Rasa is the essence of the performance theory of Natyasstra. Rasa means taste flavour. Rasa is a chemical change in the body of the performer and which is savoured by the spectator. Natyasstra is a text which tells about a refined performance. Indian performance in ancient periods and event today in classical performances depend on this sacred text.

Considering the ritual performance the ritual performer passes through 3 phases of separation, initiation and reintegration. The performer is separated from society; initiation is for developing new or restoring old behaviour and in reintegration the restored behavior in practiced until it is second nature.

The Indian body or Theatre rooted in Natasyastra and ritual theatre performance was introduced to the western proscenium theatre since the British Empire began to rule in India. After the British colonization, Indian body and mind was submitted to changes regarding the urge for freedom plays which proclaimed freedom to the nation was staged in INA camps and other areas where freedom fighters, joined hands Indian body projected in the name of freedom.

In Soyinka’s plays which urges freedom for the tribe, proclaims the pessimism that the forefathers of the tribe will awake from their soil to give the everlasting freedom for them.
The modern Indian theatre had its origin from its enthusiasm to perform ‘desi’ or traditionally blended theatre performances and also in protest against the western proscenium theatre. After 1960 whole over Indian, there were lots of researches regarding the traditional theatre of India.

Ibrahim Alkazi was the first to introduce a modern /folk theatre experience by directing the play ‘Ashad Ka ek din’.

Habib Tanwir, with his group ‘naya’ reconstructed the performance design by staging plays like ‘Mitti ki gadi’ ‘Mirz’ etc. These plays witnessed the rare blending of traditional to the contemporary ‘Indianess’. In 1970’s Habbib Tanwir staged a play with the participation of 70 Folk artists from Chattisgarh. This was the first ‘happening’ in Indian theatre. The play was ‘Agra Baazar’. ‘Jasma Auden’ was also a newly staged play during that time, which gave a new diammension in its staging.

These plays, explored a new performance behaviour and text, through body and acting.

These plays were also inspired from traditional performances like Jatra, Thamasaa, Yakshagana, Bhavai, Dashavataram, keertan, chac, theyyam, Kootiyatam, therukottu, kathakali etc.

The plays which were done during this time were ‘Hayavadana’ by Girish karnad, ‘Jo Kumaraswami’ by Chandrasekhar kambar, ‘khasiramkotwal’ by Vijayatendulkar,’Charandhas chor’ by HabibTanwir, Rasagandharva by Saksena,’Avanavan kadamba’ by Kavalam, ‘Kiratham’ by G. Sankarapillai, ‘Chakravyooham’ by Rathan kumar etc.

The play by B.V karanth staged at Kochi in 1977 was also a play which was designed in a new way by blending puppets with the body of the actor in performance.
The ‘Hayavadana’ play by Girish Karnad was a magico ritual significant play which tells the story of transposed heads. The body of the actor contributes much to the performance, which explains the body in a different way.

New theatre has produced some modern classics; Vijay Tendulkar's Ghasi Ram Kotwal is one such play on the life of morally decadent Peshwa ruler Nana Phadnavis and the corrupt Brahmans of Pune with music and dance woven in the very fabric of the play inspired by Dashavatar traditional form. These elements of traditional form sharpen the irony of the situations. Jabbar Patel's production of the same play in 1973 is a landmark in the new theatre. The play has been performed in several Indian languages and has enjoyed great popularity. Girish Karnad, noted Kannada playwright, wrote Hayavadan taking inspiration from Thomas Mann's short novel Transposed Heads which is turn is based on an ancient Indian tale given lit Kathasaritsagar by Gunadhya. The play has been constructing using elements from the traditional form of Yakshagan of his region. B.V. Karanth's production of the play in 1971 with music and movements is another significant work of the new theatre. The play had been performed in several Indian languages and is marked for its innovative structure and elements.

Karanth also produced Shakespeare's Macbeth with the Repertory of National School of Drama in a new verse translation titles Barnam Van by the late Hindi poet Reghuvir Sahai. Karanth also used performance elements of Yakshagan. Robin Das, a creative stage designer, designed most imaginative set and costume, which showed some similarity with theatre of South East Asian theatre. Shakespeare's plays have been performed in India since mid-nineteenth century both in the original language and translations and adaptations in most of the Indian languages. However, it was for the first time that Karanth did Macbeth using indigenous performance elements and putting strong imprint of Indian performance culture. Karanth hails from Karnataka and brings out productions both in Karnataka and Hindi.
Another Kannada playwright Chandrasekhar Kambar, poet, novelist and folkrist has written several plays which have been performed in Kannada, Hindi and other major languages. He draws upon the rich resources of folklore and uses elements from Bayalata, a folk form of his region. His most popular play Jokumaraswamy, which received the national award, starts with a fertility rite in honour of the phallic deity Jokumar, who is worshipped in the form of a snake gourd and then consumed by those desirous of bearing children. An impotent landlords' virgin wife feeds the snake gourd by mistake to the village rake and has a child by him. The rake's death at the hands of the landlord is a kind of gang-rape-cum-fertility offering. The landlord himself is literally left holding the baby he cannot dispose off.

Kambar who mostly draws themes for his plays from the folk tales and traditional myths also wrote a play Sin Sampize based on two Kannada short stories which were also used by Girish Karnad for his play Nagmandai. But Kambar's play treats the stories bit differently. The play has been performed in Hindi, titled Aks Tamasha. Kambar's language is earthy and rich in metaphors and imagery.

Senior director Prasanna from Karnataka produces plays both in Kannada and in Hindi, mostly working as a Guest Director for the repertory company of the National School of Drama. He belongs to the class of directors who still primarily work in naturalistic idiom but occasionally introduce experimental elements in their productions. Prasanna's Sanskrit play Uttar Ramcharit by Bhavabhuti in Hindi translation, was admired for its innovative elements. He also directed Girish Kamad's latest play Agni-Mattumalle in Hindi translation titles Agni Aur Barkha. The production was mounted with great competence.

Alkazi, first Director of National School of Drama (NSD) and a senior theatre director did several memorable productions using variety of spaces.
sixties and seventies. It was for the first time that a director used ancient historical monuments of Delhi for staging plays. His production of Dharmvir Bharati's verse play Andha Yug (The Blind Age) dealing with the great war between the Kauravas and Pandavas, is still a masterpiece. In this production he was the first director to use ramparts and a large platform stage in the ruins of Ferozeshah Kotla and then Purana Quila's tiered steps.

Using NSD's open air theatre with multiple local, he also produced Girish Karnad's historical play Tughlaq, on the life of the 14th century Sultan of Delhi. Alkazi set new standards in every branch of a theatrical production and gave Indian theatre sophisticated professionalism.

Actor-director, the late Om Shivpuri directed Vijay Tendulkar's play Shantata, Court Chafu Ahe (Silent, Court is in Session) in Hindi translation with his actress wife Sudha in the main role. Both the play and the production showed freshness of structure and were marked for their improvisatory character. Shivpuri later directed Girish Karnad's historical play Tughlaq too on the ridges of Talkatora Gardens with innovative elements.

Similarly senior Hindi actor-directors Shyamanand Jalan in Calcutta &rid Sataydev Dubey in Bombay, both working in realistic mould, have done several productions over the years. Their productions are mounted with great competence. Their forte is the dramatic word, and delivery of dialogues. Badal Sarkar's play Evam Indrajit and Gyandev Agnihotri's Shuturmurg are Jalan's noteworthy productions in which he resorted to stylization with great success. Credit goes to Dubey for first discovering theatrical potentialities of Bharati's Andha Yug (The Blind Age) when he presented it in 1962 on Alkazi's terrace theatre in Mumbai.

