

RECOMMENDATIONS

Baishakh celebration

'Hrishij Shilpa Goshthi' will celebrate Pohela Baishakh today at Bhashani Sharak, Narikelbithi Chatter in front of Shishu Park at 7a.m.

Nree

April 13-28
Nree is holding a photography and research work exhibition on Kantaji Temple and Nayabad Mosque of Dinajpur at the La Galerie of Alliance Francaise de Dacca.

Exhibition

April 14-28
Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts holds the solo art exhibition of artist Ifat Ara Dewan, open for visitors from 12 - 8pm everyday till April 28.

Book Fair

April 2-15
'Shrabon'-a literary publishing house, holds an amazing book fair at its stall at the Aziz Super Market, to protest the ongoing US-led war against Iraq.

The Academy Award (Oscars 2003) winning films
Zahir Raihan Film Society will be showing nine academy award winning films at the Goethe Institut (House No 10, Road No 9, Dhanmondi, Dhaka) this month.

Tuesday, 15 April 2003:
3:00 PM "Spirited Away" (Best Animated Feature)
5:15 PM "Road to Perdition" (Best Cinematographer)
7:25 PM "Talk to Her (Best Original Screenplay)

Wednesday, 16 April 2003:
3:00 PM "Frida" (Best Make-Up and Music Score)
5:15 PM "The Pianist" (Best Director + Two Oscars)
7:45 PM "Chicago" (Best Film + Five Oscars)

Theatre

Gupi-Bagha visits Scholastica

The school's theatre group presents a play based on Satyajit Ray's famous film.

HARUN UR RASHID

EVERYBODY was choked in breathless tension. The teachers and the students. The audience. The whole team--the actors and the director, people on the lights, the music and choreography troupes--all of them. Would it go on smoothly? That also by all those amateurs!

And when it finally took place, the show was a grand success. With the audience occasionally bursting in feats of laughter, watching all those fantastic magic works of the famous duo, Gupi and Bagha, it became all mirth and pure entertainment.

The show was a theatrical production of the acclaimed Satyajit Ray film Hirok Rajar Deshe by the students of Scholastica. The theatre group of the school gave two shows of the production on April 10 and 11 at its STM Hall at Uttara. In recent years, this was Scholastica's second such big scale production, the other being last year's The Merchant of Venice.

The theatrical production of a film like Hirok Rajar Deshe is no doubt a tough task. For, it involves staging at least some magic anything else apart. Moreover, there was the anticipated pressure of the audience-expectation, said Arshad Hossain, a faculty of the school and also one of the production managers. 'With a new script it's easier to entertain people. But with something that has already achieved the highest level of perfection and praise, the thing is rather difficult', he said.

Arshad was telling how the entire arrangement for the school's annual production of drama had been made.



Doree dhorey maro taan Raja hobey khaan khaan

There was a preliminary audition for selecting performers in the play; then there was another in order to pick the main characters.

Indeed, it can be imagined easily what it could be like preparing English-medium boys and girls for performing in a Bangla theatre--that too with dialogues in humorous rhyming syntax often requiring the character's own good sense of humour and irony.

They made a few changes into the original script incorporating a female character or two, editing out a few dialogues and sequences. The play however retained most of the songs--all of them quite brilliantly presented by a group of chorus in ancient Greek style. A ballet team also performed effective rendition of dance to enact the dramatic expressions.

What seemed at first quite confusing as two names had been found for each of the Gupi and Bagha characters, in course of action however turned out to be a tool for effective dramatic presentation. As known to the audience of Satyajit Ray's film, Gupi Gain and Bagha Bain were bestowed some magical powers by the King of bhut (spirits). By the magic of the pairs of slippers they can teletransport themselves from one place to another. Now to present this on the stage was a real challenge for director Azad. He cast two players for each of the characters for this purpose. Spot lighting also played a major role in this case: the moment the duo strike their hands to execute the teletransportation, the light on them goes off and another light catches the substitute duo at another place. On the stage, the whole thing was really quite convincing.

Acting of several characters, particularly the Hirok Raja, the Scientist, the Bidushok, and, of course Gupi-Bagha the duo, earned much adoration from the audience. The music team's presentation of the songs was excellent. And what was notable was that all instruments were played by students themselves.

It was certainly a courageous attempt for Scholastica to enact a classic piece of our literature like the Hirok Rajar Deshe, which has also been filmed. And it is obvious from their performance that if similar endeavours go on, they will be able to come up with work of professional standard.



The yes-men crowded court of the Hirok Raj.

Film show

And the Academy Award goes to ...

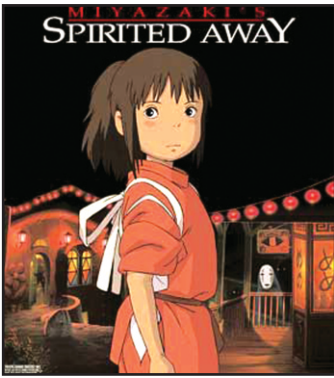
Zahir Raihan Film Society screens nine 'Oscar'-winning films of 2003

SABBIR CHOWDHURY

ACADEMY Awards are considered the most prestigious awards for the English language films, though one award is given each year for the best foreign language film. This year the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences celebrated the 75th anniversary of the Academy Awards. The first 'Oscar' awards were given in 1927-28. In order to celebrate this anniversary in a grand manner, the Academy took necessary measures. But the award giving ceremony this year became the podium for protest against the beginning of the American attack on Iraq three days back. The award giving ceremony took place at the state-of-the-art Kodak Theater in Los Angeles on 23rd March. A total of 15 films were awarded in 24 different categories. Peter O'Toole was given the Honorary Award for lifetime achievement in films.

