Priyanka Bhattacharya critiques this year’s Inter-House Hindi One-Act Play Competition

If you missed the Inter-House One-Act Play Competition this year, then you wouldn’t believe that legions of Doscos actually spoke so much Hindi in the course of five-odd hours spread across two evenings. It was reassuring to hear them wrap their tongues around sonorous words like manka and aashanka. Barring the occasional slip of the tongue, (gadha became ghada) and the mispronounced consonant (fal instead of phal), things went off very well indeed. I’ve never encountered so much social and political comment in the course of two evenings in my entire life. All the plays were well-chosen, and well-interpreted. Boys were speaking in the idiom and language they were comfortable in—there was no need to put on an ‘act’, so to say.

Hyderabad started the ball rolling with their version of Sharad Joshi’s celebrated political satire Ek tha Gadha. No one is likely to forget Abhilaksh Lalwani as the megalomaniacal nawab reeling off his loaded lines at a dizzying pace. (I kept praying for his precariously balanced handlebar moustache, which held up, thankfully.) He was superb, playing his role with conviction and great confidence. The other actor who deserves mention is Rahil Badhwar who played the delectable Ramkali. He ‘out-masakkali-ed’ masakkali, I thought, and did it with great panache. Item numbers on the school stage come and go, but this was special. Directors Rishi Sood and Aditi Joshi deserve credit for being able to do justice to this complex play, and for ensuring that its hard-hitting political message did not get lost in the laughs and general bonhomie on stage. The entries and exits were well-timed, and the riches offered by the Rose Bowl were well utilised.

Commendable also was the minimal use of props on stage, which is a measure of the confidence a director has in the content of the play to hold the audience. The audience loved every minute, and the loud laughs were as audible as the hush at the end when the human Allahdad Khan (Rishi Sood) was dragged away screaming to his execution. Another great play from the Nizams, who never fail to entertain and provoke, year after year. Who indeed was the gadha? The dead animal, the TRP-driven nawab, or the unresisting courtiers? Do you wonder?

Tata were up next with their idealistic play-within-a-play, Aakhir Kab, written by our own Vidhukesh Vimal, and directed with great maturity by Amit Gupta. The strong socialistic message of the play was delivered with conviction by the lead actors, especially Jai Sharma and Amit Gupta himself. The transition between the mother play and the ‘natak’ within was fluid and convincing, for the most part. Like the Hyderabad production, Tata made do with minimal props, incorporating elements from street theatre as well, to lend the play a refreshing, earthy texture. The live music (tabla and flute) as well as the choral song at the end was a brilliant accomplishment—’Nafas Nafas, Kadam Kadam’ will resonate in our ears for a long time to come. The pièce de resistance of the play was the brilliant cameo by K aranbir D harwal who played (continued on page 3)
Regulars

PLAYING ONSTAGE

In the Inter-House Hindi One-Act Play Competition 2009, the following are the results:
Best Actor: Aruj Shukla
Best Supporting Actor: Shashank Peshawaria
Best Director: Aruj Shukla
Best Producer: Sagar Agarwal
Best Technical Director: Aadityaa Vicram Gupta
Best Art and Craft Manager: Jaywardhan Singh

The House positions are as follows:
1st: Oberoi
2nd: Tata
3rd: Jaipur
4th: Hyderabad
5th: Kashmir

We wish them a fruitful year ahead.

MATH MAGAZINE

The following is the Editorial Board of the Infinity for the coming year:
Editor-in-Chief: Devashish Singal
Chief-of-Production: Abhishek Jain
Associate Editors: Arvind Sharma, Chirag Ambekar, Harshit Tiwari, Harsh Verma, Prateek Agarwal, Shreyvardhan Swaroop, Varun Goel.

We wish them a fruitful year ahead.

PING-PONG

The results of the Inter-House Table Tennis Competition, 2009 are as follows:

Junior Cup:
1st: Tata House
2nd: Oberoi House
3rd: Kashmir
4th: Jaipur and Hyderabad

Senior Cup:
1st: Oberoi House
2nd: Hyderabad House
3rd: Tata and Kashmir Houses
5th: Jaipur House

Melvin Michael and Shivam Pal represented Dehradun in the Under-18 State Basketball Tournament held at Welham Boys’ School, Dehradun. The team won the finals, defeating Roorkee 62-27. Congratulations!

STAFF CRICKET

The Mayoor School, Ajmer, Staff Cricket Team played The Doon School Staff Team last Sunday. They beat the Doon team by 37 runs. Congratulations on a well-played match!

