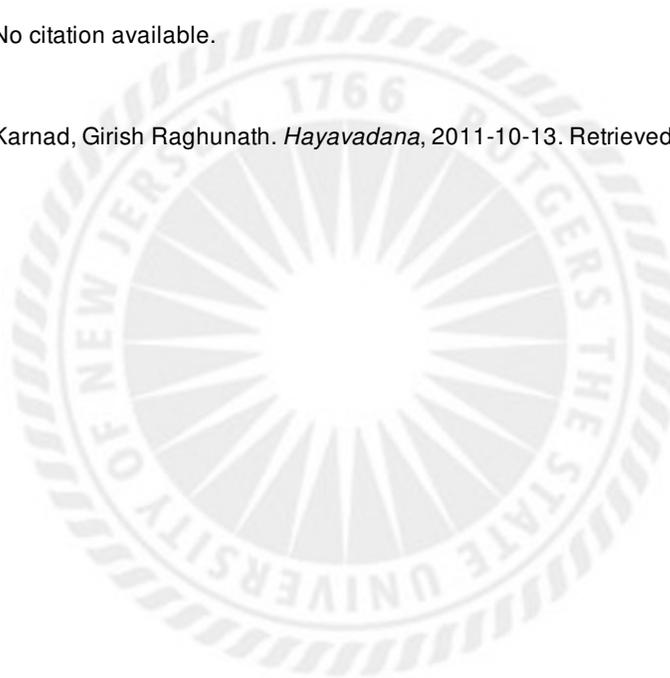


## Hayavadana

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Girish Karnad is one of the foremost living playwrights in India today, a bilingual playwright who mostly writes in Kannada and translates his own work into English. He was born in 1938 and is culturally connected with both Maharashtra and Karnataka through personal history and through his work in film and theater. He is a playwright, a filmmaker, an actor, a writer and an activist and he has been at the center of some of the

most important cultural and artistic movements and events of the last four decades in India. Among his many and varied accomplishments are his stint at Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar (1960-63), multiple awards over the years for best film, best actor, best screen play, and in recent years, best feature film in Kannada for *Kanooru Heggadthi* (2000), the top national honors for his contributions to the arts and to literature (Padma Shri in 1974 and the Padma Bhushan in 1992) and the country's highest literary award (Jnanpith award in 1998). Recent honors include being designated as World Theatre Ambassador by the International Theatre Institute of UNESCO in 2008 and an honorary doctorate by University of Southern California in 2011.

Epic Actors Workshop was originally formed in New York in 1988. Over the years, Epic has broadened its mission to showcase and underscore the importance of South Asian theater performance and arts within the community and in the larger context of mainstream American culture. Although Epic's focus has been to provide a platform for Bangla Theater in the United States, it has also tried to be a conduit that connects the emerging trends and thoughts of South Asian Theater with the Indian Diasporas in the US. In this process, Epic espouses to support all intercultural and multicultural endeavors.



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# HAYAVADANA



WRITTEN BY *GIRISH KARNAD*

DIRECTED BY  
*FARLEY RICHMOND &  
MARSHALL JONES*

PRESENTED BY  
*EPIC ACTORS WORKSHOP*

ORGANIZED BY  
*ANJALI NERLEKAR*

**HAYAVADANA** (1971) is a play based upon ancient and modern sources—the ancient Sanskrit *Kathasaritasagara* and the novella of the 20<sup>th</sup> century novelist, Thomas Mann in the narrative but also modern Western theatrical traditions and indigenous folk theater from India. It is a story about two men in love with one woman and through this typical tale of love, Karnad raises philosophical questions about human identity and social questions about women's desires and societal restrictions. Exciting, funny, dramatic, rebellious, this play showcases a range of theatrical devices and embeds a tragedy of unfulfilled desires in a comedy of social and political incompleteness.

## Cast of Characters:

**BHAGAVATA /DOLL 1:** KAJOREE RENEE BHATTACHARYA

**HAYAVADANA :** JAMES MARION

**NATYA 1 :** NOBUKO HORI

**NATYA 2:** TUSHAR MUKHERJEE

**CHILD :** PRITISH MUKHERJEE

**KALI / DOLL 2 :** BARKHA KISHNANI

**DEVADUTTA :** GOLAM SARWAR HARUN

**PADMINI :** ARPANA BHATTACHARYA

**KAPILA :** SUBHASIS DAS



### **THE BHAGWATA:**

The chorus leader; the one who can see into his characters' minds, and one who can influence the action of the play; part of the *Yakshagana* performances of the Kannada folk theater form India. A variation here since it is performed by a woman.

### **NATI:**

In the original play, "Nata" or "Actor" (Sanskrit). Here, it is "Nati," a woman acting this part.

### **HAYAVADANA:**

"The man with the horse's head"; here, also one of the many symbols of incompleteness, which is a running theme in the play..

### **KALI:**

The goddess that symbolizes the destruction of evil, usually represented in a wrathful and vengeful mode; in the play, however, she is half-asleep and only partially attendant to her devotees' lives.

### **DEVADUTTA:**

The hero of the play; represents the mind/soul, the intellectual but also the ethereal.

### **KAPILA**

The woodcutter, the other side of the mind-body difference; of the body, the physical.

### **PADMINI:**

The woman who does not deny her bodily desires and is "selfish" in a way that is transgressive; she is the center of the tragic set of events that result from her yearning to have both mind and body that questions central notions of monogamy, womanhood and patriarchy.



### **KARNAD ON HAYAVADANA:**

"A young woman is travelling with her insecure and jealous husband and his rather attractive friend. The husband, suspecting his wife's loyalties, goes to a temple of Goddess Kali and beheads himself. The friend finds the body and, terrified that he will be accused of having murdered the man for the sake of his wife, in turn beheads himself. When the woman, afraid of the scandal that is bound to follow, prepares to kill herself too, the goddess takes pity and comes to her aid. The woman has only to rejoin the heads to the bodies and the goddess will bring them back to life. The woman follows the instructions; the men come back to life-except that in her confusion she has mixed up the heads. The story ends with the question: who is now the real husband, the one with the husband's head or the one with his body?"

