

FIRST READ: MALAVIKA
Readings of new works

Written by Hemang Yadav

Directed by K. Rajagopal

Tune and lyrics by Gillian Tan

Performed by

Sivakumar Palakrishnan as Agnimitra Shunga

Mumtaj Maricar as Dharini Shunga

Hasisha Nazir as Iravati Shunga

Musa Fazal as Gautum Iyer

Grace Kalaiselvi as Bakkoo (Bakulavalika)

Shafie Bada Jabari as Madhav Sen

Gillian Tan as Simone Khoo

Sangeetha Rebekah Dorai as Voice of Malavika

Synopsis

Malavika features a middle-aged lawyer, Agni. His name denotes fire, but his inner fire seems to have burnt out, perhaps due to the ennui of the daily grind; perhaps because of mid-life angst; perhaps as a result of the perpetual erosion of his self-esteem. When a new domestic helper from a troubled country comes to work in his home, the beauty of her songs rekindles Agni's passion for life. Will the master's love for his maid lead to his salvation, or to tragedy?

This play is the second in a trilogy that deconstructs, reframes and modernizes three seminal plays by the eminent classical playwright Kalidas. While the first engages with visual arts and the third with dance, Malavika accords a significant place to music, in the form of an original song written and composed by Gillian Tan.

Malavika's Song

By Gillian Tan

Here in the dark unseen
There's a flower in bloom
From deep within the earth
There is beauty beneath the gloom
The sun is rising
The sun is rising again

All that we knew has gone,
Washed away by our fate.
Yet something remains untouched,
And our story will be great.
The sun is rising
The sun is rising

Over the sand dunes, over the dust
That settled on our lands and our lives and our
destiny.

Still, a flower blooms secretly

Ah...

There is much one cannot know,
Cannot see, too close, too close. Ah...

All that is torn apart,
Shows us what lies within,
Weakness and strength alike,
Trembling under the skin.
The sun is rising
The sun is rising again

Don't fear your journey dear,
Liberation is nigh,
Will you be brave enough,
Spread your wings and you'll fly.
The sun is rising
The sun is rising

Over the minutes, over the days,
That faded into years and a life, trapped by
gravity.

Still, a flower blooms secretly.