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# Sheetal Gandhi Shines at the National Asian American Theater Festival

By Lauren Joseph, 10/14/2009

*To say that Sheetal Gandhi's performance of Bahu-Bati-Biwi (Daughter-in-law, Daughter, Wife) at the Theater for a New City on E. 10th street was passionately choreographed would be an understatement.*

The solo 50-minute performance, choreographed, written and directed by Gandhi with music by Joseph Trapanese, exposed the often untold stories of Indian women wavering between tradition and assimilation, love and practicality, obedience and compromise and the attainment of freedom through rebellion.

The collective narratives of a daughter-in-law, daughter and wife, weaved through the storyline like a needle puncturing through the past to complete a "quilt" that only Gandhi could create with her unique ability to reach into your chest and evoke an emotion through Indian dance.

Every portion of her body, from the gleam in her eyes to her hands, that seemed to have its own desires, was used to bring life and color to a dark, minimalistic stage.

During the "Red Chili" performance (for lack of a better title) she sat on the floor with her face covered, and feverishly grinded into a mortar as she proclaimed "I will grind, grind, red chiles fine with my new pestle and throw them in my father-in-law's eyes to blind him--then I won't have to cover my face in his presence."

Gandhi sang and used Indian music and dance along with quirky body movements to portray the character's frustration and desire for freedom.

Another highlight of the production was Gandhi's "Hiccup" performance where the "old Wife" character became convinced that her hiccups were contributed to someone "far away" suddenly remembering her. She then remembered a former love and asked "Why are you thinking about me now?"

The flirtatious "Red Dress" performance served as an extension of "Hiccup" and through Gandhi's emotional and pain-writhen voice, you feel the hurt of love that was lost.

For the full review and for ticketing information please visit: <http://www.examiner.com/x-24486-NY-Fine-Arts-Examiner>

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