

theatre mosaic 2026



bbitf26



Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival 2026

Guwahati · Assam · India

with the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival 2026 · Makum



Conquering Newer Horizons



With a legacy traversing three centuries from the successful commercial discovery of crude oil at Digboi in 1889 and Independent India's first oil field in Naharkatiya - all in the north eastern state of Assam - Oil India Limited was born on 18th February, 1959 to increase the pace of exploration in Northeast India.

Dogged determination of some of the finest oil & gas explorers and a committed workforce has enabled OIL to expand its pan India presence and spread its wings overseas with footprints in countries such as Bangladesh, Gabon, Libya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Russia and Venezuela.

Today, as a Maharatna PSU, Oil India Limited is fully committed to achieve the vision to "Be a leading and future ready integrated energy company committed to sustainable energy security of India through performance excellence" with special emphasis on Environmental, Social, and Governance principles to drive positive change and foster long term value for our stakeholders, society, and the planet.

Setting the right pace globally

CIN : L1101AS1959GOI001148



Corporate Office: OIL House, Plot Number 19, Sector 16A, Noida, District Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh 201301, India, Tel.: +91 (120) 2488 333

Registered Office: Duliajan - 786602, District - Dibrugarh, Assam, Tel.: +91 374 2804510, +91 374 2800427

Website: www.oil-india.com; Also follow us on: [f](#) [t](#) [in](#)



theatre mosaic 2026

A souvenir of the 4th Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival 2026, Guwahati, and the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival 2026, Makum



Organised by
AANK_A Creative Line, Guwahati



In association with
Bodousa Foundation, Makum

Theatre Mosaic 2026

A souvenir of the 4th Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival (BBITF) 2026 and the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival (BCITF) 2026

EDITOR

Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

CO-EDITORS

Dr Junmoni Gogoi · Dr Sanjib Borah

COVER DESIGN

Dr Sanjib Borah

PUBLISHED BY

AANK_A Creative Line

Nice N Novel Landmark, HN 26, Flat 301, Phaguna Rabha High School Path, Jatia,
Guwahati 781006, Assam, India

info@aank.org · www.aank.org

Regn. No. RS/KAM(M)/263/S/143 of 2018–2019

FIRST EDITION

25 October 2026 · E-book (digital download and online)

ISBN

978-81-980486-2-2

© 2026 AANK_A Creative Line. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without prior written permission from the publisher.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the messages, articles and production notes are those of their authors and of the participating groups, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or the publisher. Production details are based on material submitted by the groups.

Contents

MESSAGES

- 6 Chief Guest: Krzysztof Rogacewicz
- 8 Message from M. Safeer, Colombo International Theatre Festival
- 10 From the Festival Director
- 12 From the Festival Secretary

BBITF 2026

- 14 The Festival
- 18 Programme: BBITF 2026
- 20 Physical Theatre Workshop
- 21 Theatre Forum: Theatre as a Meeting Ground

RELEASED AT BBITF 2026

- 22 Two New Books
- 25 AANK Digital Tools: eight free apps

ARTICLES

- 30 Romanian Theatre · *Andreea Tănase, Romania*
- 35 Saying and Doing · *Iva Peter-Dragan, PhD, Croatia*
- 40 The Actor in the Air · *Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami*

PRODUCTIONS

- 52 Paramaleela · *Kalpavriksha Dance Ensemble, India*
- 54 When It Hurts You Play · *Theater86, USA*
- 56 Giri Devi – Section 364A · *Selene Theatre Group, Sri Lanka*
- 58 Kontrabasista · *Teatr Maska, Poland*
- 60 The Dark Memory · *T & T Productions, Sri Lanka*
- 62 Hriday Bhangaar Gaan · *Ashokenagar Nattiyamukh, India*
- 64 Unknown Writer · *Abhiranga Theatre, Sri Lanka*
- 66 Black, White & Colors · *Inter Act Art Institute, Sri Lanka*

BCITF 2026

- 69 The Parallel Festival
- 70 Programme: BCITF 2026
- 71 From the Festival Secretary, BCITF
- 72 Dapon (The Mirror) · *Bodousa Foundation & AANK_A Creative Line*
- 74 Environmental Sensitisation Workshop
- 75 Bodousa Foundation
- 76 BCITF Committee

ORGANISERS

- 77 AANK_A Creative Line
- 78 Festival Director: Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami
- 80 BBITF Committee

BBITF 2026

Festival Partners

ORGANISED BY



AANK_A Creative Line

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Bodousa Foundation

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
PARTNER



Colombo International
Theatre Festival

PARALLEL FESTIVAL



Bo-Chang International
Theatre Festival

SUPPORTING PARTNERS



ऑयल इंडिया
OIL INDIA

Oil India Limited



Numaligarh Refinery
Limited



CHIEF GUEST · BBITF 2026

Krzysztof Rogacewicz

Actor, Director and Founder, Teatr Maska, Jelenia Góra, Poland

Krzysztof Rogacewicz is an acclaimed Polish actor, director and the founder of Teatr Maska in Jelenia Góra. An award-winning solo performer, he has presented his work at international theatre festivals in the USA, Greece, Tunisia, Germany, Egypt, Armenia, Slovakia, Russia, Albania and Canada. He frequently serves as a jury member at international festivals, conducts masterclasses and acting workshops, and appears regularly in international film and television productions.

CHIEF GUEST

Congratulatory Message

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the organisers of the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival in Assam for inviting me once again to participate in this remarkable event.

I hope that our continued exchange will be highly fruitful for both sides and bring a fresh, new perspective to theatre. Bringing together the European way of theatrical thinking and practice with the rich tradition of Asian Indian theatre creates a powerful space for dialogue. Through this encounter, I believe we can find a universal language of theatrical communication that connects us beyond all borders.

I wish all participants, artists and organisers an inspiring festival and great success on stage.

Thank you.

Krzysztof Rogacewicz

Actor, Director and Founder, Teatr Maska (Poland)

Chief Guest, BBITF 2026



INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL PARTNER

M. Safeer

*Director, Colombo International Theatre
Festival, Sri Lanka*

The Colombo International Theatre Festival, initiated in 2012 and organised with Inter Act Art, is the sister festival of BBITF. Its 12th edition was held in August and September 2026.

MESSAGE

Ayubowan!

(May you live long!)

It is with utmost gratitude and great joy that I share this message, as we have successfully completed 15 years of the Colombo International Theatre Festival (initiated in 2012) while marking its 12th edition this August and September. The Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival is our sibling festival. Founded three years ago, it is a collaborative festival that works very closely with the Colombo International Theatre Festival. Through these festivals, our endeavour is to bring new dimensions of theatre from South Asia and across the globe to our countries. We always strive, through an international theatre festival, to select high-quality foreign productions alongside high-quality local productions.

It is a pleasure to announce that the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival is taking another step forward this year by organising a parallel festival, the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival, in the Tinsukia district of Assam, which marks yet another step in its growth. For a long time, the Colombo International Theatre Festival and the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival, along with Inter Act Art and AANK_A Creative Line, Guwahati, Assam, have successfully organised numerous activities, including collaborative theatre productions, joint workshops, exchange programmes, book publishing projects and international productions.

As the Director of the Colombo International Theatre Festival, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to Mrinal Jyoti Goswami and the entire team for organising the 4th edition of the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival and inaugurating the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival. Organising an international theatre festival is not an easy task. It must be done amid immense difficulties, obstacles and challenges. Having overcome all of them, I once again sincerely wish great success to the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival and the newly launched Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival this year.

M. Safeer

*Director, Colombo International Theatre Festival
Sri Lanka*

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

Let the River Flow



Dear friends, artists and fellow travellers in theatre, Welcome to the fourth Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival. When we began BBITF in 2023, we wanted a small and honest platform where the theatre of Assam could meet the theatre of the world on equal terms, beside the river that has shaped our civilisation. Four editions later, that wish has grown into a family of festivals.

This year the festival takes two forms. From 25 to 29 October, the Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium at Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra hosts eight productions from India, Sri Lanka, the USA and Poland. From 31 October to 2 November, the same spirit travels to Makum in Tinsukia, where the Bodousa Foundation and AANK_A Creative Line present the first Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival at Bodousa Senior Secondary School. Taking international theatre from a city auditorium to a school campus in Upper Assam is, for us, the most meaningful step we have taken so far.

Our theme remains “Theatre for Harmony”. Bishnu Prasad Rabha saw the culture of Assam as a meeting of many streams, and the Brahmaputra, our Bhullung-Bhuthur, teaches the same lesson: a river grows by receiving. This year’s plays carry stories of war and

lost homes, of grief after a landslide, of women judged by law and custom, of a musician alone with his instrument and of a life rebuilt on another continent. They come in different languages, yet they ask one question: how do we remain human together?

We are honoured to welcome Krzysztof Rogacewicz, actor, director and founder of Teatr Maska, Poland, as our chief guest. I thank M. Safeer and our friends at the Colombo International Theatre Festival and Inter Act Art, with whom we share this journey. Alongside the performances, the festival offers a three-day Physical Theatre Workshop and a Theatre Forum on theatre as a meeting ground of cultures.

At the inaugural ceremony we release two books on Assamese theatre and launch AANK Digital Tools, eight free apps for theatre, film and research, made in Assam in Assamese and English. They are our small gift to students and young practitioners who work with limited means.

No festival lives without support. I am grateful to Oil India Limited and Numaligarh Refinery Limited, our supporting partners; to the Bodousa Foundation; to Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra; to our advisors, committee members, volunteers and friends in the media; and above all to the artists who have crossed seas and borders to be with us.

Let the river flow. Let the stage stay open.

Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

Festival Director, BBITF 2026

AANK_A Creative Line, Guwahati

FESTIVAL SECRETARY

See You at the Theatre



Dear friends,

It gives me great joy to welcome you to the fourth Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival. Every edition begins long before the first light falls on the stage. It begins with letters and calls across time zones, with travel plans and rehearsal schedules, with hospitality, sets, lights and sound, and with a small team that believes the effort is worth it.

This year we welcome artists from India, Sri Lanka, the USA and Poland. For five evenings the Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium becomes a meeting place of languages and forms: monodrama, music theatre, physical theatre and Sattriya dance. During the day, the Physical Theatre Workshop and the Theatre Forum give young practitioners and students a chance to learn directly from the visiting artists. I warmly invite you to take part.

The festival then travels to Makum for the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival, organised with the Bodousa Foundation. Sharing artists and ideas between Guwahati and Upper Assam strengthens both festivals, and we thank our friends in Makum for making it possible.

On behalf of the organising committee, I thank Oil India Limited and Numaligarh Refinery Limited for their support; Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra for hosting us; our advisors, members, volunteers and media friends for their tireless work; and every visiting artist for their trust. Most of all, I thank you, our audience. Your presence completes the performance.

See you at the theatre!

