

Friday, November 10, 2006, 8pm
Saturday, November 11, 2006, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

**Ratan Thiyam's
Chorus Repertory Theatre of Manipur, India**

in

Nine Hills One Valley
(Chinglon Mapan Tampak Ama)



Script, music, design and direction by Ratan Thiyam

Cal Performances' 2006–2007 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Education and Community Events

Chorus Repertory Theatre

Making Theatre

Thursday, November 9, 4pm

Geballe Room, Townsend Center for the Humanities, 220 Stephens Hall

Ratan Thiyam, director of India's renowned Chorus Repertory Theatre, has been called one of the creative geniuses in the world of performing arts. Meet this influential composer-writer-director-choreographer as he is interviewed by Professor Sudipto Chatterjee of the UC Berkeley Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies.

Workshop: *Performance Practices of Chorus Repertory Theatre of Manipur*

Friday, November 10, 10–11:30am

Zellerbach Hall

Ratan Thiyam and guest artists lead a workshop, introducing participants to the practices of music and movement that are an intrinsic part of the company's performances.

Sightlines

Friday, November 10, Zellerbach Hall

Post-performance talk with the artists of Chorus Repertory Theatre. *Sightlines* events are free to all event ticket holders.

Nine Hills One Valley

Cast

<i>Maichou Puren</i>	Somo
<i>Maichousing</i>	N. Tomba, Nimai, Robindro, T. Ibomcha, Premjit, Santikumar
<i>Mamasing</i>	Chingkheinganbi, Sushma, Leimatombi, Umabati
<i>Matam/Pakhangba</i>	Ibomcha Sorok
<i>Anouba Meesing</i>	Bhogen, Premananda, Jilasana, Lupachandra, Angoutombi, Ibomcha Sorok, Umabati, Dhakeshwori, Premila, Chingkheinganbi, Sushma, Leimatombi, Sasita
<i>Lairembising</i>	Umabati, Dhakeshwori, Premila, Chingkheinganbi, Sushma, Sasita, Leimatombi
<i>Musicians</i>	L. Tomba, Bsanta, Rakesh Luwang, Manisana Sharma

Production Credits

<i>Stage Manager</i>	Premananda
<i>Assistant Stage Managers</i>	Nimai, Lupachandra
<i>Stage Props</i>	Premananda, Nimai, Lupachandra, Angoutombi
<i>Costume Manager</i>	P. Somo
<i>Costume Assistants</i>	Dhakeshwori, Umabati, Premila
<i>Lighting Assistant</i>	Ibochouba Meetei
<i>Production Manager</i>	Ibomcha Sorok
<i>Administration</i>	Dolendro
<i>Assistant Directors</i>	Ibochouba Meetei, R. K. Bhogen
<i>Publicity</i>	K. Kiran
<i>Consultants</i>	Ojha Birjit Ngangomba, Ojha N. Amusana Devi, Ojha Keinatombi

Nine Hills One Valley premiered in October 2005 in New Delhi, India.

*Performed in Manipuri with English surtitles.
Running time: 90 minutes without intermission*

*The 2006 national tour of Nine Hills One Valley is co-produced by Asia Society and
Lisa Booth Management, Inc. with support from the Indian Council for Cultural Relations;
the Ford Foundation; the Asian Cultural Council; and the Association of Performing Arts
Presenters Ensemble Theatre Collaborations Grant Program, a component of the
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Theatre Initiative.*

www.asiasociety.org/arts/chorus

Chorus Repertory Theatre 2006 National Tour

Staff

<i>Tour Advisor</i>	Dr. Sunil Kothari
<i>Project Scholar</i>	Dr. Sudipto Chatterjee
<i>Company Manager</i>	Pat Kirby
<i>Technical Coordinator</i>	Stan Pressner with Dan Gallagher
<i>English Surtitles</i>	Lucy Powell
<i>Production Photography</i>	Robert Workman, Ratan Thiyam
<i>Filmed Documentation</i>	Vagabond Productions
<i>Graphic Design and Web Site Host</i>	Asia Society
<i>Tour Logistics</i>	Road Rebel
<i>Freight Services</i>	Clark Transfer, Inc.

