

MANDI THEATER

10+ Years and Going Strong

Where stories come alive. Where the community becomes the stage.

With over a decade of powerful storytelling, Mandi Theater has brought 38+ productions, more than 50 performances, and a host of prestigious awards to life — and now, we're proud to host MTF 2025.

Founded in 2015 by a group of passionate theater aficionados, Mandi Theater was born out of a desire to keep the rich tradition of Indian theater alive in the heart of Chicago.

Rooted in culture. Driven by passion.

Our plays are contemporary, bold, and thought-provoking — exploring the intimate realities of individual lives while engaging with broader social and political themes. We present original and adapted works by Indian and international playwrights (in translation), brought to life by talented performers and inventive staging.

A platform for voices, visions, and vibrant performances.

Mandi Theater strives to bridge generations — reaching both youth and elders — through productions that inform, inspire, and challenge. We are also recognized for reviving the classics of Indian literature with fresh energy and relevance.

Join us as we continue to celebrate the power of performance and the spirit of community — where every story matters, and every voice has a stage.



WWW.MANDITHEATRE.COM

theatre.mandi@gmail.com

Mandi Theater is a **501 (c) (3)** charitable organization:

Tax ID number **81-2360681**

About

With an aim to promote the interrelation between artistic and technological languages, MANDI THEATRE will soon bring in the 9th edition of 'Annual Theatre Festival', to be held from 24th thru 26th Oct. 2025

Held each year in collaboration with The Consulate General of India and partly funded by Illinois Arts Council Agency, this festival features community theatres from various states across the USA.

MTF 2025

Mandi Theater is thrilled to announce that an excellent array of plays has been selected for the 9th Annual Mandi Theater Festival (MTF2025)—a vibrant celebration of storytelling, culture, and creativity in the heart of the Midwest.

This year holds special significance as we celebrate **10 years of Mandi Theater**—a decade of amplifying community voices and bringing Hindi and other South Asian languages to life on stage. We look forward to sharing these powerful stories with you at MTF2025!

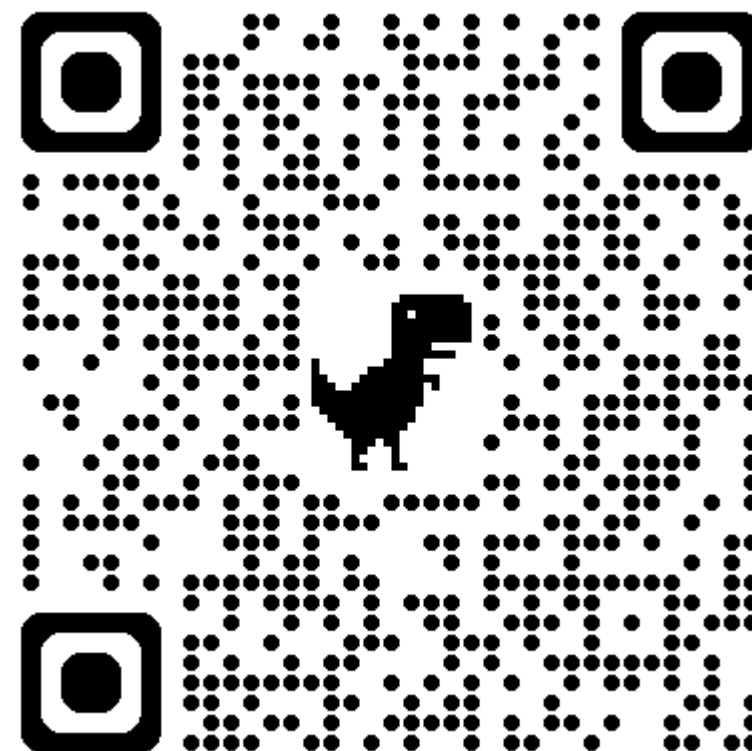
Venue: The MATRIX Club, 808 S Route 59 Naperville, IL 60540

Ticket & Schedule: <https://manditheatre.com/9th-annual-mtf2025>

Celebrated as the Midwest's most awaited multilingual theater event, MTF2025 brings together diverse voices and cultures through powerful stage performances.

