

Symposium on Theatre

A symposium on 'English Theatre in India: Challenge and Opportunity' will be held at the Sir Mutha Venkatasubba Rao Concert Hall on August 6 (6 p.m. to 9 p.m.). The seminar, which is open to all, is a part of the MetroPlus Theatre Fest. It will be chaired and moderated by Arshia Sattar; the speakers are all associated with English theatre. The speakers and their subjects:

Arshia Sattar: Setting the parameters

Sabina Mehta Jaitly: Theatre in English or Hindi: The dilemmas of an actor/director

Shernaz Patel: English Theatre in Bombay: How one survives

Mahesh Dattani: Indian Theatre and the English Language: A personal journey

Keval Arora: The Indian-ness of English Language Theatre in India: How we speak on stage and who hears us

Poile Sengupta: The In-Between Theatre: Between Amateur and Professional, Adults, Children, Experiment and Structure

P.C. Ramakrishna: Opening the Indian Treasure Chest: Enriching the English State through Adaptation and Translation

About the speakers:

Mahesh Dattani is a playwright, screenwriter and filmmaker. In 1998, he received the Sahitya Akademi Award for 'Final Solutions and Other Plays'. His plays have been translated into Hindi, Gujrati, German and Japanese. He also writes drama regularly for BBC Radio 4.

Shernaz Patel is a film, television and theatre actor. She is also a partner in one of Mumbai's leading theatre groups, Rage, and has produced and conceived numerous plays and theatre festivals.

Sabina Mehta Jaitly is an actor and director for 35 years. She has done over 50 productions in English, Hindi and Urdu, with Yatrik and other theatre groups. A National School of Drama graduate, she has worked with the Shri Ram Centre Repertory in Delhi, conducted workshops in India and abroad, and taught drama in Switzerland and Pakistan.

Keval Arora is a respected theatre critic. He teaches drama at the Department of English, Kirori Mal College and works with students in a campus-theatre environment.

Poile Sengupta has several books to her credit. Her playwriting career for adults began with 'Mangalam', — a The Hindu-Madras Players award winner that was published by Seagull in a collection called 'Body Blows'. She teaches English and has acted in plays and films.

P.C. Ramakrishna has been the president of the Madras Players for over 20 years. He has been a member of the group since 1969 and has done over 100 productions with them. He wrote 'Bring Down the House Lights', celebrating 50 years of the Madras Players, which was staged at the inaugural edition of the MetroPlus Theatre Fest (2006).

Arshia Sattar has a Ph.D in South Asian Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago. Her translations from Sanskrit of the Valmiki Ramayana and tales From the 'Kathasaritsagara' have been published by Penguin Books. She curated the Ranga Shankara Theatre Festival in 2005 and recently conducted a workshop on translating for the theatre.