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14 September 2014



Sahitya Akademi

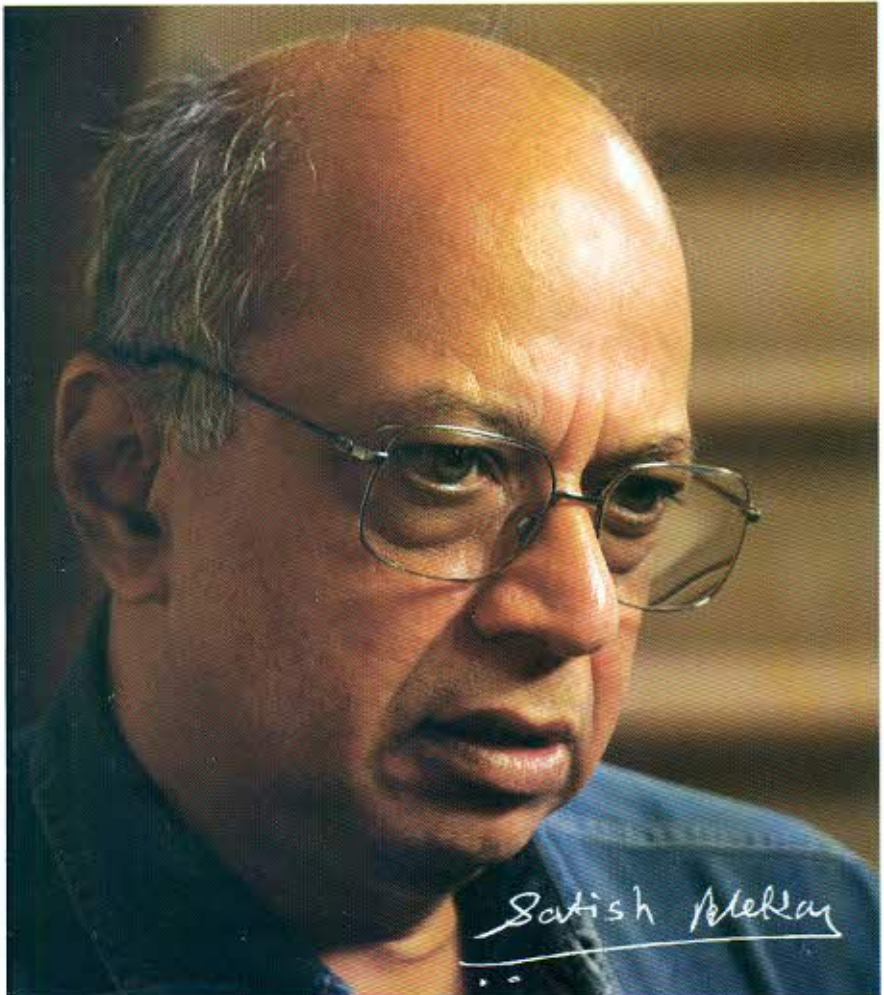


Marathwada
Sahitya Parishad

invite you to

meet the author

Satish Alekar





It is in my nature. I think it comes inevitably and naturally in any performance tradition. If I had not helped in the organizational activities of our theatre group, Theatre Academy, Pune, who would have produced my first plays? I am equally interested in taking my plays to audiences all over the country and abroad. It is an essential part of my creativity. I learn a lot while watching my plays or for that matter any play, again and again, from the wings."

✂ Satish Alekar in an interview by Samik Bandopadhyay, *Collected Plays of Satish Alekar*, OUP, Delhi, 2008

Playwright, director and actor Satish Alekar is known for his distinguished plays such as *Mahanirvan*, *Mahapoor*, *Micky Aani Memsahab*, *Doosra Saamna*, *Begum Barve*, *Shanivar-Ravivar* and *Pidhijat*. With his plays like *Mahanirvan* and *Begum Barve* he created new idiom in Marathi theatre by his unique use of black humour, language and absurdity to convey the oblique sense of reality. He also authored several short plays that are extensively staged by the experimental theatre groups all over Maharashtra for past forty years. He recently completed his new short play *Ek Divas Mathakade...* which is running in Hindi in Delhi, and in Marathi in Pune.

