

Oneness

Voice without form

The extraordinary life of Swami Vivekananda

a play

by

Alex Broun

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Oneness - Voice without form

was first performed at the Playhouse of the Sydney Opera House, Sydney, Australia on October 17th, 2013 with the following cast:

Cast (in alphabetical order)

Tade Adeyoyibi	Kali, Mrs Johnson, Ensemble
Shaheb Chatterjee	Vivekananda
Dana Dajani	Margaret Noble/Sister Nivedita, Ensemble
John Gomez Goodway	Sarat Chandra Gupta, Turiyananda, Ensemble
Sontaan Hopson	Elizabeth Dutcher, Dancing Girl, Ensemble
Isaro Kayitesi	Sarada Devi, Emma Calve, Ensemble
Julia Kennedy-Scott	Kate Sanborn, Surendranath Mitra, Ensemble
Suparna Mallick	Bhuvaneswari, Raja of Khetri, Ensemble
Bali Padda	Naren, Ensemble
Jerry Retford Ensemble	Professor Hastie, Professor Wright, John D Rockefeller, Ensemble
Robert Rhode	Ramakrishna, Ensemble
Carlos Sivalingam	Viswanath, Yogananda, Ensemble

Musicians

Musical Director	Dr Kim Cunio
Musicians	Babu Cunio, Olatunji Beier
Singer	Heather Lee

CHILDREN

Daya Chadda, Rama Chadda, Arjun Chowdhury, Veronica De Ferrari, Alisha Koak, Krrish Maini, Neil Maini, Siddarth Mallick, Aditya Anand, Suchita Rao, Arpita Rao

DEVOTEES

Diley Alanca, Harita Dhankhar, Carolina Diaz, Belinda Elchaar, Jeremy Ghali, Sampa Ghosh Dastidar, Sage Godrei, Mona Grover, Melek Karakus, Neil Khare, Reena Koak, Susan Ling Young, Shounak Mallick, Tamara Meyer, Anja Meyer, Tanya Monahan, Shreehari Muralidhar, Shourya Nidhi, Mimi Parfitt, Ethieli Revell, Kimi Seage, Sankar Sekar, Thulaisi Sivapalan, Veena Sudarshan, Aoibhe Tobin, Shantha Viswanathan, Alizon Vosburgh, Louise Wildman, Sarah Ann Wiles, Kelvin Zhou

Artistic Team

Writer/Co-Director	Alex Broun
Co-Director	Felicity Nicol
Set/Costume Designer	Tobhiyah Feller
Musical Director	Dr Kim Cunio
Co-Producer	Madhu Sen
Movement Director	Adelina Larsson

Research Consultant
Script Editor
Stage Manager
Production Manager
Costume Manager

Robert Grant
Swami Sunishthananda
Jarrett Hope
Prasad Tadipatri
Ambika Tadipatri

PART 1: ENLIGHTENMENT

Shaheb Chatterjee as Vivekananda: "As the music and chanting reaches its high point the lights go up to reveal VIVEKANANDA seated upstage on a podium."



As the audience enter the theatre we hear MUSIC. DEVOTEES sit on stage CHANTING. The smell of incense fills the air.

The audience walks through a welcoming tunnel of SARI CLAD WOMEN holding lamps.

Once the audience is seated the house lights go down and the music and chanting on stage builds.

As the music and chanting reaches its high point the lights go up to reveal

VIVEKANANDA seated upstage on a podium.

DEVOTEES enter and in turn they place sacred symbols at a table near him - the Catholic Cross, the Jewish Tallit, a verse from the Quran, a small Buddha, the Hindu Om.

Suddenly a group of CHILDREN flood the stage. They sit at VIVEKANANDA's feet laughing and smiling.

They stand and take VIVEKANANDA by the hands. They lead him downstage.

The lights snap to a SPOTLIGHT on VIVEKANANDA.

