Hayavadana



SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI NEW DELHI



HAYAVADANA (in Marathi)

Hayavadana, literally means 'the face a horse.' It is a Kannada play by Girish Karnad. The play has been translated into Hindi, Marathi, English. The present production is in Marathi. Girish Karnad drew inspiration from both 'The Transposed Heads' by Thomas Mann and a tale from the **Vetalapanchavimsati** on which the former is based.

Devadatta and Kapila are very close friends though different in build and temperament. Devadatta is a poet, a man of intellect. Kapila is all body. One day Devadatta confesses to Kapila his intense love for a beautiful girl named Padmini and swears that if he ever wins her hand, he will sacrifice his arms to Goddess Kali and his head to Lord Rudra. With the help and assistance of Kapila, Padmini becomes Devadatta's wife.

Devadatta, Padmini, Kapila are happy together, almost inseparable. But there is a lurking fear in Devadatta's mind: Are Padmini and Kapila too fond of each other?

The three set out on a trip to Ujjain. When they approach the Kali Temple, Devadatta insists on going to the temple alone. He spots a sword near the shrine, and remembering his vow to Mother Kali, he beheads himself. When Kapila finds the severed body, he is overcome with sorrow and blaming himself for Devadatta's suicidal act, picks up the same sword to put an end to his own life. Padmini comes up to the shrine and stumbles on the two bodies. She screams in terror, which rouses Kali from her slumber. Padimini in tears prays Kali to save her. Kali, impatient to go to sleep again, tells her to put the heads back on the bodies and bring the two men to life again. In her excitement Padmini transposes the heads and as soon as the young men come back to life, they discover the mistake. There is now a dilemma; which of the two was Devadatta? Who is Padmini's husband?

The dilemma persists. And how does it all relate to the problems of a man with the face of a horse?

Let us see

The Chairman and Council members of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi cordially invite you to a presentation of

HAYAVADANA

(the brilliant innovative play by Girish Karnad)
by the Goa Hindu Association, Bombay
(Direction : VIJAYA MEHTA)

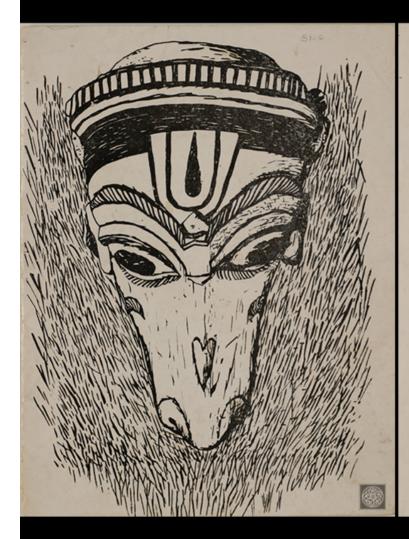
August 30, 1983

Shri Ram Centre of Art & Culture
4, College Road, New Delhi-1
at 6-30 p.m.

R. S. V. P. JIWAN PANI 387246 387247 387248

As seats are limited, your early acceptance is requested so that seats can be allotted and seatcards sent to you well in time.





SANGEET NATAK AKADEMI, NEW DELHI presents

The National Centre for the Performing Arts and The Goa Hindu Association's production of

hayavadana



30TH AUGUST 1983 SHRIRAM CENTRE OF ART & CULTURE NEW DELHI



The Bhagavata (the narrator, here called Buwa) sings the invocatory prayer in praise of Ganesha, the remover of all obstacles. "No performance can hope for success without Ganesha's blessings. An elephant's head on a human body, a broken tusk and a cracked belly — and yet he is the very image of Perfection! How can that be? But why should we, poor mortals, try to unravel this mystery, to understand Creation in all its totality? All we can do is to pay homage to this deity and begin the play.

Here is Dharmapura, the city where our two heroes live. They are the closest of friends, though different in build and temperament. Devadatta is a man of intellect, a poet. Kapil, the ironsmith's son, dark and plain, is all body."

A scream of terror interrupts him. An actor enters, trembling with fear. He blabbers. He has seen an apparition. A comic interlude ensues as he describes what has scared him. A horse with a...but he can barely complete his sentence. He is ordered out to make sure, to have another look. How dare he disturb a performance with his delusions?

