with the child within and realize what kids may or may not like. With Harak, we have made sure that the play can be easily related by the children and their parents because kids always look at their parents for approval. If the parents enjoy the play, we know for sure that the kids too will enjoy it," adds Yu.

The play revolves around an old couple who is blessed with a child called Harak by the tree spirit on the condition that they could never feed him cooked rice. But a grown up Harak would constantly ask for cooked rice. Finally, the couple gave in to his pleas and fed him rice only to face dire consequences.

The group, comprising eight graduates, first began performing in 2003. They combined acting methods of the traditions of Eastern and Western tales. Harak's story was the brainchild of the troupe but it has taken a lot of influences from the Korean folk stories. "It's not very challenging to blend folk and modern cultures because we are all doing it in our everyday life. We are all products of past living in the present, aren't we?" asks Yu.

The play, which has already been staged in Chennai and Bangalore, have received a tremendous response from the audience. Tour manager Hye Jin Lee says that the group was very nervous as they had heard a lot about the audience in India.

"Before coming here, a lot of people had told us that the Indian audiences are very quiet and serious. And they don't let out their emotions easily."

HEE JIN LEE

ENERGETIC: Yu along with other cast members.

All that we borrow from the nature goes back to the nature to gain a new life. But there are some materials that cannot be recycled. So we use those items like the plastic drum, water bottles and other things and adapt it into our production."

Ask them about the future and Yu says, "Having completed ten years, we have a lot of things planned for the future. Mainly, we want to spread Korean theatre all over the world and start a new form of art movement. Our only aim is that one day we would like the theatre to be available to each and everyone."

OHNS
How Haruk happened

THEATRE Director Bae-Yo Sup discusses the making of his hit musical "Tale of Haruk."

"Enchanted," Bae-Yo Sup and Lee Jin-Lee have many moments to recall. Their play "Tale of Haruk," has won awards and critical acclaim around the world, and fans are always excited to see "Tale of Haruk."
The show, inspired by a poem, was performed in a packed auditorium at the National Theater of Korea.

"This film, "Haruk," perfectly shows a smile when he remembers the story of the little boy, his heart is touched. They experience not only the beauty of the poem, but also the joy of living."

Before we came to India, everyone warned us that the audience here are very, very, very, very excieted. But we were surprised by the reaction we got from Chennai. And the children were so excited and happy."

Bae-Yo Sup and Lee Jin-Lee are proud of the Korean performance group "Tale of Haruk which was set up in 2009 by eight graduates of the Korean National University of Arts."

"Our main intention of staging "Tale of Haruk" was to introduce Korean contemporary theater and literature to the world."

"We made puppets from a young age while we were studying Korean literature and drama."

The idea for "Haruk" came from two things - from life and everyday conversations. The idea was shared among the members of the cast."

"The puppetry in 'Haruk' was inspired by the traditional Korean padding and the masks."

"The masks and puppets were made out of traditional Korean paper. This paper is manufactured from the wood of the 'Tak' tree."

"We have used paper to express complex human emotions, which appear to both children and adults," said the director."

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Hear the tale of Haruk

Haruk kept the kids entertained with his varied emotions!

SUBRAJAYANTHI

A

cellophone tape, empty water cans, square silver foil, floral platters decorated with glass bottles tied together with string, a few long and short wooden sticks, metal blades the size of your palm, a terracotta pan and a flute called Taegyangyo. If asked which of these would make music you would pick the flute. But, the right thing to say would be “all of the above” as the fiveISCO performers of the Korean musical “The Tale of Haruk” went on to show.

High drama

From an unassuming start to a dramatic finish, powerful music from the creative brain enthralls the audience as the performers jump on stage singing and emoting in sync with the narration, replicating the ancient folk tale of Haruk, the boy whose hunger could never be satisfied.

The Tale of Haruk begins with an old couple longing for a child. Their only hope is the Spirit Tree to which they pray. The tree gives them an egg which they are supposed to incubate. The child that would come out of the egg should be given only morning dew, says the tree. When the egg breaks, out comes a boy who the couple names Haruk. The couple nurture him with dew drops until one day he gets fed up of the same food that he asks for rice cake. From then on there is so much drama and the kids were highly entertained. After much struggle, they give it to Haruk, who is now ready to eat rice. The story, however, fourt the wrath of the Spirit tree.

