

Thursday, March 6, 2014

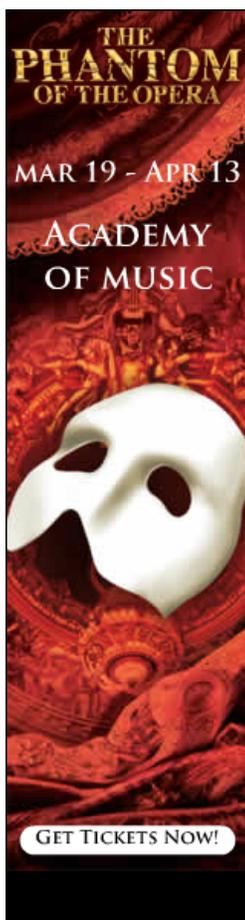
Member Login: [Sign In](#) | [Register](#) | [f](#) | [t](#) | [g](#)

philly.com

Search 
[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Business](#) | [Food](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [Health](#) | [Shop](#)
[TRENDING](#) [GOSSIP](#) [TV](#) [MOVIES](#) [THE ARTS](#) [MUSIC](#) [THINGS TO DO](#) [OUT & ABOUT](#) [EVENTS](#) [GAMES](#) [COMICS](#) [HOROSCOPES](#) [TICKETS](#)


## PhillyStage

# Review: Sheetal Gandhi at the Painted Bride

[Share](#)[Tweet](#)[Reddit](#)[Email](#)

Nancy G. Heller

POSTED: SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2012, 1:18 PM

By Nancy G. Heller  
For The Inquirer

This was not just another Asian-fusion dance [concert](#). In recent years there's been a vogue for combining Indian classical dance with western techniques -- Bharatanatyam and ballet, Kuchipudi and modern dance, Kathak and tap — with varying degrees of success. In her one-woman show, Friday and Saturday at the Painted Bride, Sheetal Gandhi used Indian heel-stamps and turns, alongside western-style isolations and floorwork, to create an eloquent, inventive, virtuosic dance-theater piece that kept the opening-night audience transfixed.

Gandhi has an unbelievably varied resume. She has toured with Cirque du Soleil, performed with the National Dance Ensemble of Ghana, and acted on Broadway; she's a percussionist with a university degree in psychology and dance. She also wrote, directed, and choreographed *Bahu-Beti-Biwi* (*Daughter-in-Law, Daughter, Wife*), which she has presented at venues from Israel to Hawaii.

In this piece Gandhi explores her cultural heritage, as a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Californian whose life is still shaped by age-old Indian traditions. She assumes various identities: petulant teenager, disapproving old woman, 30-something man. Each character speaks -- and moves -- differently, in scenes that evoke humor and melancholy, rage and abject terror.

### Travel Deals

### About This Blog



**Toby Zinman's** night job since 2006 is theater critic for the Inquirer. She also is a contributing writer for Variety and American Theatre magazine. Her day job: Prize-winning prof at UArts, author

of four books about four playwrights (Rabe, McNally, Miller, Albee), and doer of scholarly deeds (winner of five NEH grants, Fulbright lecturer at Tel Aviv University, visiting professor in China). Her 'weekend' job as a travel writer provides adventure: dogsledding in the Yukon, ziplining in Belize, walking coast-to-coast across England, and cowboying in the Australian Outback.

**Wendy Rosenfield** has written freelance features and theater reviews for The Inquirer since 2006. She was theater critic for the Philadelphia Weekly from 1995 to 2001, after which she enjoyed a five-year baby-raising sabbatical. She serves on the board of the American Theatre Critics Association, was a participant in the Bennington Writer's Workshop, a 2008 NEA/USC Fellow in Theater and Musical Theater, and twice was guest critic for the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival's Region II National Critics Institute. She received her B.A. from Bennington College and her M.L.A. from the University of Pennsylvania. She also is a fiction writer, was proofreader to a swami, publications editor for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and spends all her free time working out and driving people places. Follow her on Twitter [@WendyRosenfield](#).



**Jim Rutter** has reviewed theater for The Inquirer since September, 2011. Since 2006, he covered dance, theater and opera for the *Broad Street Review*, and has also written for many suburban

newspapers, including The Main Line Times. In 2009, the National Endowment for the Arts awarded him a Fellowship in Arts Journalism. Thames & Hudson released his updated and revised version of *Ballet and Modern Dance* in June, 2012. From 1998 to 2005, he taught philosophy and logic at Drexel, and then Widener University. He also coaches Olympic Weightlifting for Liberty Barbell, and has competed at the national level in that sport since 2001.