A fine Delhi-based actor-director, Ramgopal Bajaj, has several noteworthy directorial works to his credits. His most innovative and bold production is of
Hindi classic Andha-Yug. Bajaj built a massive structure on the NSD Campus in the shape of pond with steps. Actors performed all around on the steps. Actors performed all around on the steps, and also on a platform stage built in the pond. Audience also sat on one side of the steps. Unique feature of the production was that the actors also served as Kathavachak (story-tellers). Just by turning over their robes hanging loosely on the shoulders, they became story-tellers and formed a group. Choreography, an important feature of the production, was by the modern dancer-choreographer, Bharat Sharma and the music was by B.V. Karanth.

In Hindi, the late playwright Mohan Rakesh wrote all his plays in realistic mould. His forte is dramatic language. His Ashadh Ka Din, on the life Sanskrit poet and playwright Kalidas has been widely translated and performed. Another play Adhe Adhure prevents a grim picture of a disintegrating middle class family. It is the first important play in Hindi on this problem of the contemporary society. It has been widely performed in Hindi and several other languages.

Senior director Amal Allana, working in Hindi, directs plays in naturalistic idiom with great competence. Her husband Nisar Allana, a stage designer, prefer to mount heavy and elaborate sets for her productions which often obstruct the flow of dramatic action and movements of the actors. Some of her successful and acclaimed productions are - Mahabhoj, a dramatization of the novel of the same name by its author Mannu Bhandari. Brecht's Mother Courage in Hindi adaptation as Himmat Mai, with veteran actor Manohar Singh in the mother's role, is also a significant production of Allana. Her production of King Lear in Hindi translation in a large open space with multiple locales was well acted again by Manohar Singh in the role of King Lear. She seated the audience at one fixed point forcing frontal view of the performance. The audience had to constantly
move their neck in different directions to follow the action. It is regrettable that with such exciting experiment with space, she did not take the audience into account.

Sheela Bhatia with her group Delhi Arts Theatre is the only director who writes and directs operas both in Punjabi and Urdu. Some of her better known operas are - Vedi Ki Goonj, Heer, Ranjhha, Chann Badlan Da, which is rich in Punjabi folk tunes, Dard Aayega Dabe Paon based on the poetry of famous Urdu poet Faiz, Ameer Khusro and Ghalib Kaun Hal by S.M. Mahandi. In North India with a rich tradition of folk operas like Nautanki, Swang, Bhagat and Khyal, she is the only modern director who took to writing and producing operas.

The senior Delhi-based directors in Hindi theatre, Rajinder Nath and M.K, Raina generally work in naturalistic idiom, though occasionally do experimental works tool Rajinder Math's Ghasi Ram Kotwal with music, dance and movements was a great success. Dharamvir Bharati's famous play Andha - Yug directed by M.K. Raina at the Purana Quila was most spectacular theatrical piece using vast performance area with ramparts and tiered steps. On the other hand, Bhopal based Bansi Kaul does experimental productions using elements and conventions from folk forms. A most creative stage director, he also often conducts workshops for actors in other linguistic regions. His noted production is Panchati Shapatham, a poetic play by the famous Tamil poet Subramanyam Bharati. The production was the result of a forty-day workshop in Tamil Nadu. This production marked the beginning of the new theatre movement in Tamil Nadu. His important production is Ala Afsar, a creative adaptation of Gogol's famous play Inspector General by Hindi writer Mudrarakshash. Kaul also did Bhasa's Panchatra with an imaginative set.
In Marathi theatre with Mumbai as its center, there has always been large theatre-going audience. Vijay Tendulkar, Vasant Kanetkar, Jaywant Dalvi, Mahesh Alkunchwar and Satish Aleker are the playwrights who have fed the Marathi theatre with their rich plays. They had also been translated and performed in Hindi and other Indian languages. All of them write in realistic mould. Senior actress director, Vijaya Mehta did pioneering experimental theatre in the sixties and seventies as some other group theatres did it. With large audience there is a strong flourishing commercial theatre in Mumbai. To counter it, group theatres always did experimental work even when working in naturalistic mould. Alekar's Begum Barwe, a musical in his own direction has been highly acclaimed.

In Bengali theatre, senior actor-director, the late Sombu Mitra and his most accomplished actress wife Tripathi Mitra with their group 'Bahuroopi' discovered Tagdre's plays in theatrical terms and mounted quite powerful productions. These productions are - Raktakarbi (Red Oleander), Raja (King of the dark chamber), Visarjan (Sacrifice) and Muktadhara (The River Unbound). They set a new standard in acting specializing in the delivery of dialogues. They also did some contemporary Bengali plays, and adaptation of Ibsen's Doll's House titled as Putulkhela with great success.

Another senior Bengali actor-director, the late Utpal Dutt, committed to Marxist ideology practiced political theatre. He is known for mounting massive productions with large sets and crowd scenes. Dutt mostly wrote his own plays Angar on the problems of the coal miners was a great success and created sensation with lighting designed by Tapas Sen.

The mines were shown flooded with the workers drowning in them. Another powerful play Kallol (Sound of waves, 1965) concerns with the Bombay Naval Mutiny of 1946. He also wrote a play on the Vietnam war. Dutt remained committed to his philosophy of revolutionary theatre and to his
political ideas. He also wrote and directed plays for Jatra, the indigenous popular theatre form.

Bengali playwright and director Badal Sarkar has developed his own aesthetics and philosophy of 'Third Theatre' which seeks maximum intimacy between actor and spectators. He uses simple halls and with benches and stools create varying relationship between actors and spectators. He has written several plays which have been widely performed all over India. His important plays are - Evarn Indrafit, dealing with the monotony and emptiness of life of the middle class youth, Baki Itihas, Pagta Ghorha, Sesh Nal etc. He did some of his plays like Dhoma and Michhil in public parks where the performance is surrounded by the audience.

This vibrancy of the contemporary Indian theatre also has great variety in production styles and dramatic forms, In this connection special mention should be made of the directorial work of Deoraj Ankur in creating a new theatrical genre called Kahani Ka Rangrnanch. It was in 1975 that Ankur presented three short stories by the reputed Hindi writer Nirmal Verma under a common title Teen Ekant (Three Situations of Loneliness). Since then has been presented short stories and novels though not in usual dramatized version. What Ankur does is to lift the short story from the printed page and put it on the stage. The presenters of the story are not impersonators and performer as in a dramatic presentation. The spectators get a new experience of the short stories which is different from their reading of them. Ankur does not provide any special costume to the presenters nor or there any scenic means, He gives simple blocking to the presenters for moving, sitting and standing. He often presents two or three stories by different writers under one common title. With the popularity of this new theatrical genre, several young directors have taken to the presentation of short stories without dramatizing them much. There is a great creative stir in Indian theatre which is being practiced in many forms and styles. NSD, New Delhi with its training
programme and organization of national theatre festival in the capital has greatly contributed to this stir. For the last ten years are so NSD's regional center at Bangalore has encouraged interaction between theatre of the North India and South India.

Encounter with performance tradition and the rise of a new theatrical form and idiom has led to a great debate in contemporary Indian theatre. Those playwrights and directors who still practice naturalistic theatre denounce these efforts and consider the use of performance elements and conventions from the traditional and folk theatre as misappropriation. The protagonists of the new theatre lay emphasis on return to roots to liberate Indian theatre from its colonial moorings.