Co-Producers

Asia Society

Vishakha N. Desai, *President*

Rachel Cooper, *Director of Cultural Programs and Performing Arts*

La Frances Hui, *Senior Program Officer, Performing Arts*

Sébastien Haizet, *Administrative Assistant, Cultural Programs and Performing Arts*

Presenting Partner

Barbican biteo7, London

Louise Jeffreys, *Head of Theatre*

Gordon Millar, *Administrative Producer*

Lisa Booth Management, Inc.

Lisa Booth and Deirdre Valente

Special thanks to Bunty Chand, Shaila Saldana, and George Jose at Asia Society's Office in Mumbai; Neelam Deo, Consul General, Consulate of India in New York; and Pavan Varma, Director General, Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

Chorus Repertory's 2006 US tour is hosted by the Brooklyn Academy of Music NEXT WAVE Festival, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Carolina Performing Arts at UNC/Chapel Hill, the Lied Center of Kansas, the Mondavi Center at UC Davis and Cal Performances at UC Berkeley.

For more information, including background notes, commissioned essays and an annotated bibliography of print and online resources, visit www.asiasociety.org/arts/chorus.

Synopsis

Prologue

Seven old women, sentinels guarding the cultural traditions of the land, invoke the evil spirits who are responsible for the violence, hostility, disharmony, hatred and sufferings in the Nine Hills One Valley and try to propitiate them to leave and let the people live in peace. Wails of anxious mothers trying to save their children from the sacrificial altar fill the air. They call upon the wise men who have faded into oblivion, to protect and save their children.

Scene One

Seven wise men, thought to have vanished and gone into deep slumber, toss and turn, disturbed by their dreams—a bad omen. They awake from their prolonged sleep, spanning centuries, determined to decipher the coded prophecies in the book of knowledge they had left behind, but fall asleep again and dream.

A beautiful dance sequence, the “Bhangi Pareng” of the Raas Lila, is performed, highlighting the aspects of rhythm, pattern, posture and gesture of this sacred dance, one of Manipur’s cultural signposts.

The demon Time disrupts the scene and devours all in his path.

Scene Two

The seven wise men wake up again and discuss the serious implications of their dreams. They recount the beauty and importance of the art forms which are intricately woven into the social fabric, life style, culture and history of the Nine Hills One Valley, and share their anguish over their destruction, a serious threat to the identity and flow of civilization. They decide to write a new book of knowledge in simple language that can be easily followed by the common man, unlike the coded one they had written earlier.

The seven wise men witness modern man and the contemporary world. They are shocked by the cruel acts of terrorism and the wrongful systems

and practices that envelop the world. They see nothing except blood, and blood everywhere.

Scene Three

The seven wise men prepare to write the book of knowledge. They invoke scholars, experts and their ancestors, who are the pillars of wisdom, to help them. They drive away the evil spirits before writing. They also call upon Mother Goddesses, the celestial nymphs, to lend their helping hands. They complete their writings which contain the knowledge of freedom, peace, religion, politics, human rights and the duties of a man—the ultimate wisdom.

The deity of the land emerges from water in the form of a dragon boat and sails away the seven wise men, the seven pillars of wisdom, leaving behind their invaluable gift to the younger generation—the new book of knowledge.

Epilogue

In its scenic beauty, the Nine Hills One Valley stands as a mute witness to the changes time has wrought. Mothers speak of restlessness and turmoil in a world where they cannot find peace in their own lifetimes. They sing lullabies to console their children, and plead for the wise men to return. Lamps are lit on the hilltops and in the valley to enlighten and remind the people of their past glory and to bring back the peaceful days once more. A ray of hope is streaking across the turbulent sky of their lives in the form of the book of knowledge. They pray for peace and love to return in their beloved land.