1.1: SEPTEMBER 11TH, 1893 - PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS, CHICAGO

The CHILDREN and DEVOTEES run off stage. VIVEKANANDA is alone now, looking nervous, edgy.

We hear a VOICE from the darkness.

DR. BARROWS

Our next speaker is Swami Vivekananda, our Hindu Delegate from India.

Vivekananda looks up, prays with folded hands and eyes closed. After a pause he begins to speak.

VIVEKANANDA

Sisters and Brothers of America!

Thunderous applause.

LIGHTS DOWN on VIVEKANANDA.

1.2: 1877 - DUTTA FAMILY HOME, CALCUTTA

NAREN, the young Vivekananda, enters.

BHUVANESWARI

Come Naren. Your father will read to you.

NAREN

But mother, I already know those books.

BHUVANESWARI

Naren, your father -

NAREN

No. I must teach myself religion. What right has my father to put all sorts of nonsense in my head? How many beautiful things have been spoiled by this horrible idea of a *family* religion, a *social* religion, a *national* religion? I must discover my own truth.

BHUVANESWARI

Naren, listen to your father. He will not always be there to listen to.

NAREN

Why should I? What has he done for me?

BHUVANESWARI

Siva! Siva! Siva! A son such as this. Must I hold your head under the cold water tap again.

VISWANATH

(ENTERING)

Narendranath - lord of men. How I regret giving you that name? Perhaps I have taught you all that I can.

BHUVANESWARI

Forgive him. He is just a boy.

VISWANATH

(TO NAREN)

Do you know why I read to you from those books?

NAREN

I must find my own god.

VISWANATH

And that is why I read to you from the Bible, the Quran and the Bhagavad Gita. Because I want you to find this god you are so desperate to seek.

NAREN

Yes father.

VISWANATH

I am not a stupid man Naren, just because I am not as smart as my own son. Naren, I am your friend. Not only your father. Why do you treat your friend so?

VISWANATH exits.

NAREN

There must be a God, a truth behind all this. I must find it. I must.

BHUVANESWARI

Do you know the day you were born?

NAREN

January 12th, 1863.

BHUVANESWARI

It was the day of Makarasamkranti. The great Hindu Festival. You were born just before sunrise, as if your birth was ushering forth the sun. Around the house millions of devotees had come to give worship to the holy river. Your first breath was taken when the air was reverberating with the prayers of thousands of Hindu men and women. I knew then you were a boon from Vireshwara Siva.

She kisses her son on the forehead.

LIGHTS CHANGE.

1.3: 1879 - DUTTA FAMILY HOME, CALCUTTA

NAREN

Mother, what's father up to? He is squandering all our family resources in meeting the needs of all sorts of lazy tramps. I found one of them indulging in smoking hemp.

VISWANATH enters.

VISWANATH

It seems some conspiracy is going on between mother and son.

NAREN

Father ?

VISWANATH

Come now, are you not your father's son? If you want to say something then have the courage to say it.

BHUVANESWARI

What Naren would like to know is why do you waste money in meeting the demands of any fool who happens to ask your favour?

VISWANATH

Son, in this world of suffering, if you can give happiness to a person even for a moment, know that much alone to be true.

NAREN

But father! As your son, what am I to inherit?

VISWANATH

What are you to inherit? Go, stand in front of the mirror. You will see what you inherit. (BEAT) I have no need to worry about my sons. They will make their own living; but these wretched ones have not that strength; they need help. (BEAT) I am raising you so that you can stand on your own feet.

NAREN

But then what is the difference between me and those lazy creepers?

VISWANATH

Just because a man has nothing does not mean he is lazy.

NAREN exits.

BHUVANESWARI

You see your son is growing up. How smart he is. Siva save me from an intelligent son.

VISWANATH

He may be smarter than I think but he is definitely not as smart as he thinks.

BHUVANESWARI

Are you aware that he has started smoking?

VISWANATH

No.