Letter To The Editor

Punishing Matter

This letter is regarding the article Sparing the Rod by Sriyash Kishorepuria published on April 11, 2009 in The Doon School Weekly.

As an Old Boy, I, too, was bemused on hearing about the announcement that there would be no prefectorial punishments for twenty days. I do agree with the prefectorial body that some of the punishments, like lines and graphs, should be considered redundant as they do not achieve anything. Where I disagree with Sriyash is about the ineffectiveness of changes-in-break. He says that changes are “given for the smallest of infringements” and that they are implemented in an ineffective way. This itself gives the answer to the problem, which is that the prefects need to take more responsibility when they are giving out punishments and that they should make sure that the punishment is implemented in such a way that it is inconvenient.

I agree that a Dosco should learn to discipline himself by his experiences in Chandbagh. But these experiences include making mistakes and learning how to take responsibility for them. Changes-in-break are the most basic form of punishment meted out to students, given by prefects. This allows them to stem indiscipline before it gets worse. Instead of stopping them altogether, punishments need to be re-evaluated. Prefects should know what warrants a change-in-break and what needs a heart-to-heart conversation. There is a definite line between these two options. The solution is to identify the difference and not to dilute this line.

Lastly, changing clothes and running between the Houses and the Main Building all in 15-20 minutes, is definitely an inconvenience. If implemented correctly, no one would repeat the offence unless he considers it as practice for Athletics season!

Akaash Pathare ex-584 T ’07

Unquotable Quotes

Don’t do me your attitude.
MLJ does it well.

Shut the damning up.
Vinayak Bansal, as usual.

He tell me.
Shaurya Sinha has been informed.

I’m short because I haven’t evaporated as yet.
Siddhant Gupta, giving logical explanations.

Opinion Poll

Do you make the best use of your time?

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(337 members of the School community were polled)

Next Week’s Question: Do you follow the elections in the newspapers?
a thinks supplying people for political rallies. He floored the audience by getting under the skin of the character with astonishing ease, and I think his bit deserves a place in the Rosie Hall of Fame. Tata could have done with a bit of editing, though. The protracted court scene, with all its emotional intensity, weighed the play down somewhat.

But what’s a student play without a few hiccups? Tata deserve credit for staging a play that deals with a reality far removed from the Dosco world, with a conviction that is both touching, and reassuring.

Jaipur came next with the hilarious satire Yahan Bande Saste Milte Hain by T.P. Jhunjhunwala. As the steady stream of characters rolled onto the ‘kidney’, the audience wondered how Jaipur managed to produce so many stunning ladies, led by the elegant Mrs. Mehra, played to perfection by Varun Gupta. If there were an award for best make-up, the Eagles would definitely have swooped upon it! Samarth Jaiswal carried the burden of his constant presence onstage manfully, though he was occasionally shrill and over-the-top. The latter half of the play, especially the final scene, could have used some deft editing, though one must appreciate director Aashray Patel for imposing some semblance of sanity upon the mad melee of the ending. Jaipur used the ‘kidney’ admirably, as also the perimeter of the Rosie, though deft handling of the lights could have added another dimension to the climax. I felt the ending was somewhat forced, and took away from the general quality of the play. The Jaipur show reminded me of Twenty Reasons Not to Do a Play staged by Kashmir last year. Both these plays are exemplars of how cameos can be the bedrock of any performance. Well done, Jaipur! The whole School is still raving about the ‘women’ that you pulled out of your hat!

The second evening of the competition opened with Kashmir’s youthful interpretation of another great satire, Habib Tanvir’s Charandas Chor. Yashvardhan Jain as the canny burglar committed to truth, Anmol Joshi as the new age Guruji, and Siddhant Mittal as the uber-feminine Rani delivered memorable performances. Yet another play with minimal props, it was deftly handled by director Shubhro Gargy. The stage hardly asleep between scene changes, clean entries and exits on cue and intelligent use of lighting. It did drag at times; some roles needed a little more conviction from the actors, and some bits (especially when the Rani appeared) were farcical, though hilarious. Yet, if any play connected spot-on with the audience, it was this one, never mind the judgement. In employing Bollywood/Hollywood kitsch as the visual language of ‘the play, be it in the ‘C’ left behind as a signature, or in the wonderful collage on a softboard at the Guru’s (no one missed Rasta Marley), or even the item number qawwals, Kashmir showed that theatre is all about being alive to the cross-currents of culture one is exposed to. Their performance far outdid the judgement. I would beg to differ from the judge who felt that the “gimmicks” in this play detracted from its serious message. To label the play’s many youthful devices as “gimmicks” would be doing disservice to the play and the boys. What, one ought to ask, have we adults done to deal with these “gimmicks”? Merely develop ‘parallel’ cultures with minimal subscription! Not good enough! The media that the boys feed on is rife with gimmickry. It is only meet that we expect of the boys what we dole out to them. With these “gimmicks”? Merely develop ‘parallel’ cultures with minimal subscription! Not good enough! The media that the boys feed on is rife with gimmickry. It is only meet that we expect of the boys what we dole out to them.

