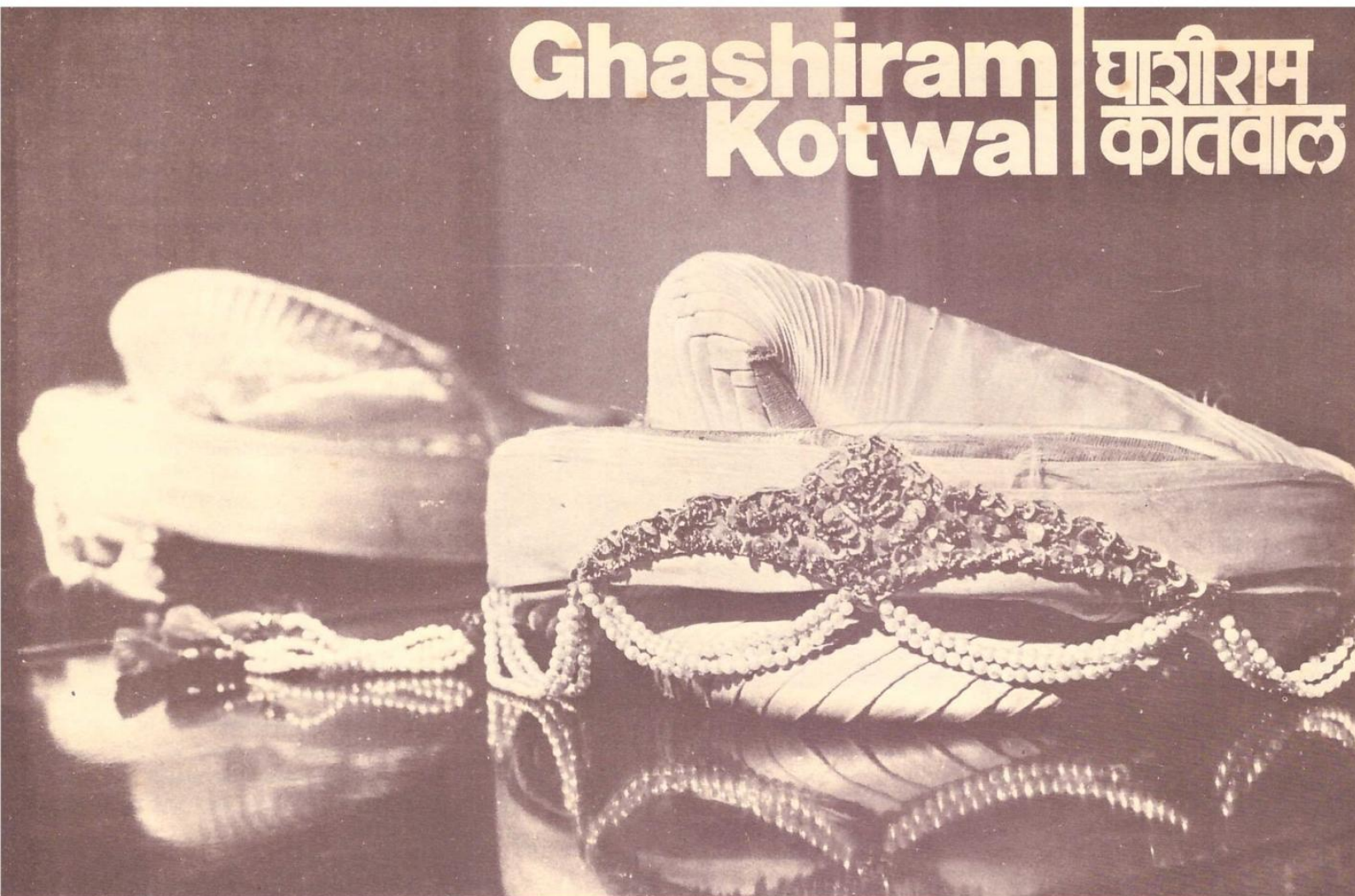


Ghashiram Kotwal | घाशीराम कोतवाल





Ghashiram Kotwal is representative of the modern trends in Marathi, indeed Indian theatre — a fusion of the traditions of ancient India and contemporary technique; a blend of the Ancient and the Modern which is quintessence of India itself.

Theatre Academy earnestly wishes to present this example of Indian theatre to audiences throughout Europe. In doing so, it is hoped, to bring a bit of India to Europe, an India which is as vibrant, graceful, traditional and modern as Ghashiram Kotwal is.

1. THEATRE ACADEMY

Theatre Academy, Poona has become one of the best known theatre groups in India. It is a group of artistes coming from various fields, like Medicine, Engineering, Arts, Commerce etc., who share common ideas, and aim to achieve a distinctive style. Besides production of full length plays, the Academy concerns itself with the promotion of an Experimental Theatre movement and offers a platform to any modern young creative person. In a span of seven years it has produced twelve full length plays, of which *Ghashiram Kotwal* is considered a landmark in Indian Theatre. And has produced twenty five sets of one-act plays in its Experimental Theatre Promotion Campaign. The Academy also runs an experimental Theatre Hall with a sitting capacity of 200 and offers it at a very low cost for the benefit of all amateur groups in the state. Over the years the Academy has conducted many seminars and workshops and has organized lectures

and discussions with eminent stage and film personalities.