Anupam Saikia

Festival Secretary, BBITF 2026

AANK_A Creative Line



4TH EDITION · GUWAHATI

Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival 2026

25–29 October 2026 · Sri Sri Madhavadeva International
Auditorium, Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra



BBITF 2026

The Festival

AANK_A Creative Line, a distinguished theatre collective from Guwahati, Assam, India, proudly presents the **Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival (BBITF)** as part of its parallel international theatre festival framework, which includes the **Colombo International Theatre Festival** and the **Chilaw International Theatre Festival** (Sri Lanka). BBITF is positioned as the sister festival of the Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF) and works in close artistic collaboration with the **Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival (BCITF)**.

The fourth edition, BBITF 2026, is held from 25 to 29 October 2026 at the Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium, Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra, Guwahati. Building on its editions from 2023 to 2025, the festival aligns its vision and programming with BCITF, held from 31 October to 2 November 2026 at Makum, Tinsukia, Assam, and organised by the **Bodousa Foundation** and AANK_A Creative Line at **Bodousa Senior Secondary School (BSSS)**. This alignment reflects a deliberate movement from metropolitan cultural centres to community-rooted spaces, ensuring broader access, participation and cultural equity.

Together, BBITF and BCITF function as parallel international theatre festivals under the shared theme “Theatre for Harmony”, promoting sustained artistic mobility, intercultural dialogue and long-term collaboration among theatre practitioners worldwide.

BBITF foregrounds the cultural relationship between rivers and civilisations, with a special focus on the Brahmaputra River (Bhullung-Bhuthur), while BCITF reflects its own local cultural, educational and ecological contexts, together shaping a shared global discourse rooted in local realities. Both festivals integrate performance, pedagogy and environmental awareness, positioning theatre as a tool for cultural sustainability and social responsibility.

The 2026 edition reaffirms the commitment of BBITF and BCITF to theatre as a medium for empathy, intercultural exchange and social transformation, bringing together theatre artists and scholars from **four countries** (India, Sri Lanka, the USA and Poland). BBITF is inaugurated by an eminent theatre personality from **Poland**, Krzysztof Rogacewicz, as chief guest, symbolising the expanding international collaboration fostered through the BBITF–BCITF framework.

Context and Cultural Vision

The cultural vision of BBITF and BCITF is rooted in the relationship between local landscapes and global human values, positioning theatre as a medium of dialogue between nature, culture and society. Drawing inspiration from Assam’s riverine civilisation, the festivals foreground the Brahmaputra River, also known as *Bhullung-Bhuthur*, *Lohitya* and *Mahabahu*, as a symbol of continuity, coexistence and harmony.

Inspired by the idea of cultural harmony conveyed by Bishnu Prasad Rabha in *Asomiya Kristir Samu Abhash*, the festivals celebrate the inseparable relationship between rivers and human civilisation, using theatre as a reflective and transformative practice.

BBITF and BCITF emphasise unity and empathy in the arts, drawing from indigenous and folk performance traditions, particularly the legacy of Sankardeva’s *Nat* and *Bhaona*, alongside contemporary theatrical forms. Through this convergence, the festivals explore how performance can foster social cohesion, ethical reflection and shared understanding across cultures.

Within this shared vision, the concept of *Bo-Chang*, a “grand platform” in the Moran cultural imagination, emerges as a community-

rooted expression of the same philosophy. Nurtured by the Bodousa Foundation through education, cultural preservation and youth engagement in Upper Assam, *Bo-Chang* represents a participatory cultural space where theatre functions as learning, dialogue and social empowerment. The integration of BCITF within the BBITF framework ensures that grassroots cultural practice and international theatre discourse remain in continuous conversation.

Operating within a parallel festival framework, with BBITF positioned as the sister festival of the Colombo International Theatre Festival, the initiative strengthens South–South cultural exchange and sustained international collaboration. Alongside artistic exchange, the festivals integrate environmental awareness and sustainability, reinforcing the responsibility of culture in responding to ecological challenges.

Through performances, workshops, forums and collaborative projects, AANK_A Creative Line envisions BBITF and BCITF as a shared global platform where tradition and contemporaneity meet, advancing theatre as a medium for empathy, harmony and socially responsive cultural action.

Objectives

The objectives of BBITF and BCITF are multidimensional, focusing on the intersection of culture, art and social change:

- To celebrate the relationship between human civilisation and rivers, with a special emphasis on the Brahmaputra, exploring its role in shaping cultural identity.
- To promote global unity through theatre, using performances, workshops and discussions to foster empathy, understanding and collaborative creativity.
- To inspire environmental awareness by linking artistic expression with ecological responsibility and encouraging participants to engage in sustainability initiatives.
- To create a platform for artistic innovation where artists from around the world can share their work, experiment with new ideas and contribute to the evolution of contemporary theatre.

Scope of the Festival

The Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival and its parallel festival, the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival, are conceived as dynamic celebrations of theatre, culture and social change, bringing together artists, scholars, students and audiences from diverse regions of the world. Together, the festivals function as interconnected platforms for artistic exchange, critical dialogue and collaborative creativity. Their scope includes:

- **International Theatre Performances:** a curated selection of productions representing diverse theatrical traditions and contemporary practices, ranging from folk and traditional storytelling to experimental and modern theatre forms, with participation from several countries.
- **Physical Theatre Workshops:** hands-on training programmes focusing on movement, body awareness and physical expression as universal languages of performance.
- **Theatre Forums:** structured discussions addressing global and regional challenges and examining the role of theatre in social transformation, cultural sustainability and intercultural understanding.
- **Environmental Sensitisation Workshops:** programmes highlighting the cultural and ecological significance of rivers, wetlands and local ecosystems through expert-led interactions.

Through these components, BBITF and BCITF aim to create a shared global platform for cultural exchange, engaging substantial live audiences while extending their reach through documentation and digital dissemination. The festivals seek to integrate artistic innovation with environmental consciousness, uniting traditional values with contemporary expressions to inspire empathy, sustainability and meaningful social transformation across communities.

Festival Programme

25–29 October 2026

Sunday, 25 October

5:30 PM Inaugural Ceremony

Chief Guest: Krzysztof Rogacewicz (Poland)

Release of two books · Launch of AANK Digital Tools, eight free apps

6:15 PM Paramaleela

A Sattriya dance presentation · Kalpavriksha Dance Ensemble, India ·

Concept, Research and Direction: Dr Anwesa Mahanta

Monday, 26 October

11:00 AM Physical Theatre Workshop

Day 1 of 3 · 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

5:30 PM When It Hurts You Play

Theater86, USA · Director: Aleksey Burago

6:45 PM Giri Devi – Section 364A

Selene Theatre Group, Sri Lanka · Director: Tharindu Wanigasooriya

Tuesday, 27 October

11:00 AM Physical Theatre Workshop

Day 2 of 3 · 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

4:00 PM Theatre Forum

Theatre as a Meeting Ground: Culture, Conflict and Human Connection ·

4:00 – 5:00 PM

5:30 PM Kontrabasista (The Double Bass)

Teatr Maska, Poland · Actor and Director: Krzysztof Rogacewicz

6:45 PM The Dark Memory

T & T Productions, Sri Lanka · Director: Dr Tharindu Nilanga

Wednesday, 28 October

11:00 AM Physical Theatre Workshop

Day 3 of 3 · 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

5:30 PM Hriday Bhangaar Gaan

Ashokenagar Nattiyamukh, India · Director: Avi Chakraborty

6:45 PM Unknown Writer

Abhiranga Theatre, Sri Lanka · Director: D. Randika T. Wimalasuriya

Thursday, 29 October

5:30 PM **Black, White & Colors**

Inter Act Art Institute, Sri Lanka · Playwright, Design and Direction:
Sujeewa Pathinisekara

6:45 PM **Culmination Ceremony**

Felicitation of participating groups · Closing address: Dr Mrinal Jyoti
Goswami, Festival Director

*Venue for all events: Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium, Srimanta
Sankaradeva Kalakshetra, Panjabari, Guwahati. Performances every evening from 5:30
PM. The schedule may change according to festival requirements.*



Physical Theatre Workshop

Body in Action: Movement, Space and Expression

An intensive, practice-based programme that treats the body as the performer's primary instrument of expression. Through guided physical exercises, movement improvisation, and partner and group work, participants explore how gesture, posture, energy, rhythm and space create character, emotion, image and dramatic action, and how the performing body can tell a story without depending on spoken dialogue.

The workshop is led by facilitators from India, Sri Lanka, USA and Poland. It is designed for actors, theatre practitioners and students, and focuses on:

- body awareness, alignment and physical presence
- movement improvisation and physical vocabulary
- gesture, mime and physical storytelling
- rhythm, coordination and spatial dynamics
- partner work and ensemble movement
- non-verbal communication and stage expression

GUWAHATI · BBITF

26–28 October 2026

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily

Srimanta Sankaradeva

Kalakshetra

Contact: Mallika Kalita,

+91 96787 22927

WHO CAN JOIN

Aged 18 or above, with a 10+2 pass
and in good physical condition ·

30 seats

MAKUM · BCITF

1–2 November 2026

11:00 AM – 4:00 PM daily

Bodousa Senior Secondary School,

Makum

Contact: Malaya Baruah,

+91 93948 79784

PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE

Workshop materials, working
lunch, tea and snacks, and
free entry to all BBITF 2026
performances

Theatre as a Meeting Ground

Culture, Conflict and Human Connection

Every play in this festival crosses a border before it reaches our stage. It crosses a language, a political history and a set of beliefs about the body and the audience. The Theatre Forum asks what makes this meeting possible, and what it asks of artists and spectators.

This year's programme brings stories of war and lost homes, of grief after a landslide, of women judged by law and custom, and of a life rebuilt on another continent. The forum invites the artists behind these works to speak about how they carry such experiences across cultures without reducing them to spectacle.

Questions for the conversation

- How does a performance reach an audience that does not share its language?
- Can theatre hold conflict and grief and still keep room for dialogue?
- What do festivals in cities such as Guwahati and towns such as Makum offer international artists, and what do they receive in return?
- How can exchange continue after the festival week ends?

Short opening reflections are followed by an open conversation with the audience.

DATE AND TIME

Tuesday, 27 October 2026 · 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM

VENUE

Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium, Guwahati

SPEAKERS

Directors and actors of BBITF 2026 from India, Sri Lanka, USA and Poland

ENTRY

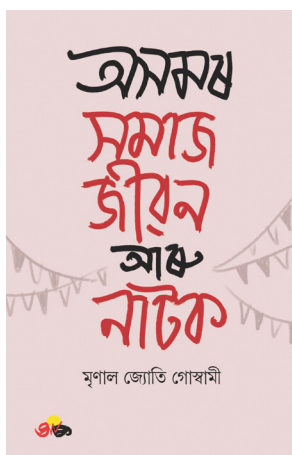
Open to all

Two New Books

Two new books from AANK_A Creative Line were released at the inaugural ceremony of the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival 2026 on 25 October. Both are written in Assamese for students, researchers, teachers and theatre practitioners. Both are free e-books on aank.org.