However, encounter with rich performance tradition has reversed the process and the theatrical productions have acquired new idiom. Directors now maximize stage sings and symbols and minimize literary sings, thus creating a rich performance text. Traditionally, here has always been great emphasis on creating a performance text rich in staging elements and visual quality. Tradition even provides a separate word for performance text. In Sanskrit, dramatic text is referred to as Kavya or Drishya Kavya, whereas performance text is prayoga. Similarly Jatra of West Bengal is a performance form and pala is a dramatic text. Bhand Pather of Kashmir is dramatic text, whereas Bhand Jashna is performance text.

In this running account of the modern theatre which arose in the nine-teenth century under the direct influence of British theatrical tradition causing a breach with the old and living performance tradition of the country, and emergence of 'new' theatre after Independence as part of the process of de-colonisation and quest for identity, three theatrical movements had to be left out to maintain a logical continuity of the narrative. A brief account of these movements is being given here.
The Parsi theatre was a commercial venture of rich Parsi community living in Bombay, had all the elements of a hybrid theatre. Beginning in 1853, it continued with great popularity until the '30s and '40s of the 20th century when it could not complete first with the silent cinema and then the talkies. Most of the actors and actresses of Parsi theatre worked in early films, and plays popular in Parsi theatre such as Inder Sabha, Aiam Aara, and Khonne Nahaq, (based on Hamlet story) were picturised. Cinema also retained several stage practices and conventions of the Parsi theatre such as abundance of songs and dances.

It is relevant to note that before the beginning of the commercial Parsi theatre, for several years there was an active amateur theatre movement, which performed plays in English, Gujarati and Hindustani. There was a dramatic club which also did Sanskrit plays translated from the English translations done by H.H. Wilson. Amateur theatre activity had created a taste for theatre and built an audience for it. Taking advantage of this, some rich Parsis established theatre companies. They also built theatre halls to sustain commercial theatre activity. Some of these theatre halls were Alphinston Theatre built in 1853; Edward Theatre built in 1860; Galty Theatre; Empire Theatre built in 1898; Trivoli Theatre, Novelty Theatre, National Theatre, Victoria Theatre, Royal Opera House; Alfred Company; Willingdon Cinema and Hindi Natyashala. Some of the Parsi theatre companies and dramatic clubs established in Bombay were Parsi Natak Mandal; Amateur Dramatic Club; Alphinston Dramatic Club, Parsi Stage Players, Zorostrain Natak Mandali, Zorostrain Dramatic Society; Persian Zorostrain Natak Mandal; Oriental Natak Mandal; Oriental Dramatic Club; Zorostrain Dramatic Club, Zorostrain Club; Parsi Club, Albert Natak Mandal, Shakespeare Natak Mandal; Victorian Natak Mandal, Original Victorian Club, Parsi Victorian Opera Troupe, Hindi Natak Mandal etc. Along with Bombay, in some other cities and large towns also theatrical companies were established. In
Rajasthan several princely states also had theatrical companies. Jharhawad and Tonk had famous companies. Other states too sponsored theatrical companies.

There were quite a few playwrights to meet the growing demand of plays and most of them were attached to theatrical companies on a fulltime salary basis. Some playwrights wrote in Urdu, some in Hindi and some preferred Hindustani. Versified dialogues were the special feature of the text, and were delivered with great theatricality. Some of the important playwrights were Abbas All Abbas, Zarif Husaini Mian, Raunak Mahmood Mian Banarasi, Munshi Vinayak Prasad Talib, Narayan Prasad 'Betab', Aagha Hashra Kashmiri, Mehandi Hasan, Pandit Radhey Shyam Kathavachak etc. Some of Pandit Radhey Shyam's plays such as Veer Abhimanyu were of literary value and dramatically structured. These plays were also widely performed by early amateur theatre groups. He also wrote Ramayana which is famous as Radhey Shyam Ramayana and is used for textual material for Ramilla plays in Punjab and in some regions of Uttar Pradesh. He along with Agha Hashra and 'Betab' were the most significance playwrights of Parsi theatre. Plays were written of epic and puranic stories, historical and social subjects. Stories of love and sacrifice from various parts of the world were also written about and performed on stage. Plots were freely borrowed and changed from Shakespeare's plays. A significant feature of stage presentation was a running comic story presented after each drop curtain.

These companies were professionally organized and 'went on a performing tour to distant cities, they also went to neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar) and Malaysia. In these countries their popularity and Impact was so great that in Malaysia it has survived in the popular opera Bangsawan which evolved from the Parsi theatre incorporating some elements from indigenous theatre and Western opera.
The southern state and their own counterpart of Parsi commercial theatre called Company Natak, and companies were organized in various languages regions. Karnataka had a famous Gubbi Viranna Company. Veteran director B.V. Karanth of modern theatre worked in this company at the age of fourteen and played the role of Krishna and some female roles. There is still a company in Andhra Pradesh called 'Surabhi', with some 70 members living together as an extended family. The company stays in a village some 45 kilometers from Hyderabad. It is 100 years old and performs in the old style of Company Natak. Eminent Kannada playwright Girish Karnad wrote his famous play Tughlaq structured on the model of Company Natak plays.

Melodrama, suspense and sensational effects were the main ingredients of Parsi theatre. There were painted curtains with conventional scenes - Palace, Fort, River, Mountains and a drop curtain used to indicate the end of an act. Drop curtain was always used at a climactic point in the play with a striking tableau. If there was an enthusiastic audience and continued clapping, the curtain was lifted again and again, and tableau kept frozen. A popular actor with good voice always managed to get "once more" calls from the audience, and he would repeat the song - sometimes there were more than one 'once more' calls. Elaborate sets, gorgeous scenery and trick scenes managed with elaborate stage machinery were always loudly applauded.

For costume and stage decor, Parsi theatre depended on Raja Ravi Verma's calendar art. Ravi Verma began modern painting in India at the beginning of the 20th century 'using oil color technique and European tradition of painting. He, in turn, was influenced by the Parsi theatre in choosing puranic themes, and also in composing scenes and settings. He also composed tableau influenced by Parsi theatre. His paintings Sita Swayamvar and Sita Bhuvravesham look like stage pictures of Parsi theatre.
3.1 IPTA

The Two theatre movements, though shortlived, are important in the history of modern Indian theatre. One is the Jan Natya Sangh, popularly known as IPTA (Indian Peoples Theatre Association), which was a cultural forum of the Communist Party of India. It was founded in 1942 in Calcutta. The immediate cause for this was the Bengal Famine, when three million people starved to death due to the negligence of the ruling class.

In 1944 Bijan Bhattachariya, one of the founders of IPTA in Calcutta, wrote a play Nabanna (New Harvest) which dramatized the exploitation of present by the land owners. Bhattacharya also wrote another play Zabanbandi. Both the plays were directed by actor director Sombhu Mitra. Seeing the popularity of Zabanbandi, it was also performed in Hindi as Antim Abhilasha. The troupe went to Bombay to give performances of these two plays to collect money for famine relief fund. Another item prepared by this Calcutta troupe was Bhukha Hai Bengal consisting of songs and dances. Seeing the success of these plays the General Secretary of the Communist Party decided to establish a Central Ballet Troupe in Bombay.

