Performance Group Tuida presents Tale of Haruk, a myth universally known but uniquely interpreted

Venue: Sir Mutha Venkatasubbba Rao Concert Hall, Harrington Road, Chetpet
Date and Time: August 15, 7:30 p.m.

Innocent, tech-perfect multi-genre productions from Korea are not new to The Hindu Metroplus Theatre Fest. This time Performance Group Tuida brings Tale of Haruk, a myth universally known but uniquely interpreted. Gifted to a lonely old couple by the Tree God, the highly indulged son Haruk becomes insatiably hungry the moment his parents allow him to eat forbidden food (cooked rice). His hunger is appeased only after consuming the entire world. The old parents, now in his stomach, sing a song to comfort him in his loneliness.

To transform this parable into performance, playwright Bae Yosup has evolved a form to “explore the world of objective reality and the world of feeling and emotion.” Using everything from puppets and masks to music and dance, Yosup’s lyrical play focuses on things left behind by Korea’s ancestors, to perceive what it means to be human in today’s world. Appealing to children and adults, this lyrical work features traditional Korean puppets made of paper, native masks, and percussion instruments made of recycled-material.

As founder-member of Tuida — launched in 2001 with eight graduates of the Korean National University of Arts — Yosup prides himself in evolving plays through continuous experimentation. His vision follows Nature’s process — where everything goes back to the same regenerating central force, recycling waste and preserving the environment. Since everything is part of Nature, he believes that playmaking should also be a Nature-friendly activity.

Yosup’s Korean-cosmopolitan global style has been acclaimed by audiences across the world. Says Yosup, “I believe a good life makes a good play. I also believe a good play can bring a good life.”

GOWRI RAMNARAYAN

A founder of Tuida Performance Group, Korea, and its permanent director, Bae Yosup has scripted and directed internationally acclaimed performances such as You Can’t Say I Did It (2010) and Old Song’s Odyssey (2011). His goal? To create an open, Nature-friendly, ever-evolving theatre.

Excerpts:

Where did you find this story?

The idea for Haruk came from the universal game, the so-called story of creation. Lively discussions with the members of the cast fuelled the performance.

Masks and puppets entertain. But how do they enrich metaphoric meanings for you?

Masks and puppets bring fantasy to life. Fantasy or myth delivers profound messages about life through metaphors in the story. The power of the metaphor is activated in reinterpretations. Depending on the perspective and situation, audiences can accept these meanings in varying ways. For example, in this play, once Haruk eats cooked rice, a metaphor for a primal taboo, the promise that his parents made to the Tree God is broken, and the boy begins to suffer from insatiable hunger. The only “cure” is for him to eat his parents. This drastic sacrifice by Haruk’s parents, works on multiple levels. Puppets and masks made of Korean traditional paper provide unique visual entertainment while also functioning as powerful signifiers to explore the meaning of desire, the trap of consumerism, the dangers of excessive parental love and also simply how we communicate.

Tale of Haruk also uses clowns from eastern and western traditions. Why?

We have developed our own style by studying and crafting methods to meet the audience face-to-face. Juxtaposing eastern and western clowns we create a new experience for the audience. The clown describes and opens unknown worlds to the audience. So he can be a messenger as well as a divulger of secrets.

Do audiences in different countries react differently?

A play is reborn every time it meets the audience. The performance grows and shapes itself depending on the kind of audience we encounter, each with its own geo-cultural background. Moreover, children and adults accept the story in varying ways. The most beautiful moments arise in their reactions. This is constant learning process. Also, it is wonderful to find empathy from older generation viewers.

What kind of actor do you need to realise your directorial vision?

Actors who study themselves to seek the essence of theatre! This earnest attitude encourages us to create plays. I hope my actors will always find the essence of what is human and present those elemental aspects of life and Nature which remain eternally unchangeable.
Tale of Haruk deals with a story which could be the same old story - only, it is not told in the way the same old but in a unique, different way. The beautiful world which Tuida has created will attract adults as well as children. Featuring traditional Korean puppets made of paper, wood, native masks and percussion instruments made of recycled-material, this is visually stunning theatre by one of Korea’s most acclaimed theatre groups.

There once lived an old couple. There was no one else except them and they were lonely. They prayed for a child. One day, the Spirit of the Tree gave the old couple a child whose name was Haruk. They were very happy and did everything they could for Haruk. But they never gave Haruk cooked rice because the Spirit of the Tree had forbidden it. Haruk grew up rapidly. One day, Haruk wanted to eat cooked rice and begged his parents to give him some. Helplessly, the old couple gave him some.

As soon as he ate it, Haruk started to feel extremely hungry. He felt so hungry that he was starving. He began to eat the things in the house. The more hungry he felt, the more terribly hungry he felt. He left home and started to eat everything in the world. But nothing could stop Haruk from feeling hungry. Travelling with hunger and loneliness, Haruk returned home. He missed the old couple but he could not see them because his body had become too huge.

Finally, the old couple gave their bodies to Haruk to soothe his hunger.

Only then did Haruk’s terrible feeling of hunger stop. Inside the body of Haruk, everything remained just as it was before. The old couple began to live there as before. When they heard the sound of thunder or rain, they thought Haruk was crying from loneliness and sang a song to comfort him.

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IT'S MY PLEASURE TO BRING BACK TALE OF HARUK. I STILL REMEMBER THE ENTHUSIASTIC AUDIENCES FROM OUR LAST TOUR IN INDIA. LOOK FORWARD TO MEET MORE AUDIENCES AND SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS!

BAE YO-SUP (DIRECTOR)

Performance Group Tuida was first created in 2001 by eight graduates of Korean National University of Arts, with the aim of creating open, nature-friendly and evolving plays. Their acting method combines traditions of both Eastern and Western clowns. Their play is interwoven with fantastic and creative puppets, masks and music. Their unique signature has been built with continuous experimentation in each play, and their Korean-yet-cosmopolitan style has earned high acclaim in Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the U.S. and Ireland, where they have participated in numerous international children's play festivals.

Tuida is always in search of an open theatre. It continuously experiments with an aim to make the audience happy. Tuida productions are always nature-friendly. The company believes in what it calls 'recycling' theatre.

DIRECTED BY: BAE YO-SUP
PLAYRIGHT: BAE YO-SUP

AUG 15 | 7.30 P.M.

LANGUAGE: KOREAN WITH ENGLISH SURTITLES
DURATION: 60 MINUTES (NO INTERVAL)
FOR ALL AGE GROUPS
TALE OF HARUK

TALE OF HARUK IS A LYRICAL AND BEAUTIFUL STORY OF AN OLD COUPLE WHOSE PRAYERS FOR A CHILD ARE FINALLY ANSWERED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE TREE, WITH A BOY NAMED HARUK. FORBIDDEN FROM EATING RICE, ONE DAY HARUK BEGS HIS PARENTS TO GIVE IN. WHAT FOLLOWS IS HIS INSATIABLE HUNGER THAT LEADS HIM TO CONSUME THE WHOLE WORLD.

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DIRECTOR & PLAYWRIGHT
BAE YO-SUP

DURATION
60 MINUTES

LANGUAGE
KOREAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

TICKETS
₹600 | ₹350 | ₹200