Alekar has been practicing theatre in Maharashtra since 1970, and is one of the founder members of India's best-known theatre group Theatre Academy, Pune that he administered from 1973 to 92. Most of his plays were written and produced for Theatre Academy

“As I have told you earlier, I belong more to the performance tradition than the textual or literary. So I visualize and experience the performance in all its details while thinking or writing a play. How much I plan consciously, ultimately I fall back on my instincts in which I have more faith. With my instinctive absorption of the political ideals that my maternal grandfather, my uncle, and my parents embodied and lived by, I could see how blatantly the public and private systems have eroded over the years. Erosion of values has set in every sphere, both in public and personal lives.

But what transpired was that the development of Pune city became prey to the corrupt politics of municipal corporators representing both these political parties; the corporators turning themselves into builders. Interestingly, my parental home 'Alekarwada' in Shanwar Peth stands at a stone's throw distance from the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh city headquarters, while the Socialist Party office is next door and the Congress office just across the Mutha River, what a geographical location for a playwright! And then what do you expect of him!

...I have always been an organizer.



Chandrakant Kale & Mohan Agashe in *Begum Barge*

since 1973. His plays have been translated and produced in several regional languages all over India.

As a highly skilled organizer Alekar proved his acumen in conceiving and successfully implementing, with his rare and unusually genuine insights, programmes like "Playwrights Development Scheme" and "Regional Theatre Group Development", which were supported by the Ford Foundation for Theatre Academy, Pune from 1985 to 1994. Satish Alekar worked as Professor and Head of the Centre for Performing Arts (Lalit Kala Kendra) at Savitribai Phule University of Pune from July 1996 until his retirement. His vision and industry genuinely excelled academic ambience of Lalit Kala Kendra which has now been recognised as one of the best regional centres for performing arts studies in India. In 2014 he was nominated as Distinguished Professor by Savitribai Phule University of Pune for the tenure of five years.

A recipient of several national and state awards since 1973 for his outstanding contribution to the field of theatre and literature, Alekar has extensively travelled abroad, and during January-May 2003 was adjunct professor at

Performance Studies, Tisch School of Arts, New York University as a Fulbright Professor. He also was at the Duke University, N.C., U.S.A. on adjunct teaching assignment during spring 1995 semester. In 2005 he was invited by the University of Georgia, U.S. to direct English version of his play *Begum Barve* for the Department of Theatre and Film Studies.

He received Nandikar Sanman in Kolkata in 1992 and fellowships from the Asian Cultural Council, New York in 1983 to study Theatre in the U. S. and from the Ford Foundation to study Theatre of South Asia in 1988. He received National Award for playwriting in 1994-95 from Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi. He scripted the national award winning Marathi feature film *Jait Re Jait* in 1977 and directed a Hindi television serial in 13 parts *Dekho Magar Pyarse* for Doordarshan in 1985. He also scripted dialogues for Marathi feature film *Katha Don Ganpatravanchi* produced by N.F.D.C. in 1995-96. He was invited to participate in Odin Theatre Week by Eugenio Barba at Odin Teatret, Holstebro, Denmark in August 2002. He participated in the 12th ISTA's International Theatre workshop conducted by Eugenio Barba in Germany in



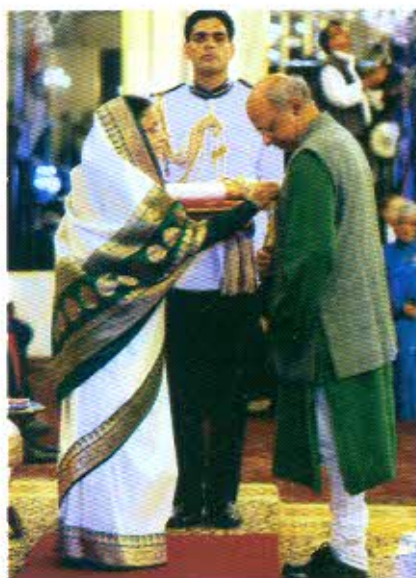
L to R : Ramesh Medhekar, Satish Alekar, Chandrakant Kale & Mohan Agashe
in *Begum Barve*

September 2001 and in Eugene O'Neill Theatre Centre's Playwrights' Conference in Connecticut (U.S.) in 1992. He participated in the World Theatre Congress of I.T.I. (UNESCO, Paris) held in Berlin (1983), Athens, Greece (2002) and Tampico, Mexico (2004) where he was nominated as the Vice President of the International Playwrights' Forum.

He himself directs his plays usually, and the published ones are available with Neelkanth Prakashan, Pune (in Marathi) and Seagull Book, Kolkata (in English). Many of his plays have been translated, produced and published in Hindi, Tamil, Dogri, Kannada, Guajarati, Rajasthani, Punjabi, and Konkani. His plays have been anthologised by the National School of Drama and Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. Oxford University Press published his six plays in a volume entitled *Collected Plays of Satish Alekar*.