But nothing happens till daybreak when all of a sudden Haruk grows up. He becomes tall and big, and wants more food. He eats everything he sees. His hunger is so great that he makes an attempt to swallow his parents. He goes round the world, eating and growing monstrous. The couple regret deeply their irreversable act of breaking their promise to the Spirit tree. Finally, there is nothing more left for Haruk to eat that he cries uncontrollably. His tears become rivers and his body takes the form of land and mountains. His stomach becomes the place inside which all life continues to exist.

The puppets, masks and other paraphernalia made the play a visual treat. The choreography, timed perfectly with the sequencial rhythm of the story and music, showcased the mastery of the performers in their shibing art.

The play ends with a happy ending. Haruk, having tasted all the food he could eat, goes to bed after eating rice for the first time.

About Tsuido

Korean Theatre group Tsuido performed “The Tale of Haruk” for the first time in India in association with InKo Centre as a fundraiser for Nishdhanwad, which works with “children in challenging situations from the poorest districts of India”. The funds raised from the event would go towards educating marginalized children and helping them express their creativity, while teaching them to become independent.

Towards reading

The new academic year saw the launch of The Hindu’s Newspaper in Education (NIE) programme in two city schools.

MADHUMITA SHRIVASAN AND NILIMA S.M.

“Children don’t read newspapers these days” is a common complaint. But going by the popularity of The Hindu Newspaper in Education (NIE) program, the complaint stands unsubstantiated.

Getting information

This NIE programme was launched at many schools in the city and one such was P.A.R.B. Nongondakulam where the program was first launched a few years ago. Present during the inauguration were Dr. Mrs. Y.G.P. Deo and Directors, P.A.R.B. group of institutions, Dr. Sudha Seshu, Ramakrishnan, The Tamil Nadu Dr. M.G.R. Medical University, and Dr. Marius Rajan, Director, Rajeev Kalyan, apart from school principal Mrs. Valli Arumugam.

On the occasion, Mrs. Y.G.P. recalled her days as a journalist and then added that the programme was serving to revive the students’ interest in the field. She also said that the programme helped promote the newspaper reading habit among children who otherwise suffer with just scanning through the sports pages.

Dr. Sudha Seshu emphasized the need for the students to develop into knowledgeable individuals and this is said to be achieved by making a habit of reading newspapers every day. The habit of reading newspapers, if cultivated, can sustain an individual during times of crises, she felt. While addressing the students, she also instilled in them the ardor of the Young World and that they should be the same as the one at the bottom.

A

At the Mahatma Vidya Mandir, Chettpet, Gagandev Singh Bedi, I.A.S. Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board delivered the key note address.

“School life is the foundation for life. If the foundation is not strong the building will collapse,” said Mr. Bedi. “We should not confine ourselves to text books, instead should explore other sources of information as well,” he said.

Students were all ears while he pointed out the importance of reading and how it could help develop the overall personality of children. He quoted Abraham Lincoln to emphasize this point, “A capacity, and taste, for reading, gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others.”

The NIE programme covers around 350 schools reaching out to six lakh students.
SING A SONG OF SUCCESS!

Okay, out with it! Did you make a song and dance about coaching Super Singer Juniors Season 2 every week on Star Vijay? Did you watch the programme every week as one talented junior singer after the other belted out songs? Did you jump for joy when your favourite singer made it to the next round and shed tears secretly when she/he got left behind?

Well, if you're nodding your head vigorously in response to every question, we're sure you watched the finals with bated breath as Alka Ajith, Roshan, Shreya and Shikhani could each与其他 in an attempt to win the prestigious prize. And that you applauded cheerfully for Alka Ajith when she was chosen Season 2's ultimate singer!

But hey now that the show is over are you missing all that musical action? Well, here's a chance to relive the Super Singer Juniors magic again! Catch the finale live on 25 July at Sir Mutha Venkata Subba Rao Concert Hall at 7.30 pm as they tease you with Tamil songs again!

FOLKTALE FANTASY

There once an old children's couple, who prayed for a child every day. Soon, the Spirit of the tree answered their prayers and gave the old couple a child called Haruk. The happy couple did everything they could for Haruk, making sure he never got any rice to eat because the Spirit of the tree had specifically forbidden it. One day Haruk wanted to eat cooked rice so badly and begged them for it. Helplessly the old couple gave Haruk some boiled rice. No sooner did Haruk eat the rice that his brother started eating everything in the house. The more he ate, the more hungry he got!