The group is fortunate to have competent playwrights, directors, actors and designers as founder members and has played a significant role in the development of the Modern Indian Theatre.

Communications
should be addressed to

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1205/3-8 Shivaji Nagar,
Poona 411 004. India.
Telephone — 53956*

**Ghashiram
Kotwal** | घाशीराम
कोतवाल



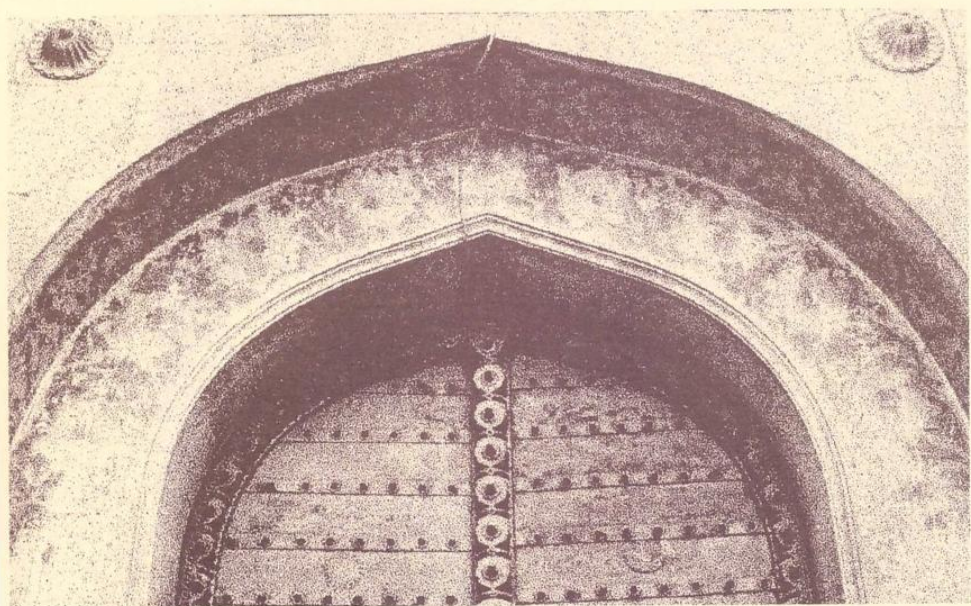
2. GHASHIRAM KOTWAL

The play is considered a major event in the history of Indian Theatre because of its pioneering use of folk dance, mime and music. A stunning homogenous combination of diverse forms of folk Theatre such as the now almost obscure *Khele* and *Dashavatar*, *Tamasha*, *Gondhal*, *Bharud*, *Bahurupree* and *Waghya-murli*. The basic structure of the play is a *Human Wall* which is basically a singing and dancing chorus, impersonally

commenting on the episodic developments. But it also breaks into smaller tableaux, grouping and regrouping endlessly. The *human wall* ceases to exist when its back is turned to the audience. The *Sutradhar* or Narrator interposes in the proceedings to keep the audience abreast of things, the actors switching parts with perfect timing. A touch of opera with verse, music and prose fusing into one another in a strange, compelling alchemy. The Ballet blending with the traditional folk dances, sets the mood

and tempo of the decadent and bawdy era.

Ghashiram Kotwal transcends language barriers. Audiences from all over India, even those without passing knowledge of Marathi have acclaimed it. Even after a continuous run of nine years, the play draws full houses. Rave reviews from notable drama critics in the Indian Press endorse audience response.



3. SOURCE

Ghashiram Kotwal is a blend of historical fact and dramatic fiction, set in the last years of the 18th Century. Poona; the Capital of the Maratha Empire, then on its last legs, was dominated by the Brahmins, a small community of intellectuals and priests. *Nana Phadnavis*, the Chancellor, a towering Machiavellian figure, ran the empire; while the *Peshwa*, the hereditary Prime Minister was just a figure-head. Intrigue, deceit, moral decadence and lust eroded the very foundations of the empire, which, within a few years from the setting of the story passed into vassalage under the British. This is the story of some episodes of that tumultuous, lusty, controversial era, the principals being *Nana Phadnavis* — Chancellor to the Peshwa and *Ghashiram*, the *Kotwal* — Chief of Police — Nana's creation.