In 1942-43 Udy Shankar Center at Almore, which used to train and develop modern creative dancers, had closed. As a result some dancers like Shanti Vardhan, Narendra Sharma and Shachin Shankar also joined the IPTA Central Troupe along with musician Ravi Shankar. Shanti Vardhan was the main choreographer and leader of the troupe. Two ballets - Bharat Ki Atma (Spirit of India) and Amar Bharat (India Immortal) were prepared raving a duration of one hour each. A few songs and dances were also prepared collectively to make it a programme of two hours. Binoy Roy who had a powerful voice was the main singer. The troupe toured all over the country to collect funds for Bengal famine. Filled with missionary zeal, performance was given with great gusto.
New in form and content, these theatrical shows were very popular and made quite a big impact. IPTA movement spread with branches in every state involving theatre artists, dancers, musicians, folk singers and performers. The Party also greatly encouraged popular forms of ballad singing such as 'Burra Katha' of Andhra Pradesh and 'Pawada' of Maharashtra. Popular folk form of Tamasha of Maharashtra with its pungent for humour and satire was also exploited for political purposes.

There were political differences in the Party. And in 1947, the Central Troupe was closed. There are still IPTA groups in some states but they are not of much artistic consequence.

IPTA also made a film Dharti Ke La! Directed by K.A. Abbas, Music was provided by Ravi Shankar and the actors included Sambhu Mitra, Balraj Sahani, Damayanti Sahani and Tripti Bhaduri, who later married Sambhu Mitra and evolved as one of the greatest actresses of this century in the country.

3.2 Prithvi Theatre

Parsi theatre had died and there was a total vacuum in the theatre life of the country. It was in such a situation that popular and highly respected film actor Prithvi Raj Kapoor started his Prithvi Theatre with a missionary zeal. Though it was an individual venture, it had the force and effect of a movement. It was started in 1944. Inspired by the ideals of nationalism and communal harmony, he had such plays in his repertoire as Deewarll Pathan, Ghaddar and Ahuti. He also staged Sanskrit Classic Shakuntala. His troupe turned whole of North India and mostly performed in the morning in cinema houses since no theatre halls were available. After the performance he used to move in the audience to collect funds for his theatre. Regretfully, he had to close It down in 1960. But
the Theatre is actively charged by his grand daughter Sanjana Kapoor. Prthvi Theatre and festivals are now very much established in India.

3.3 Music and Movements

With the define of naturalistic theatre and the emergence of new theatre following the performance practice, music and movements have been brought back. It was Habib Tanvir who in mid-50s in his theatre used music, songs, movements, dance and poetry, which were practically exiled from the naturalistic theatre. His production of Agra Bazar, a play constructed by himself on the poetry and life of popular poet Nazir of Agra was a celebration of life on the stage. He put on the stage a whole Bazar scene with hawkers selling their goods and singing Nazir's poems. Later Tanvir did this play again in local dialect with the folk performers of Nacha form of his region Chhattisgarh, now a full fledged state, and then a part of Madhya Pradesh.

Music has now become so important and integral to the performance that If has acquired the status of a theatre language like that of the dramatic text itself. It had its own channel of communication. From the Natyashastra to the other treatises, all have laid great emphasis on music in drama. In all traditional forms music land movements are integral to the performance. The primary concern of theatre as a public art is communication, which is opened with the active involvement of spectators with theatre. Theatre music greatly channels and smoothens the flow of communication. In the new theatre, spectators in providing multiple perception of performance.

It is a special feature of the new theatre that several directors are also music composers and compose music for their productions in relation to the dramatic text and movements. Kavalam Narayana Panikkar, B.V. Karanth and Ratan Thiym are the senior directors who compose music for their productions, Karanth has specialized in theatre music and has a definite philosophy and
aesthetics. Often he also composes music for the productions by other directors. One may say that a new class of theatre music composers has emerged. In the credit list for a theatrical production, the name of music composer is give along with other technician.

In theatrical productions music accentuates and highlights postures and gestures while providing a frame for visual images. Panikkar's actors in his production of Sanskrit plays make entrances and exits in highly stylized gait set to tala and accentuated by the drum. This greatly increases the Impact of the entrances and exits of the actors, Both Panikkar and Karanth use swar patterns and bois as music. Karanth also uses alap, chant and humming for musical effect. In new theatre, music rather than being ornamental has become functional and organic.

Along with music, dance like movements are also added. Some directors use the services of dancers and choreographers to work on a scheme of movements and 'their names are given in the credit list. Ratan Thiyam's famous play Chakravyuth (1984) and was based on Abhimanyu story from the theatre. While this production made great impact was disapproved by the directors who still practiced realistic theatre. They commented it was ballet and not theatre. They did not realize that Indian tradition did not exclude movements and rhythm from a theatrical production.

3.4 Back to classics

An important feature of the new theatre is the endeavour to get back to the classics. A symbolic beginning of getting back to the Sanskrit classics was made in 11956 when the first national drama festival was organized by the Sangeet Natak Akademi (National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama). It opened with the production of Shakuntala by the great poet and playwright Kalidas in original, performed by the Goa Brahman Sabha of Bombay. They
have been doing Sanskrit plays in original. In Mahsrashtra, with the singing of the shlokas in the style of sangeet natak (musical form), the classics also became part of the Marathi Sangeet Natak, which is a special feature of the Marathi theatre.

The other two theatre groups namely - Sanskritrang of the late Dr. V. Raghavan in Chennai and Prachyavani In Kolkata also did the groups, however, did not arouse the interest of contemporary theatre audience, and their academic style was of no theatrical interest.

From the early 60s, the National School of Drama (NSD) as part of its training programme took up the production of Sanskrit plays in Hindi translation by the students of the School. These were largely training oriented and the directors tried to reconstruct the ancient style of production on the basis of their understanding of the Natyashastra. Some of the significant productions in this category were by Shanta Gandhi as a member of the staff of the school. Her noted production was that of Madhyem Vyayog by Bhasa, which, though showing semblance of freshness in production, had a text-book character. Since mid 60s, the famous semblance or freshness in production, and a text-book character. Since mid 60s, the famous Sanskrit prahasana (farce) - Bhagvadajjukiyam (The Monk and the courtesan) in Hindi translation has been done by the students of the school by several directors.

But it was Habib Tanvir's production of Mrichhakatikam (The Toy Cart) by Shudrak in Hindi translation In 1958 as sung and danced performance, which though she eking to the pundits and purists of Sanskrit dramatic tradition, aroused great interest among the theatre audience. It brought to light the potential of Sanskrit classics to become a part of the mainstream theatre activity.
In the second phase of return to the classics which began in early 70s, both the objectives of doing the classics and their production design got completely changed. These productions were done by the senior directors of the contemporary new theatre in viridus languages and their objective was to make the classics part of contemporary theatre activity. Hence they did not care about the authentic style of production. They wanted to approach and interpret the classics as contemporary directors and for the contemporary audiences.

It is an interesting point to note that the second phase of getting back to the classics was generated by the new theatre movement. What is even of greater interest is that, inter alia, it strengthened new theatre movement, and within the course of less than two decades, the classics became an integral part of the new mainstream theatre. Surprisingly it is Bhasa (2nd Century B.C. - 2nd Century A.D.) who made it possible, and made greatest contribution to this phenomenon of the new theatre. The significant contribution of Bhasa's plays to the development of the new theatre is ironical as his plays were discovered only in 1913. Not only that, his 13 plays dealing with the two epics remained un-performed for nearly half a century as Sanskrit scholars, both Indian and foreign, kept debating and doubting the stageability of this plays. The basic debate veered round to the argument that being close to the epic tradition Bhasa's plays was descriptive, and dramatically not well constructed.