Find out what happens to hungry Haruk... Watch The Tale of Haruk as part of the Arts Aarattai Aarpattam festivities on 24 July.

SCHEDULE ARTS FESTIVAL

24 JULY
- Sing Along with Krishna Iyer and Jeeva - Museum Theatre - 7PM

24 JULY
- The Tale of Haruk - A Korean Folktale - Sir Mutha Concert Hall - 7PM

25 JULY
- Super Singer Juniors - Live - Sir Mutha Concert Hall - 7PM

30 JULY
- Adventures of the Green Ogre - Sir Mutha Concert Hall - 11AM & 7PM

31 JULY
- Kuravunj - Folk Theatre - Pithy Thiyagaraya Hall - 7PM

1 AUGUST
- Ali Baba and 40 Police - A Tamil Play - Sir Mutha Concert Hall - 7PM
Korean play to weave magic

TALE OF HARUK

THE PLAY HAS WON CRITICAL ACCLAIM AND INTERNATIONAL AWARDS IN RUSSIA AND KOREA

RANGA SHANKARAA is ready with its fifth play for children - Tale of Haruk, which will be staged on July 27. Made under its AHA! productions, the play from Korea is an internationally acclaimed work, which has live music as its other major attraction. The instrumental background entirely makes use of traditional Korean instruments, which will be a novelty and an educative experience.

Tale of Haruk is a simple story that has been made

The play will parade clowns as part of the production, drawing from the acting traditions of the East and the West.

- Gayathri

gritty on stage, thanks to all the stage accoutrements that have gone into its making. Although made specially for children, it is expected to hold the interest of adults too. The far eastern play comes with all the exotic trappings of the region - the indigenous, colourful costuming, an exciting tale spun with regional flavour, and Korean music.

Huge puppets and masks, exclusive to that country, and made of Korean traditional paper, add to the visual experience, the Taepungos or Korean flute, enhancing the unique expe-

rience, Gayathri Krishna, programme in-charge, Ranga Shankara, told Express.

The play will have English subtitles, she said. Tale of Haruk is part of Ranga Shankara's commitment to bring successful productions from around the world to the Bangalore audience.

The play parades clowns as part of the production, drawing from the acting traditions of the East and the West, said Gayathri.

There are many sights and sounds in the play that are novel, such as the view of a cloth inflating to fill the entire stage, when Haruk devours everything around him.

Directed by Baak Yoo-sup, for the Tuida troupe, the play is being presented in association with Inko Centre, Chennai, and Britannia Industries Ltd.

There is only one show of the play at 7.30 pm. Tickets, priced at Rs 200, are available at Ranga Shankara, www.indianastage.in, and bookmyshow.com. Only children above five are allowed entry.

Jyothi Raghuram
A peep into Haruk's world

CHITHIRA VIJAYKUMAR

Halfway through 'The Tale of Haruk', the theatre floor begins to tremble. The stage is breathing, heaving and swelling. The actors stop, take one last look at the backdrop that's beginning to go out, strip their masks off, and run. As the audience questions, the floorboards begin angrily like the sea, and rise dramatically to the sky.

"Yes, that's Haruk, who has consumed the world," laugh Young Bae, who has directed 'The Tale of Haruk'. "I promise we all have our ancestors in us. But Haruk, quite literally, devoured his parents." "But not like a horror movie," reassures Heewun, the assistant producer. "Yes, he ate them bifeul-," laugh Youp again.

Their award-winning play by Tsidir has been touring the world since 2002, sweeping the Seoul Children's Theatre Awards with four awards including Best Production, and winning a never-before combination of both Best Production and the Young Critics' awards at the International Theatre Kingsfestival in Russia.

The performance group began as a few theatre graduates who ended up evolving a style that imbued the traditions of the Clown — from the East, and the West. "The clown, the character that breaks the fourth wall," says Youp.