PLOT

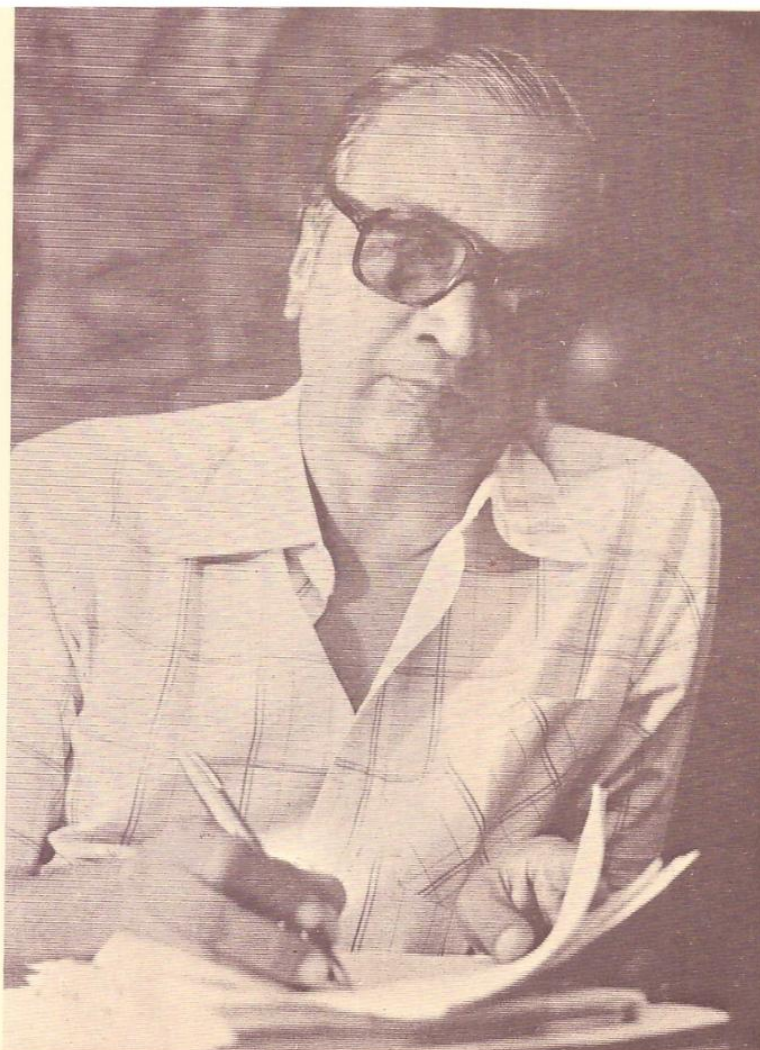
Ghashiram Savaldas, a poor Brahmin from the North, finds work in Poona as servant of a dancing girl, *Gulabi*, where he encounters *Nana Phadnavis*, the Chancellor of the Maratha Empire. *Ghashiram* is humiliated by the Poona Brahmins, and burning for revenge, ingratiates himself with the dissolute *Nana*. Knowing *Nana's* lust for young girls, he provides *Nana* with his daughter, *Lalitagauri*. In return, he is appointed *Kotwal*, the Chief of Police. While *Nana* is busy with his amorous pursuits, *Ghashiram* lets loose a reign of terror, under which Poona trembles. *Lalitagauri's* death in childbirth unhinges the *Kotwal*, and soon his sadistic excesses lead to a revolt. The crafty *Nana*, to appease the populace, orders *Ghashiram* executed, ridding himself, and Poona, of the monster of his own creation.



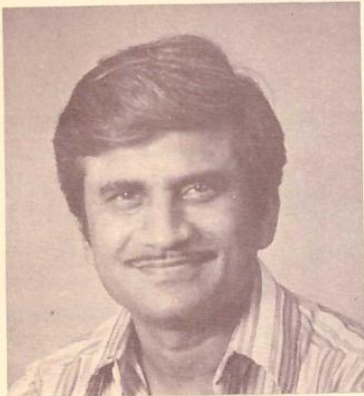
AUTHOR'S NOTE

This is not a historical play. It is a story, in prose, verse, music and dance set in a historical era.

Ghashirams are creations of socio-political forces, which know no barriers of time and place. Although based on a historical legend, I have no intention of commenting on the morals, or lack of them, of the *Peshwa*, *Nana Phadnavis* or *Ghashiram*. The moral of this story, if there is any, may be looked for elsewhere.



Vijay Tendulkar
Playwright



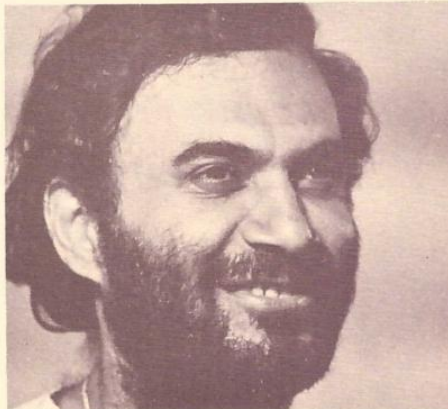
Jabbar Patel
Director

Born in Pandharpur, State of Maharashtra in 1941. After graduating in Medicine from B.J. Medical College, Poona he did his diploma in Paediatric Medicine from the same college. Now he has his private consulting rooms and hospital in Dhond, District of Poona which is managed jointly by him and his wife Dr. Mrs. Mani Patel.