Second important step in the production or Sanskrit drama was K.N. Panikkar's Madhyam Vyayog (The Middle One) by Bhasa in original. He mounted the production at the Kalidasa Akademi's Festival in 1980. Kalidasa Akaderhi in Ujjain has provided a Meaningful forum for the classics for the last more than two decades. Similarly, several directions of the contemporary theatre got attached to the classics and produced in different styles. These productions showed marked change from the productions done earlier in realistic mode with elaborate sets. It is said that in of their early festivals, Dr.
V. Raghvan, Sanskrit scholar and director, brought his production of Shakuntala from Chennai with a truck load of painted curtains, sets and props.

Panikkar's Madhyam Vyayog was later presented in Delhi in Sri Ram Center's Annual Theatre Festival. It made great impact on the audience and marked the beginning of rediscovery of Bhasa in theatrical terms. Panikkar was followed by Ratan Thiyam who also did successful productions of Urubhangam (Broken Thigh) and Karnabharam (Kama's Burden) in Manipuri putting strong imprint of Manipur's rich performance culture. These productions completely negated and proved meaningless conventional text book productions of Sanskrit plays.

For doing Bhasa's Urubhangam, his emphasis has been on creating powerful visual images with strong movements, music and dance. He has superb ability as a craftsman. His actors make strong and prolonged entrances and exits with dance-like movements. His compositions and groupings are pleasant and powerful. Speech of his actors is almost explosive inspired as it is by Wari-Liba, the story-telling form of Manipur.

3.5 New folkloric Theatre

As a result of encounter with the traditional theatre, several directors following Tanvir's example started working with the mixed group of folk performers and urban actors often using folk legends and community myths. As a result a new theatrical genre called folkloric theatre has emerged.

The credit of eliminating the great divide between modern-urban and folk-rural theatre goes to the senior theatre director, Habib Tanvir. With his new folkloric theatre, working with the performers of Nacha form of his region, Chhattisgardi he blurred the line between these two worlds.
Nacha performers are brilliant singers and dancers, and perform with great
gusto. Habib Tanvir produced his famous Charandas Chor based on a folk tale
of Rajasthan. Since then has been working in the same theatrical idiom with a
mission. His other well known productions are - Asghar Vazahat's play Jin
Lahore Nah! Dekhya Vo Janma Nahin (1970), dealing with the partition of
India and creation of Pakistan and Dekh Rahain Hain Na. Tanvir has always
been attracted to Sanskrit Classics. He also produced
Yshakhida, Mudrarakshash in English and Bhavabhuti's Uttar Ramcharit. B.V,
Karanth while working s the Director of Bharat Bhavan's repertory at Bhopal
also did Mrichakatikam and Kalidasa's Malvikagnimitra in the Malavi dialect
of the state. He also used other dialects of Madhya Pradesh such as
Bundelkhandi and Chhattisgarhi in his other productions. The use of dialects
is another Interesting feature of the new folkloric theatre.

This trend in the contemporary theatre received a great boost from the Sangeet
Natak Akademi's scheme of granting production assistance to young directors
for experimental productions Involving interaction with folk and traditional
theatre. The power of traditional themes, music and dance used by the
directors made these folkloric performances quite popular with the audience.
For instance, cutting across linguistic barrier Habib Tanvir's Charandas Chor
has been receiving large enthusiastic response from the audience in Kolkata.
Akademl's scheme involving new productions and organization of zonal find
national festivals of these new productions has resulted in the discovery of
whole new generation of young brilliant directors from small cities and towns
where they had no exposure to the urban theatre, these festivals also enlarged
theatre audience eyen created new and in small towns.

Some of the directors who were discovered in this process continue to work in
folkloric theatre idiom. For instance, after the great success of his Baba Jitto,
during one of the festivals organized by the Academy, Balwant Thakur in
Jdmmu with his group has been quite active. Play-scripts for these groups are
often written by the local poets based on traditional myths and legends. Similarly, Waman Kendre in Mumbai has developed into a bright young director after his successful production of Zulva during one of such festivals. Zulva is based on a powerful story concerning the VeHamma community. Jaishri from Bangalore has two presented a brilliant play Lakshapati Rajan Katha by M.S. Nagarajan during one of the Academy festivals.

As part of folkloric theatre movement, several directors are now working with mixed cast of urban and folk actors. Neelam Man Singh Chaudhary working in Chandigarh has professional Naqqals of Punjab in her group, who had with great virtuosity dance and Movements to all her productions and act as female Impersonators and work as stage handi too. She did Raja Bharthari, a traditional play, imparting it a contemporary idiom. Later, she did a production of Lorca's Yerma in adaptation by Punjab's famous poet Pattar. The production of Yerma was greatly admired for its strong images echoing the agony of Yerma's barrenness. Later, she did Girish Karnad's play Nagmandal (play with a Kobra) based on two Kannada folk tales. With complex weaving of the thematic material, the play moves on several planes. She mounted the production with moving rituallstic images and put a strong imprint of Punjab's rich culture of traditional arts and crafts.

Similarly senior director, Bhanu Bharati, is now working at Udaipurwith a group from the Bheel tribal community. His famous production Amar Beej (Immortal seed) is based on a Bheel legend which has environmental concerns. He created strong images of water, milk and blood by stretching cloth across the stage.

Satish Anand, a senior director in Patna, uses lost folk traditional forms Bidesia and Bidapat nach of his region and performs in his native dialect of Bhojpuri. Sanskrit classic Mrichhakatikam produced In Hindi translation as Mati-Gadi is a most delightfully sung and danced production of a classic. He
has also done dramatized version of famous novel Maila Anchal by Phanishwamath Renu in the same theatrical In the South India, Ramaswamy mixes folk and urban actors in his productions and uses folk forms most effectively as he used Teravattam dancers in the role of the Chorus for his production of Antigone. Playwright and director N. Muttuswamy in Chennai has been working with traditional actors of Terukuttu form of his region, and using their movements has evolved his own system of training of actors. Similarly, senior Tamil director Ramanujam is also working with mixed cast and creativity interacting with folk forms. Young director V. Arumugam, whose talent was discovered in one of these festivals, practices theatre of rich visual images with his own plays Karunchuzhi (Whirlpool) which have minimal text. These directors are credited with bring about a complete change of the character of Tamil theatre, a poor imitation as it was of commercial Tamil cinema dominated by popular film idols like M.G.R. and Shivaji Ganeshan.

In Manipur in the north-east, senior director and playwright Kanhai Lal uses traditional legends and tales providing them contemporary relevance. His Pabet based or folk tale is a powerful comment on cultural domination of Manipur and a brilliant example of the lyric theatre of images. His wife Savitry is a most accomplished and powerful actress. Lokendra Arambum with his concerns with the social and political life of Manipur, uses traditional forms while diluting their religious elements, There are several other young directions in Manipur who take inspiration from tradition to suit and enrich their production methods and designs. This vibrancy of the contemporary Indian theatre also has great variety in production styles and dramatic forms, in this connection special mention should be made of the directorial work of young Directors.
3.6 Modern Classics

New theatre has produced some modern classics; Vijay Tendulkar's Ghasi Ram Kotwal is one such play on the life of morally decadent Peshwa ruler Nana Phadnavis and the corrupt Brahmans of Pune with music and dance woven in the very fabric of the play inspired by Dashavatar traditional form. These elements of traditional form sharpen the Irony of the situations. Jabbar Patel's production of the same play in 1973 is a landmark in the new theatre. The play has been performed in several Indian languages and has enjoyed great popularity. Girish Karnad, noted Kannada playwright, wrote Hayavadan taking inspiration from Thomas Mann's short novel Transposed Heads which is turn is based on an ancient Indian tale given lit Kathasaritsagar by Gunadhya. The play has been constructing using elements from the traditional form of Yakshagan of his region. B.V. Karanth's production of the play in 1971 with music and movements is another significant work of the new theatre. The play had been performed in several Indian languages and is marked for its innovative structure and elements.