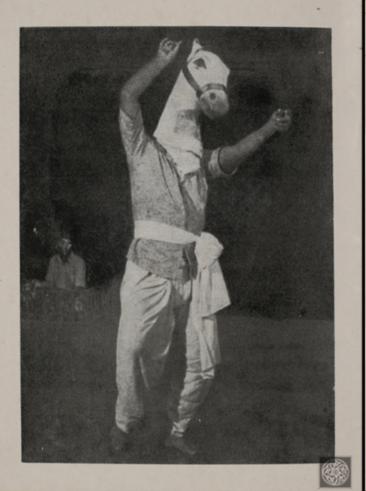
The actor rushes in announcing that the apparition is close by, about to appear.

A half-curtain is brought in shielding the cause of the terror. The sound of sobbing is heard behind the curtain which is lowered a little to reveal the head of a horse. Then lowered further until one sees on the floor a man's body with a horse's head, crouched in fear and sorrow.

They all think the head is just a mask and try desperately to rip it off. When they fail, they ask him who he



A palanquin is carried through the auditorium, in keeping with the tradition of annual festivals when the main village-goddess visits other deities in their shrines and returns to her own temple. This ritual usually precedes a performance staged outdoors in front of the main temple.



is. (The dialogue here is in the Malwani dialect of the Kopkan coast of Maharashtra.)

'Hayavadana' he replies and relates his sad tale partly in song and dance. His mother, the beautiful princess of Sindhudurga, had several suitors only too eager to marry her. Instead of choosing a handsome prince, she insisted on marrying his great white stallion. After fifteen years of marriage, the stallion, now released from a curse that had doomed him, was transformed into a celestial being. His wife stubbornly refused to accompany him to his abode in the heavens for she wanted him to remain a horse. In his fury, he cursed her, turned her into a mare, and disappeared into the sky. The mother-mare pranced away happily, leaving behind their offspring, Hayavadana, half-man, half-horse.

Hayavadana has done everything possible to become a complete man. His personal life is unblemished; he has tried to immerse himself in social 'causes'. But where is the society to which he 'belongs'?

Yes, he has visited all the shrines. But no .. he won't consider going to Tirupati. His silken mane will have to be shorn and that's his dearest possession.

The narrator suggests the shrine of Kali on Mount Chitrakoot. She is said to grant man's innermost wishes. Hayavadana hastens to leave, with the villagers showering him with directions on how to reach his destination. At this point, the narrator cautions him gently.

Providence ordains our fates and all our longings The curse of infinite imperfections afflicts all beings.



The core story is resumed and the narrator reiterates in song the ties of friendship that bind Devadatta and Kapil.

Two friends, one heart, one mind All inseparable as water itself.

Devadatta is sitting alone, despondent, lost in thought. He has caught a glimpse of a beautiful maiden and, to the background of a solemn chant extolling Mahakali, he vows that could he but win this maiden, he would offer his head to Rudra and his hands to Kali.

Kapil enters, brimming with excitement, eager to relate to his friend his victory over a famed wrestler from Gandhara. Realising that Devadatta is immersed in his own world, he asks, "Which one is it this time? You have lost your heart to fifteen girls these two years." But this one is special. Devadatta describes the magic of her charms, Quoting lines from Kalidasa, he says that if he had this maiden to inspire him, he might even outshine the great poet. He repeats with grim urgency his pledge to Rudra and Kali.

Hearing the desperate note in Devadatta's voice, Kapil asks her name. Devadatta can tell him nothing. After much questioning, Kapil learns that she lives in Pavana Teertha. Devadatta can barely describe the house. All that he recalls is that the door-frame had an engraving of a two-headed bird and as her soft hand touched it, it almost came alive.

Kapil has found the clue. Why does Devadatta need the cloud-messenger or the bumble-bee of Kalidasa's poetic fancy? Kapil will himself locate the girl, plead his friend's suit and Devadatta must promise to forget those pledges to Rudra and Kali. But how can Devadatta banish the memory of his vow?