Initiated to theatre very early in his

school days, Jabbar developed serious interest in it while studying Medicine.

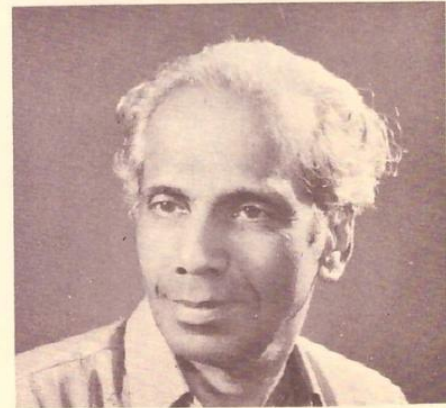
Today he is considered one of the best directors in Indian Theatre. Of his many well known productions, "Ghashiram Kotwal" and 'Three penny Opera' created a stir in theatre world. He was honoured by the 'Sangeet Natak Academy' New Delhi in 1979, for his contribution to theatre.



Bhaskar Chandavarkar
Music Director

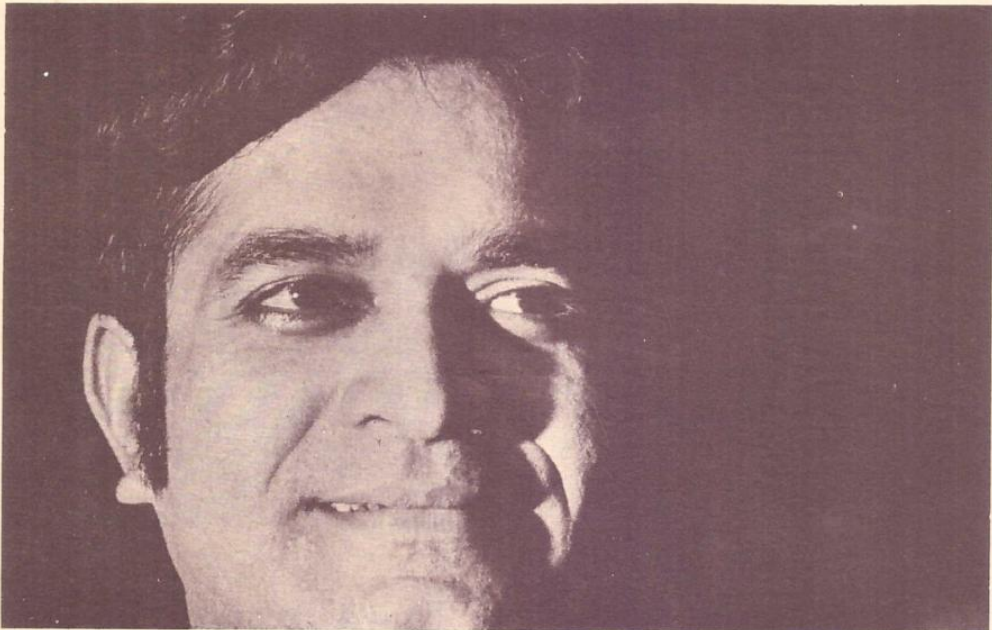
In 1975 he directed his first feature film 'Saamna' (The Confrontation) which was India's official entry to the International Film Festival, Berlin in 1976.

All three films directed by him have won President's Awards for Best Regional Film and Best Director.



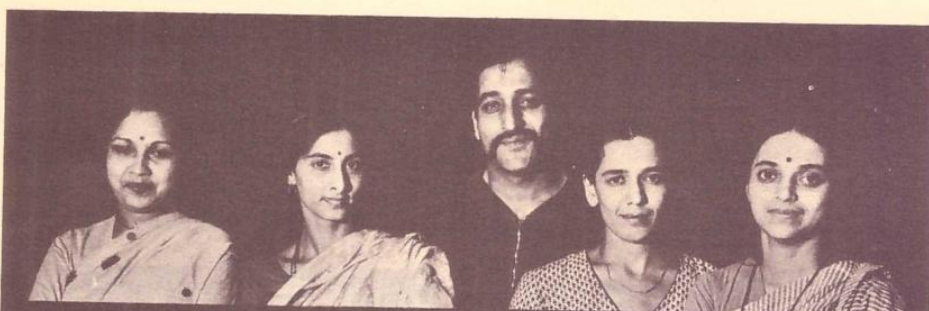
Krishnadev Mulgund
Choreographer

The Company



Prakash Arjunwadkar and Ramesh Medhekar
"Guards"

Ramesh Tilekar
Ghashiram Savaldas



"Nana" Mohan Agashe with the female cast
 Jayamala Kale (*Gulabi*)
 Sujala Watve (*Lalitagauri*)
 Rohini Bhagwat (*Brahmini*)
 Swaroopa Khopkar (*Lalitagauri*)