Karanth also produced Shakespeare's Macbeth with the Repertory of National School of Drama in a new verse translation titles ‘Barnam Van’ by the late Hindi poet Reghuvir Sahai. Karanth also used performance elements of Yakshagan. Robin Das, a creative stage designer, designed most imaginative set and costume, which showed some similarity with theatre of South East Asian theatre. Shakespeare's plays have been performed in India since mid-nineteenth century both in the original language and translations and adaptations in most of the Indian languages. However, it was for the first time that Karanth did Macbeth using indigenous performance elements and putting strong imprint of Indian performance culture. Karanth hails from Karnataka and brings out productions both in Karnatka and Hindi.
Another Kannada playwright Chandrasekhar Kambar, poet, novelist and folkrist has written several plays which have been performed in Kannada, Hindi and other major languages. He draws upon the rich resources of folklore and uses elements from Bayalata, a folk form of his region. His most popular play Jo kumaraswamy, which received the national award, starts with a fertility rite in honour of the phallic deity Jokumar, who is worshipped in the form of a snake gourd and then consumed by those desirous of bearing children. An impotent landlords' virgin wife feeds the snake gourd by mistake to the village rake and has a child by him. The rake's death at the hands of the landlord is a kind of gang-rape-cum-fertility offering. The landlord himself is literally left holding the baby he cannot dispose off.

Kambar who mostly draws themes for his plays from the folk tales and traditional myths also wrote a play Sin Sampize based on two Kannada short stories which were also used by Girish Karnad for his play Nagmandai. But Kambar's play treats the stories bit differently. The play has been performed in Hindi, titled Aks Tamasha. Kambar's language is earthy and rich in metaphors and imagery.

Senior director Prasanna from Karnataka produces plays both in Kannada and in Hindi, mostly working as a Guest Director for the repertory company of the National School of Drama. He belongs to the class of directors who still primarily work in naturalistic idiom but occasionally introduce experimental elements in their productions. Prasanna's Sanskrit play Uttar Ramcharit by Bhavabhuti in Hindi translation, was admired for its innovative elements. He also directed Girish Kamad's latest play Agni-Mattumalle in Hindi translation titles Agni Aur Barkha. The production was mounted with great competence.

Alkazi, first Director of National School of Drama (NSD) and a senior theatre director did several memorable productions using variety of spaces In the
sixties and seventies. It was for the first time that a director used ancient historical monuments of Delhi for staging plays. His production of Dharmvir Bharati's verse play Andha Yug (The Blind Age) dealing with the great war between the Kauravas and Pandavas, is still a masterpiece. In this production he was the first director to use ramparts and a large platform stage in the ruins of Ferozeshah Kotla and then Purana Quila's tiered steps.

Using NSD's open air theatre with multiple local, he also produced Girish Karnad's historical play Tughlaq, on the life of the 14th century Sultan of Delhi. Alkazi set new standards in every branch of a theatrical production and gave Indian theatre sophisticated professionalism.

Actor-director, the late Om Shivpuri directed Vijay Tendulkar's play Shantata, Court Chalu he (Silent, Court is in Session) in Hindi translation with his actress wife Sudha in the main role. Both the play and the production showed freshness of structure and were marked for their improvisatory character, Shivpuri later directed Girish Karnad's historical play Tughlaq too on the ridges of Talkatora Gardens with innovative elements.

Similarly senior Hindi actor-directors Shyamanand Jalan in Calcutta & rid Sataydev Dubey in Bombay, both working in realistic mould, have done several productions over the years. Their productions are mounted with great competence. Their forte is the dramatic word, and delivery of dialogues. Badal Sarkar's play Evam Indrajit and Gyandev Agnihotri's Shurutmurg are Jalan's noteworthy productions in which he resorted to stylization with great success. Credit goes to Dubey for first discovering theatrical potentialities of Bharati's Andha Yug (The Blind Age) when he presented it in 1962 on Alkazi's terrace theatre in Mumbai.

A fine Delhi-based actor-director, Ramgopal Bajaj, has several noteworthy directorial works to his credits. His most innovative and bold production is of
Hindi classic Andha-Yug. Bajaj built a massive structure on the NSD Campus in the shape of a pond with steps. Actors performed all around on the steps. Actors performed all around on the steps, and also on a platform stage built in the pond. Audience also sat on one side of the steps. Unique feature of the production was that the actors also served as Kathavachak (story-tellers). Just by turning over their robes hanging loosely on the shoulders, they became story-tellers and formed a group. Choreography, an important feature of the production, was by the modern dancer-choreographer, Bharat Sharma and the music was proved by B.V Karanth.

In Hindi, the late playwright Mohan Rakesh wrote all his plays in realistic mould. His forte is dramatic language. His Ashadh Ka Din, on the life of Sanskrit poet and playwright Kalidas has been widely translated and performed. Another play Adhe Adhure presents a grim picture of a disintegrating middle class family. It is the first important play in Hindi on this problem of the contemporary society. It has been widely performed in Hindi and several other languages.

Senior director Amal Allana, working in Hindi, directs plays in naturalistic idiom with great competence. Her husband Nisar Allana, a stage designer, prefer to mount heavy and elaborate sets for her productions which often obstruct the flow of dramatic action and movements of the actors. Some of her successful and acclaimed productions are - Mahabhoj, a dramatization of the novel of the same name by its author Mannu Bhandari. Brecht's Mother Courage in Hindi adaptation as Himmat Mai, with veteran actor Manohar Singh in the mother’s role, is also a significant production of Allana. Her production of King Lear in Hindi translation in a large open space with multiple locales was well acted again by Manohar Singh in the role of King Lear. She seated the audience at one fixed point forcing frontal view of the performance. The audience had to constantly move their neck in different
directions to follow the action. It is regrettable that with such exciting
experiment with space, she did not take the audience into account.

Sheela Bhatia with her group Delhi Arts Theatre is the only director who
writes and directs operas both in Punjabi and Urdu. Some of her better known
operas are - Vedi Ki Goonj, Heer, Ranjhha, Chann Badlan Da, which is rich
in Punjabi folk tunes, Dard Aayega Dabe Paon based on the poetry of famous
Urdu poet Faiz, Ameer Khusro and Ghalib Kaun Hal by S.M. Mahandi. In
North India with a rich tradition of folk operas ti ke Nautanki, Swang, Bhagat
and Khyal, she is the only modern director who took to writing and
producing operas.

The senior Delhi-based directors in Hindi theatre, Rajinder Nath and M.K,
Raina generally work in naturalistic idiom, though occasionally do
experimental works tool Rajinder Math's Ghasi Ram Kotwal with music,
dance and movements was a great success. Dharamvir Bharati's famous play
Andha - Yug directed by M.K. Raina at the Purana Quila was most
spectacular theatrical piece using vast performance area with ramparts and
tiered steps. On the other hand, Bhopal based Bansi Kaul does experimental
productions using elements and conventions from folk forms. A most creative
stage director, he also often conducts workshops for actors in other linguistic
regions. His noted production is Panchati Shapatham, a poetic play by the
famous Tamil poet Subramanyam Bharati. The production was the result of a
forty-day workshop in Tamil Nadu. This production marked the 'beginning of
the new theatre movement in Tamil Nadu, His important production is Ala
AFsar, a creative adaptation of Gogol's famous play Inspector General by
Hindi writer Mudrarakshash. Kaul also did Bhasa's Panchatra with an
imaginative set.

