

# A creative titan at work

Photographs of Ray by Nemai Ghosh



Ray shooting from inside the boot of a car in a Kolkata thoroughfare for *Jono Aronyo* (L), Explaining a scene to Bobita before a take for *Ashoni Shangket*

KARIM WAHEED

An artist becomes known to us through his/her work. We perceive these geniuses when we see paintings, songs, plays, movies or any other art forms where they manifest their creativity. Rarely do we get to see these creative giants at work, their brainstorming process, and all 'behind the scene' actions that accumulate to become a masterpiece.

Satyajit Ray is familiar to us as well as the whole world through his classics such as *Songs of the Road* (*Pathar Panchali*), *Adventures of Goopy and Bagha* (*Goopy Gain Bagha Bain*), *The World of Apu* (*Apur Shongshar*), *Distant Thunder* (*Ashoni Shangket*)...the list goes on.

Nemai Ghosh, a brilliant photographer who is a loyal devotee of Ray and Ray's work, has followed the titan around for a period of over 25 years. Ghosh has about 95,000 negatives of Ray on the sets, working away completely oblivious to the surroundings. Ghosh was everywhere Ray was; hence his presence often became discreet to the filmmaker. Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts is holding an exhibition of these photographs titled *Satyajit Ray: From Script to Screen*, at the Bengal Shilpalaya. The exhibition opened on February 8.

At the inaugural, Nemai Ghosh said, "I'm ecstatic that this exhibition is being held in Dhaka. Ray is a

source of pride to every Bangalee, he highlighted the traditional Bangalee lifestyle -- rural and urban -- to the outer world. I'm thankful to the Indian High Commission to Bangladesh, Indian Council for Cultural Relations, National Gallery of Modern Art,

residence. Apparently he showed my photographs to Manikda. One day I received a letter that said Satyajit Ray would like to meet me regarding a major role in one of his upcoming movies (*Ashoni Shangket*). My first reaction was, someone is obviously pulling a

(Ghosh) my link to Ray." Among others speaking on the occasion were Veena Sikri, the Indian High Commissioner, Professor Rajeev Lochan, director of National Gallery of Modern Art (New Delhi) and eminent filmmaker Subhash Dutta who was the chief

director doing what he did best -- creating magic on screen. The photographs show Ray sharing notes with art director Ashok Bose for *Gharey Bairey* (1984), reading the script of *Agantuk* to Utpal Dutta, instructing Tapan Chatterjee and Robi Ghosh on the sets of *Goopy Gain Bagha Bain* (1968), explaining a scene to the short-lived actress Smita Patil on the sets of *Sadgati* (1981), rehearsing a take with Santal women for a dance sequence in *Shantiniketan* for his last film *Agantuk* and many more.

Viewers also get a demonstration of the maestro's multifaceted talent -- designing titles cards for *Sonar Kella* (1974), a caricature of the legendary screen-diva Nargis, a visualisation of Dayamoyee in the final sequence of *Debi*, a sketch of Apu's room for *Apur Shongshar*, different stages during the scoring, rehearsing, recording and the final take of a song sequence in *Hirok Rajar Desh*.

One cannot completely perceive the magnitude of a creative titan like Ray. But these images, apart from being wonderful artwork all by themselves, give one an insight to the working process of the master filmmaker. The exhibition is a treasure trove for cine-enthusiasts and connoisseurs of photography but namely anyone who has ever been mesmerised by any of Ray's timeless classics.

The exhibition will remain open till February 14.



Subhash Dutta (C) seen with (L-R) Kabori, Nemai Ghosh, Bobita and the Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri at the exhibition

New Delhi and Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts to make this exhibition possible."

Noted actress Bobita said, "I was introduced to 'Manikda' (Ray) through Nemai Ghosh. It was in 1973 when Ghosh shot some photographs of me at actor Razaque's

practical joke on me. Why on earth would Ray want to cast me in his film when there's no lack of talented actresses in India.

"It was only after the High Commission of India contacting me regarding the offer that I realised it wasn't a joke. I consider Nemai's

guest.

The specialty of the photographs are, they are all black and white; flash has not been used either during the shots. Ray was on top of everything and that's what becomes apparent in the photographs. One gets to see the talented

# A window to the past

Discussion session on Abdullah Abu Sayeed's *Amar Uposthapok Jibon*

KHALID-BIN-HABIB

Literature imparts both wisdom and humane values. Committed to create enlightened people to build a viable nation, eminent literary personality, chairperson of Biswa Sahitya Kendra (BSK) and popular TV anchor Abdullah Abu Sayeed launched a book, *Amar Uposthapok Jibon*. Based on a review of this book by Sayeed, a lively discussion session titled *Glorious past of television programmes*, was held at BSK auditorium, on February 8.