Though Haruk's story is their brainchild, it has found its way through the memory of folktales and oral traditions of Korea. "One of them is the story of the 'pulgasari' — a little insect someone shaped from a ball of rice. The pulgasari then begins to feed on meat and grows into a monster. And, he eats the whole world." And then? "Um, I can't really remember," says Heewun, bow furrowed in thought. But the world's been eaten, we yelp, "I'm pretty sure it died in the end," reassures Young hastily.

Varied reactions

Haruk has brought many stories to them as well. "In Japan, while we performed, the audience sat mod-still, frozen, and all the time we wondered if there were angry. In China, it was like being in a world cup stadium — they were leaping, laughing and falling about." In Australia, they performed the children's play in front of an audience almost entirely composed of distinguished 70-year-olds.

We're in the deep, dark mountains, where a lonely old woman and man have been blessed with a child by the Spirit of the Tree. But, warns the invisible Spirit, the child must eat nothing but dew. Yes, yes, a thousand times yes, they say, and so begin wonderful years. (Haruk is played by a hand puppet, who somehow emotes almost as well as the brilliant actors.)

The great hunger

And one day, Haruk, who wants for nothing, decides that he must eat rice. After much pleading, and magnificent wailing, his parents give in. But then his hunger grows. And it cannot be appeased. He leaves, devouring everything in his way. His parents wander the world looking for him — until the world is his. He'd swallowed the earth, the sun, the moon and, by the looks of the stage, most certainly Sir Mutha Venkatarama Rao Concert Hall. But, he is still hungry. In a final act of sacrifice, his parents offer themselves up to him.

"Everywhere we went with the play," says Young, "people have been seeing it differently. Many saw a metaphor for our world — the greed, the insatiability of our crowd. Others saw sacrifice. But none," he smiles, "saw love."

Keywords: The Tale of Haruk, Korean theatre
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Kids' world

Tales from Korea

DHNS

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Inside everyone, there is a whole world filled with love, fantasy, sacrifice, desire and taboos. Bringing that to light is the Korean theatre troupe Tuida, who are in the City for the first time with their heart-warming children's play The Tale Of Haruk.

Known for their award-winning children's plays, Director Yo Sup Bae says that there is a whole new challenge when it comes to directing a play for kids. "As artists, we must all be in tune with the child within and realise what kids may or may not like," he says. "With Haruk, we have made sure that the play can be easily related by the children and their parents because kids always look at their parents for approval. If the parents enjoy the play, we know for sure that the kids too will enjoy it," adds Yo.

The play revolves around an old couple who is blessed with a child called Haruk by the Tree Spirit on the condition that they could never feed him cooked rice. But a grown-up Haruk would constantly ask for cooked rice. Finally, the couple gave in to his pleas and fed him the rice only to face dire consequences.

The group, comprising eight graduates, first began performing in 2001. They combined acting methods of the traditions of Eastern and Western tales. Haruk's story was the brainchild of the team but it has taken a lot of influences from the Korean folk stories.

"It's not very challenging to blend folk and modern cultures because we are all doing it in our everyday life. We are all products of past living in the present, aren't we?" asks Yo. The play, which has already been staged in Chennai and Bangalore, has received a tremendous response from the audience. Tour manager Hee Jin Lee says that the group was very nervous as they had heard a lot about the audience in India.

"Before coming here, a lot of people had told us that the Indian audiences are very quiet and serious. And they don't let out their emotions easily. But when we first performed in Chennai, we heard roaring of laughter and applause, which made us so happy," she adds.

In the 10 years of being in theatre, the team has developed its signature style of being nature-friendly. "We like to call it recycling theatre," says Yo and adds, "All that we borrow from the nature goes back to the nature to gain a new life. But there are some materials that cannot be recycled. So we use those items like the plastic drum, water bottles and other things and adapt it into our production." They ask about the future and Yo says, "Having completed ten years, we have a lot of things planned for the future. Mainly, we want to spread Korean theatre all over the world and start a new form of art movement. Our only aim is that one day we would like theatre to be available to each and everyone."
In conversation with TUIDA: Behind the scenes of The Tale of Haruk

Korean performing group TUIDA has kindly shared with DramaDose some interesting insights on their award-winning production, The Tale of Haruk, which recently played in Chennai and Bangalore to packed audiorium.

In conversation with Heejin Lee, the associate producer and tour manager of TUIDA.

Shuchi: What was the inspiration for the story of The Tale of Haruk?