14 powerful plays/dance drama + one guest performance
along with specially invited productions in Polish & Russian!
(English supertitles available for all non-English plays)

This one-of-a-kind festival brings together community theater groups from across the U.S. to celebrate culture, language, and the magic of storytelling. It's more than just theater — it's a vibrant bridge connecting communities.



There will be no ticket sales at the venue.

Please purchase your ticket online and either show it on your phone or bring a printed copy for entry.

We request you to arrive a little early to avoid any last-minute delays.

9th Annual Theater Festival
24th Oct. thru 26th Oct.

			Duration	(English Supertitles available for all non-english plays)
OCT. 24 FRIDAY 5:30 PM seating	5:45 PM	Devi's Sabbatical	20 Minutes	Hindi
	6:15 PM	From Alphabet to Grammar -The Evolution of Bengal (Dance drama)	40 Minutes	Hindi & Bengali
		===== 20 min. Break=====		
	7:30 PM	How to kill a man	50 Minutes	Russian
OCT. 25 SATURDAY 1: 00PM seating	01:30 PM	Love Unlocked	50 Minutes	English
	02:35 PM	Shikhandi - Dance drama	30 Minutes	Sanskrit, English
	03:15 PM	The Blindman's Daughter	20 Minutes	English
	04:00 PM	Kak Charitra	30 Minutes	Bengali
		===== 20 min. Break=====		
	05:00 PM	The Carbon FootPrint of a cradle	60 Minutes	English
		===== 20 min. Break=====		
	6:30 PM 7:30 PM	Fourteen Quartet for Four Actors	30 Minutes 50 Minutes	English Polish
OCT. 26 SUNDAY 1: 00PM seating	01:30 PM	Khidki (The Window)	20 Minutes	Marathi, Sindhi
	02:15 PM	Prakriti : Dance Drama (based on the Five Elements)	30 Minutes	Sanskrit, English
		===== 20 min. Break=====		
	03:30 PM	Kathputli	30 Minutes	Rajasthani
		===== 20 min. Break=====		
	04:15 PM 04:45 PM	Main Nark Se Bol Raha Hoon ** Guest performance Bhagwadjukkiyam	15 Minutes 60 Minutes	Hindi Sanskrit, Hindi

DAY 1

Friday, OCT. 24th 2025, (SEATING 5:30 PM)

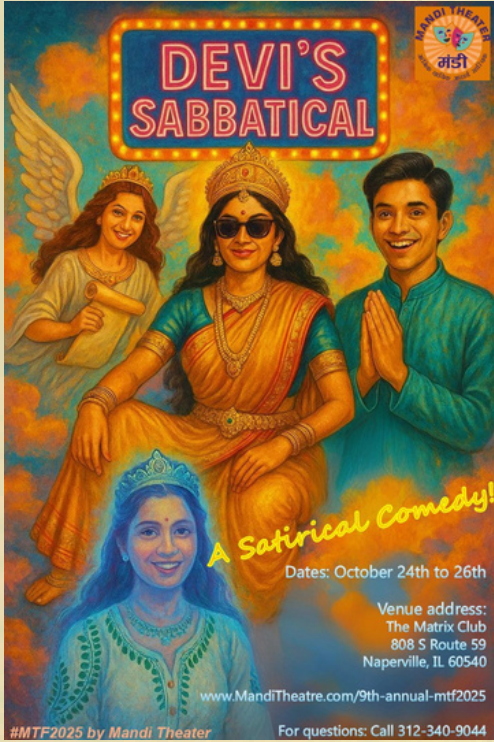
#1 Play : **Devi's Sabbatical**

Language: Hindi /Eng. (with English supertitles)

Synopsis: In this sharp and witty short play, Devi Shakti — the cosmic goddess — decides to take a break. Exhausted by the pressures of modern spirituality, commercialized devotion, and full-blown cosmic burnout, she finally resigns. She's joined by her frazzled celestial assistant Pari, and soon interrupted by Manav, an overly enthusiastic NRI spokesperson for humanity. What follows is a hilarious reflection on the absurd expectations placed on deities in the 21st century. With biting humor, eccentric characters, and a refreshingly original take on divine fatigue, Devi's Sabbatical invites the audience to laugh, reflect, and rethink the way we see gods, rituals, and ourselves.

This production holds a special place at MTF 2025. Earlier this year, Mandi Theater organized a 10-minute play contest that received enthusiastic participation from local theater groups and emerging artists. With just 10 minutes to make an impression, the competition was intense — but one team stood apart: Team Devi's Sabbatical, whose outstanding performance earned them a special invitation to perform at MTF 2025.

By giving platforms like MTF to emerging performers, writers, and directors, we're not just showcasing talent — we're nurturing a vibrant community where art can grow, challenge, and connect us all.



#2 Dance Drama: : **From Alphabet to Grammar: The Evolution of Bengal in Dance**

Language: Hindi & Bengali

Performed by: Chicago Nupur Dance Academy
Written by: Jayanta Mukherjee
Concept, choreography and direction: Guru Mahaswata Ganguly

Rooted in Bengal's timeless artistic soul, this production draws from centuries of profound cultural expression — beginning with the mystical verses of the **Charyapada**, the spiritual beauty of **Geet Govindam**, and the devotional energy of Vaishnav kirtans in the time of **Chaitanya Mahaprabhu**.

From the lyrical genius of Dwijendralal Roy to the enduring brilliance of Rabindranath Tagore, Bengal's creative legacy has long woven thought, rhythm, and emotion into one sublime thread. This living heritage, energized by the Bengal Renaissance, continues to inspire new forms—from classic poetry to modern Bengali rock.

"From Alphabet to Grammar" is a tribute to this evolving journey — ancient in roots, yet ever-relevant in voice and vision. This production is not just a performance, but a dialogue between the past and the present, inviting audiences to rediscover a cultural legacy that is both rich and resonant.



#3 Play : **To Kill a Man**

Language: Russian (with English supertitles)

Performed by: Debut Theater Organization
Director: Andrey Grin
We're honored to welcome Debut Studio back to MTF2025 with their gripping Russian-language drama, To Kill a Man.

Synopsis: A wealthy city woman encounters a mysterious intruder one late night—and what begins as a confrontation unfolds into an intense psychological journey. To Kill a Man explores themes of power, vulnerability, and moral ambiguity. With sharp tension and minimal dialogue, it forces us to question what it means to take a life... and the weight carried by those who can.

Did you know?
The play draws inspiration from the works of Jack London (1876–1916), a pioneering American author who was among the first to gain international fame and commercial success in literature.

By presenting To Kill a Man in Russian, Mandi Theater continues its mission to showcase global voices and diverse narratives, making international stories accessible through supertitles and shared stages.



DAY 2

Saturday, OCT. 25th 2025, (SEATING 1:00 PM)

#1 Play : Love Unlocked

Language: English

Performed by: DFW Play, Texas

Director: Sumeet Borwankar

Co-Director: Shravan Gaddam

Synopsis: Love: Unlocked is a sharp, witty, and darkly comedic exploration of modern love, fidelity, and emotional chaos. Inspired by the raw psychological realism of *Vijay Tendulkar's Sakham Binder* and the irreverent satire of *Dario Fo*, this contemporary play flips traditional relationship norms on their head.

Set inside a middle-class apartment, we follow Meera and her husband as they stumble through an unconventional marriage filled with suspicion, desire, frustration, and hilarity. Open relationships? Emotional confusion? Power games? It's all here — delivered with dark humor and a thought-provoking punch. A raw, absurd, and entertaining look at how we define love in today's world — and whether anyone really has it “figured out.”

Team mandi is thrilled to welcome DFW Play (Texas) to MTF2025 — marking their debut appearance at our festival! Here's to the beginning of a new and exciting artistic collaboration.



#2 Dance Theater Performance: SHIKHANDI

Language: Sanskrit, English

Performed by: Sreyashi Dey, Akshara, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Concept, choreography, and artistic direction: Sreyashi Dey
Script: Dr. Jeffery Long, Dr. Dheeman Bhattacharyya, Dr. Tathagata Mondal & Maragatham Mani

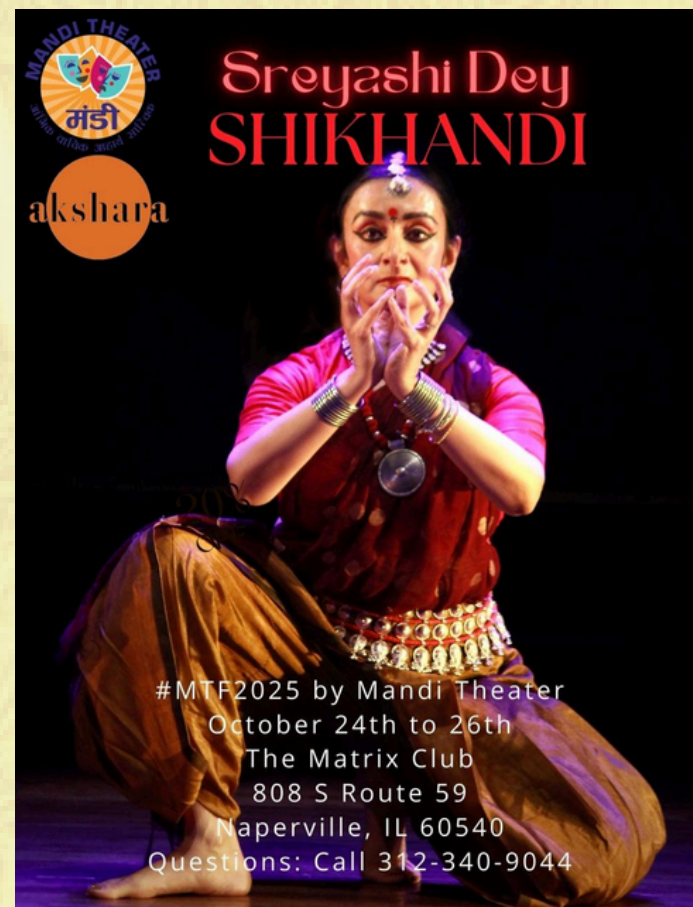
Music: Monit Paul

English spoken word: Sarah Hebert-Johnson

Shikhandi — a bold and powerful piece delving into gender and identity through the lens of one of the most overlooked characters of the Mahabharata.

This innovative dance-theater work reimagines the story of Shikhandi (they/them), whose journey across two births reveals deep truths about queerness, fluidity, and resistance in the face of injustice.

From queer identities to ancient epics, Shikhandi invites you to witness a story that is timeless, subversive, and deeply human.



#3 Play : The Blindman's Daughter

Language: English

Performed by: Unlimited Sky Productions

Playwright: Maggie Lee

Director: Mandar Gadre

We are honored to host Unlimited Sky Productions for the second time at MTF. This passionate and talented team captivated audiences at MTF2024, leaving a lasting impression with their heartfelt storytelling and powerful stage presence. We can't wait to see what they bring this year.

Synopsis: A father shares a story with his young daughter — a vibrant, modern retelling of a classic Korean folktale about familial duty, sacrifice, and love.

But this production is more than just a folktale. It's an emotional journey that invites reflection and opens the eyes and hearts of every audience member. A story layered with meaning, it's a quiet but profound experience you won't forget.

About the Playwright: Maggie Lee is an award-winning playwright based in Seattle, known for crafting diverse, imaginative worlds in genres such as science fiction, horror, and adventure. Her work explores identity, relationships, and cultural narratives through rich, innovative storytelling.



DAY 2.....continues.....

#4 Play : Kak Charitra

Language: Bengali (with English supertitles)

Original Story: Manoj Mitra

Adaptation & Direction: Chandrima De

Synopsis: This drama dives deep into the human psyche, exposing the contrast between surface virtue and inner truth. At its center is Byomkesh, a playwright in search of an honest protagonist for his next story. Enter Kak – the Crow – a symbolic character who unveils the duality of human nature. Through dark humor and biting satire, the play questions who truly embodies goodness: those celebrated by society, or those ignored by it?

Manoj Mitra: One of the most revered figures in Bengali theatre, Manoj Mitra is celebrated for his sharp, socially charged plays that blend satire with fantasy. His acclaimed works include Absanna Prajapati, Neela, Singhdwar, and Fera.

Earlier this year, Mandi Theater ignited the stage with an electrifying 10-minute play contest, showcasing the brilliance and diversity of our local theater community. Among fierce competition and unforgettable performances, one play rose above the rest – Kak Charita – now taking the MTF2025 stage!

By bringing Kak Charitra to life, Mandi Theater continues its mission to honor linguistic and cultural diversity in theater – creating a platform where every language has a voice.



#5 Play : The Carbon Footprint of a Cradle

Language: English

Performed by: Mandi Theater

Playwright & Direction: Alka Sharma



What is climate anxiety?

Climate anxiety, or eco-anxiety, is the healthy distress that we feel when we look at what is happening in our changing world. We are facing personal and planetary threats from our rapidly changing climate. And it causes us to feel anxious and afraid for our own and our children's futures. It is not just anxiety, but also sadness, depression, grief, despair, anger, frustration, and confusion. We often have moments of hope or optimism, but this can be hard to hold on to as we are heading rapidly in the wrong direction and not taking sufficient steps to slow down the climate crisis. As global warming continues to push temperatures higher, we need to get comfortable talking about climate all of the time. Conversations should be taking place in the classroom, workspaces, and even entertainment! Using diverse mediums such as theater to communicate climate change helps reach a broader audience – a feat of increasing importance. ~ **Caroline Hickman, University of Bath**

Climate. Future. Family. Choices.

Winner of Best Play, Best Set Design, and Two Outstanding Actor Awards, this thought-provoking piece is a must-watch!

About the Play:

As global warming continues to push temperatures higher, we need to get comfortable talking about climate all of the time. Conversations should be taking place in the classroom, workspaces, and even entertainment! Using diverse mediums such as theater to communicate climate change helps reach a broader audience – a feat of increasing importance.

The play follows the journey of Saloni and Juhi, two sisters grappling with the decision to start a family in the face of a rapidly changing world. Through heartfelt conversations, poignant flashbacks, and moments of resilience, they confront fears and rediscover hope for the future.

Saloni is entrenched in a tech-heavy, busy life, while Juhi has embraced a simpler, eco-conscious lifestyle. Juhi encourages Saloni to reflect on her lifestyle choices and the impact they have on the world around them. Saloni, initially skeptical, starts to understand the severity of the environmental crisis and the power of small, mindful actions in creating change. Juhi emphasizes the role of education, especially teaching the next generation to care for the planet. She believes that instilling a sense of environmental responsibility in children—whether through gardening, reducing waste, or learning about sustainability—will empower them to shape a better future. Saloni, inspired by Juhi's words, realizes that there's hope in embracing both technology and nature, finding balance and purpose in a world that often feels overwhelming.

By the end of their conversation, Juhi and Saloni resolve to make conscious choices and teach the next generation the importance of sustainability. The scenes emphasize that through small, intentional actions and fostering an appreciation for nature, we can build a brighter, more sustainable future for all.

DAY 2.....continues.....

#6 Play : **Fourteen**

Language: English

Performed by: Mandi Theater

Playwright : Alice Gerstenberg

Direction: Alka Sharma

Mandi Theater presents
Fourteen
(A play in ENGLISH)
Playwright: Alice Gerstenberg
Direction: Alka Sharma
Cast : Ayati Ojha, Meghana Deshmukh & Swadha Varshney
#MTF2025
the story of a society mother and daughter and a dinner party
derailed by a snowstorm and a healthy dose of ego
Summerfest, 2019
Oakbrook Terrace, IL
Rhinofest, 2023
Chicago, IL
Echoes Theater
Festival, 2025, NJ
ITA-AACT, 2019
Peoria, IL

Originally written by Alice Gerstenberg, **FOURTEEN** is a fast-paced comedy of manners set in a world of social etiquette and matchmaking. As a well-meaning mother tries to arrange the perfect dinner party to impress a potential suitor for her daughter, unexpected cancellations throw everything into chaos. What was meant to be an elegant evening for fourteen guests turns into a superstitious nightmare with only thirteen at the table. Will the dinner party survive? Can her daughter's future still shine bright? Come find out!

About the Playwright:

Alice Erya Gerstenberg was an American playwright, actress, and activist known for her bold feminist writing and pioneering work in Chicago's Little Theatre Movement.

Gerstenberg played a crucial role in the foundation and success of several theater companies as well as the Little Theater Movement in Chicago. In 1921, she founded the Junior League Children's Theater in Chicago; in 1922 she founded the **Playwrights Theater**; and she supported an amateur theater company that was eventually named for her at its foundation in 1955.

Gerstenberg was one of a handful of women invited to speak at the National Drama Council and National Theatre Conference. In 1936 she was an invited speaker at three AETA conferences and she won the Chicago Foundation for Literature Award in 1938.

Gerstenberg had many opportunities to move to New York, but instead chose to remain in Chicago.

#7 Play : **Quartet for Four Actors**
Language: Polish (with English supertitles)

Performed by: TEATR NASZ Chicago

This year, we're honored to present a special tribute to legendary Polish avant-garde composer, playwright, and musicologist Bogusław Schaeffer (1929–2019) — a true pioneer of experimental theater and modern European stagecraft.

Quartet for Four Actors was **Schaeffer's first full-length instrumental play** — a bold blend of absurdism, improvisation, and theatrical innovation that broke all conventions.

Did you know?

The original production premiered on February 24, 1979, and has since become a cultural icon in Poland, performed by nearly every major Polish theater. Schaeffer's groundbreaking work continues to inspire new generations of artists around the globe — and now, it's coming to our stage!

Polish Theatre TEATR NASZ presents at
9th Annual Mandi Theater Festival
BOGUSŁAW SCHAEFFER play:
QUARTET FOR FOUR ACTORS
Saturday, October 25th, 2025
7:30pm
www.manditheatre.com
Ticket link:
www.MandiTheatre.com/9th-annual-mtf2025
English Subtitles available
For questions: Call 312-340-9044

This play has been staged multiple times. It was first performed in 2019 at the AACT Fest, where it won several awards, including **Best Sound & Light Design**. Later, it was invited to perform at **RhinoFest 2023** — Chicago's longest-running fringe festival — and was most recently showcased at the **Echoes Theater Festival 2025, NJ**.

DAY 3

Sunday, OCT. 26th 2025, (SEATING 1:00 PM)

#1 Play : Khidki (The Window)

Language: Sindhi & Marathi

Performed by: Mandi Theater

Director: Varsha Visal

KHIDKI — a powerful one-act play — was the 2nd Runner-Up at the prestigious BMM Ekankika Spardha 2024. This play was also staged at MTF2021 and was well received by the audience!

Synopsis:

At its heart, Khidki is the story of a window — yes, a literal window — but it's anything but ordinary. Told through its unique perspective, the narrative makes you laugh, cry, and most importantly, reflect. How can a story be so simple, so subtle, yet hit so deep? The credit goes entirely to the brilliant writing of Madhurani Sapre Patil — a voice that's both fresh and deeply rooted in emotional truth.

About the Playwright: Madhurani Sapre Patil

In her own words - "Hi! I'm Madhurani Sapre. I grew up in and around Mumbai, completed my education in Munich, Germany, and now live in Milpitas, California. I work as a software engineer at Apple Inc., but creative writing is where my heart is. I love experimenting across genres, forms, and languages — though Marathi will always feel like home."



#2 Dance Theater Performance: Prakriti (based on the Five Elements)

Language: Sanskrit, English

Performed by : Kalakriti School of Dance

Choreographer/Guru: Ramya Ravi

About the performance:

Prakriti explores the essence of nature through the five fundamental elements — Space, Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. Every being is a microcosm of the universe, and this captivating performance connects movement, music, and meaning to celebrate the harmony of creation.

Earth – the nurturing mother, the primal source of life

Water – joy and abundance, bringing the world to bloom

Fire – light, energy, anger, and strength — the soul of transformation

Air & Ether – touch and sound, connecting everything in space

With storytelling through expression, rhythm, and spiritual symbolism, Prakriti promises to be a visual and emotional journey — blending classical tradition with timeless philosophy. This is a breathtaking performance by local young artists as they take the stage with elegance and purpose.



#3 Play : Kathputli

Language: Rajasthani

Performed by: Mandi Theater presented in collaboration with Performing Arts Community of Atlanta (PACA),

Story: Manisha Kulshreshtha

Translation: Ujla Lohiya

Rajasthani Makes Its Debut at MTF!

This powerful performance marks a meaningful milestone in our journey — a celebration of language, identity, and the enduring strength of our cultural roots.

Kathputli brings to life the vibrant spirit and deep traditions of Rajasthan — a land renowned for its bravery, poetry, music, and timeless art forms.

As artists and storytellers living far from home, it is both our responsibility and joy to keep our heritage alive. Presenting a play in Rajasthani at MTF 2025 is not just an artistic achievement — it's a tribute to the stories that shaped us.

Manisha Kulshreshtha — an award-winning literary voice — lends her poetic, profound narrative to this production. Recipient of honors including the Bihari Puraskar, Vanmali Katha Samman, and International Vatayan UK Award, her work is known for its bold, nuanced exploration of cultural and social themes.

Don't miss this unforgettable moment in the MTF journey — a powerful debut that honors tradition while reaching new creative heights.



DAY 3.....continues.....

#4 Play : Main Nark Se Bol Raha Hoon

Language: Hindi

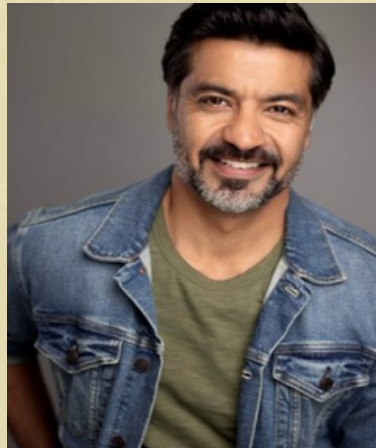
Story: Harishankar Parsai

Actor: Rachit Trehan

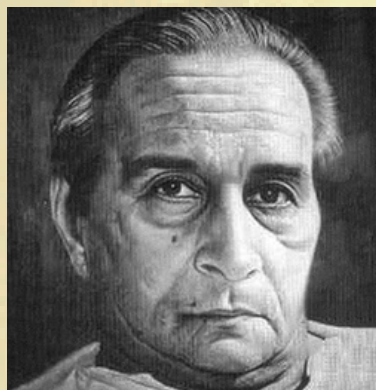
"Main Nark Se Bol Raha Hoon" is a sharp socio-political satire by Harishankar Parsai, exposing societal hypocrisies with his signature wit. The story critiques governance, religion, and social norms, highlighting how truth is ignored in life but celebrated in death. It urges us to value action, intelligence, and perseverance over complacency – contrasting a dog who earns heaven through struggle with a man who lands in hell by avoiding it.

