

Songs of the soul

Celebrating our heritage – Baul songs



Baul artistes performing at the event
PHOTO: STAR

KARIM WAHEED

IN 2005 Baul songs have been proclaimed by Unesco as one of the 43 masterpieces of oral and intangible heritage prevailing in all corners of the world. To celebrate the event, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in collaboration with Unesco Dhaka, organised a discussion followed by a musical programme where Baul artistes from the rural areas performed. The event was held at the National Art Gallery Plaza on January 7.

Begum Selima Rahman, state minister for cultural affairs inaugurated the event. ANM Bazlur Rahman, secretary of the Bangladesh National Commission for Unesco was present as the special

guest. Other guests speaking at the occasion were Wolfgang Vollmann, Unesco representative in Bangladesh and Abul Kalam Shafi Ahmed, director of music and dance, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Ahmed Nazir, director of the academy presided over the discussion. The French and Japanese ambassadors to Bangladesh also attended the event, among other distinguished foreign delegates.

The word 'Baul' originated from 'Bawra' -- meaning people who do not associate with traditional lifestyle or norms. Bauls do not belong to certain religious communities. They believe in the religion of 'humanity'. Searching for the 'higher being' through love, peace and harmony among fellow

human beings, is their conviction. And this is what fetched Baul songs mass popularity in this part of the world during the last few centuries.

At the discussion Wolfgang Vollmann said, "Bangladesh has a rich and thriving cultural heritage. Unesco feels Bangladesh is stepping into the global culture scene in a significant way. Baul songs make up for an indispensable part of the Bangalee culture. Authentic Baul singers are more like sages, who do not belong to any certain caste. This philosophy formed during the Middle Ages. Bauls (singers) sing of the eternal human bond with the 'Supreme Being'. But this 'Entity' does not reside in some unknown heaven. The 'Higher being' can be traced within us, through love and compassion

for each other.

"It is an amazing feat, hence Unesco recognised Baul songs as one of the masterpieces of oral and intangible cultural heritage existing around the world."

Ahmed Nazir said, "During the middle ages when both Hindus and Muslims from the lower classes of the society lost hope in the traditional social system due to the maltreatment they received from the higher classes; some individuals left civilised world and formed a new creed. These people -

Hindus and Muslims -- did not become atheists though. They did believe in God. But according to them God is amongst us, within each and every being. It is amazing how these folks who had no traditional education; spoke of the

intricate and complex philosophy of mysticism."

Begum Selima Rahman said, "During the 8-9th century, 'Sufism' was introduced in Persia (Iran) and some of these Sufis traveled to the sub-continent. Sufism was introduced in parts of the Bengal and the Bauls were deeply influenced by the Sufi philosophy.

"We are thrilled that Unesco has made a commendable effort to honour our cultural heritage and hope it will continue its endeavors in future."

Following the discussion, artistes Abdul Latif Shah, Ranjit Das, Momota Dashi, Anil Kumar De, Kiran Chandra Roy, Shamir Baul and Pagla Babul entertained the audience with their soulful renditions of Baul songs.

Measuring up our art films and documentaries

In conversation with Manzar-e- Haseen Murad

FAYZA HAQ

Assessing our art films on an international level, Manzar-e- Haseen Murad, who was present both at the recent Int'l Short Film Festival and the National Film Conference, held at the Public Library and the Goethe Institut respectively, said, "Our independent films, whether documentary or feature films (short), I think we have achieved a fairly high standard. Most of our good films are getting regular featuring in int'l film festivals. Some of them have won awards too." He said, when sending our films overseas, one must keep in mind the international high standards of films. The subject should be important for the place of origin of the film, he said, "Its mode of expression and technical quality should be at least acceptable, world over," he added.

Asked to compare local art films with those in the rest of the subcontinent, Manzar-e-Haseen said, "I don't wish to compare our film productions with those in India, as India is a large country. It has a powerful film industry and where there is such a big production of films there are a large number of skilled personalities. Above all they have good facilities of int'l standards. In respect to Pakistan, as far as I know, without discussing the mainstream cinema, and only keeping in mind the alternative int'l cinema, we are much ahead of our Pakistani counterparts.

"Our colleagues are pretty impressive filmmakers like, Sabiha Sumar, Farzad Nabi and Shireen Pasha, who are doing interesting work. Sumar has completed a feature film, which has been awarded in the Cannes Film Festival. This has been screened in Bangladesh last month. Nabi is a young, enthusiastic and talented documentary filmmaker. Pasha has worked for PTV for several years and is a seasoned filmmaker. She has been working from her own production company, doing mind-whirling work, many of them dealing with social and political issues. I salute their challenging work."