Alekar has also collaborated in several international translation projects. He freely translated and directed short plays by the German playwright Tänkred Dörst (for Goethe Institute, Pune) in 1980; the play *The Flood* by Günter Grass in 1980 (for Goethe Institute, Pune), two short plays by Egyptian playwright Alfred Farag, Cairo (in association with American University in Cairo) in 2001.

Alekar has served many cultural organizations, institutes like the Ford Foundation, Bharat Bhavan, Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi, National School of Drama,



Receiving Padmashri at the hands of smt Pratibha Patil, then President of India

University Grants Commission, New Delhi and several state and the central universities as the advisor member of committees. He was Government of India nominee on the society for the National School of Drama, New Delhi (2001-5) and also nominated as the Vice-Chairman of NSD during his tenure. He was also a member of the Theatre Advisory committee of Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi 1999-2004. He successfully completed a grant project (2006-2011) supported by Sir Ratan Tata Trust under the auspices of Savitribai Phule University of Pune under which nine text books in Marathi on the performing arts were published.

(Photograph on the front page and the first on the second page are taken by Kumar Gokhale, Pune)



Receiving Sangeet Natak Akademi Award



with Shambhu Mitra

A SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Plays

<i>Micky Aani Memsahab</i> *	1973
<i>Mahanirvan</i> *	1974
<i>Mahapoor</i>	1975
Directed by Mohan Gokhale	
<i>Begum Barve</i> *	1979
<i>Shaniwar Raviwar</i> *	1982
<i>Doosra Samna</i>	1985
directed by Waman Kendre	
<i>Atireki</i> *	1990
<i>Pidhijat</i>	2003
directed by Girish Joshi	
(* These plays were directed by the Author for Theatre Academy, Pune)	

Collections of Short Plays

<i>Zulta Pool, Memory, Samna and Bhajan</i>	1973
<i>Dar Koni Ughadat Nahi, Bus-Stop</i>	1985
<i>Ek Divas Mathakade...</i>	2012

Collections of Adapted Short Plays

<i>Bhint, Valan</i>	1980
Six Adapted Short Plays	2011
<i>(Judge, Yamuche Rahasya, Supari, Alashi Attarvalyachi Gosht, Nashivvan Baiche Don)</i>	
All Marathi Books published by Neelkanth Prakashan, Pune	
<i>Collected Plays of Satish Alekar</i>	2008
Published by Oxford University Press, Delhi	
<i>(Collection includes English Translations of six plays: Micky aani Memsahab, Mahanirvan, Mahapoor, Begum Barve, Atireki and Pidhijat)</i>	

Anthologies of Indian Plays

Plays like *Mahanirvan*, *Begum Barve*, and *Mahapoor* have been included in the anthologies of Indian plays Published by Sahitya Akademi and National School of Drama



Begum Barve in English

Critique Published on Satish Alekar's Plays

<i>Mahanirvan: Samiksha aanti Sansmarane</i>	1999
Ed. Rekha Inamdar-Sane	
Rajahans Prakashan, Pune	
<i>Begum Barve Vishayee</i>	2010
Ed. Rekha Inamdar-Sane	
Rajahans Prakashan, Pune	

Screenplay and Dialogue

<i>Jait Re Jait</i>	1977
Marathi feature Film	
Directed by Jabbar Patel	

Dialogue

<i>Katha Don Ganpatravaanchee</i>	1996
Marathi feature film	
directed by Arun Khopkar	

Direction for Television

<i>Dekho Magar Pyarse</i>	1985
Hindi television serial in 13 parts for Doordarshan, Delhi	

Acting in films (Character roles)

Hindi Films

1. <i>Ye Kahani Nahi</i>	(1984)
<i>Dir. Biplav Rai Chowdhary</i>	
2. <i>Dumkata</i>	(2007)
<i>Dir. Amol Palekar</i>	
3. <i>Aiyaa</i>	(2012)
<i>Dir. Sachin Kundalkar</i>	
4. <i>Dekh Tamasha Dekh</i>	(2014)
<i>Dir. Feroz Abbas Khan</i>	

Marathi Films

1. <i>Aakrit</i>	(1981)
<i>Dir. Amol Palekar</i>	
2. <i>Umbartha</i>	(1982)
<i>Dir. Jabbar Patel</i>	
3. <i>Dhyas Parva</i>	(2001)
<i>Dir. Amol Palekar</i>	
4. <i>Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar</i>	(1991)
<i>Dir. Jabbar Patel</i>	
5. <i>Ek Hota Vidushak</i>	(1992)
<i>Dir. Jabbar Patel</i>	
6. <i>Hovoon Jaudyaa-We Are On!</i>	(2013)
<i>Dir. Amol Palekar</i>	
7. <i>Mhais</i>	(2013)
<i>Dir. Shekhar Naik</i>	
8. <i>Aajachaa Divas Maazaa</i>	(2013)
<i>Dir. Chandrakant Kulkarni</i>	
9. <i>Yeshwantrao Chavan - Katha Eka Vadalachi</i>	(2014)
<i>Dir. Jabbar Patel</i>	

A CHRONOLOGY

- 1949 Born on January 30, 1949 in New Delhi
- 1970 B.Sc. (Chemistry) from Fergusson College, Pune
- 1971 Written, directed and acted short play *Zulta Pool* for the Purushottam Karandak One Act Play Competition.
Won all the awards for best writing, direction and acting
- 1972 M.Sc. (Biochemistry), Savitribai Phule University of Pune
- 1972-96 Taught Biochemistry at B.J. Medical College, Pune.
- 1972 Assisted Jabbar Patel in directing *Ghashiram Kotwal*
- 1973 Founded Theatre Academy, Pune with Jabbar Patel, Mohan Agashe, Chandrakant Kale
- 1973 Written and Directed first play *Micky uani Memsahab* for Theatre Academy, Collection of short plays, published by Neelkanth Prakashan Pune, in the same year received State Award
- 1974 Received first Prize for playwriting, direction, etc. at Maharashtra State Drama Competition and acted in *Mahanirvan*, written & directed by himself. The play received Ram Ganesh Gadkari prize from State Govt. Performed more than 500 shows until 2011
- 1975 Written *Mahapoor*, received First Prize for playwriting at State Drama Competition
- 1976 Invited by Sahitya Akademi to participate in a writers' workshop. Short play *Yamuche Rahasya* was written during the workshop
- 1980 Toured with the play *Ghashiram Kotwal* to Europe, US, Canada and Eastern Europe performing 65 shows
- 1983 Awarded fellowship by the Asian Cultural Council, Rockefeller Foundation, New York to study theatre in US for six weeks.
- 1985 Awarded travelling fellowship by ICCR, Govt. of India to study theatre in Europe for four weeks.
- 1985-92 Hon. Project Director to implement "Playwright Development Programme" supported by the Ford Foundation for Theatre Academy
- 1988 Awarded International Travelling Fellowship by the Ford Foundation to study theatre of South East Asia, Visited Japan, China, Thailand and Indonesia for six weeks
- 1992 Received Nandikar Sanman in Kolkata at the hands of Shombhu Mitra for significant contribution to Indian theatre
- 1994 National Award by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, Delhi for Playwriting at the Hands of Hon'ble President of India at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Delhi
- 1996- Professor and Head, Centre for Performing Arts (Lalit Kala Kendra)
- 2009 Savitribai Phule University of Pune
- 1999 Natyadarpan/Tata Finance life achievement award for work in Theatre
- 2001 Late Jotsna Bhole memorial award for the contribution to Marathi theatre by Natya Parishad
- 2004 Maharashtra Foundation, N.J, USA Award for the play *Pidhijat*
- 2005 Prestigious Ram Ganesh Gadkari Award from the Govt. of Maharashtra through Natya Parishad, Mumbai
- 2005 Prin. V.K. Joag Memorial Award (2005) for outstanding performance in teaching from University of Pune
- 2005-11 Director of the Grant programme supported by Sir Ratan Tata Trust for Lalit Kala Kendra, Savitribai Phule University of Pune
- 2007 Late V.V. Shirwadkar Sanman for playwriting by Natya Parishad, Nasik
- 2009 Retired as Professor and Head from Savitribai Phule University of Pune
- 2010 Lifetime Achievement Award by Natya Parishad, Mumbai
- 2012 "Padmashree" was conferred upon by the President of India
- 2013 Late Balraj Sahani Award for contribution as a playwright
- 2013 Nominated as the Distinguished Professor on the campus by the Savitribai Phule University of Pune for the tenure of five years
- 2014 Received Poet and Playwright Arati Prabhu (C. T. Khanolkar) memorial award from Baba Vardam Theatres, Kudal, Dt. Sindhudurg