The role of the soul speaking from hell is played by Rachit Trehan, who sees himself as a "soul on a journey." With decades of dedication to the performing arts, he is grateful to bring such powerful stories to life and considers it a blessing to serve as a medium for meaningful storytelling.

About the actor: **Rachit Trehan** is a versatile SAG-AFTRA actor, director, editor, writer, and producer, whose career bridges both Bollywood and Hollywood. From Rajkumar Hirani's Sanju to NBC's Law & Order, Rachit has dozens of film and television credits to his name.



Parsai was known for revolutionising satire in Hindi by writing in simple yet biting language and adding nuance to his works from his understanding of issues of global urgency, including racism, consumerism, war and pervasive corruption.



#5 Play : Bhagavadajjukam – The Hermit and the Harlot

Language: Hindi & Sanskrit

Performed by: Mandi Theater

Written by: Bodhayan

Direction: Alka Sharma



🌱 **A tribute to our roots. A mirror to society.
A celebration of classical theatre.**

🏆 **Winner of 11 awards across multiple categories, this acclaimed production artfully blends satire, philosophy, and Indian performance traditions to create a uniquely moving experience that's both thought-provoking and deeply entertaining.**

About the Play:

Originating in the 7th century and penned by **Bodhayana**, Bhagavadajjukam is the earliest surviving example of a Sanskrit satirical play (**prahasana**) – **one of the ten classical forms outlined in the ancient treatise Natyashastra.**

Set in a world of philosophers, misfits, and moral dilemmas, the story weaves through existential questions and social commentary, revealing the absurdities of life and the dualities of dharma with wit and wisdom. The play narrates the story of interchange of souls of a saint and the harlot

Infused with the elegance of Bharatnatyam, the play doesn't just showcase a story – it becomes an experience. Classical dance, layered language, and modern relevance merge into a breathtaking tribute to Indian heritage.

Why this play matters now:

In a world that's rapidly evolving, Bhagavadajjukam reminds us of the timelessness of introspection, laughter, and critical thinking. It proves that ancient art still speaks – and speaks loudly – to today's audiences. Despite its ancient setting, the play's themes and characters remain relatable and thought-provoking for modern audiences.

NOTE

This production offers a unique glimpse into the rich tradition of Indian classical theatre as described in the Natyashastra, while also creating a meaningful connection with today's audience. Elements of Bharatanatyam, the classical Indian dance form, are woven throughout the play to enhance its narrative and aesthetic expression. According to the Natyashastra, stage worship (Rang Pooja) is an integral ritual performed before any theatrical presentation. In keeping with this tradition, the play begins with each character entering the stage one by one through Bharatanatyam movements, as the sacred space is purified with holy water and rituals – symbolizing respect for the art form and sanctity of performance.

House Rules

To ensure an enjoyable experience for all, we kindly request that you follow these guidelines:

- No Ticket Sales at the Venue

Please purchase your tickets online in advance. You may show the digital ticket on your phone or bring a printed copy for entry.

- Arrive Early

The schedule is tentative. Please arrive a little early to avoid last-minute delays and help us start on time.

- No Entry During Live Performances

To respect the performers and audience, late entry will only be allowed between performances or during designated breaks.

- Phones on Silent Mode

Please silence your mobile phones and electronic devices before the show begins.

- Photography & Videography

Unauthorized photography, video, or audio recording during performances is strictly prohibited.

- Food and Drinks

No food or drinks are allowed inside the performance area unless specified.

- Respect the Space and People

Be courteous to fellow audience members, staff, and performers. Let's keep the space welcoming for everyone

THANK YOU