Asked to compare our work from those of the Far East, such as from Japan and China, Manzar-e-Haseen said, "Again, if one wants to consider our film productions with those from Japan or China, it would not be fair. China is a huge country, although their films production does not go all that much in history, yet they have a phenomenal economic growth. Meanwhile, Japan has internationally acknowledged film makers like Kurasawa, Mizoguchi and Ozu, and hence we cannot compare ourselves with them.

Talking about Sri Lankan film, he said, "In compari-



A scene from My Migrant Soul, a film by Yasmeen Kabir

son to Sri Lanka, we are at par with them. There are some good Sri Lankan directors like, Lester James Peres and his wife, who created a sensation during the 50s and 60s." Later on, in the 70s, 80s and 90s, Manzar-e-Haseen said that one didn't witness good Lankan films, but now a couple of good directors are emerging. He said that these new directors have won international film festival awards. "In Bangladesh, what is interesting, is that we now have digital formats and are now making some good documentary films which is a laudable sign."

Asked to name some of the talented new filmmakers, he said, that those in the documentary scenario are making quite a buzz. This, he said, included Shaheen Dil Reaz, who is based in Berlin, but makes most of his films in Bangladesh. He also praised Yasmeen Kabir, who has done challenging works, and Shabnam Ferdousi, who has made three good films.

Manzar-e-Haseen Murad, studied Economics at DU, and then proceeded to the Czech Republic to study film-making. He specialises in biographical documentaries, such as that on artist Hamiduzzaman Khan.

CULTURAL FEAST

Painting Exhibition
Title: A Dew Drop
Artist: Nasima Khanam Queenie
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery
Date: January 03-10

Photography Exhibition



Title: A look through the crow's eyes
Organiser: Bengal Foundation
Venue: Gallery of Ward's n Pages, Café Insomnia, 125, Gulshan-2; The Fine Arts Institute, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Bangladesh National Museum and Bengal Foundation
Date: December 25, 2005- January 27, 2006
Title: Photographs of Zainul Abedin
Organiser: Zainul Gallery
Date: December 29, 2005- January 18, 2006
Time: 12-06pm

Achievement

A budding artist wins international acclaim

KAVITA CHARANI

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

--Thomas Gray, English poet (1716-1771)

This verse springs immediately to mind when one goes to see nine-year-old Rahima Akhter, one of the 12 winners of the 1st Intervida National Painting Competition, arranged by Intervida, a Spanish NGO. Though the visitor has to precariously negotiate a boat to cross a lake to her BRAC primary school in Korail, the effort is well worth it.

Here is a group of 36 bright eyed children who welcome the visitor and introduce themselves. As for Rahima, she is bubbling with excitement over her recent accomplishment. As she says, "I am delighted at the award and want to pursue art."

Rahima's award winning picture depicts a *nobo-barsha-*



Rahima Akhter (C) with her friends at school
PHOTO: TAFIYA JAILL

mela, or a Bengali New Year fair. Ironically she has never been to a fair and the work is created entirely through her imagination.

Her picture depicts the fair with people enjoying a variety of rides.

The young Rahima has to juggle her studies with hobbies and household chores. Fifth among her six siblings, she attends the Intervida (which works for the welfare of underprivileged children) after-school drawing and reading programmes. This is a welcome breather after the rigours of housework and caring for her younger sibling.

The credit for recognising Rahima's creative skills goes to BRAC and Intervida. Her father is a fruit seller and her mother a domestic aide. On their meagre incomes, they have never been able to send her to a formal school to learn drawing. The BRAC school gave her the opportunity to explore and discover her potential in drawing through various extra-curricular activities at the school.

With her drawing published in Intervida's calendar for 2006, Rahima has a dream to become an artist when she grows up. And that dream may just come true given her artistic skills.

Jiboner Jaigaan Concert for Parvez Chowdhury



Parvez Chowdhury

Mahmuduzzaman Babu also performed at the programme, singing *Ami Banglar gaan gai*, an all-time favourite. Kumar Bishwajit was the last to take the stage.

Parvez Chowdhury is currently being treated in Bangkok and has expressed his gratitude to everyone for the generous endeavor.

To Raise funds for Parvez Chowdhury, an executive producer working for ntv, a concert titled *Jiboner Jaigaan*, was held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre on January 7.

Top 11 contestants of the popular talent hunt *Closeup 1* along with noted artiste Kumar Bishwajit performed at the concert.

Rinku performed *Moner dukkho mone-e-roilo*, followed by performances by Nowrin, Mahdi, Mehbab, Beauty, Rumi, Rajib, Rashed, Abid and Sonya and Nolo. Singer



Nolok Babu performing at a programme in Baufal, Barisal recently. After winning the title *Closeup 1*, this was his first stage appearance. Hundreds of people from surrounding areas crowded the venue to catch a glimpse of the singing sensation.

