

Metrolife on the move

KIDS' WORLD

Tales from Korea

'Tuida', the Korean theatre troupe shares its experiences with Metrolife

Inside everyone, there is a whole world filled with love, fantasy, sacrifice, desire and taboo. Bringing that to light is the Korean theatre troupe Tuida, who are in the City for the first time with their heart-warming children's play *The Tale Of Haruk*.

Known for their award-winning children's plays, Director Yo Sup Bae says that there is a whole new challenge when it comes to directing a play for kids. "As artists, we must all be in tune with the child within and realise what kids may or may not like. With *Haruk*, we have made sure that the play can be easily related by the children and their parents because kids always look at their parents for approval. If the parents enjoy the play, we know for sure that the kids too will enjoy it," adds Yo.

The play revolves around an old couple who is blessed with a child called Haruk by the Tree Spirit on the condition that they could never feed him cooked rice. But a grown-up Haruk would constantly ask for cooked rice. Finally, the couple gave in to his pleas and fed him the rice only to face dire consequences.

The group, comprising eight graduates, first began performing in 2001. They combined acting methods of the traditions of Eastern and Western tales. Haruk's story was the brainchild of the team but it has taken a lot of influences from the Korean folk



ENERGETIC Yo along with other cast members.

stories. "It's not very challenging to blend folk and modern cultures because we are all doing it in our everyday life. We

"Before coming here, a lot of people had told us that the Indian audiences are very quiet and serious. And they don't let out their emotions easily."

HEE JIM LEE

are all products of past living in the present, aren't we?" asks Yo.

The play, which has already been staged in Chennai and Bangalore, have received a tremendous response from the audience. Tour manager Hee Jim Lee says that the group was very nervous as they had heard a lot about the audience in India.

"Before coming here, a lot of people had told us that the Indian audiences are very quiet and serious. And they don't

let out their emotions easily. But when we first performed in Chennai, we heard roaring of laughter and applause, which made us so happy," she adds.

In the 10 years of being in theatre, the team has developed their signature style of being nature-friendly. "We like to call it recycling theatre," says Yo and adds, "All that we borrow from the nature goes back to the nature to gain a new life. But there are some materials that cannot be recy-

clad. So we use those items like the plastic drum, water bottles and other things and adapt it into our production."

Ask them about the future and Yo says, "Having completed ten years, we have a lot of things planned for the future. Mainly, we want to spread Korean theatre all over the world and start a new form of art movement. Our only aim is that one day we would like the art to be available to each and everyone."

DHNS

How Haruk happened

THEATRE Director **Kae-Yu Sup** discusses the making of his hit musical **Tale of Haruk**

Behind the scenes, Kae-Yu Sup and Joo-Yi Lee have many reasons to smile. Their play "Tale of Haruk" has won awards and critical acclaim the world over, from Japan to America. The play, sponsored by Bestman, was performed to a packed audience at the Rangji Theater.

"I remember the first time a critic when he comments the reaction of the audience in Chennai. They were an outstanding crowd. It was like a rock band concert!" Joo-Yi Lee adds excitedly. "Before we came to India, everyone warned us the audience here are very calm and serious. But we were surprised by the reaction we got from Chennai. The children, excited with reviews and kept asking their parents what each scene meant. They laughed, clapped and cheered."

Kae-Yu Sup and Joo-Yi Lee are part of the Korean performance group Taiko which was set up in 2000 by eight graduates of the Korean National University of Arts. Their main intention of staging "Tale of Haruk" was to introduce Korean contemporary theatre to the world. Joo-Yi Lee developed a love for puppetry from a young age when Joo-Yi Lee studied Chinese literature and drama.

The idea for "Haruk" came in two stages — from life and everyday conversations and observations of lives among the members of the cast. "What inspired them all the stories and thoughts of children are around, yet interesting when being ordinary."

Yes, that's when Haruk drew most of the time, but he doesn't suffer by one by his hands or even human ones' spared? The two hands has not designed in it only a few details of "Haruk Haruk?"

Parents, media and the press are mostly used to tell the story of the little boy Haruk. In Korea, people think puppetry is meant for children. I want to break that myth



EDGE OF SEAT The Haruk team has been overwhelmed by the response in India, dispelling myths about a grim audience
PHOTO: SHADYA PRASAD K.

We have used puppetry to express complex human emotions, which appeals to both children and adults," says the director. The music drama and live music were creations of the entire cast and crew. "While directing the play, I took the other performers' opin-

ions into account.

"The cast and I together improvised on the traditional Korean dance and the music." The masks and puppets were made out of traditional Korean paper. This paper is constructed from the wood of the Takt tree.

"Usually we take this paper into small pieces and stick them on to human faces that we draw." The puppets and sets they have used in "Haruk" are environmentally friendly because they can be easily recycled. "The puppets we have made are very special. We have used a special

spiral and beads, and we plan to use it for future productions."

"Tale of Haruk" successfully prompts the audience to look at the world differently. It's about universal love, death and the forbidden concept of life after death.

SHADYA PRASAD



TUIDA PERFORMS: Five merry performers. PHOTO: SUBAJAYANTHI

Hear the tale of Haruk

Haruk kept the kids entertained with his varied emotions!

SUBAJAYANTHI

A cellophane tape, empty water cans, a square silver foil, seven plastic containers and glass bottles tied together with string, a few long and short wooden sticks, steel blades the size of your palm, a terracotta pan and a flute called *Tappayana*. If asked which of these would make music you would pick the flute. But, the right thing to say would be "all of the above" as the five merry performers of the Korean musical "The Tale of Haruk" went on to show.

High drama

From an unassuming start to a dramatic finish, powerful music from the creative basics enthralled the audience as the players ramped up stage singing and emoting in sync with the narration, recreating the ancient folktale of Haruk, the boy whose hunger could never be satisfied.

The Tale of Haruk begins with an old couple longing for a child. Their only hope is the Spirit tree to which they pray. The tree gives them an egg which they are supposed to incubate. The child that would come out of the egg should be given only morning dew, says the tree. When the egg breaks, out comes a boy who the aged parents name Haruk. The couple nurtures him with dew drops until one day he gets fed up of the same food that

he asks for rice cake. From then on there is no more drama and the kids were highly entertained. After much perspiration, they give in. Haruk goes to eat rice. The couple, however, fear the wrath of the Spirit tree.

But nothing happens till day-break, when all of a sudden Haruk grows up. He becomes tall and big, and waste more food. He eats everything he sees. His hunger is so great that he makes an attempt to swallow his parents. He goes round the world, eating and growing monstrous. The couple regret deeply their irrevocable act of breaking their promise to the Spirit tree. Finally, there is nothing more left for Haruk to eat that he cries uncontrollably. His tears become rivers and his body takes the form of land and mountains. His stomach becomes the place inside which all life continues to exist.

The puppets, masks and other paraphernalia made the play a visual treat. The choreography, lined perfectly with the sequential rhythm of the story and music, showcased the mastery of the performers in their shilling art.

The night Haruk goes to bed after eating rice for the first time, he

About Tuida

Korean theatre group Tuida performed "The Tale of Haruk" for the first time in India in association with InKo Centre as a fundraiser for Nidandaway, which works with "children in challenging situations from the poorest districts of India". The funds raised from the event would go towards educating marginalised children and helping them express their creativity, while teaching them to become independent.

has a happy dream. Winged creatures in white apronlike corsetti all around him, coloring in two shades by puppets as high as the roof. And when they spread themselves on stage opening out their wing-like attachment, the audience is wonder-struck.

A similar feeling gripped me when Haruk on the rampage heaves and sighs in hunger after having eaten almost everything in sight. His bloated stomach (a huge inflated piece of cloth) is like a hill. The children in the hall screamed.

This theatrical performance was unique in itself for its myriad modes of expression. Every element on stage seemed to communicate something. The theme on parental love and the message on children and consequences left an indelible mark at the end of a buoyant evening of "larger-than-life" experiences.

Towards reading

The new academic year saw the launch of The Hindu's Newspaper in Education programme in two city schools.

MADHUMITHA SRINIVASAN AND NILEENA M.S.

"Children don't read newspapers these days" is a common complaint. But going by the popularity of The Hindu Newspaper in Education (NIE) programme, the complaint stands unsubstantiated.

Getting information

This NIE programme was launched at many schools in the city and one such was F.R.B.R. Nanganbakkam where the programme was first launched years ago. Present during the inauguration were Dr. Mrs. Y.G.P. Devi and Directors, F.R.B.R. group of institutions, Dr. Sudha Seshayyan, Registrar, The Tamil Nadu Dr.M.G.R. Medical University, and Dr. Mohan Rajan, Director, Rajan Eye Care, apart from school principal Mrs. Valli Aravachalam.

Speaking on the occasion, Mrs. Y.G.P. recalled her days as a journalist and then added that the programme was serving to revive the students' interest in the field. She also said that the programme helped promote the newspaper reading habit among children who otherwise suffered with just scanning through the sports page.

Dr. Sudha Seshayyan emphasised on the need for the students to develop into wholesome individuals and this she said can be achieved by making a habit out of reading newspapers everyday. "The habit of reading newspapers, if cultivated, can sustain an indi-

vidual during times of crisis," she felt. While addressing the students, she also confessed to being an ardent reader of the Young World and that she collected articles from the supplement and bound them into books which she read often.

Meanwhile, Dr. Mohan Rajan pointed out things that can be learnt from a newspaper. He asked the students for the day's headlines and when a student replied, he said that apart from the factual knowledge, there are valuable life lessons to be learnt, for instance — no one is above the law, is the message he derived from the day's headline.

At the Malankala Vidya Mandir S.S.S. Chetpet, Gopandeep Singh Bell, I.A.S. Managing Director, Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board delivered the key note address.

"School life is the foundation of our career. If the foundation is not strong the building will collapse," said Mr. Bell. "We should not confine ourselves to text books, instead should explore other sources of information as well," he said.

Students were all ears while he pointed out the importance of reading and how it could help develop the overall personality of children. He quoted Abraham Lincoln to emphasise this point, "A capacity, and taste, for reading, gives access to whatever has already been discovered by others."

The NIE programme covers around 350 schools reaching out to six lakh students.



THE NIE: Reviving an interest. PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI

AN ANCIENT FOLKTALE ABOUT A BOY WHOSE HUNGER COULD NOT BE SATIATED.



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The third edition of *Malankaya*'s children's festival **Art Arattai Aarpattam** is here! Enjoy our special pages across the next four weeks and be part of the festival celebrations!

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Check out with it! Did you make a song and dance about racing **Super Singer Juniors Season 2** every week on *Sar Vijay*? Did you watch the programme every week as one talented junior singer after the other belted out songs? Did you jump for joy when your favourite singer made it to the next round and shed tears secretly when she/he got left behind?

Well, if you're nodding your head vigorously in response to every question, we're sure you watched the finale with bated breath as **Alba Ajith, Reshan, Shrovan and Shekhar** battled with each other in an attempt to win the prestigious prize. And that you applauded cheerfully for **Alba Ajith** when she was chosen *Season 2's* ultimate singer!

But hey, now that the show is over, are you missing all that musical action? Well, here's a chance to relive the *Super Singer Juniors* magic again! Catch the finale live on **25 July** at **Sri Mutha Venkatesa Subba Rao Concert Hall** at *Tyre* as they entertain you with Tamil song splendor!

FOLKTALE FANTASY

There were an old childless couple, who prayed for a child every day. Then, the Spirit of the Tree answered their prayers and gave the old couple a child called **Haruk**. The happy couple did everything they could for Haruk, making sure he never got any rice to eat because the Spirit of the Tree had specifically forbidden it. One day Haruk wanted to eat cooked rice so badly and begged them for it. Happily the old couple gave Haruk some boiled rice. His mother did Haruk eat the rice that he begged to eat everything in the house. The more he ate, the more hungry he got!



Find out what happens to hungry Haruk. Watch **The Tale of Haruk** as part of the **Art Arattai Aarpattam** festival on **24 July**.

Presented in association with the InKo Centre and performed for the first time in India, the play has won awards for the Best Play, Acting, Playwriting, and Art Directing at the 2002 South Children's Theatre Awards and received five reviews for its experimental style, creative set-design and use of exquisite masks and puppets made from recycled and found material.

SCHEDULE
ARTS FESTIVAL

- 24 JULY**
 - ▶ **SING ALONG WITH KRISHNA IYER AND JEEVA** • Museum Theatre • 7PM
- 24 JULY**
 - ▶ **THE TALE OF HARUK: A Korean Folktale** • Sri Mutha Concert Hall • 7PM
- 25 JULY**
 - ▶ **SUPER SINGER JUNIORS — LIVE** • Sri Mutha Concert Hall • 7PM
- 30 JULY**
 - ▶ **ADVENTURES OF THE GREEN OGRE** • Sri Mutha Concert Hall • 11AM & 7PM
- 31 JULY**
 - ▶ **KURAWANJI** • Puli Theatre • Puli Thyagaraya Hall • 7PM
- 1 AUGUST**
 - ▶ **ALI BABA AND 40 POLICE: A Tamil Play** • Sri Mutha Concert Hall • 7PM

Korean play to weave magic

TALE OF HARUK

THE PLAY HAS WON CRITICAL ACCLAIM AND INTERNATIONAL AWARDS IN RUSSIA AND KOREA



RANGA SHANKARA is ready with its fifth play for children—*Tale of Haruk*, which will be staged on July 27. Made under its AHA! productions, the play from Korea is an internationally acclaimed work, which has live music as its other major attraction. The instrumental background entirely makes use of traditional Korean instruments, which will be a novelty and an educative experience.

Tale of Haruk is a simple story that has been made

rience, Gayathri Krishna, programme in-charge, Ranga Shankara, told Expresso.

The play will have English subtitles, she said. *Tale of Haruk* is part of Ranga Shankara's commitment to bring successful productions from around the world to the Bangalore audience. The play parades clowns as part of the production, drawing from the acting traditions of the East and the West, said Gayathri.

There are many sights and sounds in the play that

The play will parade clowns as part of the production, drawing from the acting traditions of the East and the West

— Gayathri

gitty on stage, thanks to all the stage accoutrements that have gone into its making. Although made specially for children, it is expected to hold the interest of adults too. The far eastern play comes with all the exotic trappings of the region—the indigenous, colourful costuming, an exciting tale spun with regional flavour, and Korean music.

Huge puppets and masks, exclusive to that country, and made of Korean traditional paper, add to the visual experience, the Taepyo or Korean flute, enhancing the unique expe-

rience, such as the view of a cloth inflating to fill the entire stage, when Haruk devours everything around him.

Directed by Bae Yo-Sup, for the Tuida troupe, the play is being presented in association with Inko Centre, Chennai, and Britannia Industries Ltd.

There is only one show of the play at 7.30 pm. Tickets, priced at Rs 200, are available at Ranga Shankara, www.indianstage.in, and bookmyshow.com. Only children above five are allowed entry.

Jyothi Raghuram



ARTS • THEATRE

July 26, 2010

A peep into Haruk's world

CHITHIRA VIJAYKUMAR

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RICH IN DRAMA 'The Tale of Haruk': Photo: R. Ravindran

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Halfway through 'The Tale of Haruk', the theatre floor begins to tremble. The stage is breathing, heaving and swelling. The actors stop, take one look at the backdrop that's beginning to bloat as well, strip their masks off, and run. As the audience quiets, the floorboards broil angrily like the sea, and rise dramatically to the sky.

"Yes, that's Haruk, who has consumed the world," laughs Yosup Bae, who has directed 'The Tale of Haruk'. "I suppose we all have our ancestors in us. But Haruk has, quite literally, devoured his parents." "But not like in a horror movie," reassures HeeJin, the assistant producer. "Yes, he ate them beautiful-ly," laughs Yosup again.

Their award-winning play by Tuidir has been touring the world since 2002, sweeping the Seoul Children's Theatre Awards with four awards including Best Production, and winning a never-before combination of both Best Production and the Young Critic's awards at the International Theatre Kingfestival in Russia.

The performance group began as a few theatre graduates who ended up evolving a style that imbued the traditions of the Clown — from the East, and the West. "The clown's character that breaks the fourth wall," says Yosup.

Though Haruk's story was their brainchild, it has found its way through the memory of folktales and oral traditions of Korea. "One of them is the story of the 'pulgasari' — a little insect someone shapes from a ball of rice. The pulgasari then begins to feed on metal in the world, and grows into a monster. And, he eats the whole world." And then? "Um... I can't really remember," says HeeJin, brow furrowed in thought. But the world's been eaten!, we yelp. "I'm pretty sure it dies in the end," reassures Yosup hastily.

Variety reactions

Haruk has brought many stories to them as well. "In Japan, while we performed, the audience sat stock-still, frozen, and all the time we wondered if they were angry. In China, it was like being in a world cup stadium — they were leaping, laughing and falling about." In Australia, they performed the children's play in front of an audience almost entirely composed of distinguished 70-year-olds. We're in the deep, dark mountains, where a lonely old woman and man have been blessed with a child by the Spirit of the Tree. But, warns the liquescent Spirit, the child must eat nothing but dew. Yes, yes, a thousand times yes, they say, and so begin wonderful years. (Haruk is played by a hand puppet, who somehow emotes almost as well as the brilliant actors.)

The great hunger

And one day, Haruk, who wants for nothing, decides that he must eat rice. After much pleading, and magnificent wailing, his parents give in. But then his hunger grows. And it cannot be appeased. He leaves, devouring everything in his way. His parents wander the world looking for him — until the world is him. He'd swallowed the earth, the sun, the moon and, by the looks of the stage, most certainly Sir Mutha Venkataramba Rao Concert Hall. But, he is still ravenous. In a final act of sacrifice, his parents offer themselves up to him.

"Everywhere we went with the play," says Yosup, "people have been seeing it differently. Many saw a metaphor for our world — the greed, the insatiability of our creed. Others saw sacrifice. But some," he smiles, "saw love."

Keywords: The Tale of Haruk, Korean theatre

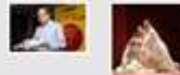
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SLIDESHOW



MPTF 2010 launch party

The sixth edition of The Hindu MetroPlus Theatre Fest got under way at The Park, Chennai, on the evening of August 5. The Sanara Hall was packed with an audience made up of theatre lovers and other invitees of The Hindu. Addressing the gathering, N. Ram, Editor-in-Chief, The Hindu, announced that the Fest will travel to Hyderabad, Bangalore and Coimbatore by the end of the year.



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SLIDESHOW



Svanubharva on Day 4

Svanubharva hosted the fourth day of the festival at FSEB, KJC Nagar, Chennai. Morning concerts included a group presentation conceptualised by R. Vedavalli and a duet by Priya Sisters. 'Koothupattara' presented a Tamil play in the afternoon and the day's activities came to a close with a lec-dem on the role of upa pakkavadyan in concerts by S. Karthick's ensemble. Photos by R. Shivan Rao

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Kids' world

Tales from Korea

DHNS

'Tuida', the Korean theatre troupe shares its experiences with MetroLife



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"It's not very challenging to blend folk and modern cultures because we are all doing it in our everyday life. We are all products of past living in the present, aren't we?" asks Yo. The play, which has already been staged in Chennai and Bangalore, have received a tremendous response from the audience. Tour manager Hee Jin Lee says that the group was very nervous as they had heard a lot about the audience in India.

"Before coming here, a lot of people had told us that the Indian audiences are very quiet and serious. And they don't let out their emotions easily. But when we first performed in Chennai, we heard roaring of laughter and applause, which made us so happy," she adds.

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In conversation with TUIDA: Behind the scenes of The Tale Of Haruk

Posted on Aug 2nd, 2010 by Shuchi in Interviews, TUIDA



Korean performing group TUIDA has kindly shared with DramaDose some interesting insights on their award-winning production *The Tale Of Haruk*, which recently played in Chennai and Bangalore to packed audiences.

In conversation with HeeJin Lee, the associate producer and tour manager of TUIDA.

Shuchi: What was the inspiration for the story of *The Tale Of Haruk*?

TUIDA: There was a character in the Korean old folk tale, which ate everything made of steel. We started from that character and put several motifs of old stories together in this story.

Shuchi: *The Tale Of Haruk* has sombre undertones; it isn't uniformly cheery as children's plays tend to be. The night of Haruk's transformation is rather spooky. Did you have any qualms at all that the script might be too heavy or scary for children to handle?

TUIDA: I don't think children's play should be cheery only. Children can accept and enjoy scary, sombre, spooky things also. That they will find it difficult to do so is a misconception about children.

Children's worlds are much deeper and wider and more sophisticated than adults think.

Shuchi: The word 'haruk' had a special role in the play – it can mean anything! What made you choose this word and not any other? Does 'haruk' actually mean something in Korean?

TUIDA: Actually 'Haruk' means nothing. But as you've seen in the show, it means everything.

Shuchi: It is said that connoisseurs derive interpretations in art that the artist never intended. Do you find that happening with *The Tale Of Haruk*?

TUIDA: Well, a certain critic said that this story is about the metaphor of the creation of the universe.

Shuchi: Which countries has *The Tale of Haruk* travelled to? Do you prepare yourself differently for performing in different countries? Do you see any change in the reception the show receives at different places?

TUIDA: We have been in China, Japan, Australia, Austria, Turkey, Singapore, Russia.

In the prologue, we play a famous folk song or children's song of each country. It makes the audience feel friendly.

The response of the audience is very different in the different countries. Indian audiences are very energetic. They accept everything like a sponge.

Shuchi: Tell us something about your other shows.

TUIDA: We do have 4-5 more shows based on our own distinct methods developed through a continuous process of actor training that incorporates movement meditation, body/voice work and dynamic use of puppets, masks and other objects.

Like *Hamlet Cantabile*, it's a farcical story which deals with tragedy with the playful attitude of 'Unfortunately, I am still alive in this idiotic world!' Four jesters play with bits and pieces left behind by the dead Hamlet. Using masks, puppets, and other assorted objects, while singing bizarre and grotesque songs, the jesters evoke the inner world of Hamlet and the people around him.

And *Alice Project* is a story about the ironic reality in a modern society inspired from and by Lewis Carroll. Alice and the other characters seem to be all peaceful in time and space, however, they actually have to face cruel realities such as war. The play is like a festival which breathes in and out in perfect harmony with audiences including vivid music, improvising movement, dance, and peculiar dolls.

We're also going to make a new intercultural production with puppets and masks in collaboration with Australian troupe Snuff Puppet in 2011.

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Article by Shuchi

Shuchi lives in Bangalore, adores theatre and hangs out a lot at the Ranga Shankara cafe.

[Other posts by Shuchi](#)

LIFE IS A BOX OF CHOCOLATES

TUESDAY, 27 JULY 2010

The Tale of Haruk

Went for a Korean play yesterday at Rangsihenkara. 5 stars, 10 on 10, out-of-out (In A.)/peak). I would put it in the same league as Little Angel Theatre that we used to haunt in our London days. It was technically superlative and the performers were able to send the four kids with us into fits of giggles with their delightful expressions. The soulful Korean music was created live by the performers themselves with percussion instruments made from recycled materials - a couple of empty mineral water bubbles served as drums, a clutch of bottles was the xylophone, a tambourine was tied as a hat and a tin with grains in it served as a maraca, however you'd never guess it if you just listened to the music. The puppets and masks were made from wood or paper and the costumes were simple white linen ones.

Children's theatre minus bright shiny over-the-top primary colours you ahh! Yes, and it was classy stuff. The dialogues were in Korean with English sub-titles on the screens next to the performing space. The story was beautiful albeit poignant towards the end. The final end though was fairly cheery again, which was good because my 5-year old did not want Haruk or his parents to be all sad and lonely.

And now for the four kids - well, my two, S's A and Starry's Div who all instantly gelled with each other, like their mummies. There were many other familiar faces in the houseful auditorium. Earlier, while we were waiting for the doors to open, S and I shamelessly hogged the mind-blowing ahh rotf from the cafe while the kids roamed around in and out of the Sanja's books outlet. Its worth going over to RS just for the food at the cafe.

And oh in her introductory speech Arundhati Nag told us that this was their fifth production for children and there would be many more. Yay so that!

POSTED BY CHOXB0X AT 22:43

14 COMMENTS:

ABOUT ME

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