**Asomar Natyakala: Parampara
aru Parivartan**
Mrinal Jyoti Goswami and
Junmoni Gogoi



Asomar Samaj Jiban aru Natak
Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

RECENT PUBLICATION BY DR MRINAL JYOTI GOSWAMI

গৱেষণাৰ প্ৰণালীতত্ত্ব আৰু প্ৰয়োগ **Gabeshanar Pranalitattva aru Prayog**

**Research Methodology and
Practice**

Sampriti Publication, Guwahati, 2026

Drama, Theatre and Performance: Theories and Practices

Sandakada Publishing, Sri Lanka, 2026 ·
released at CITF on 22 August 2026

Asomar Natyakala: Parampara aru Parivartan

Theatre Arts of Assam: Tradition and Change

Mrinal Jyoti Goswami and Junmoni Gogoi

E-BOOK · 232 PAGES · ISBN 978-81-980486-4-6 · FREE · AANK.ORG

The history of theatre in Assam is more than a history of written plays. The actor's body and voice, music, the stage, light and the audience all belong to it. This book reads that history as one continuous story of performance, from ritual and folk forms to the contemporary stage.

The early chapters discuss drama as an art and give a short history of Assamese drama. They then turn to Sankardeva's Ankiya Nat, Madhavdeva's Jhumura and the plays of the post-Sankardeva period, and to later forms such as epic theatre, the theatre of the absurd and the theatre of roots. One chapter traces how the place of performance changed: the Namghar and the Sattrra, early halls such as Ban Theatre in Tezpur, the proscenium stage, Rabindra Bhawan and Srimanta Sankaradeva Kalakshetra, and the open-air and alternative spaces of recent years. Separate chapters cover the folk performing arts of Assam, among them Ojapali, puppet theatre and Kushan Gaan, and the Sattriya performing arts.

The last three chapters follow performance through three periods:

- the years before Independence: Ban Theatre, Brajanath Sarma's touring companies and the arrival of women on stage
- the post-Independence decades: IPTA, one-act play competitions, radio drama, directors trained at the National School of Drama, and the rise of mobile theatre
- the twenty-first century: festivals, body-centred theatre, scenography, the pandemic years, Assamese theatre abroad, and new digital tools for theatre

The guiding question throughout is not only when a play was written, but where, how and before whom it was performed. A full reference list, an index of names and an index of subjects make the book a useful reference for further study.

Asomar Samaj Jiban aru Natak

Social Life and Theatre in Assam

Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

E-BOOK · 136 PAGES · ISBN 978-81-980486-0-8 · FREE · AANK.ORG

Theatre is not merely a mirror of society; it questions society and imagines it anew. This book studies how social life in Assam and Assamese drama have shaped each other over a long history.

It opens by defining society, social life, literature and theatre, and by describing the land, people, faiths and languages of Assam and the making of Assamese identity. It then moves period by period:

- **The pre-colonial age:** Sankardeva's neo-Vaishnavite movement, Chihnā Yatra, Ankiya Nat and Jhumura, and the Bhaona, Namghar and Sattrā as social institutions.
- **The colonial period:** English education, print, a new middle class, the birth of the modern Assamese play and historical drama as a voice of national feeling.
- **1947–1966:** hope and partition, questions of language and border, and the social realism of the new drama.
- **1967–2016:** new theatrical languages, youth and unrest, epic and absurd forms, a return to folk traditions and the rise of community theatre, with close readings of plays such as *Srinibaran Bhattacharya*, *Aahaar* and *Dhumuha Pakhir Neer*.
- **2016–2026:** alternative and intimate spaces, the pandemic and the crisis of livelihood, theatre in courtyards, under trees and in studios, the body and the digital image, and festivals, one-act competitions and international links.

Throughout, the book shows how social structure, language, politics and values changed both the themes and the forms of Assamese drama. It treats the stage, mobile theatre, festivals and the audience as part of that social story.

AANK Digital Tools

Eight free apps from AANK_A Creative Line for theatre, film and research, in Assamese and English. Each one runs in the browser, installs like an app, works without internet and comes with a user manual and an installation guide.

The apps were launched at the inaugural ceremony of BBITF 2026 on Sunday, 25 October 2026, at the Sri Sri Madhavadeva International Auditorium. XUDHAKANTHA is the mother app; six advanced studios, one for every department of a production, send their work to it. PRADIP is a separate research companion, fully in Assamese.

How the apps work together

1. Work in any studio, as you always do.
2. Choose *Send to* and pick XUDHAKANTHA or another studio.
3. In that app choose *Open from*. Cast, scenes, script and stage come across; each app takes what it needs.
4. On aank.org the work moves across at once. Elsewhere it travels as an .aank file you can keep or share.

Every app also includes

- A single offline file for computers
- Automatic backups on your own device; nothing is uploaded
- No account and no sign-in

Every app is free and will stay free. Paid Pro versions with more advanced features are planned for later. Created by Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami on behalf of AANK_A Creative Line, Assam, India.



SCAN FOR ALL EIGHT APPS

aank.org/digital-tools/

Free · offline · English and Assamese



MOTHER APP · VERSION 1.0.0

XUDHAKANTHA

সুধাকণ্ঠ

Director's Digital Notebook

The director's notebook for a whole production. Keep the script with your notes, block every scene on a ground plan and in 3D, run rehearsals, and gather the work of the six AANK studios in one place.

Scenes and script with pinned notes · ground plan and 3D for proscenium, thrust, arena, black box, open air and the Namghar · rehearsal diary · lighting plot and cue sheets · reports in Word, Excel and PDF

Dedicated in commemoration of the birth centenary of Bharat Ratna Sudhakantha Dr Bhupen Hazarika (1926–2011)



aank.org/apps/xudhakantha/



ADVANCED STUDIO · VERSION 1.0

SILPA KUTIR

শিল্প কুটির

Jadumoni's Craft Studio

Design and make sets, props, costumes, masks and make-up for the stage.

Sets, props, costumes, masks and make-up in one studio

Dedicated to my Guru Ningombam Jadumani Singh, master craftsman of the stage, Manipur · Sangeet Natak Akademi Award 2020



aank.org/apps/silpa-kutir/



ADVANCED STUDIO · VERSION 1.0.0

XUNPAKHILI

সোণপখিলী

Theatre lighting design and control

Plan, focus and run the lighting of a production, from the light plot to the cues.

Light plot, focus, 3D, cues and DMX

Dedicated to Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala (1903–1951)



aank.org/apps/xunpakhili/



ADVANCED STUDIO · VERSION 2.0

BURHA LUIT

বুঢ়া লুইত

Sound, pictures, video and surtitles from one cue list

Show-control software for theatre. Run music, video, pictures and two-language surtitles from one cue list, on up to three projectors.

One GO for music, video, pictures and surtitles · surtitles in Assamese and English · timed show reports

In fond memory of Late Thanesarwar Goswami (my father) and Late Arpan Bezbaruah (my uncle)



aank.org/apps/burha-luit/



aank.org/apps/aarohan/

ADVANCED STUDIO · VERSION 2.0

AAROHAN

আৰোহণ

Screenwriting and film production software

Write a screenplay and carry it into production.

Screenplay, breakdown, schedule and budget

*Dedicated to the memory of Dr Bhabendra Nath Saikia (1932–2003),
writer and film director*



aank.org/apps/srinibaran/

ADVANCED STUDIO · VERSION 1.0

SRINIBARAN

শ্রীনিবারণ

Digital Stage Blocking, Movement & Spatial Design Studio

Map every entrance, cross and stage picture of a production
and prepare the calling script.

Blocking, movement paths and the calling script

*In tribute to the enduring theatrical legacy of Arun Sarma & Kulada
Kumar Bhattacharjee*



aank.org/apps/kumsung/

ADVANCED STUDIO · VERSION 1.0

KUMSUNG

কুমচুং

Theatre, Film & Performance Archive

An archive for the creative history of a theatre group, a film company, a festival or an artist: productions and the people who made them, scripts, posters, photographs, recordings, oral histories, a timeline and research notes, kept safely on your own device.

Productions, people, files and oral histories in one archive

In loving memory of Bina Prova Doley Goswami and Devalota Gogoi



aank.org/apps/pradip/

RESEARCH · VERSION 1

PRADIP

প্ৰদীপ

Assamese research methodology studio

A free research companion in Assamese for undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD work. Draft a proposal, a PhD synopsis or a thesis outline in seven steps, check the draft, search the literature and prepare the bibliography. The app is fully in Assamese and is separate from the theatre and film apps.

Proposal, synopsis and thesis outline in seven steps · literature search · bibliography

Dedicated to my research guru Professor Pradipjiyoti Mahanta

Romanian Theatre: Tradition, Modernity and Contemporary Performance Practice

Andreea Tănase, Romania

Historical Foundations and Cultural Role

Romanian theatre emerged as a significant cultural institution in the 19th century, closely connected to processes of nation-building and the consolidation of the Romanian language. The establishment of the National Theatre Bucharest in 1852 marked a decisive moment in the institutionalization of theatre, transforming it into a central site of cultural production and public discourse. During this period, theatre functioned not only as entertainment but also as a medium for articulating social, political, and national concerns.

A foundational figure in Romanian dramatic literature is Ion Luca Caragiale, whose plays, such as *A Stormy Night* and *The Lost Letter*, offered sharp satirical critiques of political life, bureaucracy, and bourgeois society. His dramaturgy helped establish a tradition of realism combined with irony and social commentary, which continues to influence Romanian theatre. At the same time, Romanian theatre drew upon broader European influences, particularly French realism, integrating them into local cultural contexts and performance traditions.

During the communist period (1947–1989), theatre operated within a centralized system of state control. While institutions were well funded and maintained stable repertoires, artistic production was subject to censorship and ideological regulation. Scholars have noted that Romanian theatre artists developed indirect strategies of expression, using metaphor, allegory, and visual symbolism to address

politically sensitive themes (Runcan, 2002). This resulted in a complex theatrical language in which meaning was often layered and encoded, requiring active interpretation by audiences.

Post-1989 Transformation and International Presence

The political changes of 1989 marked a significant turning point in Romanian theatre. The removal of censorship enabled artists to explore new themes, forms, and modes of production. According to Cristina Modreanu (2014), this period represents a fundamental shift from a state-controlled system to a more diversified and dynamic theatrical landscape, characterized by increased artistic freedom and international engagement.

Institutional theatres continue to play a major role in cities such as Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, and Sibiu, maintaining repertoires that combine classical European playwrights with contemporary Romanian works. At the same time, Romanian theatre has gained international recognition through the work of influential directors. Silviu Purcărete is widely regarded as one of the most important contemporary European directors, known for productions such as *Faust* (Sibiu, 2007), which exemplifies large-scale visual dramaturgy and symbolic staging. Andrei Șerban has also achieved international prominence, particularly through his intercultural and experimental approach to theatre-making, integrating ritual, movement, and non-Western performance techniques.

A major platform for Romania's global theatrical presence is the Sibiu International Theatre Festival (FITS), established in 1993. It has grown into one of the largest performing arts festivals in the world, hosting hundreds of performances annually and facilitating international collaboration. The festival has played a crucial role in connecting Romanian theatre to global networks and enhancing its international visibility.

Beyond the major national institutions located in large urban centers, Romania's theatrical landscape is also shaped by a network of regional theatres that contribute significantly to the cultural vitality and intercultural dialogue. Many of these institutions function not only as

local cultural centers but also as platforms for international exchange.

A relevant example is the Tony Bulandra Theatre in Târgoviște. In recent decades, the theatre has developed an artistic profile that combines repertory productions with an openness to contemporary staging and international collaboration. Under the leadership of its director, Mihai Constantin Ranin, the institution has increasingly positioned itself within broader international performance networks while maintaining the connection to the cultural life of its local community.

An important dimension of this activity is the Babel International Performing Arts Festival, organized annually by the theatre. Established in 2007, the festival has become a meeting point for artists from diverse theatrical traditions and disciplines, bringing together theatre, dance, music, street performance, and interdisciplinary artistic forms. Over the years, Babel has hosted companies and artists from dozens of countries and has welcomed internationally renowned theatre figures such as Eugenio Barba and Robert Wilson, alongside numerous performers and ensembles from Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Each edition is structured around a thematic concept that encourages reflection on fundamental elements of performance—such as body, gesture, sound, image, or space—creating a framework for artistic dialogue across cultures. Through this international participation and its integration of performances in both traditional venues and public urban spaces, the festival contributes significantly to intercultural exchange and the community life.

Contemporary Practices and Aesthetic Directions

In recent decades, Romanian theatre has diversified through the emergence of independent theatre groups and alternative performance spaces. These companies often operate outside state institutions and focus on contemporary social and political issues, including identity, migration, and post-socialist transformation. As Modreanu (2014) observes, independent theatre in Romania frequently employs devised methodologies, collaborative creation processes, and documentary approaches, reflecting a shift toward socially engaged performance.

In parallel with the repertory system of state theatres, the Romanian theatrical landscape has also been enriched by the development of independent theatre initiatives. Emerging more visibly after the early 2000s, independent companies often operate in alternative venues such as studio theatres, cultural centers, and adaptable performance spaces. Despite limited funding and institutional support, these groups have become an important laboratory for experimentation within Romanian theatre. Their productions frequently address contemporary social concerns—including urban transformation, migration, identity politics, and the cultural legacies of the post-socialist transition—while encouraging collaborative creative processes that place the performer's presence and collective authorship at the center of the theatrical event.

A defining characteristic of contemporary Romanian theatre is its emphasis on the performer's body as a central expressive medium. Physical theatre, movement-based performance, and interdisciplinary practices have become increasingly prominent. Productions often integrate multimedia elements, visual art, and sound design, creating layered performance environments.

At the same time, Romanian theatre maintains a strong connection to tradition. Elements of folklore, ritual, and classical performance techniques are reinterpreted within contemporary dramaturgical frameworks. This dynamic engagement with tradition allows Romanian theatre to preserve its cultural specificity while participating in global aesthetic trends.

The acting tradition remains a central pillar of Romanian theatre, characterized by rigorous training and a focus on psychological depth. This strong performer-centered approach supports both text-based and non-verbal forms of theatre, contributing to the distinctiveness of Romanian performance practices.

Conclusion

Romanian theatre represents a dynamic and evolving field shaped by historical, political and artistic transformations, balancing historical legacy with contemporary innovation. From its 19th-century role in nation-building to its development under communism and its post-

1989 diversification, it has continuously adapted to changing political, cultural and artistic contexts.

Today, Romanian theatre balances institutional stability with independent experimentation, local cultural identity with international collaboration, and traditional forms with contemporary innovation. Through its directors, festivals, and emerging artists, it continues to contribute significantly to global performance discourse, maintaining its relevance as both a national and international cultural force.



PC. AANK_A Creative Line



PC. AANK_A Creative Line

References

- Caragiale, I. L. (2007). *Teatru (Plays)*. Bucharest: Minerva.
- Modreanu, C. (2014). *A History of Romanian Theatre from Communism to Capitalism: Children of a Restless Time*. London: Routledge.
- Runcan, M. (2002). *Teatru în România: 1945–2000* [Theatre in Romania: 1945–2000]. Bucharest: UNITEXT.
- Șerban, A. (2000). *The Path of the Actor*. New York: Routledge.
- Sibiu International Theatre Festival (FITS). (n.d.). *Official website*. Retrieved from <<https://www.sibfest.ro>>
- National Theatre Bucharest. (n.d.). *Official website*. Retrieved from <<https://www.tnb.ro>>

Saying and Doing: Physical vs. Spoken in Croatian Theatre Today

Iva Peter-Dragan, PhD, Croatia

Croatia is a small country in south-east Europe with a population of less than four million, but the tradition of its language and culture is traceable from the 7th century.

Croatian Theatre is strongly bound to the western tradition – mainly influenced by Greek antiquity. At its centre today, as well as in the recorded history of Croatian theatre practices, that started in medieval times, is the written word.

We have had some quite successful dramatists throughout history, and perhaps the best known one is Marin Držić, a renaissance writer famous for his brisk satires and comedies which depicted the lives of his contemporaries. Even today, more than 500 years after they were written, his comedies manage to present the nature of a man so truthfully that one realizes we haven't changed a bit. In that long period between Držić and today, Croatian theatre has produced many valuable dramatists; Ivan Gundulić, Miroslav Krleža, Ranko Marinković and our contemporaries Tena Štivičić and Ivor Martinić are some I will mention.

It is clear why physical theatre pieces were not well documented, or, when it comes to Croatian theatre, not documented at all. The conditions for recording were not existent before the late 19th century and were not, till recently, widely spread and easily accessible for documenting. You could mention certain performances that were not text based, but you could not preserve any parts of it, because of the nature of the live performance: it is happening only in front of live audiences, and whatever stays after are fragments and (maybe)



PC. AANK_A Creative Line

recordings and that one thing, the contact between audience and performers is elusive, it cannot be captured by any camera, no matter how sophisticated it is.

This does explain why we couldn't maintain the nonverbal tradition till today, although some other theatres of the world show us that it is possible by handing the practices and styles from generation to generation – Japanese *Noh* theatre is an example.

So the only tangible tradition in Croatian theatre is the tradition of written text. And it still definitely is the strongest style today.

If you take a look at contemporary theatre production in Croatia, more than 90 per cent of it is text-based, traditional national ballet excluded from the number. That other 10 per cent is the dance theatre and, still emerging, contemporary circus theatre. If we analyze the data of Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 1,602 new shows were produced in Croatia in season 2022/2023, and of those 1,602, 111 were contemporary dance, 4 were circus, which actually makes less than 10 per cent of the whole production that is not based in spoken word and I use

this report to illustrate approximate relation between text based and physical theatre.

Why is that?

Croatian audiences are not used to physical theatre. If you take out national ballet, the whole known and saved tradition is based on the spoken word. Though Italian and French theatre influenced our tradition, records of any form of physical theatre are nonexistent before the second part of the 20th century. Still the expression of that time was not strong enough to create a distinctive, widely accepted style that could continue growing. It seems that nonverbal theatre is constantly reinventing itself, it is in no position to reach a certain continuum.

As a physical theatre practitioner, more specifically in physical comedy, this puts me in a difficult place, more difficult than the situation my spoken actor colleagues find themselves in. There is nothing to hold on to. This also may seem as a great starting point for creating completely new work, not burdened by expectations or not suitable for comparison...



PC. AANK_A Creative Line

Of course, we do live in the 21st century and the world is a global village, so as an artist, I do not necessarily need Croatian influences, especially if there aren't many. But that fact is certainly a worse starting point for a producer in distributing artistic theatre work that is nonverbal.

Nonverbal theatre, at least in Croatia, implies that it cannot be commercial and be self-sufficient in financing. It has to rely on the positive political climate to get funded. It is dependent in that way much more than theatre with spoken word.

Not a single private theatre in Croatia can produce shows that are completely physical in their expression without support from donors or local government or state.

Audiences are not used to that kind of theatre, and institutional theatre does not produce shows that are completely physical theatre.

And while audiences in Spain and France, for example, are used to nonverbal theatre traditions, Croatia is, in that sense, still far behind.

One could argue that the problem is maybe in the quality of such work, but, as a practitioner of physical theatre for more than 20 years, I will argue back that often we hear a person from the audience saying that a certain physical theatre piece is a revelation to them, that they never realized that such shows existed. This of course makes us happy, makes us think we are growing new audiences, and we are, just at too slow of a pace. That one person may not really have a chance to see another performance like that in months, for the obvious reason that the production of spoken word theatre abounds, while physical theatre is scarce.

I choose to do physical theatre pieces because it doesn't give concise stories, doesn't give outspoken solutions to dilemmas theatre offers, actually it produces them. The audience has the freedom to create meanings in a much greater sense than when you hear opinions, when they are vocalized and transmitted in the form of text. In this way an author can be very clear at where they stand in a certain matter. Physical theatre, on the other hand, has a freedom to give possibilities to the audience to co-create.

It is exactly this that, for me, gives rise to the engaged theatre, meaning that no person can be left untouched.

While I do not suggest we have to abandon text, every nation takes pride in using it, I suggest that we should stop considering it the only, or primary way of expressing emotion and thoughts and dare to be more active.

Well, at least in Croatia...



PC. AANK_A Creative Line

Source of the statistics: Croatian Bureau of Statistics, <https://podaci.dzs.hr/2023/hr/58155>

The Actor in the Air: Training, Physicality and Risk in Aerial Theatre

Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

Abstract

Aerial theatre is a significant development in contemporary performance that combines theatrical storytelling with aerial acrobatics. By introducing vertical movement into stage performance, aerial theatre expands the expressive possibilities of the stage beyond the traditional horizontal space. Performers use apparatus such as aerial silks, trapeze and harness systems to move through the air while portraying characters and dramatic situations. This form of theatre requires actors to develop specialized training that integrates techniques from theatre, dance and circus arts. In addition to acting skills, performers must build physical strength, flexibility, balance and spatial awareness in order to perform safely and effectively. Aerial performance also involves a degree of physical risk, making proper rigging systems, safety protocols and disciplined rehearsal processes essential elements of production. This paper examines three key aspects of aerial theatre: the training methods required for actors, the role of physicality in performance and the importance of safety in aerial practices. It argues that aerial theatre represents a hybrid performance form in which technical aerial skills and dramatic expression work together to create visually dynamic and meaningful stage performances.

Keywords: Aerial theatre, actor training, physical theatre, aerial acrobatics, performance safety, contemporary performance.

Introduction

Theatre has traditionally relied on the actor's body, voice, and movement as the primary means of expression. In conventional stage practice, actors usually perform within the horizontal space of the stage, using gesture, dialogue, and movement to communicate meaning to the audience. However, in contemporary theatre practice, directors and performers have increasingly experimented with new spatial and physical possibilities in performance. One important development in this context is the emergence of aerial theatre, which expands performance into vertical space and introduces new dimensions of movement and visual storytelling.

Aerial theatre combines dramatic acting with techniques drawn from aerial acrobatics. In this form of performance, actors are suspended above the stage and perform using apparatus such as aerial silks, trapeze, aerial hoops, or harness systems. While executing these movements, performers continue to portray characters and participate in narrative action. By incorporating vertical movement, aerial theatre transforms the traditional stage into a three-dimensional performance environment and offers new ways of representing ideas such as flight, transformation, freedom, or supernatural experience.

The development of aerial theatre is closely related to the growing influence of contemporary circus and physical theatre in modern performance. Scholars have observed that circus techniques have increasingly been integrated into theatrical productions to expand the expressive capacity of the performer's body. As Peta Tait (2005) notes, aerial performance highlights the physical strength, risk, and visual spectacle of the performing body, thereby creating powerful images that engage the audience both emotionally and visually. Similarly, physical theatre traditions emphasize the body as a central medium of communication in performance (Keefe & Murray, 2007).

Despite its artistic possibilities, aerial theatre also places significant demands on performers. Actors must undergo specialized training that develops strength, flexibility, balance, and spatial awareness. They must also learn how to use aerial apparatus safely and effectively. Because aerial performance involves working at height and handling

complex equipment, safety procedures and risk management become essential aspects of rehearsal and performance practice (Allain & Harvie, 2014).

This paper examines the role of training, physicality, and risk in aerial theatre. It explores how performers combine theatrical expression with aerial technique and how disciplined training and safety awareness enable actors to perform effectively in the air while maintaining the artistic integrity of theatrical performance.

The Concept of Aerial Theatre

Aerial theatre refers to a form of performance that integrates aerial acrobatics with theatrical storytelling. In this performance practice, actors use aerial apparatus and suspended movement as part of dramatic expression. Unlike traditional circus performances, which often present aerial acts as independent displays of technical skill, aerial theatre places greater emphasis on narrative structure, character development, and emotional communication. The aerial movement therefore becomes part of the dramaturgy of the performance rather than simply a spectacle.

One of the defining features of aerial theatre is its transformation of stage space. Conventional theatre primarily uses the horizontal plane of the stage, where actors move across the floor while interacting with other performers and stage elements. Aerial theatre expands this spatial dimension by introducing vertical movement. Performers move above the stage, creating a three-dimensional performance environment. This vertical dimension allows directors and choreographers to explore symbolic meanings such as flight, freedom, transformation, or spiritual elevation. Scholars of contemporary performance note that such spatial expansion changes the relationship between the performer's body and the theatrical environment (Allain & Harvie, 2014).

Aerial theatre typically employs specialized apparatus that enables performers to execute controlled movements in the air. Common equipment includes aerial silks, trapeze, aerial hoop (lyra), and harness flying systems. Each apparatus offers different possibilities



PC. AANK_A Creative Line

for movement, including climbing, spinning, suspension, and controlled drops. These movements create visually striking images while also supporting the narrative and emotional tone of the performance.

The influence of contemporary circus has played an important role in the development of aerial theatre. Companies such as Cirque du Soleil have demonstrated how aerial acrobatics can be integrated with narrative, music, and visual design to create complex theatrical experiences. According to Peta Tait (2005), contemporary circus performances highlight the expressive potential of the performing body and combine physical skill with artistic storytelling.

Aerial techniques have also been used in traditional theatre productions. A well-known example is the stage adaptation of *Peter Pan*, where flying harness systems allow actors to appear as if they are flying across the stage. These stage effects contribute to the magical atmosphere of the narrative and enhance the audience's imaginative engagement with the performance. Joseph Roach (1993) observes that theatrical technologies such as stage flight have historically been used to produce spectacular visual illusions and expand the possibilities of stage representation.

These examples demonstrate that aerial movement can significantly enhance theatrical storytelling. By incorporating vertical space and suspended movement, aerial theatre creates visual images and dramatic moments that are difficult to achieve through conventional stage movement alone.

Actor Training in Aerial Theatre

Training for aerial theatre performers is physically demanding and multidisciplinary. Unlike conventional acting training, which focuses mainly on voice, movement, and character development, aerial theatre requires performers to develop both theatrical skills and advanced physical conditioning. Actors must acquire technical knowledge of aerial apparatus while maintaining the expressive abilities required for dramatic performance. As contemporary performance practices increasingly emphasize the body as a central instrument of expression, the physical preparation of performers becomes an essential part of training (Allain & Harvie, 2014).

One of the most important aspects of aerial training is the development of physical strength. Performing in the air requires actors to support and control their body weight using their arms, shoulders, and core muscles. Without sufficient strength, it is difficult to maintain stability or execute complex movements safely. Therefore, aerial training programs often include exercises such as pull-ups, core conditioning, resistance training, and endurance-based workouts. These exercises help performers develop the muscular control necessary to climb, suspend themselves, and perform dynamic movements while in the air.

Flexibility is another crucial component of aerial training. Many aerial techniques involve extended body positions, splits, and smooth transitions between movements. Regular stretching and flexibility exercises allow performers to achieve these positions safely and with greater ease. Flexibility also contributes to aesthetic quality in performance, as elongated and controlled movements often create visually striking images in aerial choreography.

In addition to strength and flexibility, performers must develop

strong coordination and spatial awareness. When suspended in the air, the performer's orientation constantly shifts due to movement and momentum. As a result, actors must learn to control rotation, balance, and body alignment while remaining aware of their position in relation to the stage and other performers. Such awareness is essential not only for performance quality but also for safety during aerial routines.

Training also involves learning how to properly handle aerial apparatus. Performers must understand the technical aspects of equipment such as aerial silks, trapeze, and harness systems. Skills such as climbing fabrics, wrapping silks around the body, securing harnesses, and executing controlled descents are fundamental techniques in aerial performance. These skills are typically developed through careful instruction and repeated rehearsal under the supervision of experienced trainers or rigging specialists.

Physical theatre training often complements aerial practice by strengthening the expressive capacity of the performer's body. Physical theatre emphasizes movement, gesture, and bodily action as key elements of storytelling. According to Keefe and Murray (2007), this approach encourages actors to communicate emotion and narrative through physical movement rather than relying solely on spoken dialogue. In aerial theatre, such training helps performers integrate technical aerial skills with dramatic expression, allowing the body to function simultaneously as a physical instrument and a storytelling medium.

Physicality and Performance Expression

Aerial theatre places strong emphasis on the expressive potential of the performer's body. In this form of performance, the body becomes the primary medium through which meaning is communicated to the audience. Movement in the air creates a sense of lightness, suspension, and fluidity that differs significantly from movement performed on the stage floor. Because the performer is lifted above the ground, the body appears to defy gravity, producing powerful visual and symbolic effects. Scholars have observed that aerial performance highlights the physical presence of the performer and transforms the

body into a central visual element of theatrical storytelling (Tait, 2005).

In conventional theatre, actors typically express emotions and dramatic intentions through gestures, posture, and movement across the horizontal space of the stage. In aerial theatre, however, the performer's body moves vertically as well as horizontally, creating a three-dimensional field of movement. This expanded spatial dimension allows performers to communicate ideas and emotions through suspended movement and aerial choreography.

Different types of aerial movement can evoke different emotional or symbolic meanings. Slow and controlled movements in the air often create a dreamlike or meditative atmosphere, suggesting ideas such as freedom, transcendence, or spiritual elevation. In contrast, rapid spins, sudden drops, or dynamic swings may express tension, danger, or emotional conflict. By controlling elements such as speed, height, direction, and rhythm, performers are able to communicate complex dramatic ideas through bodily movement rather than spoken dialogue.

This form of performance requires actors to maintain emotional and dramatic focus while simultaneously executing technically demanding aerial techniques. The challenge lies in balancing physical precision with expressive acting. Performers must ensure that aerial movements support the narrative and character rather than appearing merely as displays of acrobatic skill.

As Allain and Harvie (2014) note, contemporary performance practices often demand a high level of bodily awareness and discipline from actors. In aerial theatre, such awareness is particularly important because performers must control their bodies accurately while suspended above the stage. The performer's ability to combine physical control with emotional expression ultimately determines the effectiveness of aerial performance as a theatrical form.

Risk and Safety in Aerial Performance

Aerial theatre involves performing at heights above the stage, which introduces significant physical risks. Because performers are suspended in the air while executing complex movements, accidents

such as falls, equipment malfunction, or incorrect technique can potentially lead to serious injury. For this reason, safety practices are an essential component of aerial performance and training. Proper planning, technical expertise, and disciplined rehearsal processes are necessary to ensure that performances are both safe and artistically effective.

One of the most important aspects of safety in aerial theatre is the use of reliable rigging systems. Rigging refers to the equipment and structural arrangements used to suspend aerial apparatus above the stage. Professional productions depend on trained rigging specialists who install and maintain this equipment according to established safety standards. Apparatus such as aerial silks, trapeze bars, and harness systems must be securely attached to strong support structures. In addition, equipment including carabiners, ropes, pulleys, and harnesses must be regularly inspected to ensure that they remain in safe working condition. Regular maintenance and inspection are necessary because even small defects in equipment can create serious risks during performance.

Rehearsal practices in aerial theatre also emphasize safety. Performers usually begin their training at low heights and gradually progress to higher levels as their skills develop. During the early stages of



PC. AANK_A Creative Line

training, safety mats are placed on the floor to reduce the impact of potential falls, and instructors or spotters provide physical assistance when necessary. This gradual approach allows performers to build confidence and technical control while minimizing the risk of injury.

Physical conditioning is another important element of safety in aerial performance. Strong muscles, flexibility, and proper body alignment help performers maintain control during aerial movements. Without adequate physical preparation, performers may experience muscle strain, joint injuries, or fatigue during performance. As a result, many aerial performers incorporate additional forms of physical training such as yoga, pilates, and strength conditioning into their regular practice routines.

Scholars of contemporary performance emphasize that disciplined training and bodily awareness are essential for performers who engage in physically demanding forms of theatre. According to Allain and Harvie (2014), performers must develop careful control of their bodies and a strong awareness of movement in order to perform safely and effectively. In aerial theatre, such discipline helps performers manage the inherent risks of aerial work while maintaining the artistic and expressive qualities of performance.

Hybrid Training: Circus and Theatre

Aerial theatre represents an interdisciplinary form of performance that combines elements from different artistic traditions, particularly circus arts, dance, and dramatic theatre. Because aerial performance requires both technical skill and expressive ability, performers often undergo hybrid training that integrates these various disciplines. This approach allows actors to develop the physical capabilities necessary for aerial movement while maintaining the dramatic sensitivity required for theatrical storytelling.

Circus training provides the technical foundation for aerial performance. In contemporary circus practice, performers are trained to use aerial apparatus such as trapeze, aerial silks, and aerial hoops with precision and control. This training focuses on developing strength, balance, coordination, and risk awareness. According to

Peta Tait (2005), contemporary circus performance emphasizes both the physical discipline of the body and the aesthetic presentation of aerial movement, making it an important influence on modern aerial theatre.

At the same time, theatrical training focuses on aspects such as character development, emotional expression, and narrative structure. Actors learn to interpret dramatic texts, communicate with audiences, and create believable characters. Physical theatre methods also contribute to this process by encouraging performers to use the body as a primary means of expression. Keefe and Murray (2007) note that physical theatre training emphasizes movement, gesture, and bodily awareness as key tools for storytelling.

The combination of circus and theatre training allows aerial performers to integrate acrobatic movement with dramatic performance. Rather than presenting aerial skills as isolated acts, performers use these movements to support the narrative and emotional dimensions of the performance. This interdisciplinary approach reflects broader developments in contemporary theatre, where artists increasingly combine techniques from different performance traditions to create innovative and visually engaging forms of stage performance.

Conclusion

Aerial theatre represents an important and innovative development in contemporary performance practice. By combining theatrical storytelling with aerial acrobatics, it expands the traditional boundaries of stage performance and transforms the stage into a three-dimensional space. The use of vertical movement allows performers to explore new visual, symbolic, and expressive possibilities that are difficult to achieve through conventional stage movement alone. As scholars of contemporary performance observe, such developments reflect the increasing emphasis on the body as a central medium of theatrical expression (Allain & Harvie, 2014).

However, the artistic potential of aerial theatre also requires performers to develop a range of specialized skills. Actors must

undergo rigorous training to build physical strength, flexibility, coordination, and spatial awareness. In addition to mastering aerial apparatus and movement techniques, performers must maintain the emotional depth and expressive qualities that are essential to theatrical performance. This balance between technical precision and dramatic expression is one of the defining characteristics of aerial theatre.

Safety is another crucial aspect of aerial performance. Because performers work at heights and rely on specialized equipment, professional rigging systems, proper rehearsal methods, and disciplined training practices are necessary to reduce risk and prevent injury. Careful attention to safety ensures that performers can execute complex aerial movements while maintaining artistic quality.

Ultimately, aerial theatre demonstrates how the human body can function as a powerful artistic instrument. Through hybrid training that combines circus techniques with theatrical performance methods, aerial actors are able to create performances that are both visually striking and emotionally engaging.

References

- Allain, P., & Harvie, J. (2014). *The Routledge companion to theatre and performance*. Routledge.
- Keefe, J., & Murray, S. (2007). *Physical theatres: A critical reader*. Routledge.
- Roach, J. R. (1993). *The player's passion: Studies in the science of acting*. University of Michigan Press.
- Tait, P. (2005). *Circus bodies: Cultural identity in aerial performance*. Routledge.



BBITF 2026 · GUWAHATI

Productions

Eight productions from India, Sri Lanka, the USA and Poland



BBITF · SUNDAY, 25 OCTOBER · 6:15 PM



Paramaleela

A Sattriya Dance Presentation

Kalpavriksha Dance Ensemble · India

Concept, Research and Direction: Dr Anwesa Mahanta

Dancers: Dr Anwesa Mahanta, Niki Borah, Shruti Sharma, Aditi Saikia, Druvi Mahanta, Vendanshi Krishnatreya

Recorded music: Music direction: Hari Prasad Saikia Barbayan, Gautam Bayan · Khol: Hari Prasad Saikia Barbayan, Debajit Saikia · Cymbals: Hari Prasad Saikia, Debajit Saikia · Vocal: Tarali Sarma, Gautam Bayan · Flute: Pradip Deka, Nabajit Saikia · Violin: Manoj Baruah

Lights: Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Leela, an oft-quoted term in performance genres across India, draws upon a mytho-poetic trajectory from Vedic, Upanishadic and Puranic sources that suggest, in myriad ways, a creative interplay of macrocosmic and microcosmic actions manifested in the universe by a force that is supreme and divine. This creative interplay can be conceived as a response to the acted, where the creative potential depends on the interaction between the performers. *Paramaleela* includes an interpretive narration centred on the Vaishnavite philosophy of the Sattriya tradition, founded by the saint-poet Srimanta Sankaradeva, as found in the literary texts of *Bhakti* by the saint-poet and his principal apostle, Sri Sri Madhavadeva.

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

A dedicated young exponent of Sattriya dance, Dr Anwesa Mahanta has received accolades from connoisseurs and scholars for the grace and liveliness of her dance and the expressiveness of her *abhinaya*. A disciple of Bayanacharya Ghanakanta Bora, she received the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar of the Sangeet Natak Akademi for 2013–14 and the Charles Wallace Fellowship of the Charles Wallace India Trust and the British Council to conduct research at Queen's University Belfast. Through Kalpavriksha Dance Ensemble, she and her group have performed at numerous prestigious festivals in India and abroad. The ensemble comprises some of her senior-most disciples, along with collaborations with great masters of Majuli.

FROM THE CRITICS

Reviewers have praised *Paramaleela* for its “emotion and devotion”, set to the melodious playing of the *khol* and cymbals, and for pure dance sequences that show the dancers’ immersive joy, reflecting on the semiotic layers of space and the inner and physical energy revolving in it.



BBITF · MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER · 5:30 PM
BCITF · SUNDAY, 1 NOVEMBER · 5:30 PM



When It Hurts You Play

Theater86 · USA

Director: Aleksey Burago

Author and Actress: Danijela Popovic

Producer: Di Zhu, Artistic Director, Theater86

Duration: 55 minutes

Language: English

ABOUT THE GROUP

The production is centred on Serbian-American pianist and actress Danijela Popovic, who is the author and performer of *When It Hurts You Play*. She brings together music and storytelling drawn from lived experience, shaping the work through emotional honesty, technical skill and personal reflection. Aleksey Burago directs the production, balancing intimacy, rhythm and theatrical structure. Di Zhu, producer of the work and Artistic Director of Theater86, supports its development from concept to stage, helping realise its distinctive fusion of theatre and live music.

ABOUT THE PLAY

When It Hurts You Play is a poignant one-woman piano performance by Serbian-American pianist and actress Danijela Popovic. Blending virtuosic live music with intimate storytelling, the work traces a woman's journey from growing up under a communist regime to rebuilding her life on another continent. Through loneliness, loss and love, she finds refuge in the piano, which becomes both companion and lifeline. The production combines theatre and concert performance to explore resilience, self-discovery and the healing power of art.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When It Hurts You Play is a deeply personal exploration of survival through art. At its core, the piece is about finding refuge when the world feels unstable and discovering how creativity can become a lifeline. By blending live piano performance with intimate storytelling, the production invites the audience into a life shaped by displacement, loss and resilience. The piano is not simply an instrument onstage, but a constant companion and witness. The work seeks to create an honest, unguarded space where music and memory intertwine, revealing the quiet, transformative power of art to heal and connect.



BBITF · MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER · 6:45 PM

BCITF · SUNDAY, 1 NOVEMBER · 7:00 PM



Giri Devi – Section 364A

Selene Theatre Group · Sri Lanka

Director and Script: Tharindu Wanigasooriya

Choreography and Costume: Sewwandi Withanage

Duration: 15 minutes

Language: Sinhala

ABOUT THE GROUP

Selene Theatre Group was established by Tharindu Wanigasooriya with an alternative approach to theatre-making. A banker by profession, he brought together colleagues who shared a strong interest in theatre and the performing arts. The group reached the final round of the Sri Lankan State Drama Festival 2023 with its production *Lapati Muwa Mas*. At present, Selene Theatre Group works through the collaboration of young theatre professionals and professional bankers who are actively engaged with theatre and drama.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Giri Devi – Section 364A follows a young woman brought before the court on a charge of incest, although she was in fact drugged and abused by her elder brother. The story changes direction when Giri Devi, a well-known figure from Sri Lankan folklore, appears on stage, revealing how similar patterns of violence and injustice recur through history. Giri Devi questions the social use of prophecy to determine a person's future and asks whether certain tragedies might have been avoided if such beliefs had not shaped people's decisions.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Giri Devi – Section 364A combines the essence of Sri Lankan folklore with dance, music and contemporary social issues related to the judicial system. Traditional beliefs have often been used in ways that discriminate against women, but the production also asks whether similar biases can continue within systems of law enforcement and justice. By bringing folklore and a contemporary legal situation together, the play invites the audience to examine how inherited beliefs, gender discrimination and institutional processes intersect.



BBITF · TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER · 5:30 PM
BCITF · MONDAY, 2 NOVEMBER · 5:30 PM

Kontrabasista

The Double Bass

Teatr Maska · Poland

Text: Patrick Süskind

Actor and Director: Krzysztof Rogacewicz

Technics: Marek Oleksy

Duration: 60 minutes

Language: Polish with English subtitles

ABOUT THE GROUP

Teatr Maska was established in 1995 in Jelenia Góra, Poland, as a small private theatre. Over three decades it has created around thirty productions for adults, teenagers and children, with performances presented internationally in the USA, Canada, Germany, Greece, Russia, Albania, Slovakia, Ukraine, Armenia, Egypt, Tunisia and Sri Lanka. KONTRABASISTA has received international recognition, including Best International Show at United Solo, New York (2016), awards in Albania, Russia and Greece, and Best Performance and Best Actor at a monodrama festival in Tunisia (2024).

ABOUT THE PLAY

KONTRABASISTA tells the story of a musician occupying the lowest level of the orchestral hierarchy: the double bassist. The action takes place in the room of an unsuccessful, isolated man whose life is dominated by an instrument he experiences as both burden and destiny. The double bass becomes the centre of the stage action, silently accompanying and seemingly commenting on his professional, social and personal failures, disappointments and unfulfilled desires. His narration, interrupted by musical digressions, develops as a confession and an attempt to give shape and meaning to his own biography.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When an actor stands alone before an audience, even when he can hide from time to time behind a great instrument, he must build every mood and emotion without the support of acting partners. KONTRABASISTA is a word-based monodrama, so the actor's direct personal communication with the audience is essential. The protagonist is a withdrawn man who spends his days alone in a room, in the shadow of a huge double bass that he blames for the failures of his life: his lack of artistic recognition, intimacy and fulfilment. He speaks to us from a loneliness that even music cannot fill.



BBITF · TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER · 6:45 PM
BCITF · MONDAY, 2 NOVEMBER · 6:45 PM



The Dark Memory

T & T Productions · Sri Lanka

Director: Dr Tharindu Nilanga (R.M.T. Nilanga)

Script and Stage Manager: Tharindu Dilshan (A.G.T. Dilshan)

Duration: 15 minutes

Language: Sinhala

ABOUT THE GROUP

T & T Productions brings together a multidisciplinary Sri Lankan theatre team. Director R.M.T. Nilanga is a medical officer who developed his passion for theatre during his school years and received national-level recognition as an actor. Stage Manager A.G.T. Dilshan is a Public Health Inspector, award-winning scriptwriter and director with international festival exposure. Ruwan Malith Peiris is a professional actor working across stage, television and film. The production's music team includes D.G.D.I. Senadheera, a young music director and audio engineer, and W.A.A. Upashantha, a musician with performance experience across varied events.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Based on a true story and inspired by the catastrophic floods and landslides of Cyclone Ditwah, *The Dark Memory* follows a man who once lived peacefully with his wife on a mountain, farming beside their home. Relentless rain triggers a devastating landslide, and the land they nurtured together buries his wife, his only family. Left alone, he curses the rain. Water, which he knew as something that extinguishes fire, instead ignites within him an unquenchable fire of grief, rage and loneliness. The play reflects on how a single tragedy can become a profound catastrophe within the human soul.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In bringing this story to life, every creative decision was made with intention and care. Professionally recorded music has been selected to deepen the emotional journey of the audience, while the cast and crew were chosen for their theatre experience. Lighting plays a central role in reflecting the mood, emotion and atmosphere of each moment on stage. Every prop, however small, is placed with attention to the emotional depth of the story. The production aims to offer a strong visual and emotional experience while remaining faithful to the human loss at its centre.



BBITF · WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER · 5:30 PM



Hriday Bhangaar Gaan

Ashokenagar Nattyamukh · India

Director: Avi Chakraborty

Performer: Puja Kundu

Music Operator: Sreya Sarkar

Light Operator: Saheb Sanyal

Duration: 40 minutes

Language: Bengali

ABOUT THE GROUP

Ashokenagar Nattyamukh was founded on 1 September 1999 by Avi Chakraborty, Sangita Sarkar, Angshuman Sarkar and Samiran Dey. After working with invited directors until 2004, the group developed a distinct theatrical identity through productions written and later directed by Avi Chakraborty, beginning with *Operation 2010* (2005). The group has produced numerous plays, organised the Kholā Haoa Theatre Festival, published Nattyamukh Nattyapatra and Amal Alo Journal, and regularly conducted theatre workshops. In 2020 it established its own performance space, Amal Alo, which has hosted more than 200 productions.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Hriday Bhangaar Gaan is a solo performance inspired by Palestinian experiences of war and displacement. After a warning signal announces that her home will be bombed within minutes, a middle-aged mother struggles to decide what she can save. As time runs out, memories of her missing child, dead children, shattered dreams and the brutality of war overwhelm her. Through fear, grief and urgency, she reflects on loss, survival and the responsibility of remembering those whose stories are erased by violence. By the end, her grief extends beyond one Palestinian mother to become the sorrowful cry of mothers affected by war across the world.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Hriday Bhangaar Gaan, inspired by Khawla Ibraheem's *A Knock on the Roof*, is not merely the story of one distressed mother; it echoes the grief of mothers across a world torn apart by war. Homes are destroyed, people are displaced and families are forced into exile. The play focuses on the terrifying moment when a mother learns that her home will be demolished within minutes. Can she leave behind the memories, love and emotions attached to it? Through Puja Kundu's performance, the production moves through war-ravaged landscapes and gives voice to countless mothers standing alone amid devastation.



BBITF · WEDNESDAY, 28 OCTOBER · 6:45 PM
BCITF · SATURDAY, 31 OCTOBER · 6:00 PM



Unknown Writer

Abhiranga Theatre · Sri Lanka

Director and Script: D. Randika T. Wimalasuriya

Stage Manager: R.D. Rumes D. Perera

Duration: 15 minutes

Language: English

ABOUT THE GROUP

Abhiranga Theatre is a regional theatre organisation in Sri Lanka, officially registered in 2015. Since its establishment, it has nurtured disciplined and talented artists across diverse areas of the local arts sector. Guided by local and international mentors, the organisation is committed to developing emerging artists and cultivating culturally appreciative audiences in regional communities. Through numerous productions, Abhiranga Theatre has gained local and international recognition. Since 2016, it has supported the Colombo International Theatre Festival and has also participated in India's BBITF. Its motto is: "Find your own world within the world."

ABOUT THE PLAY

Since childhood, a young woman has found solace in books. Her life changes when she meets a mature and profound thinker whose philosophical ideas guide her towards writing a book that captures their shared intellectual universe. Just as the manuscript nears completion, he disappears without a trace. Although the book is finished, she fears releasing it because she feels that its ideas belong to him as much as to her. She experiences the unfinished responsibility as a fatherless pregnancy and begins a desperate search for a co-owner before giving birth to the work in front of a judging society.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

No matter how deeply we attempt to create something original, creative work is inevitably shaped by the influence of others. Through us, others may project their ideas into society and, once their intentions are fulfilled, we may be left to face the consequences alone. When society accepts the outcome, recognition does not always belong to us; when it rejects the work, the burden may become ours alone. Unknown Writer explores this condition through the isolation of an artist whose identity is shaped by external contexts, a loneliness compared in the production to the suffering of a young woman condemned by society for bearing a fatherless child.



BBITF · THURSDAY, 29 OCTOBER · 5:30 PM
BCITF · SATURDAY, 31 OCTOBER · 6:30 PM



Black, White & Colors

Inter Act Art Institute · Sri Lanka

Playwright, Design and Direction: Sujeewa Pathinisekara

Designer: M.G. Mohamed Safeer

Duration: 52 minutes

Language: English

ABOUT THE GROUP

Established in 1992, Inter Act Art Institute (IAA) is a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious institution engaged in the development of theatre and performing arts in Sri Lanka. IAA has been a pioneer in introducing Forum Theatre in Sinhala and Tamil, Black Box Theatre and modern monodrama practices. It trains young creators, undergraduates and corporate-sector participants in contemporary performance techniques. Based in Sri Jayawardenepura, IAA operates a mini-theatre, theatre academy, training centre, dance section, drama production unit, film and television production unit, and publication section. It also organises national and international theatre festivals, including the Colombo International Theatre Festival.

ABOUT THE PLAY

Black, White & Colors follows a young woman attempting to establish herself in a society marked by disrespect and social inequality. Rejected by a white-clothed social world because she wears colour, she struggles through exclusion before finding work in dance. As her career develops, she enters a difficult relationship with the company owner and faces hostility from colleagues. Her desire for success, freedom and recognition is expressed through dance and dream imagery. She ultimately wins a global dance competition, but her triumph is shadowed by personal loss, leaving her alone onstage with a crown, a heavy heart and the gaze of a large crowd.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

The production grew from reflections on racial and social discrimination, including the “Whites Only” train sequence in the film Gandhi and the life of American civil-rights activist Rosa Parks. These references brought attention to the unequal treatment of people on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion and social identity, a condition that can be observed in many societies, including Sri Lanka. The theatre piece draws on social experience and reading from articles shared through the internet and social media, transforming these concerns into a performance about inequality, exclusion and the continuing struggle to be treated as an equal human being.



PARALLEL FESTIVAL · MAKUM

Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival 2026

ব'চাং আন্তঃৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় নাট মহোৎসৱ ২০২৬

31 October – 2 November 2026 · Bodousa Senior Secondary School,
Makum, Tinsukia

PARALLEL FESTIVAL

Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival 2026

The Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival (BCITF) is the parallel festival of BBITF, organised by the Bodousa Foundation and AANK_A Creative Line at Bodousa Senior Secondary School, Makum, in Tinsukia district. In the Moran cultural understanding, *Bo* means great or expansive and *Chang* means a platform or stage. Bo-Chang is therefore a wide, shared stage: a community space where theatre works as learning, dialogue and social reflection rather than mere performance.

The festival grows out of the Bo-Chang Drama Festival, which the Bodousa Foundation organised for the first time from 7 to 9 November 2025, with eight local theatre groups and two groups from outside the state. In 2026 the Foundation entered into a collaboration with AANK_A Creative Line to take the festival to the international level.

BCITF 2026 brings seven productions from India, Sri Lanka, the USA and Poland to Makum, along with a Physical Theatre Workshop and an Environmental Sensitisation Workshop.

DATES

31 October – 2 November 2026

VENUE

Bodousa Senior Secondary School,
Borpathar, Makum, Tinsukia,
Assam 786170

CHIEF GUEST

Sujeewa Pathinisekara (Sri Lanka)

ORGANISED BY

Bodousa Foundation & AANK_A
Creative Line

ASSOCIATED PARTNERS

Colombo International Theatre
Festival · Bhullung-Bhuthur
International Theatre Festival

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Oil India Limited · SGCL (A CSR
Initiative) · Echovium Intelligence
and Technology Pvt. Ltd.

Festival Programme

31 October – 2 November 2026

Saturday, 31 October

5:30 PM Inaugural Ceremony

Chief Guest: Sujeewa Pathinisekara (Sri Lanka)

6:00 PM Unknown Writer

Abhiranga Theatre, Sri Lanka · Director: D. Randika T. Wimalasuriya

6:30 PM Black, White & Colors

Inter Act Art Institute, Sri Lanka · Playwright, Design and Direction:
Sujeewa Pathinisekara

Sunday, 1 November

10:00 AM Environmental Sensitisation Workshop

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM · Maguri Motapung Beel

11:00 AM Physical Theatre Workshop

Day 1 of 2 · 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

5:30 PM When It Hurts You Play

Theater86, USA · Director: Aleksey Burago

6:30 PM Dapon (The Mirror)

Bodousa Foundation & AANK_A Creative Line, India · Script and Direction:
Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

7:00 PM Giri Devi – Section 364A

Selene Theatre Group, Sri Lanka · Director: Tharindu Wanigasooriya

Monday, 2 November

11:00 AM Physical Theatre Workshop

Day 2 of 2 · 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

5:30 PM Kontrabasista (The Double Bass)

Teatr Maska, Poland · Actor and Director: Krzysztof Rogacewicz

6:45 PM The Dark Memory

T & T Productions, Sri Lanka · Director: Dr Tharindu Nilanga

7:15 PM Culmination Ceremony

All events at Bodousa Senior Secondary School, Makum, unless stated otherwise. Profiles of the visiting productions: pages 54–67.

A Stage Wide Enough for the World



Dear friends,

Last November, Bodousa Senior Secondary School hosted the first Bo-Chang Drama Festival. Eight local theatre groups and two groups from outside the state came to our campus, and for three days our school became a theatre. That experience told us that theatre belongs here, among our children and our community.

Within a year, the festival has become international. From 31 October to 2 November 2026, the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival brings productions from India, Sri Lanka, the USA and Poland to Makum. In the Moran understanding, *Bo* means great or expansive and *Chang* means a platform or stage. Our wish is simple: to make this stage wide enough for the world and close enough for our students.

The festival includes a Physical Theatre Workshop on 1 and 2 November and an Environmental Sensitisation Workshop at Maguri Motapung Beel on 1 November. Our students also present *Dapon (The Mirror)*, a musical comedy developed during a theatre workshop at the school in July 2026.

I thank the Bodousa Foundation and AANK_A Creative Line for their vision and guidance; the teachers and the School Union of Bodousa Senior Secondary School; our partners Oil India Limited, SGCL and Echovium Intelligence and Technology Pvt. Ltd.; and all the artists and guests who have travelled so far to be with us. Welcome to Makum, and welcome to Bo-Chang.

Malaya Baruah

*Festival Secretary, BCITF 2026
Bodousa Foundation*



BCITF · SUNDAY, 1 NOVEMBER · 6:30 PM



Dapon

The Mirror

A Musical Theatre Performance

Bodousa Foundation & AANK_A Creative Line · India

Playwright and Director: Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

Assistant Director: Malaya Baruah

Performers: Students of Bodousa Senior Secondary School

Production: Bodousa Foundation & AANK_A Creative Line

Genre: Musical comedy

Language: Assamese

ABOUT THE PLAY

Dapon is a musical comedy set in a village where mirrors are still unknown. A young man brings home a mirror from a fair and, mistaking his reflection for a friend, secretly spends time with it. His unusual behaviour arouses suspicion within the family. When his wife discovers the mirror, she mistakes her reflection for another woman. Similar misunderstandings involving her in-laws lead to a series of humorous situations. Finally, the young man reveals the truth, bringing the confusion to an amusing end.

The production was developed in July 2026 during a theatre workshop at Bodousa Senior Secondary School.