TV GUIDE

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

News Bulletin

BTV
News Headlines (Bangla) at 8:55 am, 12:10 pm, 2:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00 pm, 7:00 pm.
News (Bangla) at 8:00 am, 1:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm.
News (English) at 3:00 pm, 10:00 pm.
Late Night News (Bangla and English) 11:30 pm.

CHANNEL-i
News (Bangla) at 7:15 am, 9:00am, 2:00pm, 7:00pm, 9:00pm, 10:30pm, 12:15 am.
Telecast of BTV news (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm.

ATN BANGLA
News (Bangla) at 7:00 am, 10:00am, 2:00 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11pm.
News (English) at 8:20am, 7:00pm

ntv
09:30 Agra
10:00 Grammen Phone
Shironam
10:05 Zoo Adventure
10:30 Dhakar Cinema
01:05 Muktagong
02:35 Drama Serial: Ramizer
Aaina
03:15 Music Programme
03:50 Drama Serial: Chitri
04:25 Bhinna Swader Khobor
05:20 Shubho Shindhya
06:50 Crime Watch
07:20 Ntv Dekhe Bolun
08:25 Drama serial: Labonya
09:10 Bari Ghar Thik Thak
11:25 Dindarpan

TARA BANGLA
News Headlines (Bangla) at 5:30pm, 7:30pm.
Tara News (Bangla) at 8:30 pm, 11:30 pm.
Tara News Bangladesh (Bangla) at 9:30 pm.

BBC WORLD
Every hour on the hour

CHANNEL-i
09:45 Tritiya Matra
10:45 Uchchya Shikkhaye
Desh Bidesh (live)
Aaj Dupurey O
Citycell Tarakothon
01:00 Ebong Cinemar Gaan
01:25 Public Reaction
01:30 Shangbadpotrey
Bangladesh
Special Programme
02:40 Amar Channel-i
03:40 Darshok Forum
04:00 Bashundhara Amader Gaan
04:45 Sa Re Ga Ma
05:30 Banijyo O Orthonity
06:00 Music Plus
06:20 Star Get SG-1
07:50 Drama Serial: Hatya
08:20 Drama Serial: Shimana
09:35 Drama Serial: Shampuma Rangin
10:00 Drama Serial: Pothe Jete Jete

ntv
09:30 Agra
10:00 Grammen Phone
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11:25 Dindarpan

ATN BANGLA
10:30 Holly Hazz (Live)
04:25 Chotoder

04:45 Prithibi
Ispahani Pure Snax
Quiz Time
05:10 Matir Shubash
05:45 Islami Sawaal O
Jobab (live)
06:20 BSB Education Zone
08:00 Drama Serial:
Shukhnagar
Apartment
Drama Serial: Flat No. 40
08:30 ATN Taroka
09:00 Kothamala
12:20 Adibashi Janopad

RTV
07:30 Hridoye Shur Ashe
07:45 Shukhi Thakun Deho
Mone
03:30 Islamic Programme
05:00 Foreign Adventure
06:00 Aiker Bangladesh
06:30 Nazrul Sangeet
07:45 Drama Serial:
Agontuk
08:15 R- Ranna
08:50 Drama Serial: Rater
Golpo

10:40 Rtv Exclusive
10:45 Drama Serial: Bhoror
Shopno

HBO
09:45 Jumanji
12:00 Winchell
02:15 The Brady Bunch In
the white house
04:00 The Italian Job
06:15 Tales From the crypt
25: Forever Ambergris
06:45 Van Helsing
09:30 Darkman II: The
Return of Durant
11:30 Double Team
01:30 Rasputin

STAR MOVIES
08:35 Heaven's Pond
10:05 Sonny
11:50 Out Of Time

01:35 Dorian
03:05 Fish Don't Blink
04:35 Heaven's Pond
06:05 Eulogy
07:35 Laws Of Attraction
09:05 Born On The Fourth
Of July
11:20 Opening Night

STAR PLUS
10:00 Hit Filmein Hit
Sangeet- 20 M
10:30 Meri Saheli
11:00 Shagun
11:30 Shanti
12:00 Maan
12:25 Film Topper
12:30 Hit Filmein Hit
Sangeet- 20 M
12:55 Taaza Hills

01:00 Kasautli Zindagii Kay
02:00 Bhabhi
02:30 Kesar
03:00 Saarthi
03:30 Kyunki Saas Bhi
Kabhi Bahu
04:00 Kahin To Hoga
04:30 K.Street Pali Hill
05:30 Hit Filmein Hit
Sangeet- 20 M
06:00 Maan
06:30 House Of Mouse
07:00 Hercules
07:25 Film Topper
07:30 Kumkum - Pyara Sa
Bandhan
07:55 Film Topper
08:00 Akkad Bakkad
Bambey Bo
08:30 Mum Tum Aur Hum