One of the surprises came as the film Chicago was given the Best Film 'Oscar' along with five other minor ones. Usually the Best Film Award winner gets the Best Director prize along with other major awards like Best Director, Best Actor, Best Actress, and such other categories. Polish filmmaker Roman Polanski's Second World War bio-pic The Pianist won the award for Best Director among others. Another surprise came when the Martin Scorsese film Gangs of New York wasn't given any prize. Martin Scorsese, considered by many critics and film enthusiasts to be the greatest American filmmaker, told in an interview that it took 25 years to prepare for this film. It was shot in the famous 'Cinecitta' Film Studio in Rome. The film was nominated in ten different categories but came out with none. Perhaps the film's publicity slogan 'America was born in the streets' was the reason, otherwise the film could at least be given awards in Best Art Direction and Best Costume Design categories.

Zahir Raihan Film Society, the country's leading film club, came up this time with nine films that won 'Oscars' in 18 different categories this year. The films to be screened at the Goethe Institut Inter Nations Dhaka (The German Cultural Centre) are: Chicago by Rob Marshall, The Pianist by Roman Polanski, The Hours by



Stephen Daldry, Adaptation by Spike Jonze, Talk to Her by Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar, Spirited Away by Japanese animation filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki, Road to Perdition by Sam Mendes, Frida by Julie Taymor, and The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers by Peter Jackson.

Chicago won awards for Best Film, Best Supporting Actress, Best Editing, Best Art Direction, Best Costume Design, and Best Sound. Chicago is the long-awaited film version of the Broadway hit. Set in the roaring 1920s, this is the story of Chicago chorus girl Roxie Hard (Renee Zellwegger) who shoots her unfaithful lover. Landing in jail, she meets Velma Kelly (Catherine Zeta-Jones), another chorus-girl and mur-



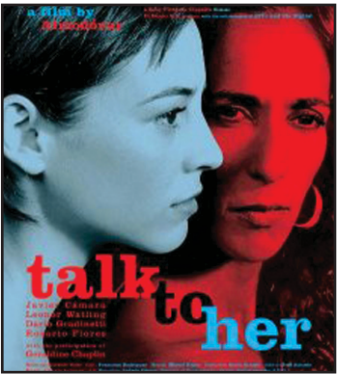
Adrien Brody in the title role of The Pianist by Roman Polanski

deress, currently enjoying media attention and legal manipulation, because of her attorney, Billy Flynn (Richard Gere), king of the old 'Razzle Dazzle'.

film The Pianist, based on Polish composer and pianist Wladislaw Szpilman's autobiography of his experience and survival of the Nazi atrocities during the Second World War in a Jewish ghetto in Warsaw. The film won him the 2002 Cannes Film Festival Best Film Award 'Golden Palm'. Polanski, himself a Jew and had almost similar experience during the Second World War in Warsaw, pictured beautifully the struggle for survival of Szpilman. Adrien Brody won the Best Actor award for his fine portrayal of the pianist hiding from the Nazis. The film also won Best Adapted Screenplay award.

Stephen Daldry's film The Hours brought together three of Hollywood's most powerful actresses: Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman and Julianne Moore. Daldry's first feature Billy Elliot showed the promise of a powerful filmmaker in the making. Based on Michael Cunningham's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, the film intertwaves the stories of three women: a book editor in New York (Meryl Streep), a young mother in California (Julianne Moore) and author Virginia Woolf (Nicole Kidman). Kidman's portrayal of the English feminist writer Virginia Woolf won her Best Actress award.

Spanish filmmaker Pedro



Original Screenplay, won the 2002 Best European Film Award by the European Film Academy. It is a film about two men looking after and taking care of the women in their lives who are now in comas. As both the women are in no way capable of conversing with the men, one man asks the other to 'talk to her' (his girlfriend) as he does with his girlfriend, though she cannot hear or react to such 'conversations'. The lives of the four characters flow in all directions: past, present and future, dragging all of them towards an unsuspected destiny. The originality of the ideas in the screenplay and excellent visualisation made it one of the best films of 2002.

Japanese animation films have matured a lot. They excel in presenting original ideas and themes. Akira, Princess Mononoke, The Ghost in the Shell are all critically acclaimed and commercially successful Japanese animated feature films of recent years. The animation film Spirited Away by Hayao Miyazaki is a story of a girl named Chihiro who travels into the world of gods to find a way to turn her parents into human form after they were turned into pigs. Spirited Away won the 2002 Berlin Film Festival Best Film Prize 'Golden Bear'. No wonder it won the Best Animated Feature 'Oscar' this year.

Julie Taymor's film Frida tells the true story of the Mexican painter and 20th century icon Frida Kahlo (Salma Hayek), focusing on her often rocky relationship with her husband Diego Rivera (Alberto Molina), and their place in the Mexican society. Hayek portrayed the powerful character of Frida Kahlo very well.

A film society activist, the writer teaches at the Department of English, Jahangirnagar University.

TV GUIDE

Table with TV channels (BTV, HBO, AXN, CHANNEL-I) and their respective program schedules.

Table with program categories (STAR MOVIES, STAR WORLD, HALLMARK) and their respective program schedules.

Table with program categories (ADVENTURE ONE, ZEE TV, ZEE CINEMA, ALPHA TV BANGLA, STAR PLUS) and their respective program schedules.

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS: Section featuring a featured film 'The Perfect Storm' with a synopsis and a 'PICK OF THE DAY' section featuring 'The Man Who Cried'.

Main TV GUIDE table listing various channels (BTV, HBO, AXN, CHANNEL-I, ZEE MUSIC, ALPHA TV BANGLA, STAR PLUS) and their respective program schedules.