About *Nine Hills One Valley*

Culture and traditions show the identity of a group of people and bind them together. Where do people stand when their cultural traditions are lost?

A mystical land comprises nine concentric ranges of hills encircling a valley, an erstwhile paradise, exists in a secluded corner of the earth. Unfortunate turns of events through the passage of time have deprived it of much of its glory.

The erstwhile paradise turns into land of chaos. Misrule has become the order of the day. The people call upon the wise men, forgotten and drowned in the eternity of time, to save them.

Seven wise men awake to decipher the coded prophecies in the book of knowledge they had left behind in the mystical land before they vanished, but fall asleep again.

The fun and peace loving people of the mystical land bear the mental anguish and tolerate the inhuman physical tortures they have been subjected to without raising a finger. Even when “Time” has physically deformed them, they still continue to suffer in silence and try to safeguard their cultural traditions to keep their identity in-

tact. The wise men see the plight of the people in their dream. They awake with a start.

The wise men are disheartened to find that their beloved land has transformed completely while they were asleep. “Time” has almost completely devoured their children along with all their cultural traditions. Genocide, political instability, venality, unemployment, political turmoil—news of happenings around the globe filters in. The wise men come forward to protect and save their people from the miseries. After invoking Mother Goddesses, they rewrite the book of knowledge anew to bring a better future for their people. Having completed their duty, the wise men leave for a mysterious destination in “Hiyang Hiren,” the traditional Dragon boat.

Mothers relate their past history and the unwelcome changes that have taken place in the recent times to their children.

An allegorical poem of a play without a conventional plot, *Nine Hills One Valley* unfolds the pitiable condition of Manipur, an erstwhile paradise. It depicts what I see and what I feel. It is a message to the people to start loving one another as in the bygone days and live in peace to restore its lost glory.

Ratan Thiyam

About the Artists

Writer, director, designer, musician, painter and actor, **Ratan Thiyam** is best recognized today as one of the most important theatre makers on the international scene. The son of Manipuri dance masters, Thiyam studied painting for a time before turning to writing. He has written short stories, novels, poetry and plays.

Writing led him to theatre. "I started reading plays, besides writing reviews; I felt the need for professional training," he says. In 1971, he enrolled at the National School of Drama in Delhi and gained a reputation as a powerful director and actor. In 1976, he returned to Manipur and founded the Chorus Repertory Theatre.

Except for a two-year stint as Director of India's National School of Drama from 1986 to 1988, Manipur has remained both the physical and aesthetic foundation of his work. Ratan Thiyam's theatre typically reflects a quest for enlightenment, reconciliation and peace by examining the human condition through explorations of war and power. He has directed more than 50 plays, original scripts as well as adaptations. His play *Chakravayuha* (The Wheel of War), which catapulted him onto the world stage in 1984, was awarded the Fringe Firsts Award of the Edinburgh International Theatre Festival (1987) and the Diploma of Cervantino International Theatre Festival (1990, Mexico), and has since been performed more than 100 times around the globe. *Uttar Priyadarshi* (The Final Beatitude), toured the United States in 2000. *Blind Age*, *Ritusambharam* and *Hey Nungshibi Prithvi* (My Earth, My Love) are some of his more recently acclaimed works.

Ratan Thiyam's many awards include the 1987 Sangeet Natak Akademi award; 1992 Nandikar award; 1997 La Grande Medaille (Paris); 1998–1999 International Man of the Year in the field of Theatre and Humanism, conferred by the International Biographical Center, Cambridge; 2000 B. M. Shah Award; 2002 Ganakrishti Award; and the 2004 B. V. Karanth Smriti Puraskar award. In 2006, he received the One India One People award and Madhya Pradesh government's Rashtriya

Kalidas Samman award, one of India's most prestigious cultural prizes. He received Padma Shri in 1989, one of the India's highest civilian honors, but returned it in 2001 in protest of the government's policies.