09:00 Kasautli Zindagii Kay
09:30 Millee
10:00 Kavayanjali
10:30 Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kil
11:00 Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi
Bahu Thi
23:00 Kahin To Hoga
12:00 K.Street Pali Hill

STAR WORLD
09:30 Oprah Winfrey Show
11:30 Charmed
12:30 Parkinson
02:30 The A Team
03:30 Oprah Winfrey Show
04:30 Bold And Beautiful
05:00 Hollywood Squares
05:30 Whose Line Is It
Anyways
06:30 Angel
06:30 The Simpsons

07:00 The King Of Queens
07:30 Friends
08:00 Seinfeld
08:30 Married To The Kellys
09:00 Everybody Loves
Raymond
09:30 King Of Queens
10:00 Becker
10:30 The Office
11:00 Coupling
11:30 Seinfeld
12:00 Friends

ANIMAL PLANET
10:30 Crocodile Hunter
Diaries
11:30 Unexplained, Unex-
plored
12:30 New Breed Vets
13:00 Crocodile Hunter
Fun Zone

04:30 India Safari
05:30 Crocodile Hunter
Diaries
06:30 Unexplained, Unex-
plored
07:30 New Breed Vets
08:30 Fun Zone
09:30 Most Extreme
10:30 The Snake Buster
11:30 Animal Miracles

DISCOVERY
08:30 Wild Discovery
09:30 Discovery's Biggest
Shows
11:30 Night Safari
12:30 Triumph of Life,
01:30 Wild Discovery
02:30 Detective Stories
03:30 Medical Diary
04:00 Operation Junkyard
04:30 Wild Discovery
05:30 Junkyard Wars
06:30 Man and Machine
07:30 Widest Week
08:30 Zero Hour II
09:30 War Zone
10:30 Extreme Engineering
11:30 FBI Files

09:30 Interpol Investigates
10:30 Seconds From Disaster
11:00 Mission Udaan

ESPN
09:00 National Bank Series
New Zealand Vs Sri
Lanka 4th Odi
Highlights
10:30 Fa Cup Fa Cup 2005/06
Sunderland Vs
Northwich Victoria
Round 3(T)
12:30 Indian Premier Hockey
League India Delhi
Dazzlers Vs Orissa
Steel Ers Tier II(R)
12:30 Indian Premier Hockey
League India
Hyderabad Sultans Vs
Bangalo Re Lions Tier
II(R)
04:30 Fifa World Cup
Programming
Cricket Classics Dravid:
The Wall
06:30 Cricket Classics Great
Indian Partnerships (R)
07:30 Cricket Classics Indian
Legends (R)
08:30 Sportscenter
Sportscenter India (L)
09:00 Indian Premier Hockey
League
Sportscenter Asia (S)
11:30 Sportscenter
Sportscenter India (R)
12:00 FA CUP HIGHLIGHTS
ROUND 3(T)
04:30 Backyard Science
04:45 Doc Eureka
05:00 Serious: Arctic
05:30 Snake Wranglers The
Totally Wild
06:00 National Geographic
Special
Is It Real?

12:30 Masters Golf Melbourne
Victoria Australia Day
One (T)
12:30 Fa Cup Fa Cup 2005/06
Hull Uk Hull City Vs
Aston Villa Round 3(T)
02:30 Fifa World Cup
Programming Heini -
The 1958 Fifa World
Cup Official Film (T)
4:30 Spanish Football
League Villarreal Spain
Villarreal Vs Real
Madrid (S)
6:30 Hopman Cup Hyundai
Hopman Cup XVII Perth
Australia Russia Vs Usa
Session 6(T)
09:30 Sportscenter Update (L)
09:32 Gillette World Sports
Special Gillette World
Sports 2006 (T)
10:00 Dakar Rally 2006
Euromilhoes Dakar
Day 10 Highlights(R)
10:30 Sportscenter India
Sportscenter Update (L)
10:32 Hitz (R)
11:00 Fa Cup Highlights
Round 3(T)
12:00 Adventure Asia Miles
Action Asia Challenge
Taiwan 2005 R.O.C
Highlights(T)

TEN SPORTS
09:00 WWE Heat
09:30 Total Rugby
11:30 Pakistan v England: 5th
ODI H/Ls (21/12/05)
05:30 Portuguese League:
Porto v Boavista
07:30 WWE: Raw
08:00 Gillette World Sport
10:00 India in Pakistan: 1st
ODI H/Ls 13/03/04
11:00 Italian League
Highlights