Kapil circles Pavana Teertha, scrutinizing the door-frames till his eyes light on the bird with two heads. He knocks and Padmini enters behind a half-curtain. One glimpse of her and Kapil realises the power of the spell cast on his friend. Padmini asks, "Who knocked?" "Whom do you want?" The questions are accompanied by a tilt of the waist, a slight shift of the head, a flicker in the eyes. Kapil is baffled and Padmini is amused by his confused answers. Kapil is anxious to get to the point and redeem his promise to Devadatta. "Call your father, the master of this house, anyone. I have some very important work. I will touch your feet if . . ."

The idea seems to thrill Padmini. She has bowed down to touch the feet of others. Now... As Kapil touches her feet, there is a slight pause. The atmosphere seems charged.

A dark shadow aslant a lighted path, At every step a strange stirring.

Kapil recalls his errand. He extols Devadatta's attainments as a scholar, his family's reputation.

Padmini: What's he to you?

Kapil : Friend! Greatest in the world!

As Padmini goes back into her house, Kapil stands perplexed. "Devadatta, this girl, swift and bright like lightning, is not for the likes of you. What she needs is a man of steel."

The narrator takes over. Predictably, Padmini, born in a prosperous family, is wedded to Devadatta, scion of a line of scholars. A glimpse of their wedding and the exchange of garlands.

Six months have elapsed since the marriage, Padmini is excited about a trip planned to Ujjain. But Devadatta seems reluctant to undertake it. He speaks of his concern for Padmini's health because she is now with child. But one senses within him a lurking dread. He cannot cope with Padmini's restless energy. The thought that Kapil and Padmini seem too fond of each other disturbs him. Padmini tries to humour him, even agrees to cancel the trip if it means so much unhappiness for him. After all she is his wedded wife, bound to him by the sacred vow of matrimony!



Kapil enters. He has been delayed because he thought that one of the oxen of the cart wasn't good enough for the journey. Devadatta coldly informs him that the trip has been called off because of Padmini's condition. Kapil is crest-fallen. The days ahead are going to be empty. He tries to conceal his anguish. (At this point, the narrator softly warns him to keep away from the couple.) And Kapil is almost ready to leave, when Padmini interveness.

"When we are going to start? We are already late." She offers an explanation to Devadatta. "He looked so disappointed. I felt sorry for him." The three start lifting the bundles to be carried to the cart and the narrator remarks that while they seem so busy, each is engrossed in his own thoughts. The song has a touch of foreboding, even as we hear the jingle of the bullock-cart bells during the journey.

A dark shadow aslant a lighted path,
At every step a strange stirring,
Beneath a touch-me-not bush, a coild serpent,
Hood raised to encircle your feet.
Today a flower might well be ripped from its stem.
And a bird flee its nest.

The journey begins and they halt in the glade of the jungle. Padmini says she enjoyed Kapil's smooth handling of the oxen and the cart and compares it jestingly with Devadatta's clumsy driving round the lake in the city.

She is struck by the glorious flowers on a nearby tree. Kepil hastens to fetch the blossoms for her and Devadatta watches the fascinated look in her eyes as they follow Kapil's movements. The erotic lines and melody of the *lavni* emphasize the power of this physical attraction.

Sturdy in build and dark in colour, His broad chest, his strong shoulders. How one longs to clutch his wrists! The sheer male in him – I fear—Has cast his spell on me. I gaze at him once, twice, and yet again Youth at its peak, A tapering waist, lithe as a leopard. He is like a bee cruising among flowers. A favoured guest in the heart.

Devadatta watches her in silence and tells himself, "Watch those purple flames in her eyes. How could you imagine she could resist him? Strangle your agony. Don't look away. Stop being a coward."

Kapil returns with a whole heap of flowers. He delights Padmini with his description of the flower: its yellow petals are auspicious like turmeric, the vermillion circle in the centre is like the *tilaka* mark on a woman's forehead, the orange streak resembles the line in the parting of her hair and the row of black dots the necklace of beads worn by a married woman. It's the *Soubhagya* flower. Kapil then describes the landscape, the temple of Rudra to the right and beyond the hill, the temple of Kali, now dilapidated, deserted.