Chorus Repertory Theatre was established by Ratan Thiyam in April 1976 in his native Manipur, a hill state in northeast India. Bordered by Bhutan, Bangladesh and Burma, Manipur is one of the world's most isolated and unfamiliar areas, rich in centuries-old traditions of dance, theatre, music, martial arts and literature. It has also been in turmoil for decades. Within this environment, and with severely limited financial resources, Chorus Repertory Theatre was founded and makes its work. "Our plays are completely entwined with our history, mythical and real," says Thiyam, "and a continuous search for a better human condition, for peace."

Located on the outskirts of Imphal, Manipur's capital city, Chorus Repertory Theatre's two-acre campus has been slowly built—and rebuilt six times after disastrous monsoons—to accommodate a self-sufficient way of life, with housing and working quarters for the company. Its centerpiece is a stunning 300-seat auditorium conceived and designed by Thiyam and inaugurated in 2001 with space for production construction and storage. Called The Shrine, it is now an important regional and national center for contemporary theatre.

Celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2006, the company has performed throughout India, and appeared at major international festivals including those in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cardiff, Dublin, Avignon, Perth, Adelaide, Bogotá, Rome, Cervantino, Mitsui and Toga. Chorus Repertory Theatre has also performed in London and Paris, Bangkok and Taipei, and toured countries including Greece, the former USSR, Holland, Cuba, Peru, Bangladesh, Japan, France, Australia, Switzerland, Brazil, Sri Lanka, New Zealand and Germany. The company made its US debut in 2000. A major retrospective of Thiyam's work with Chorus

About the Artists

Repertory Theatre, featuring at least six fully mounted plays will be held in Pune, India in December 2006.

Asia Society is the leading global organization working to strengthen relationships and promote understanding among the people, leaders and institutions of Asia and the United States. We seek to enhance dialogue, encourage creative expression and generate new ideas across the fields of policy, business, education, arts and culture. Founded in 1956, Asia Society is a non-partisan, nonprofit educational institution with offices in Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Shanghai and Washington, D.C.

Dr. Sunil Kothari is a renowned dance historian and scholar based in New Delhi. He has been associated with Chorus Repertory Theatre for 26 years, supporting it in various ways in India and abroad. The author of many books on dance and performance, he is currently editing an illustrated volume on Ratan Thiyam and Chorus Repertory Theatre that will include writings, photos and commentary from a galaxy of international contributors.

Dr. Sudipto Chatterjee teaches theatre at UC Berkeley. He is a performance scholar, performer and writer with extensive work on Indian performance. He has two books forthcoming from Seagull/Berg (India/UK) and Routledge (UK). Recently, he wrote and performed *Man of the Heart*, a solo performance under the direction of Suman Mukherjee, in Berkeley and New York.

biteo7 (Barbican International Theatre Events, London) is the year-round performing arts program that ignores boundaries and is founded on the premise of bringing together the diversity of cultures. Since 1998, bite has created a venue in London dedicated to presenting some of the most significant and innovative artists working in the world today. Productions from any country, in any language and from any performance

art form are embraced in the bite program which, while insisting on excellence, introduces its artistic collaborators to an open platform.

Lucy Powell (*English surtitles*) is a freelance journalist, theatre and book critic. She writes most regularly for *The Times* and *Time Out*, but has also published with *The Guardian's* women's pages, *The Observer Review* and *The Independent on Sunday's* books section. She is the author of two plays which have been performed many times in London, the Edinburgh Festival and around the UK. Her last play, *True or Falsetto*, a black operatic comedy about the Castrati, recently toured Mexico. Her first novel was written in India under the Audrey Pipe Charitable Trust scholarship and is currently under consideration with Random House publishers. Lucy has studied Indian philosophy and yoga in Karnataka and has traveled extensively through Ladakh.

Lisa Booth Management, Inc. (LBMI) is a producing and management firm based in New York City. LBMI tours artists worldwide, produces US tours for artists from abroad and initiates and manages special projects. Since 1983, LBMI programs have taken place in more than 300 cities in 30 countries on six continents.