ABOUT THE GROUPS

The **Bodousa Foundation**, Makum, works in education, culture, community development and environmental awareness, and runs Bodousa Senior Secondary School.

AANK_A Creative Line is a Guwahati theatre collective, founded in 2008, and the founder of BBITF. *Dapon* is their joint production with the students of the school.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dapon explores the humour arising from human perception, innocence and misunderstanding. Developed through a collaborative workshop process, the production combines music, movement, improvisation and physical expression. The primary objective was to introduce young students to ensemble performance and the creative possibilities of musical theatre while encouraging confidence, imagination and collective participation.



BCITF 2026 · WORKSHOP · 1 NOVEMBER

Environmental Sensitisation Workshop

BBITF and BCITF link theatre with the life of rivers and wetlands. In 2026 the Environmental Sensitisation Workshop is held outdoors, in the landscape of Upper Assam.

Held at Maguri Motapung Beel, a wetland in Tinsukia district known for its birdlife, the workshop brings students, teachers and visiting artists together for a day of observation, conversation and reflection. Participants learn how wetlands and rivers sustain the ecology, livelihoods and culture of the region, and how communities can help to protect them. The workshop also asks how artists can carry these concerns into their own work, through stories, songs, images and performance.

DATE

Sunday, 1 November 2026

TIME

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM

VENUE

Maguri Motapung Beel, Tinsukia



Bodousa Foundation

Bodousa Foundation is a community-driven non-profit organisation based in Makum, Tinsukia, Assam, working across the interconnected fields of education, culture, community development and environmental awareness. Inspired by the legacy of Bodousa, the last king of the Moran community, the Foundation is committed to strengthening cultural identity, social inclusion and grassroots empowerment in Upper Assam, with a particular focus on youth and community participation.

Education and youth development remain central to the Foundation's mission, most notably through its administration of *Bodousa Senior Secondary School* (BSSS), which serves as an important centre for academic growth, sports, cultural learning and community engagement in the region. Alongside formal education, the Foundation actively promotes cultural preservation, supporting local traditions, literature and performing arts as living and evolving expressions of community heritage.

In 2025, Bodousa Foundation expanded its activities into the performing arts by organising the *Bo-Chang Drama Festival*, a landmark national-level initiative that created a dedicated platform for local and regional theatre practitioners, while actively encouraging student and youth participation in theatre practice.

Building on the success and cultural resonance of the Bo-Chang Drama Festival, Bodousa Foundation has expanded its vision to the international level. In 2026, the Foundation entered into a strategic collaboration with AANK_A Creative Line to organise the Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival (BCITF) at Makum, Tinsukia. Conceived within a parallel international festival framework alongside the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival, BCITF connects community-rooted theatre practice, youth engagement and intercultural exchange within a broader global performance network.

Through its evolving engagement with theatre, sports, education and community development, Bodousa Foundation continues to play a vital role in nurturing cultural dialogue at the grassroots level while contributing to national and international cultural collaborations, positioning Makum and Upper Assam as meaningful spaces within contemporary global theatre discourse.

BCITF Committee

FESTIVAL DIRECTORS

Mr Munindra Chutia
Mr Ranjan Kumar Moran
Mr Manuram Chutia

FESTIVAL SECRETARY

Ms Malaya Baruah

PUBLICITY & MEDIA DESIGNERS

Mr Basanta Chutia
Mr Aishwarya Baruah

MEDIA COORDINATORS

Mr Deepjyoti Moran
Mr Gunindra Chutia

LEGAL ADVISOR

Mr Ankur Neog

MEMBERS

All teachers and members of the School Union

ADVISORY TEAM

Mr Rana Changmai, Mr Achyut Barthakur, Dr Rajib Bordoloi,
Mr Dulal Baruah, Mr Uttam Duorah, Dr Chaytanya Bora, Dr
Amarjit Saikia, Mr Arunjyoti Moran, Mr Diganta Kumar Borah,
Dr Malabika Bhuyan, Mrs Jugyasmita Bhuyan, Ms Gaytri Doley,
Dr Padmakshi Kakoty, Mrs Nirupoma Chetia, Mr Diganta
Moran, Dr Jigor Chutia, Dr Prosen Moran, Mr Pranjal Das, Mr
Mridupaban Dutta

CONTACT

+91 93948 79784 · +91 91012 96597 · +91 86385 03949 · +91 98647
21493
bodousafoundation@gmail.com · boruahmalaya211@gmail.
com
www.bodousa.org



AANK_A Creative Line

AANK_A Creative Line is a contemporary theatre collective based in Guwahati, Assam, India, founded in 2008 with a strong commitment to Assam's cultural heritage and innovative performance practice. Since its inception, the group has worked at the intersection of indigenous traditions, physical theatre and contemporary dramaturgy.

Beginning with the landmark production *Xunor Xing Thoka Ghariyalar Choku*, AANK_A Creative Line has created acclaimed works such as *Imaan Imaan Paani*, *Bhukar Xadhu: The Myth of Hunger*, *Erikoti-Mirikoti: The Butterfly Effect*, *Etheror Irika*, *Eréndira's Metamorphosis*, *Alice in Assam*, *A River's Tale* and *Premar Dolna (Swings of Love)*, all of which have been presented across India and on international platforms.

The group is the founder of the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival (BBITF) and maintains a sustained association with the Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF) within a parallel festival framework, contributing to long-term South-South theatre exchange.

In 2026, its international collaborative production *Swings of Love* (Assamese version), developed with Inter Act Art, Sri Lanka, was selected for the Seoul International Monodrama Festival, marking AANK_A Creative Line's growing presence in East Asian theatre circuits. The group has also been actively engaged in international theatre forums and festivals across Asia and Africa.

Through productions, festivals, publications, digital tools and intercultural collaborations, AANK_A Creative Line continues to position Assam within global contemporary theatre discourse, using performance as a medium for dialogue, empathy and social transformation.

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami



Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami (MA, MPhil, PhD) is a scholar, playwright, theatre director and educator whose work spans academia, performance practice and cultural leadership. He currently serves as an Assistant Professor in the Discipline of Assamese at Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University (KKHSOU), Assam, and is widely regarded as a significant voice in contemporary Assamese theatre and performance studies.

His academic research focuses on modern Assamese theatre, performance studies, narratology, cultural studies and social realism. His PhD thesis, “A Study on Contemporary Assamese Theatre in the Light of Social Realism and its Performances (1967–2003)”, continues to inform both his scholarly writing and creative practice. He has published extensively in UGC-CARE and Scopus-indexed journals and is the author and editor of several influential books, including *Online Short History of Assamese Literature*, *Aytijyar Nirjash*, *Bhinnaxuree Emuthi Prabandha* and *Aesthetics of Theatre: A Spectator’s Perspective*. His two new books, *Asomar Samaj Jiban aru Natak* and *Asomar Natyakala: Parampara aru Parivartan* (with Junmoni Gogoi), were released at BBITF 2026. He has also edited numerous academic volumes on literature, culture and performance.

Dr Goswami is the Founder, Creative Director and Secretary of AANK_A Creative Line, under whose leadership the group has produced acclaimed works such as *Imaan Imaan Paani*,

Bhukar Xadhu: The Myth of Hunger, Etheror Irika: Ethereal Epoch, Eréndira's Metamorphosis, Alice in Assam and A River's Tale. These productions have been presented at major national and international platforms, including the Colombo International Theatre Festival (CITF), the Seoul International Monodrama Festival, Bharat Rang Mahotsav and the International Festival of Theatre in the Sahara (Tunisia).

As the Festival Director of the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival since 2023, he has developed the festival into a vibrant international platform emphasising intercultural dialogue, environmental consciousness and performative innovation, while strengthening its association with Inter Act Art and its sister festival, CITF.

Internationally, Dr Goswami was an invited guest at the Yongin International Theatre Forum, South Korea (2024), where he presented a paper on international theatre collaboration and played a key role in the signing of an MoU among representatives from nine countries, leading to the formation of the New World Theatre Network (NWTN). He has also delivered lectures and presented papers at institutions such as the Shanghai Theatre Academy, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Tripura University and Visva-Bharati University.

A skilled light designer, translator and theatre pedagogue, Dr Goswami's work bridges regional rootedness and global engagement. He is also the creator of AANK Digital Tools, eight free apps for theatre, film and research launched at BBITF 2026. His projects have received multiple grants from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and his leadership continues to inspire emerging artists and scholars across India and internationally.

BBITF 2026

BBITF Committee

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR

Dr Mrinal Jyoti Goswami

FESTIVAL SECRETARY

Mr Anupam Saikia

PUBLICITY & MEDIA DESIGNER

Dr Sanjib Borah

MEMBERS

Ms Oinau Jengrai, Dr Junmoni Gogoi, Dr Hari Prasad Baruah, Ms Jahnabi Bora, Ms Kankana Das, Ms Namrata Sarma, Dr Manabendra Sarma, Ms Mallika Kalita

MEDIA COORDINATOR

Ms Darshana B. Baruah

LEGAL ADVISOR

Mr Dipta Prasad Goswami

ADVISORY TEAM

Mr M. Safeer (Sri Lanka), Mr Prasad Wikramarathna (Sri Lanka), Mr Sujeewa Pathinisekara (Sri Lanka), Dr Padmapani, Mr Chitra Ranjan Kalita, Mr Kaustav Moni Saikia, Mr Nuruddin Ahmad, Mr Utpal Datta, Dr Ajay Joshi, Mr Nayan Prasad, Mr Tapan Dutta, Mr Tarun Chandra Kalita, Mr Gopal Jalan, Dr Bipuljyoti Saikia, Mr Sibanu Borah, Mr Kishor Kr Das, Dr Pratibha Sarmah, Prof. Joydeep Baruah, Dr Partha Jyoti Das

CONTACT

+91 94350 16840

info@aank.org · mrinal.goswami@aank.org ·

mrinaljyoti@gmail.com

www.aank.org



Join Us

We warmly invite you to be part of this inspiring journey as we celebrate the unifying power of theatre to connect, inspire and create positive change.

Whether you are a dedicated theatre enthusiast, a passionate advocate for the environment, or someone who believes in the transformative potential of the arts, BBITF and BCITF welcome you with open arms.

Together, let us embark on a shared path of discovery, creativity and cultural exchange, working collectively to build a more empathetic, harmonious and inclusive world through the magic of theatre.

CONTACT · BBITF

+91 94350 16840

info@aank.org · mrinal.goswami@aank.org · mrinaljyoti@gmail.com

www.aank.org

CONTACT · BCITF

+91 93948 79784 · +91 91012 96597 · +91 86385 03949 · +91 98647 21493

bodousafoundation@gmail.com · boruahmalaya211@gmail.com

www.bodousa.org



theatre mosaic 2026

Theatre Mosaic is the annual souvenir of the Bhullung-Bhuthur International Theatre Festival. The 2026 edition gathers messages, the festival programme, articles on theatre in Romania, Croatia and aerial performance, profiles of the productions from India, Sri Lanka, the USA and Poland, and the first Bo-Chang International Theatre Festival at Makum.



PUBLISHED BY

AANK_A Creative Line, Guwahati
www.aank.org

ISBN 978-81-980486-2-2



9 788198 048622