"Brahmins"
 Uday Lagu, Ramesh Medhekar, Milind Dongre
 and Suresh Basale



Ravindra Sathe (*Lead Singer*)
 Shreeram Ranade (*Sutradhar*)
 Chandrakant Kale (*Lead Singer*)

The Company



Shriram Pendse
Nandu Pol
Sunil Kulkarni
Shrikant Gadre
"Brahmins"



Vidyadhar Watve
"Ingraz"



Mohan Gokhale
Dilip Mitkar
Makarand Brahme
Anand Modak
"Brahmins"

Vinata Bhave (Brahmini)



The Company

The Company

Satish Alekar
Assistant Director

Arvind Thakar
Assistant Stage Manager



Prabhashankar Gaikwad (Sundri)
Shrikant Rajpathak (Pakhwaj and Mrudangam)
Shyam Bhonde (Harmonium)
Ashok Gaikwad (Tabla and Dholki)
"The Musicians"



Nivritti Dalvi and Ganpat Shinde
Make up and Costumes

Shridhar Rajguru
Stage Manager



GHASHIRAM KOTWAL

A two act musical play by Vijay Tendulkar

Cast

Ghashiram Savaldas	:	Ramesh Tilekar
Nana Phadnavis	:	Mohan Agashe
Sutradhar (narrator)	:	Shreeram Ranade
Pariparshwak	:	Ravindra Sathe
(main singers)	:	Chandrakant Kale
Lalitagauri	:	Swaroop Khopkar / Sujala Watve
Gulabi	:	Jayamala Kale
Ingraz (British Officer)	:	Vidyadhar Watve
Brahmins (chorus)	:	Mohan Gokhale
		Suresh Basale
		Nandu Pol
		Anand Modak
		Shrikant Gadre
		Sunil Kulkarni
		Uday Lagu
		Ramesh Medhekar
		Dilip Mitkar
		Shreeram Pendse
		Arvind Thakar
		Makarand Bramhe
		Prakash Arjunwadkar
		Milind Dongre
		Satish Alekar



Brahmini	:	Rohini Bhagwat Vinata Bhave Swaroop Khopkar Sujala Watve
Musicians		
Pakhwaj and Mrudangam	:	Shrikant Rajpathak
Tabla and Dholki	:	Ashok Gaikwad
Harmonium	:	Shyam Bhonde
Sundri	:	Prabhashankar Gaikwad
Directed by	:	Jabbar Patel
Music by	:	Bhaskar Chandavarkar
Choreography by	:	Krishnadeo Mulgund
Lighting by	:	Samar Nakhate
Set Designed by	:	Suresh Basale
Assistant Director	:	Satish Alekar
Stage Manager	:	Shridhar Rajguru
Asst. Stage Manager	:	Arvind Thakar
Costumes	:	Jadhav Natya Sansar
Costume Manager	:	Ganpat Shinde
Make up	:	Nivrutti Dalvi
Production Manager	:	Anil Joglekar

GHASHIRAM KOTWAL

The performance is approximately two hours and forty minutes in length including one Intermission of fifteen minutes.

First performance of this production in Europe in "Tempodrom", West Berlin, in the frame of "Berliner Festwochen"

There is a poster specially designed for this production. Available at the Counter.

Ghashiram Kotwal was first performed at Bharat Natya Mandir, Poona on December 16, 1972



Bharat Natya Mandir, Poona

"Ghashiram Kotwal" was first published by Neelkanth Prakashan, Poona, in January, 1973.



Neelkanth Prakashan, Poona
Informal meeting place of Theatre Academy

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Words frequently mentioned are

- i) *Baman*: Brahmin, the highest caste
- ii) *Bavankhani* — the red-light area where the elite enjoy their nights with songs and dancing girls
- iii) *Rama Shiva Hari Mukunda Murari* — different names of God occurring in devotional poems and songs; used ironically in the play

SCENEWISE SYNOPSIS

Act 1

1. Traditional Invocation to the God 'Ganesh'. He has the head of an elephant on a human body, in Hindu mythology.

2. The *Sutradhar*, or Narrator, introduces the Brahmins of Poona, the intellectuals, the privileged class, supposedly pious and virtuous.

3. The *Sutradhar* confronts a Brahmin sneaking off to *Bavankhani*, the red light area.

4. The *Sutradhar* questions the nobles who are also heading for the *Bavankhani*, under

the pretense of going to a religious discourse.

The entire elite frequents this famous red light area.

5. *Gulabi* entertains the gathered nobility with romantic and erotic song and dance. *Ghashiram* is her servant.

A typical Brahmin housewife anxiously awaits her lord and master, the hour being past midnight.



6. Enter *Nana Phadnavis*, the Chancellor. While dancing with *Gulabi*, he sprains his ankle. *Ghashiram* offers him aid, and declines any reward.

7. *Ghashiram* introduces himself to *Nana*. *Gulabi*, piqued at *Nana's* interest, explains that she had hired him as an odd job man. *Nana* rewards him with a costly necklace.

Dawn is breaking, the city awakens, the nobles wend their way home.