TUIDA: There was a character in the Korean old folk tale, which is everything made of steel. We started from that character and put several motifs of old stories together in this story.

Shuchi: The Tale Of Haruk has sombre undertones; it isn’t uniformly cheery as children’s plays tend to be. The night of Haruk’s transformation is rather spooky. Did you have any qualms at all that the script might be too heavy or scary for children to handle?

TUIDA: I don’t think children’s play should be cheery only. Children can accept and enjoy scary, eerie, spooky things also. That they will find it difficult to do so is a misconception about children.

Children’s worlds are much deeper and wider and more sophisticated than adults think.

Shuchi: The word ‘haruk’ had a special role in the play – it can mean anything! What made you choose this word and not any other? Does ‘haruk’ actually mean something in Korean?

TUIDA: Actually ‘Haruk’ means nothing. But as you’ve seen in the show, it means everything.

Shuchi: It is said that connoisseurs derive interpretations in art that the artist never intended. Do you find that happening with The Tale Of Haruk?

TUIDA: Well, a certain critic said that this story is about the metaphor of the creation of the universe.

Shuchi: Which countries has The Tale of Haruk travelled to? Do you prepare yourself differently for performing in different countries? Do you see any change in the reception the show receives at different places?

TUIDA: We have been in China, Japan, Australia, Austria, Turkey, Singapore, Russia.

In the prologue, we play a famous folk song or children’s song of each country. It makes the audience feel friendly.

The response of the audience is very different in the different countries. Indian audiences are very energetic. They accept everything like a sponge.

Shuchi: Tell us something about your other shows.

TUIDA: We do have 4-5 more shows based on our own distinct methods developed through a continuous process of actor training that incorporates movement meditation, body/voice work and dynamic use of puppets, masks and other objects.

Like Haruk: Theatrical, it’s a farcical story which deals with tragedy with the playful attitude. Unfortunately, I am still alive in this idiotic world! Four jesters play with bits and pieces left behind by the dead Hamlet. Using masks, puppets, and other assorted objects, while singing chanson and grotesque songs, the jesters evoke the inner world of Hamlet and the people around him.

And Alice Project is a story about the ironic reality in a modern society inspired from and by Lewis Carroll. Alice and the other characters seem to be all peaceful in time and space, however, they actually have to face cruel realities such as war. The play is like a festival which breathes in and out in perfect harmony with audiences including vivid music, improvising movement, dance, and peculiar dolls.

We’re also going to make a new intercultural production with puppets and masks in collaboration with Australian troupe Snuff Puppet in 2011.

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Review: The Tale Of Haruk

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LIFE IS A BOX OF CHOCOLATES

TUESDAY, 27 JULY 2010

The Tale of Haruk

Went for a Korean play yesterday at Ranga Shankara. 5 stars, 10 on 10, out-of-out (in Ajspeak). I would put it in the same league as Little Angel Theatre that we used to haunt in our London days. It was technically superlatively and the performers were able to send the four kids with us into fits of giggles with their delightful expressions. The soulful Korean music was created live by the performers themselves with percussion instruments made from recycled materials - a couple of empty mineral water bottles served as drums, a clutch of bottles was the xylophone, a tambourine was tied as a hat and a tin with grains in it served as a maraca, however you'd never guess it if you just listened to the music. The puppets and masks were made from wood or paper and the costumes were simple white linen ones. Children's theatre minus bright shiny over-the-top primary colours you ask? Yes, and it was classy stuff. The dialogues were in Korean with English sub-titles on the screens next to the performing space. The story was beautiful albeit poignant towards the end. The final end though was fairly cheery again, which was good because my 5-year old did not want Haruk or his parents to be all sad and lonely.

And now for the four kids - well, my two, S's A and Stamy's Div who all instantly gelled with each other, like their mummies. There were many other familiar faces in the houseful auditorium. Earlier, while we were waiting for the doors to open, S and I shamelessly hopped the mind-blowing aki roti from the cafe while the kids roamed around in and out of the Sanka's books outlet. Its worth going over to RS just for the food at the cafe.

And oh in her introductory speech Arundhati Nag told us that this was their fifth production for children and there would be many more. Yay to that!

POSTED BY CHOXBOX AT 22:43

14 COMMENTS: