

## CELEBRATION OF 450<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SHAKESPEARE

Narbheram Hansraj English School has a tradition of staging plays of literary value. In 2011, the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore was celebrated by staging the play 'Tasher Desh'. 'Alice in Wonderland' was staged in 2007 and 'The Wizard of OZ' was staged in 2009.

William Shakespeare's 450<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary is being celebrated all over the world. To commemorate the great event, the students of Narbheram Hansraj English School staged the play "Virtue vs Vengeance", an adaptation of Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'. It is difficult to find adequate words to speak about the great dramatist, but the words of the innovative theatre director Peter Brooks probably sums it all up when he says, "...in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in England we are faced with the infuriating fact that Shakespeare is still our model." In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, this view point still holds.

'The Tempest' is believed to be the last of Shakespeare's plays. The story draws heavily on the tradition of romance, and it was influenced by tragicomedy and the courtly masque. It differs from Shakespeare's other plays in its observation of a stricter, more organized neoclassical style.

"The rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance". This is Prospero's startling revelation after years of living in exile and plotting his return to Italy. The Tempest's emphasis on mercy and forgiveness are hallmarks of Shakespeare's 'romances'. Prospero's capacity to forgive those who have betrayed him, Miranda's empathy, Ariel's mercy and Gonzalo's thoughtfulness dramatize the triumph of the human spirit. In today's world of violence and revenge, the ability to forgive is a rare quality to be emphasized upon and inculcated in students. In order to instill this spirit of forgiveness in the minds of the students, the play 'The Tempest' had been chosen.

Prospero's island is dominated by magic, and it clouds the ability of all the new arrivals to tell the difference between reality and the magical illusions they see. The play has two assassination plots. There's a group of quickly differentiated characters. There is celebration, dancing, singing, and there is entertainment, marriage and masque performed by the goddesses - Iris, Ceres and Juno. There is a tender love affair, and there are marvellous comic turns, yet a mood of seriousness is felt throughout the play.

Keeping the main story intact, certain parts had been simplified so that the present day audience could relate to the characters well. There was a wide range of musical flavour to cater to the varying tastes of the audience. There was Madonna's 'Frozen' on one side and Vivaldi's 'Spring' on the other. There was Nancy Sinatra's, 'Summer Wine' and Spice Girls', 'Hasta maniana'. The theme music of 'Braveheart' was chosen as the background score for the play.

Emphasis was laid on participation of maximum number of students to give them an opportunity to unleash their creative talent. The participants were:-

- |     |           |   |                        |
|-----|-----------|---|------------------------|
| 1)  | PROSPERO  | - | AMAN SHARMA            |
| 2)  | MIRANDA   | - | SNEHA MUKHERJEE        |
| 3)  | ARIEL     | - | SHRUTI AGARWAL         |
| 4)  | CALIBAN   | - | AMITESH MALLICK        |
| 5)  | ALONSO    | - | SAKET SUMAN            |
| 6)  | FERDINAND | - | SUMAN GHOSH            |
| 7)  | SEBASTIAN | - | B. GAURAV              |
| 8)  | ANTONIO   | - | RAJ AGARWAL            |
| 9)  | JUNO      | - | MAHIRA EKRAM           |
| 10) | CERUS     | - | RAJDEEP KAUR           |
| 11) | IRIS      | - | MANSI JAIN             |
| 12) | ADRIAN    | - | SAMUDRA DAS            |
| 13) | GONZALO   | - | SOHALDEEP SINGH SAHOTA |
| 14) | NARRATOR  | - | AAFREEN                |

There were 57 dancers in all. 21 volunteers from among the students helped with props and stage decoration.

Students were encouraged to attend the programme to give them an exposure to works of literature and widen their horizon of knowledge. The play was staged twice - for students on 17<sup>th</sup> December, and for parents, members of the managing committee and guests on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

The chief guest for the occasion was Mr. Suresh Dutt Tripathi, VP (HRM) Tata Steel.

The programme was conceptualized by the Principal, Mrs. Paramita Roy Chaudhury. She also took up the responsibility of script writing and music selection. Mrs. Suchismita Banerjee, Mrs. Tandrima Banerjee and Mr. Subhash Banerjee helped with the direction of the

play. The choreography was done by Ms. Barnali Mahato and Mrs. Susmriti Basu. Mrs. Anuradha Ghosh, Ms. Rashmi Kalra, Mrs. Suchismita Banerjee and Mrs. Tandrima Banerjee took care of the costume of the participants.

The programme was a grand success and well appreciated by the audience. The chief guest Mr. Suresh D. Tripathy said, “The programme was very good.” Mr Shashi Bhushan, father of student Vanshita Muskaan (student of class V) echoed his words.

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