8. *Gulabi* claims the necklace. When *Ghashiram* resists, she has him beaten up and thrown out.

9. *Ghashiram* turns up at a feast in honour of Brahmins. Though a Brahmin, he is refused entry. At the same time, the greedy Brahmins

vie with each other to usher in a British Officer.

10. A Brahmin discovers his pocket has been picked. The Police and the Brahmins, suspecting *Ghashiram*, promptly beat him up and throw him in a cell.

11. The *Sutradhar* comes upon *Ghashiram*, and advises him to leave Poona or else fall in line.

12. The embittered *Ghashiram* swears vengeance on the Poona Brahmins for his humiliation.

13. The Festival of Ganesh at *Nana's* palace. The gentry have assembled. The music changes from devotional to erotic, as *Nana* feasts his eyes on the assembled ladies, a young girl in particular.



14. The girl escapes *Nana's* clutches and instead he runs into *Ghashiram*, who has found service in *Nana's* palace.
15. *Ghashiram* promises to bring *Nana's* prey back to him.
16. The girl, *Lalitagauri*, is delivered to *Nana*, and *Nana* begins his seduction
17. *Ghashiram* is exultant, knowing he has *Nana* hooked, for the girl is his own daughter. His triumph is mixed with self-loathing.

Nana is completely besotted, neglects everything in his dalliance with Gauri.

18. *Ghashiram* now blackmails *Nana*, threatening to take *Gauri* away. *Nana* insists on having her for some more time. *Ghashiram* suggests the

only way out — appointment as *Kotwal*, Chief of Police.

19. *Nana* agrees, reluctantly, and issues edicts appointing *Ghashiram* Chief of Police, and *Ghashiram* in turn keeps his bargain.

Act II

1. Opens with the invocation to Lord Ganesh, but the invocation is now desultory, reflecting the mood of the populace.

While *Nana* dallies with *Gauri*, *Ghashiram* issues



frightening edicts. "Permits are now required for even cremating corpses. Eating food cooked by a person of Lower caste, Butchering goats, Abortion, Pimping, Adultery, Theft, Polyandry, Suicide, all are prohibited — the list is endless". The prisons overflow, the populace is terror stricken *Ghashiram's* writ runs large, while *Nana* is engrossed with *Gauri*.

2. The *Kotwal* stops the Narrator, who is out late at night. His explanation that he is off to summon a midwife since his wife is in labour, is deemed insufficient cause for breaking the *Kotwal's* curfew.
3. Sounds of a Brahmin, in bed with his own wife infuriate the *Kotwal*, who browbeats the neighbours into testifying

she is not his wife, and imprisons the unfortunate couple.

Ghashiram's tyranny grows, but he has *Nana's* backing.

4. *Holi*, the festival of colour. *Nana* and *Gauri*, infatuated, enjoy *Gulabi's* dance, while *Kotwal* ordains that barring one's spouse, colour is not to be splashed on anyone. This dampens the traditional joy of this Festival.
5. A distraught woman interrupts *Nana* in his dalliance, with a complaint against the *Kotwal's* tyranny. *Nana* has her driven out, and bars anyone from approaching him.

Time passes, and the Feast for the Brahmins comes again.



6. Again, a Brahmin whose pocket is picked, accuses another of theft. *Ghashiram* has him arrested, and when he professes innocence, forces him to undergo the dreaded "Trial by Fire."

The rituals of the ordeal are initiated — the man's fingernails are extracted, his hands are washed with lime and soap. The hands are bathed in oil, and a white hot ball of iron is placed on them — the superstition being that if the man is innocent, the skin will not blister.

7. The tormented man confesses his 'crime', and the jubilant *Kotwal* orders his hands chopped off. The Brahmin lays a curse on *Ghashiram*, that "he will become childless, and suffer a horrible death."

The whole of Poona trembles, people

20

jailed without reason, executed without reason, Ghashiram's tyranny grows, while Nana is unconcerned.

8. The *Sutradhar* encounters a Brahmin, who reveals he is on his way to solemnise *Nana's* seventh wedding.

The whole of Poona goes to Nana's wedding.



9. *Nana's* palace; the wedding ceremony takes place with great fanfare. The bride is a young girl, bought with a handsome dowry.
10. *Ghashiram*, accosts *Nana* while he is with his terrified bride, and demands to know his daughter's whereabouts. *Nana* informs him, under duress, that she is with a midwife.
11. *Ghashiram* discovers his daughter *Gauri* buried, dead in childbirth. At her grave *Nana* counsels forbearance pointing out to *Ghashiram* that life is but an illusion, humans are puppets in the hands of God, but while on Earth, the dignity of both the office of the *Kotwal*, and of his patrons, must at all costs be maintained.

12. *Ghashiram*, heartbroken, turns to go, but *Nana* forces him to bow before him, reiterating as it were, his supremacy. *Ghashiram* does so.
13. *NANA* orders *Gauri's* corpse flung into the river, and goes back to his new bride.

Gauri has gone, Nana remains, the old order continues.

14. The demented *Kotwal* turns sadist. For an imagined slight, he murders an unfortunate innocent.
15. The *Sutradhar* meets some poor Brahmins from South India, who have just arrived in Poona. He cautions them against resting in the *Kotwal's* gardens, but hungry, they pluck some fruit, and are



flung into dungeon by
Ghashiram.

The jails are overcrowded, the prisoners suffocated, some die.

16. A Baron, an enemy of *Ghashiram*, hears the cries of the prisoners and orders the jail doors broken down. 22 Brahmins are dead from suffocation and several serious.

The populace is furious that 22 people be killed just for stealing fruits. A mob turns violent, but Nana is indifferent.

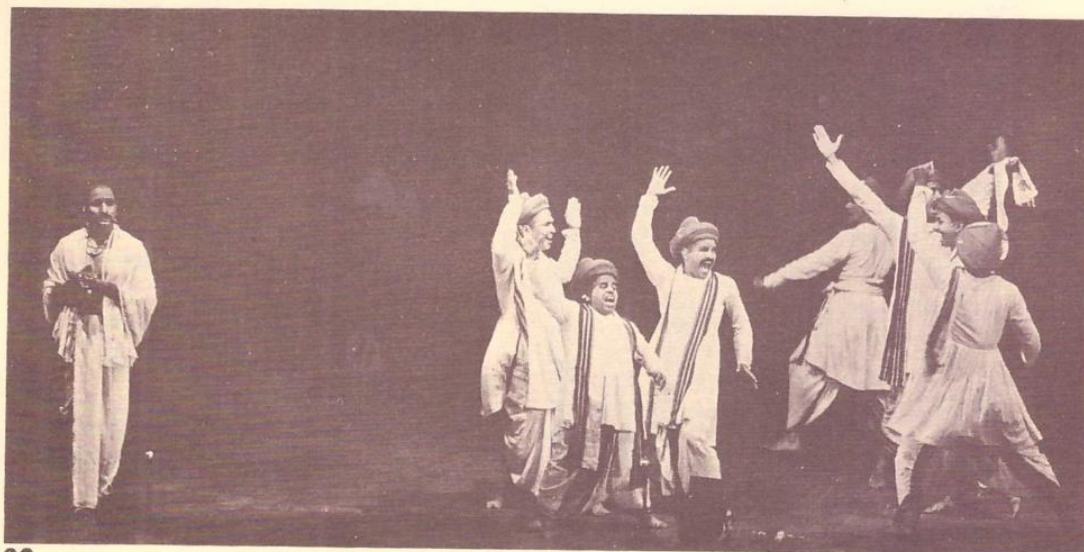
17. The mob rushes to *Nana's* palace, and demands *Ghashiram's* death, warrant. *Nana* seizing the opportunity issues orders for *Ghashiram's* execution; and suggests desecrating him too.

18. The enraged mob converges on *Ghashiram*, shaves his head, parades him back to front on a camel, drag him in the streets chained to an elephant's legs, and finally stone him to death.

19. *Nana*, Statesman and Politician, declares 3 days of

Festivities, to celebrate the passing of the terror which had gripped Poona. All traces of *Ghashiram* are ordered obliterated.

20. The populace is overjoyed, and the city resumes its old ways, decadent and debaucherous as before.



EXCERPTS FROM PRESS REVIEW

"Without exaggeration, the staging of Vijay Tendulkar's new Marathi play *Ghashiram Kotwal* can be called a major event in the history of modern Marathi theatre."

Economic Times, Bombay
Sunday 4-2-1973

"*Ghashiram Kotwal* is one of our best plays as it unravels a part of the Indian psyche and adopts native art forms skilfully on the modern stage. The play appealed greatly to the local audience in spite of the language barrier because of its concern with such basic human instincts as cruelty and self-protection".

M Radhakrishnan
Times of India 2.12.1977 (Cochin festival)

"Jabbar Patel's direction and Bhaskar Chandavarkar's music, alongwith good performance by the entire cast makes '*Ghashiram Kotwal*' an enjoyable production for someone who knows no Marathi".

Meera Bhatia
Evening News, New Delhi 8-2-1978.

"It is a three-hour delight in music and movement ... the characterisation of Nana Phadnavis as portrayed by the superb actor Mohan Agashe, blends to such perfection against a backdrop of Brahminical decay, that sound, colour and form shed their restrictive outlines."

Reeta Sondhi,
Democratic World, New Delhi 9-2-1978

"The spectacular use he has made of the folk form of Theatre is quite outstanding. The stylised movements of dance forms, the narrative rendered through singing in the traditional classical and folk styles were superb, even in the smallest of roles. The beautiful warp and woof of movements reveal a quality of cinematic visualisation on the director's part.

Ella Datta
Economic Times, Calcutta
8-9-1978

THE DECLINE OF THE PUNE

CALCUTTA :
Theatre Academy of Pune presented a second play "*Ghashiram Kotwal*" at Vidyamandir in Calcutta.