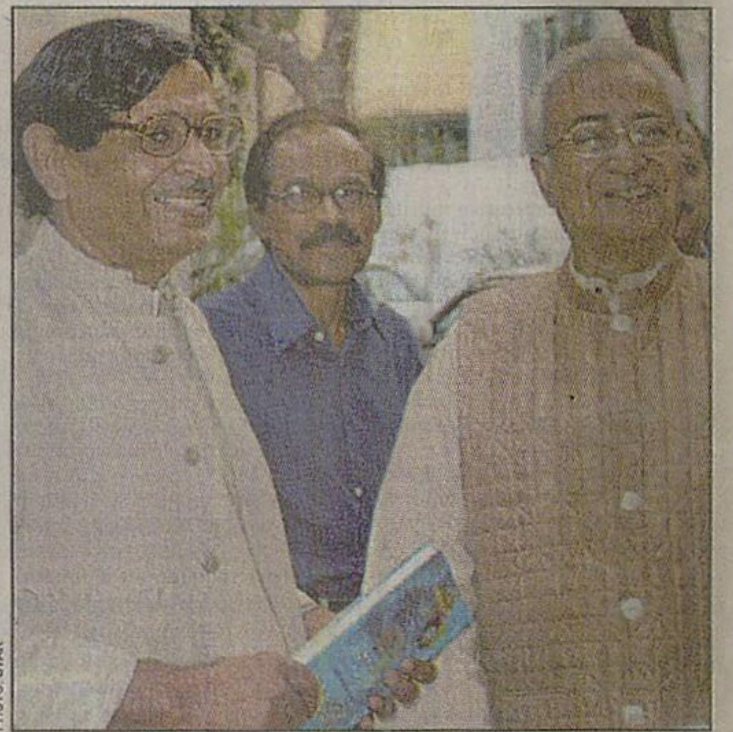
Popular anchor and journalist, Mohammed Jahangir presented the keynote paper. In his paper, he said, "This book perhaps is an efficient repository of history, sensibility, creativity and knowledge of glorious past of the BTV for the current TV and radio artists. Sayeed created some talents who are extremely popular media personalities such as Hanif Sanket, Jewel Aich and many others.

"The book *Amar Uposthapok Jibon* provides us a fascinating window to the past, into the minds of our predecessors and towards the possibilities of the future. It has tremendous humane qualities, very essential for creating leaders. Abdullah Abu Sayeed made an enormous contribution, sacrificing his passion for teaching, writing and hosting his well-loved educational TV programmes. He established the BSK in Dhaka in 1978. He has truly dedicated his life to create a medium through which true freedom is attained -- the freedom of the human spirit."

Popular media personality Asad-Uz-Zaman Noor (MP) said,

"The book is the reflection of Sayeed's dream of seeing his country emerge as a vital, progressive nation through the creation of a generation, individuals with talent, vision, and commitment."

Sayeed captivated the audience with his stimulating ideas and



(L-R) Abdullah Abu Sayeed, Syed Abdul Hadi and Atiqul Haq Chowdhury share a light moment at the discussion session

humorous anecdotes. Sayeed said, "Education, the backbone of a nation, is now in shambles. Nowadays the core purpose of education to enlighten a person is being overlooked. Good books are a logical source of enlightenment. I believe that better knowledge of world history and the eagerness to emulate great personalities, struggle for great causes would enable people to become better persons. Thus I want to create a hunger for the pleasure of the search for knowledge. Then inner talents will be ignited and create a great spark. Here's to the kindling of that spark, which shall light the path of individuals and nations out of the shadows of igno-

rance". Noted artist Mostafa Monwar, the chief guest of the event said, "This book is a snapshot of Sayeed's dreams to enrich the current generation. Only a nation of avid readers can hope to gain the enlightenment and commitment that builds a nation."

Eminent media personalities Faridur Reza Shagor, Atiqul Haq Chowdhury, noted singer Syed Abdul Hadi and theatre personality Al Mansur also participated in the discussion. They jointly discussed the role of dreamers and visionaries in the advancement of a nation.

Noted poet Asad Chowdhury was the host of the event.