Devadatta hears the words, almost in a trance. The chant of Kali resounds in his ears. He refuses to accompany them to the temple of Rudra and insists on being left alone. He has made his resolve. Let these two, whom he has loved so deeply who are almost a part of his own self, live happily together. He must find the courage to redeem his promise. He begins the steep ascent towards the Kali Temple. Near the lonely shrine, he spots a sword and lifting the weapon, cuts off his head. Its mask rolls off and the blood continues to course.

Kapil and Padmini return to the spot where they had left Devadatta. Crazed with worry, Kapil sets out in search of his friend. He follows the imprint of his footsteps until he reaches the Kali Temple and sees the severed head. Overwhelmed by guilt and sorrow, he uses the same sword to slash his own head. Padmini, feeling abandoned and lost, decides to follow the direction in which Kapil has gone. As she enters the Kali Temple, she screams with terror. She holds the two heads to her bosom.





I cluth these two heads to my heart,
Caressing the one,
Murmuring words of love to the other.

Then she realizes that she will be blamed for the tragedy. "Save me, Mother Kali," she weeps, and is about to point the same sword to her breast when the strident voice of the goddess shatters the silence. An awesome Kali enters to the sound of deafening drums and abruptly announces that, pleased with this devotee, she will grant her plea. "You have saved me, Mother. But how can I dare face the world?"

Attach the heads back to their bodies and press the blade of the sword on their necks," Kali answers.

"But why did you let them die in the first place? You the All-Knowing who could have stopped them?"

"Those two rascals!" shrieks Kali. "Devadatta — he had promised his head to Rudra and a mere pair of hands to me. Because you went to the Rudra, Temple, he came here and offered me his head, didn't he? As for Kapil, not even a mention of me! It was Devadatta, Devadatta all the time! Maybe he was afraid that people would think he killed Devadatta for your sake. Anyway, you, at least, were honest — even if it was all in self-interest! Besides, I had to think of the living seed in your womb. Now don't waste any more time. Do what I told you to do. Get going." Kali is clearly impatient to go to sleep again.

In blind haste (or as Thomas Mann says, 'not quite and altogether in blind haste'), Padmini transposes the heads on the bodies. As the men come back to life, there is momentary excitement.

Whose the head? Whose the body? We can't wait to unravel this mystery.

This question-answer style of folk expression mirrors their feelings. But soon they realise the implications of the mistake.

A fight is about to ensue. Which of the two is Devadatta? And who is Padmini's husband? The rite of marriage is consecrated with the bride holding the hand of the bridegroom before the sacrificial fire and the hand is part of the *body*. But among all the limbs, it is the *head* which is supreme. How will this problem be resolved?



This ancien tale from the *Vetalpanchvimshati* is now again recounted in song as the *vetal* (demon) relates the story to King Vikrama, raising the query and pleading for an answer. Vikrama replies, "The *Kalpataru* ranks highest among trees and the head is supreme among all parts of the body."

The narrator reiterates that a sage has also decreed that the man with Devadatta's head is Padmini's rightful husband. Resigned to this defeat, Kapil disappears into the forest.

Padmini gives birth to a son. Gradually the strong body supporting Devadatta's head assumes its earlier softer contours and Devadatta himself seems to have lost his former flair for scholarship and poetry. The puppets, bought for the child, sense the change in him and add spice to the situation, through their own reading of Padmini's yearnings for Kapil's sturdy frame. "Devadatta is changing. Perhaps Kapil, too, has changed. As for me? Change, change and more change. Is there no way out of this cycle? Drop by drop the pitcher is filled to the brim. From night to day, from day to night, the moon flounders, groping."

We have glimpses into the changing relationship between Devadatta and Padmini, her revulsion for his body. The child is now the centre of attention and the dolls are relegated to a corner, abandoned. But they hover around Padmini when she is asleep, describing her dreams — the frequent appearance of a man, his proximity to her...what can it mean? ... All through the scene are snatches from a bullaby.

A gallant rider once rode in here,
Which could be the land from where he came?
He breezed in and vanished smiling.
His turban was studded with gems,
Rows of pearls swayed on his chest.
In his fist was a sword with diamonds on the hilt.
A gallant rider once rode in here,
And wafted through the thrusts of Time,
smiling again.