In Marathi theatre with Mumbai as its center, there has always been large
theatre-going audience. Vijay Tendulkar, Vasant Kanetkar, Jaywant Dalvi,
Mahesh Alkunchwar and Satish Aleker are the playwrights who have fed the Marathi theatre with their rich plays. They had also been translated and performed in Hindi and other Indian languages. All of them write in realistic mould. Senior actress director, Vijaya Mehta did pioneering experimental theatre in the sixties and seventies as some other group theatres did it. With large audience there is a strong flourishing commercial theatre in Mumbai. To counter it, group theatres always did experimental work even when working in naturalistic mould. Alekar's Begum Barwe, a musical in his own direction has been highly acclaimed.

In Bengali theatre, senior actor-director, the late Sombu Mitra and his most accomplished actress wife Tripathi Mitra with their group 'Bahuroopi' discovered Tagdre's plays in theatrical terms and mounted quite powerful productions. These productions are - Raktakarbi (Red Olieander), Raja (King of the dark chamber), Visarjan (Sacrifice) and Muktadhara (The River Unbound). They set a new standard in acting specializing in the delivery of dialogues. They also did some contemporary Bengali plays, and adaptation of Ibsen's Doll's House titled as Putulkhela with great success.

Another senior Bengali actor-director, the late Utpal Dutt, committed to Marxist ideology practiced political theatre. He is known for mounting massive productions with large sets and crowd scenes. Dutt mostly wrote his own plays Angar on the problems of the coal miners was a great success and created sensation with lighting designed by Tapas Sen.

The mines were shown flooded with the workers drowning in them. Another powerful play Kallol (Sound of waves, 1965) concerns with the Bombay Naval Mutiny of 1946, He also wrote a play on the Vietnam war. Dutt remained committed to his philosophy of revolutionary theatre and to his political ideas. He also wrote and directed plays for Jatra, the indigenous popular theatre form.
Bengali playwright and director Badal Sarkar has developed his own aesthetics and philosophy of 'Third Theatre' which seeks maximum intimacy between actor and spectators. He uses simple halls and with benches and stools create varying relationship between actors and spectators. He has written several plays which have been widely performed all over India. His important plays are - Evarn Indrafit, dealing with the monotony and emptiness of life of the middle class youth, Baki Itihas, Pagta Ghorha, Sesh Nal etc. He did some of his plays like Dhoma and Michhil in public parks where the performance is surrounded by the audience.

3.7 Rise of Modern Theatre

In the mid nineteenth century modern drama and theatre had its beginning in Calcutta, then the seat of British power, under the direct influence of British theatrical tradition. It created great rupture from the performance tradition of more than two thousand years which began with the dialogue hymns of the Rigveda and developed with the two great epics – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Theatre Calcutta was for the enjoyment of the British officers, and it was in extension of their club life. Their world of Indian performance tradition was confined to the nautch girls. Theatre activity was generated by the visiting British companies and some amateur theatre activity by British Clubs. Victorian melodramas and farces were presented with heavy sets and sensational lighting. Even the local Bengali intellectuals and aristocracy were neither permitted to visit the theatre, nor allowed to become of such clubs. But Bengal in its Jatra form had vigorous indigenous theatre. Vidya Sunder, dealing with the story of two young lovers, was quite popular among the locals at the time. Regretfully, this was rejected by the intellectuals and the aristocracy on the ground; of obscenity in the performance. The intervention on the part if the aristocracy created a rupture between the indigenous Bengali theatre and the modern Bengali drama.
The same pattern was repeated in most other linguistic regions with variation in the intensity of rupture. In some languages, however, dramatics created modern drama on the model of indigenous forms. For instance, in Hindi, Bhartendu Harishchandra was the first dramatist who wrote plays on the model of traditional form like Rasalila. He also wrote a play Vidya Sunder based on the story popular in Jatra. In another theatrically strong region, Maharashtra, Vishnu Das Bhave wrote first modern Marathi play Sita Swayamvar in 1843 taking inspiration from the indigenes form Yakshagan of Karnataka as prevalent in the Sangli region of Maharashtra.

The first proscenium theatre was built in Culcutta in 1860, forcing frontal view of the performance on the spectators. This totally changed the aesthetics of reception of a theatrical performance and also broke close and intimate relationship between the actors and spectators. Indian audiences had traditionally seen performances often by moving from different angles and levels, having multiple perception of a performance. Sculpture on the other walls of the temples is also meant to be seen by making parikrama (circumambulation) because it is only than that the sculptures make their full dramatic impact on the viewers. Performance Tradition and Modern Theatre

It created great rupture from the performance tradition of more than two thousand years which began with the dialogue hymns of the Rigveda and developed with the two great epics – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

After the breakdown of Sanskrit classical tradition in North India in the 10th century, there was a reflowering of the of the performance edition in South India. It was first manifested in Kutiyattam of Kerala, the only surviving performing tradition of Sanskrit drama. Kutiyattam found place in large Vishnu temples performed in Temple theatre called kuttambalam. Kings provided the patronage to the theatres. Later, in Kerala itself in the 16th century, there developed two highly evolved forms - Krishnanattam, an eight-
cycle- play and the life of Krishna which found place in large Krishna temple of Guruvayur. Along with this, Kathakali with its highly codified performance elements also developed. Kathakali, too, found patronage from the kings and the temple. Similarly Karnataka state there evolved in the 17th century Yakshagana which performs stories from the two epics. All these forms retained recitation and story-telling format which have been the roots forms of the Indian performance tradition.

3.8 Rejection of proscenium Theatre

One of the several features important for the understanding of the aesthetics of new theatre is the rejection of the proscenium theatre by most of the directors. They use variety of performance spaces to bring about a closer relationship between the actors and spectators, and also provide a new perception of the performance.

The first feeble efforts to liberate the actor from the inhibiting influence or proscenium theatre were made by violating its conventions even while performing with it. These efforts manifested themselves in a variety of ways; in actor's entrances and exits through the auditorium, actors sitting in the auditorium and speaking their lined from there, - and enactment of some of the scenes, such as processional and crowd scenes, in the auditorium.

It is paradoxical that in a theatrical tradition which provides a great variety of spaces with most exciting environmental features, the modern theatre that arose” during the mid- nineteenth century chose for itself proscenium theatre. The flexibility of the performance space is utilized for mounting production in different designs. More and more, younger directors are using simple open spaces and the space determines the design of the production.

It was in the west In the early 1960s that the theatre directors revolted against the proscenium theatre in order to experiment with their productions.
In proscenium tradition the viewing is fronted and is found to one unitary channel. It was to break this monotony of unilaterity of frontal viewing in proscenium theatre that necessitated architectural changes. This resulted in the creation of thrust stage, arena stage and theatre-in-the round. These varieties of stages brought about closer relationship between the actor and the spectators with possibilities for manipulating the relationship and providing multiple perceptions of performance. The monotony of production design conditional by; the proscenium theatre format was thus broken and enabled the directors to shape their productions in relation to the type of stage they used.

3.9 Modern Indian Actor’s Body training/dynamism

While in other performing arts - music and dance - there are age-old traditional systems of training which we expect a musician or a dancer to go through, formal training for a modern actor was not given much of priority. Ours is a performance tradition in which a performer has always received training often within the family and through the process of imitation and inheritance, in several forms of theatre and dance there is a strong input from martial art also towards training performer.

For instance, Kathakali has evolved a sound system of training with several exercises and movements taken over from Kalari, the martial art of the region, including its massage system to make the body supple.

Systematic training of the traditional performer is actually an Asian phenomenon. Each theatre form has its own system of training suited to its performance design; there is an input of martial art in the training of the performer in Kabuki of Japan and Peking Opera of China to enable the actors to strike strong poses.
With the breakaway from the naturalistic spoken theatre in early 1960’s, several directors of the new theatre used yoga, martial arts, circus skills, gymnastics and acrobatics to impart physicality and plasticity to a theatrical performance and evolved their own system of training. These systems are primarily suited to their own production but also have wider applicability. Some of the senior directors who have evolved their own system of training are: Kavalam Narayana Panikkar, B.V. Karanth, Ratan Thiyam, KanhaiLal, Bansi Kaul and N. Muttuswami.

Training exercises of martial arts, though developed for their carry-over-value in combat, have inherent quality to help actor develop stamina, reflex action and performing ability. A whole range of exercises of all the systems of martial arts greatly help the performer in exploring the space, and in developing a strong and intuitive sense of the dynamics of body. Basic skills which include striking, kicking, blocking and movements of attack and defence can help the actor explore space in relation to his body - an ability which is basic to the art of the actor and dancer.

Training through martial art also helps harmonization of physical and psychological impulses and cultivates a sense of rhythm. The movements of martial art in all traditions, being based on animal and bird movements - monkey, elephant, cat, horse, snake, and crane - have inherent sense of grace and rhythm. Such training enables an actor register a strong presence on the stage. Even in stillness he is able, as it were, to charge the space. A Kathakali and Yakshgana dancer-actor, a Chhau dancer etc. have a strong arresting presence, and as they take position on the stage the whole of the performance space seems to get charged.

The training and preparation for the performer has acquired such an importance that for the directors of the new theatre, actor’ training and preparatory workshops have become more important than the conventional
rehearsals. This is in accordance with the indigenous theatrical tradition. For Kathakali and Yakshagan actors, there is no such thing as rehearsal. What they go through is several years of rigorous training and long hours of preparation before the performance. That is also the case with Japanese forms, Noh and Kabuki. There may be what may be termed as "run-through" before the performance, but not long rehearsals.

As part of the actor training system, Kavalam Narayana Panikkar has developed rhythmic exercises taking inspiration from some of the traditional performance modes of his region. Rhythm is provided by actors themselves who chant, recite, sing or perform exercises to the tune of the music of drum.

The use of Charis (gait) is a distinctive feature of Kavalam Narayana Panikkar's production design. He has developed a whole repertoire of Charts which are used for highly stylized entrances, exits, movements, formations and groupings. Kavalam Narayana Panikkar has followed Natyashastra tradition with regard to the training of actors which recognizes special charts, karrias, anaghars and mandalas for actor training.

Like Kavalam Narayana Panikkar, Kanhai Lal has evolved his own theatrical idiom with emphasis on lyrical images. To suit his theatre idiom, he has also evolved a method of training of actors which lays emphasis on improvisation during the rehearsal process. He uses actors' body to create performance text. His whole endeavour, in fact, is to liberate theatre from literature. During the exercise for actors, Kanhai Lal puts emphasis on breathing and physio-psycho impulses. In Manipur because of the strong tradition of martial art, Thang-Ta and complex religious performance forms like Natsankirtan, the body culture is very rich. Kanhai Lal and Ratam Thiyam have exploited the Manipur tradition of rich body culture to strain their performers. The Indian actor’s body mostly rooted in traditional modes of training simultaneously underwent a
change due to the social, global aspects and multimedia environment-visual changes happening, around him.

This vibrancy of the contemporary Indian theatre also has great variety in production styles and dramatic forms. In this connection special mention should be made of the directorial work of Deoraj Ankur in creating a new theatrical genre called Kahani Ka Rangmanch. It was in 1975 that Ankur presented three short stories by the reputed Hindi writer Nirmal Verma under a common title Teen Ekant (Three Situations of Loneliness). Since then has been presented short stories and novels though not in usual dramatized version. What Ankur does is to lift the short story from the printed page and put it on the stage. The presenters of the story are not impersonators and performer as in a dramatic presentation. The spectators get a new experience of the short stories which is different from their reading of them. Ankur does not provide any special costume to the presenters nor or there any scenic means, He gives simple blocking to the presenters for moving, sitting and standing. He often presents two or three stories by different writers under one common title. With the popularity of this new theatrical genre, several young directors have taken to the presentation of short stories without dramatizing them much. There is a great creative stir in Indian theatre which is being practiced in many forms and styles. NSD, New Delhi with its training programme and organization of national theatre festival in the capital has greatly contributed to this stir. For the last ten years are so NSD's regional center at Bangalore has encouraged interaction between theatre of the North India and South India. The vibrant body dynamism this plays exhibited was blended with the indigineous Theatre aspects and aggressive Indian mind against conventions, beliefs, etc. It was also a dialogue to the society against the then prevailing customs and social evils. It also was an extension of the common mans thoughts and his crave for freedom.
Encounter with performance tradition and the rise of a new theatrical form new body images and dynamics of contemporary Indian performance rests on the globalistic issues, media, fashion, bollywood films, traditional training blended with modern body culture etc. This vibrancy of the contemporary Indian theatre led to its Intercultural explorations and dialogues. One of the reason was also the global changes and the global similarities countries and individuals had to face led to a more poignant and common outlook for addressing the new global citizen, in this connection special mention should be made of the directorial work of Roysten Abel, Usha Ganguly, Abhilash Pillai etc.

Secondly, the Indian body had been submitted to lot of changes from past to the present. As every culture and body changes through time, Indian body also received changes or variations as a result of political changes economic variations environmental changes natural hazards, global changes, colonization, multimedia innovation, etc. It reflects the concerns of war, population, natural happenings etc in its expressions. It strives for its identity and existence.

The body in the plays of these masters of Indian theatre exhibits the the changing phase of Indian Theatre and Body dynamism. This plays were a turning point in the history of Indian theatre. Apart from the earlier performance the modern versions of this play performances were also staged exploring the Text and Body in different diamensions.

Virtual bodies are permeable and interweave the corporeal with machine language in oppositional stances. Bhangra Beat and Asian Dub are increasingly playing a formative role in global pop culture. At the same time, over the past few decades India's "urban bodies" have seen the emergence of a new generation of outstanding artists and intellectuals who formulate new perspectives in response to immense social transformations, translating
classical body arts and visual culture into contemporary forms of expression. On the perspectives of prominent Indian curators, from September 19 to November 16, 2003, the House of World Cultures will present body.city - New Perspectives from India, a program whose exhibitions, theatre productions, concerts, conferences, films, readings and youth events will introduce an India that is future-oriented, popular and intellectual.

Not only does India have some of the world's largest megalopolises, these are but also cultural centres of growing significance. This is where a new cosmos of images, sounds and gestures is developing, one that is gaining influence outside India as well. This frenzy of production and quantity, this illusion of numbers and statistics was called 'cultural politics', 'democratic culture', 'popular theatre'. In India also this kind of popularity rests with Bollywood and there is an interlink in the Theatre with Bollywood. The body/mind dynamism in the contemporary Indian performance has undergone a transformation in its visual and Body politics. The hybrity of the Indian performance mind tries to cope up with the virtual space innovations. This major technological shift is an important breakthrough in Indian Theatre scenario.