The results came and went, as usual; some points were won and lost, as usual; but what remains with us, the audience, is a sense of fulfillment that comes from having watched something worthwhile and elevating. It was a brilliant idea to have a Hindi competition this year: we saw plays and encountered situations that we are familiar with, that we can connect to. There is nothing like the salt of the earth to spice up a simple message, and that is what we had in abundance this year.
4. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, May 16
Recently, while surfing the net, I came across a report written 4 years back in the Times of India, which reported on the continuous nd increasing use of SMS n shorthand lingo in exam papers. Common SMS abbreviations such as lol were flying quotes from Milton, “and” had become a snpl “nd”, nd because had become bcos, hcox, or simply bcs.

Wat sprises me is that fact tht although this was a 1-time incident reported, that ground reality is that SMS nd shorthand lingo b roming common in students exam. assignment nd grate papers, nd more appalling is that fact that even find marks 2 justify their use of th lingo. fr ex, a student mentioned in the report mentioned above, said tht, “I use short forms sometimes and marks HAVE BEEN (capitalized instnd by writer) cut. But I think tht should be legalized. SMS lingo comes easily to us. But teachers aren’t that forward thinking”.

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The Doon School Weekly (DSW): Tell us something about yourself.

Larissa Normanton (LIN): I went to a boarding school called Oundle, which is the third biggest co-educational school in England and since I was seven, I am about to go to Trinity College, Cambridge where I will be studying Arabic and Middle Eastern studies. I am taking a break as of now.

DSW: What are your hobbies?

LIN: I love sports, particularly skiing and swimming, and I enjoy dancing and do a lot of ballet. I am very interested in languages and have studied French, Spanish, Arabic, Latin and, of course, English. Other than this, I love the sea. I love sailing. I am also very fond of travelling.

DSW: Where else did you spend your gap-year?

LIN: I started my gap-year by spending the summer vacation at home, by just being with friends and family. I then went to France, where I did a skiing course in the Alps. It was a lot of fun. I am now, after finishing the course, a qualified skiing instructor! I also spent two months in the old city of Jerusalem where I was staying with a Palestinian lady. I was working for a peace NGO over there, and we taught Palestinian children activities like dancing, just to distract them from all the violence. My aim was to remove violence from their minds. After The Doon School, I’ll be spending some time in Mumbai and Delhi and then my gap year will end.

DSW: What made you think of spending some time from your gap-year at The Doon School?

LIN: Well, firstly, I have always loved India. Even my middle name is India: my name is Larissa India Normanton. When I was around nine years old, my family and I came here for a holiday. This country left a very good impression on me at that time. Thus, I wanted to come back here. My tutor and my father also, somehow, knew about this school. They assumed the fact that I was planning to spend time working for an NGO in the West Bank helped, since I would be speaking Arabic there (and the course I was applying for was Arabic). Apart from that, I haven’t really got any answers...sorry!

DSW: What memories will you carry back from The Doon School?

LIN: My most memorable experience of India was of an Indian wedding which I attended in Agra. There were so many people, ceremonies, and it was all so elaborate and colourful. Everyone was in a festive mood, which now makes English weddings seem boring to me! In The Doon School, I think my work with the gymnasts was a most memorable one, and I don’t think I’ll ever forget this interview either!

DSW: How did you enjoy your midterms?

LIN: I went with the new Martyn House boys to the Himalayan Adventure Institute, at Kempty Falls near Mussoorie. It was enjoyable but I got ill due to the food there, which rather ruined it. Nevertheless, I enjoyed swimming in the freezing river and did the rock-climbing (before getting ill!)

DSW: How did you get into Trinity College?

LIN: So many people have asked me that question! I myself would be very interested to know! I honestly am not sure how the Trinity College administration selects students. I suppose it was a combination of my personal statement and the numerous interviews. But which part of either made them choose me I have no idea. I assume the fact that I was planning to spend time working for an NGO in the West Bank helped, since I would be speaking Arabic there (and the course I was applying for was Arabic). Apart from that, I haven’t really got any answers...sorry!

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