Written by Vijay Tendulkar, the play purports to be a commentary on a contemporary political situation in Maharashtra set in late 18th century. A manner of Brechtian distancing? It deals with the time when Nana Phadnavis was manoeuvring to keep the authority of Pune supreme over Maratha affairs. One of the means he used was to place Ghashiram Kotwal in a position of authority in order to create a terrorising force in return for the enjoyment of Ghashiram's daughter. He did not feel that Ghashiram would be a threat because, as a total outsider, a Kanauti Brahmin, he could not gain any real support of the people. On the other

By Ella Datta

hand, being Nana's own creation, Ghashiram could be destroyed when Nana's need was over.

Dr. Jabbar Patel's direction of the play, one felt, had to be appraised on two levels. The spectacular use he has made of the folk form of theatre is quite outstanding. The human wall, commonly used in a Konkani folk theatre, is basically a singing and dancing chorus impersonally commenting on the episodic developments. But it also breaks into smaller tableaux, grouping and regrouping endlessly to give cameo characterisations that intensify the images of Pune Brahmin life style of the times. The stylised movements of dance forms, the narrative rendered through singing in the traditional classical and folk styles were superb, even in the smallest of roles. We thought Bhaskar Chandavarkar's music composition delightful. The beautiful warp and woof of movements reveal a quality of cinematic visualisation on the director's part.

However, the story which had a powerful potential did not quite

live off the fact much although

Vijay Tendulkar's "*Ghashiram Kotwal*" political corruption and decay in Phadnavis's time.



Ramesh Tilkar as Ghashiram Kotwal

the corruption, the intriguing, the amorality of an inbred society was well depicted, it was not convincingly related to any parallel modern situation thereby blurring the au-

dience in the role of an observer of a distant past. We have already seen a quality of perform-

Theatre Academy, Pune; gratefully acknowledges 'Travel Grant' from :

1. Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi.
2. Government of Maharashtra,
3. Bank of Maharashtra, Poona

and Financial assistance from:

1. Garware Charitable Trust
2. Agarwal Containers
3. Mr. Nanasaheb Dongre
4. Mr. Dnyaneshwar Agashe
5. Mr. S.L. Kirloskar



Our grateful thanks to :

1. Ministry of Civil Aviation, New Delhi
2. Air India, Bombay and Poona
3. Sharad Pawar and friends
4. A.S. Wardekar
5. Director of Cultural Affairs, Govt. of Maharashtra, Bombay
6. Bharatiya Natya Sangha, New Delhi
7. International Theatre Institute, Paris

8. British Council Bombay
9. British Centre of International Theatre Institute, London
10. Visiting Arts Unit, London
11. Max Mueller Bhavan, Poona
12. Indian Embassies in Holland, Paris and London
13. Sujit Patwardhan
14. Dr. Ulrich Merkel
15. Dr. Dirk Angelroth
16. Vijay and Saroj Parulkar
17. Jayant Joshi

18. Avinash Gokhale
19. Sharad Mahabal
20. Miss Maryvonne Landormy
21. Electronica
22. Gunther Sontheimer and friends
23. Mr. Doctor
24. Kapila Vatsyayan
25. Shyam Bavikar
26. Usha Malik
27. Jadhav Natya Sansar
28. Travel Gem



Theatre Academy

Autumn 1980 Calendar of "Ghashiram Kotwal" in Europe

September 25	20.00 hrs	Tempodrom, West Berlin
September 26	20.00 hrs	Tempodrom, West Berlin
September 27	20.00 hrs	Tempodrom, West Berlin
October 3	19.00 hrs	Deutsches Theater, Gottingen
October 11	19.00 hrs	Maison de la Culture, Rennes, France
October 13	19.00 hrs	Theatre Populaire des Flandres, Lille, France
October 14	19.00 hrs	Theatre Populaire des Flandres, Lille, France
October 15	19.00 hrs	Theatre Populaire des Flandres, Lille, France
October 17	19.00 hrs	State Theatre, Groningen, Holland
October 18	19.00 hrs	Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, Holland
October 19	10.00 hrs	Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, Holland
October 20	19.00 hrs	State Theatre, Eindhoven, Holland



October	23	14.00 hrs	Commonwealth Institute, London, England
October	26	14.00 hrs	Questors Theatre Ealing, England
October	26	19.45 hrs	Questors Theatre Ealing, England
October	28	20.00 hrs	
October	29	20.00 hrs	
October	30	20.00 hrs	Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, London
October	31	20.00 hrs	
November	1	20.00 hrs	
November	2	20.00 hrs	

THEATRE ACADEMY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

President	Vidyadhar Watve	Members	Chandrakant Kale
Vice President	Mohan Agashe		Samar Nakhate
Secretary	Shridhar Rajguru		Arvind Thakar
Treasurer	Suresh Basale		Mr. Pravin Gokhale
			Miss Manjiri Paranjape.