Padmini seems to have come to a decision. She persuades Devadatta to go to Ujjain and buy new dolls for the child. She herself picks up the child and leaves for the forest. The scene describes her in the glade where the three had earlier halted.

Let's go to the forest and taste its magic.
The ripple of water flowing, its soft music.
The hues of flowers and their bright tracery.
Birds taking wing, soaring into the skies,
Nestling among green branches.
Tinkling like anklets at the whiff of a breeze.
Red birds alight on palas trees,
Almost the streak of orange in my hair-parting,...
Let's soak ourselves in this red, my darling!

Kapil is seen in the forest, almost a recluse. He has by now steeled through sheer will-power the delicate body of Devadatta that had come to his lot.

Spreading my wings like an eagle I roamed afar. Sped away like clouds, leaving so many skies way behind.

And now-this mortal agony!

Padmini enters, child in arms. He wants to reject her and the child which she says is the fruit of his body. He cannot bear to think of this.

My wings are clipped, I am about to sink, The blood that coursed in my heart now flows freely, Reddening the dust at my feet. He says, "Why did you leave him? Come here seeking for me? Go back to your husband. He is the winner." Padmini tells him. "He didn't win. Neither did you. And I? I am neither the winner nor the loser. Maybe we ought not to have come here, my little one? I really don't know what brought me."

The flowing river, reckless like Radha!
You cannot engrave your love on water.
Nor wound it with a knife.
Free of the load of memories.
It tosses, leaps, sweeps on . .
Flounders in the rug of moss of its blue depths,
Only to rush forward again.

Padmini turns to Kapil again. "The boy is exactly like you, with the same kind of mole on his shoulder." She touches Kapil to indicate the spot. "One can beat a body into shape. But the memories it nurses of a touch, of a warm brush of the hand cannot be wiped away, "says Kapil.

The scarecrow on the bank,
Stares at the gushing flow.
Its mudpot head is rent by a storm of memories.
There's a searing pain in its rag-and-bone heart.
But the river flows undivided, whole,
Free of the load of memories.
It moves forward, steers its way.

Kapil and Padmini retreat into his hut.





Devadatta reaches the spot. He suspects Padmini's intentions when he finds that she is missing from their home. She must have come for Kapil, he believes.

Kapil sees Devadatta; it is as though he has been expecting him to arrive. For a brief moment, the strains of the melody recall the old days of warmth and friendship. But they both love Padmini and all the three cannot live together.

"That's why I brought my sword," says Devadatta and Kapil brings out his. There is only one solution.

"We must both die." Whose is the head? Whose the body? Is it murder or suicide? "But no question of mercy now. We fight like lions and kill like cobras."

They have taken leave of their senses, Thrust their chests forward, Poised to fight to the end! Will I be killing myself? Or you? Even so their arms are now raised.

They both fall to the ground dead, the one struck by the other's sword. They lie, their bodies entwined.

Their minds were unclouded It did not matter who killed whom, Thus together they could defeat death.

Padmini, clasping the heads of the two men, bows her head, prays to Kali, knowing that the inevitable has happened.

The narrator asks her if there is anything to be done. "Take my son under your care. Let him stay till he is five in the forest with the Bhils who loved Kapil. And then take him to Dharmapura and entrust his future to Devadatta's father."

"And you?"

"Make a funeral pyre for all three of us". In the words of Thomas Mann.





"For where the single essence has fallen into such conflict, it were best it melt in the flame of life as an offering of butter in the sacrificial fire."

The song describes the ritual of Padmini's preparations to ascend the pyre and become a *Sati*.

Let us wrap a silk garment round her. Cover her forehead and the parting in her hair with red.

Build a pyre of standalwood. For this is a sacred event.



The fire is lit, a glowing red flicker rises tremulously and lotus-shaped flames leap upwards to embrace the sky.

Even as the flames consume the bodies—the framestory takes over. Hayavadana enters. On the advice of the villagers, he had visited the shrine of Kali and pleaded with her to make him complete, but before he could utter the word 'man'. Kali said, 'So be it' and disappeared. So his human-half vanished and he became a horse.

"But I am still burdened with one sorrow—this cursed human voice. I am a stranger to the joys of neighing."

