

■ Theater

NJ theater group ECTA takes its plays to Midwest and Kolkata

By Jyotirmoy Datta

Among New Jersey's 2008 celebrations of the immigrant experience — 'Culture in Context: A Tapestry of Expressions' at the New Jersey State Museum (NJSM) at Trenton, and Old Ways at a New Place' at WheatonArts to name just a couple — recognition must be given to a private theater group, ECTA, (Ethnomedia Center for Theater Arts), which has been producing live theater for the last five years that tell the stories of immigrant lives in USA.

At the beginning of the summer season (June 28 -29) ECTA staged three plays as part of a mini theater festival at the Edison Valley Playhouse, in Edison New Jersey.

All three plays (written by Sudipta Bhawmik) had a common thread - they told the stories of Indian American existence, with all the struggles to fit in, and the struggles to reconcile with our past.

ECTA took their play, 'Taconic Parkway', to Banga Mela, the cultural festival of the Bengali-speaking community of the



Indranil Mukherjee, Pinaki Datta and Keka Sirkar in 'Taconic Parkway,' a play written and directed by Sudipta Bhawmik. (Photo: Courtesy, ECTA)

Midwest, at Columbus, Ohio, July 18-20, garnering appreciation and creating awareness of the Garden State's current theater ferment.

Taconic Parkway (also written and directed by Bhawmik) is a dark play delving deep into the human psyche, depths explored in

Greek tragedy two and a half millennium ago.

Bhawmik, by training, an engineer (he is an alumnus of IIT, Kharagpur), has been pouring out original plays, marking him an emerging power in the Bengali theater. His work has been produced in Kolkata to considerable critical acclaim.

■ Literature



British Indian novelist Hari Kunzru giving a reading at the Shanghai International Literary Conference in March, 2008. (Photo as it appears on cityweekend.com.cn/shanghai)

Silencing of writers in China: Hari Kunzru joins NY protest

By Jyotirmoy Datta

Members of PEN, including the British Indian novelist Hari Kunzru, gathered in New York on August 6 to read banned and censored work by writers in China, including new and never-before translated writings by Tsering Woesser, Yang Tongyan, and other leading