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Enter the golden imagination

SRAVASTI DATTA



How to tame your dragon A theatrical fable

The internationally acclaimed *The Golden Dragon* will be performed at Jagriti from today

Following the successful staging of “Lysistrata”, Jagriti Theatre is now set to stage “The Golden Dragon”, as part of its ongoing theatre festival. A “tragicomic tale of Globalisation, set in your local Thai\Chinese\Vietnamese takeaway,” “The Golden Dragon”— which will be performed by the Olivier Award winning Actors’ Touring Company (TCA) Touring Company, UK, at Jagriti Theatre — received critical acclaim at The Edinburgh Festival.

Written by the well-known German playwright Roland Schimmelpenninck and translated by David Tushingham, “The Golden Dragon” is a theatrical fable that is placed within larger socio-economic issues of modern society and migration.

The play, in director Ramin Gray’s words, is “like looking down a telescope from the wrong end.” He hopes that the audience “will get a new, strange and wonderful perspective on how you see us Europeans looking at the world.”

Writing the script wasn’t a long-drawn out process, it happened quite naturally. “The play already existed and had premiered in Vienna in 2009. So we only rehearsed for four weeks in London before opening in Plymouth last April. Clearly the Company have been playing the show for some time now and there have been some good developments in the work over that time.”

Critics have observed that though the play deals with migrants, the cast is all-white. “The playwright asks the actors to make imaginative leaps as they take on roles that are distant to them in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and at times even species,” says Ramin.

“It’s clear from the writing that none of the actors should be playing ‘themselves’—by which I mean, a young white man shouldn’t be played by the young white actor. And so if we’d cast Chinese actors, at some point they would have been playing ‘themselves’ and that would have robbed the play of one of its key features, that the actors, like the audience, are encouraged to put themselves in the place of the distant other.”

There is an India link too. One of the cast members, 79-year-old Annie Firbank was born in India. This, as Ramin describes, is “a very special moment for us to feel we are taking Annie back home in a strange way. Of course her story of migration to England is totally different to the story in the play but

nevertheless there is a sense in which she moved from one culture to another and it's wonderful for us to travel back to India with her.”

All Ramin asks of the audience is “to bring your brain as well as your heart into the auditorium and be prepared to use it. Watch the actors carefully and be actively prepared to use your imagination to tease out all the ambiguities and possibilities in the strands of story that we lay out for you in the seventy minute traffic of our stage!”

“The Golden Dragon” will be performed at Jagriti Theatre, Whitefield, starting today till January 29, at 8 p.m. and Sunday at 3 and 6.30 p.m. No performance on Mondays.

Contact 9845373547 for details on shows for Colleges\High Schools (on Tuesdays and Wednesdays). Tickets, priced at Rs. 300, are available at Jagriti and

www.bookmyshow.com.

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