**Merilyn Jackson** regularly writes on dance for The Inquirer and other publications. She specializes in the arts, literature, food, travel, and Eastern European culture and politics. In 2001, she was dance





\$49 & up -- Atlantic City Hotel Sale incl. Extras & Credits

See all travel deals »

LISTED BY TRAVELZOO \*Some taxes, fees additional

### Weekly Circulars



50% Off Boys' & Girls' Arizona Apparel (JCPenney)



Outdoor Living Essentials (Orchard Supply Hardware)

See More Circulars »

In one especially amusing sequence a young girl mourns the end of a romantic relationship. "He loved his cat more than he loved me," she sings. Did I mention that Gandhi also sings --beautifully, live, and in two languages: English and Marwadi (from the northwestern state of Rajasthan)? In fact, Gandhi's vocalizations — rhythmically complex, operatic or rap-like, chanted and sung using Indian musical scales — were the most striking element of the performance.

There are two truly devastating scenes in *Bahu*. In the first a woman, pushed beyond the breaking point, reveals her plan to blind her father-in-law — so that she will no longer have to hide her face behind a veil. The performance ends with Gandhi, as a little girl, slowly winding herself into a white [wedding](#) sari while plaintively asking her father why he's decided to punish her by marrying her off so young.

After the stage went dark the audience sat in stunned silence for several minutes, before breaking into sustained applause. This was Sheetal Gandhi's first appearance in Philadelphia. Bring her back. Soon.

critic in residence at the Festival of Contemporary Dance in Bytom, Poland; in 2005, she received an NEA Critics' Fellowship to Duke University's Institute for Dance Criticism. She likes to say that dance was her first love but that when she discovered writing she began to cheat on dance. Now that she writes about dance, she's made an honest woman of herself, although she also writes poetry.

Find us on Facebook



Philly Stage - Philadelphia Inquirer

Like

470 people like Philly Stage - Philadelphia Inquirer.



Facebook social plugin

### Philly Stage

Get our top stories

Get the latest newsletter delivered to your email. Sign up now!

Enter email address to sign up

Already a philly.com member?  Yes  No

Share Tweet Reddit Email

### Share this story with friends who would like it.

We recommend which of your friends would enjoy this story.

#### MORE FROM THE WEB

[Kaught You! The Fake 'Keeping Up With The Kardashians' Home Hits The Market For \\$6.25 Million](#) (Trulia)

[Nicole Kidman in a Tiny Mini Skirt](#) (Hollyscoop)

[Check out the Girls You Marry vs. the Girls You Hook Up With](#) (Rant Lifestyle)

[Part I: Celebrities Who Should Be Strippers](#) (Lossip)

[The Late Dick Clark's 'Flintstones House' Gets A Price Chop, Now Listed For \\$3 Million](#) (Trulia)

[The 20 Worst Places to Hold Your Bowels Will SHOCK You](#) (Rant Lifestyle)

#### MORE FROM PHILLY.COM

[Don't miss Main Line Fashion Week](#)

[This is how the NYTimes covered '12 Years a Slave' story in 1853](#)

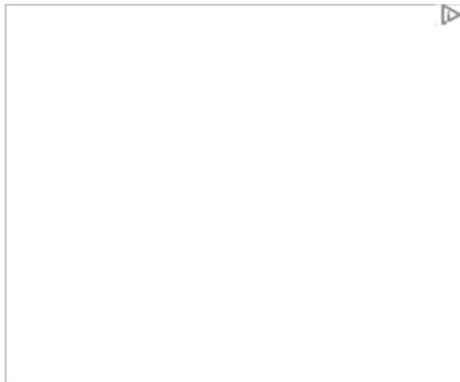
[Flyers pursuing Canucks center Ryan Kesler?](#)

[Burnett sees a hungry Phillies team](#)

[Your Office Coach: Avoid discussing forgetful employee's pregnancy](#)

[Eagles notes: Foles' radar gun speed; Byrd could be available in FA; Redskins tag Orakpo](#)

### Latest Videos:



[?]