The narrator reminds him that he had warned him at the very start of the workings of Providence.

Hayavadana looks into the distance and beckons to a child. The Bhils in the forest around the Kali Temple had asked him to take the child safely to his home.

The villagers try to get the boy to speak, to find out who he is. Hayavadana tells them that the child will not speak, nor laugh, nor cry. But his home is Dharmapura. Now the villagers begin to put two and two together. They want to make sure that he has a mole on his shoulder. But Hayavadana warns them to be careful. "If you even so much as touch the dolls in his hands, he bites."

So they approach the child warily, only to see if there is a mole on his arm. The identification is complete. He is Padmini's son. And as the narrator sings Padmini's lullaby the child, till now silent and serious, joins in, riding with joy on Hayavadana's back. And and at this point even Hayavadana begins to neigh, much to his own delight.



The Epilogue tells us. Two characters in our play—this little boy, he learnt to laugh, and the innocence of his childhood was restored to him; Hayavadana began to neigh and became a complete horse.

Their desires were fulfilled. May the great Ganesha in his mercy fulfil your desires and ours!







GIRISH KARNAD, the well-known Kannada dramatist, is recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi's National Award for Playwriting (1972). Among his plays, Tughlaq & Hayavadana have been translated and performed in the major Indian languages and in English. Hayavadana was adjudged the Best play of the Year (1971) and won him the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Award instituted by the Bharatiya Natya Sangh, the Indian Section of the International Theatre Institute (UNESCO).

Girish Karnad has also made an important contribution (as an actor and director) to more meaningful cinema through his association with such films as Samskara, Vamsha Virksha, Kaadu, Nishant, Manthana, Godhuli. At present he is directing Utsav, based on the classical Sanskrit play Mirchchakatikam.

VIJAYA MEHTA, the distinguished Marathi actress and director, is a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi's Award for Direction (1975). She was invited to the Berlin Festival to present the Marathi production of Brecht's The Caucasion Chalk Circle. She produced Vishakadatta's classical Sanskrit play Mudrarakshasa in Marathi and also in German (with German actors) at the Weimar National Theatre. Recently she directed Kalidasa's Shakuntala in Marathi and produced it in Leipzig with German actors. She is in charge of all the theatre training programmes of the Government of Maharashtra.

BHASKAR CHANDAVARKAR, composer and sitar player, is a pupil of Pandit Ravi Shankar. For several years he headed the Department of Music at the Film and Television Institute, Pune. He has composed the music for the Theatre Academy's Ghashiram Kotwal, for Ajab Nyaya Vartulacha (Marathi adaptation of The Caucasian Chalk Circle) and for the Marathi and German versions of Mudrarakshasa and Shakuntala. He has also composed music for films: Girish Karnad's Kaadu and Godhuli and Vijay Tendulkar's Samana (directed by Jabbar Patel) and for Mrinal Sen's Khandhar. Recently he scripted and directed Atyachara, based on the autobiography of a dalit (untouchable). He has also been visiting Professor of Music at several universities in the U.S.A.



CREDITS

Original Kannada script : Girish Karnad

Marathi script : C. T. Khanolkar and

D. G. Godse : Shanta Shelke : Vijaya Mehta

Direction Vijaya Mehta

Lyrics

Music : Bhaskar Chandavarkar

Dance direction : Ramesh Purav
Dashavatari direction : Tulsi Behre

Puppets : Ramdas Padhye Lights : Dilip Kolhatkar

Assistants on lights : Raghu Bangera, Sudhakar Tondwalkar, Sitaram Awsare

Make-up : Ashok Pangam

Costumes : Pandharinath Khatavkar

Stage management : Avinash Ingale

MUSIC ACCOMPANIMENT

Vocal : Sharad Jambhekar Harmonium : Chandrachud Vasudev Pakhawaj : Shekhar Khambete

Dholki : Kamalakar Pawar Percussion : Vijay Kadam

Manjiri & Cymbals : Tulsi Behre & Avinash Ingale

CAST

Ravindra Mankni : Vijay Kadam Uday Mhaiskar : Vijay Chavan Rekha Kalekar : Vijay Salvi

Vidya Patwardhan : Sharvari Patankar

Sharad Jambhekar

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