## Book Launch

# Mone Porey: An insight on Ferdausi's life

ERSHAD KAMOL

We have watched the charismatic actor Ferdausi Majumdar on stage 'lift' on screen. However, little is known about the family life of the theatre personality. Ferdausi Majumdar in her autobiography titled *Mone Porey* thus breaks new ground as she reminisces on her family including her parents, brothers and sisters. *Mone Porey* was launched on February 8 at the Liberation War Museum.

The members of her family -- Abdul Halim, (Ferdausi's father) Afia Khatun (her mother) and all her siblings (13 brothers and sisters) -- have appeared as characters in *Mone Porey*. Featuring the saga of her parental home 'Darul Afia', Ferdausi has represented the time, culture and society of that period in her autobiographical work.

Litterateur Syed Shamsul Haque comments, "Mone Porey is a documentation of Ferdausi's aspiration to become a theatre activist. It is not a feature of her acting career. And the autobiography never delivers any 'self satisfaction' or 'self assessment', which is a positive aspect of the book. I consider the book as an introduction to her acting career. And I expect she will write another book on this subject, as Ferdausi Majumdar and Bangladeshi neo-theatre movement are interwoven."



An upbeat Ferdausi Majumdar reminisces her by-gone days at the book launch

The other speakers were Dr Maleka Begum, Anisul Haque and MM Akash. Professor Kabir Chowdhury chaired the programme. He said, "Ferdausi has done a wonderful job. And it is a tough task as she had to call upon her family members to unveil all their secrets."

Asked for her response, Ferdausi

said, "While writing the autobiography, I've received tremendous support from my husband Ramendu Majumdar and my daughter Tropa Majumdar. I intend to write another book on my acting career soon."

Abdullah Al Mamun delivered the welcome speech in the programme.



Artistes perform at the Central Shaheed Minar premises on the inaugural day of the week long Ekushey programme by Shammilito Sangskritik Jote to commemorate the martyrs of the Language Movement.



PHOTO: STAR

# Of mists and mires in opalescent grays

An exhibition of Kazi Ghiyas' paintings

FAYZA HAQ

On February 10, the Japan-based Kazi Ghiyasuddin begins his solo exhibition of 42 paintings at Chitrag. Kazi Ghiyas went to Tokyo Japan 30 years ago, through a Japanese government scholarship in 1975. There he had to learn Japa-

nese for six months at Osaka before he commenced his course on fine arts. Next he went to the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, where he got his PhD on his paintings, after having mastered a course in art teaching and art appreciation.

"I have more than a dozen deal-

ers to represent my works around the world," says Ghiyas, who is not keen on entering competitions, as he has sales aplenty the world over. In Tokyo alone he has four representatives, and others in Koushu, Okinawa (a US base in Japan) and Khanajawa. He has participated in many art fairs in Japan, Korea and Argentina, and has taken part in group shows in Europe, as in Italy, and New York, USA.

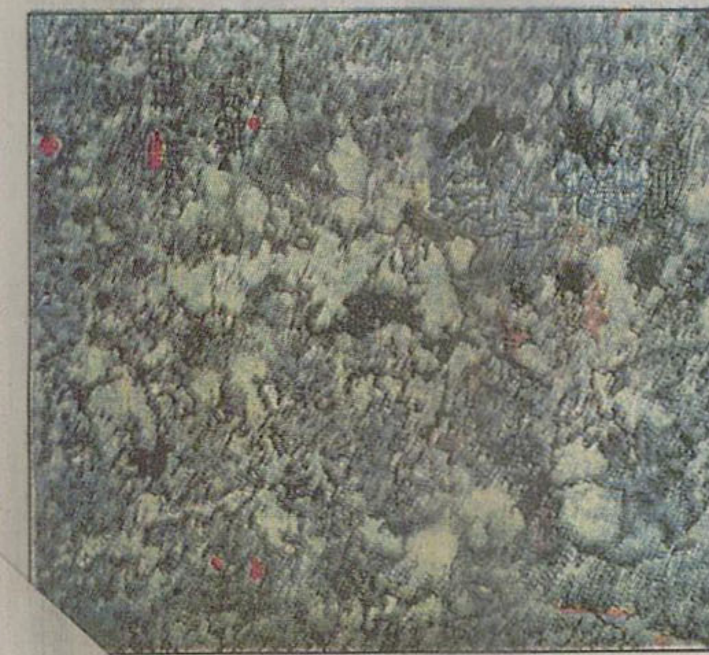
His present exhibition is a continuation of his earlier old style of modern abstract work. In this he has combined his nostalgia for the Japanese natural environment, and what he found around his studio in Savar, where he worked for his present exhibit. He took his inspiration from the fields, rivers, lakes, the sun and the moon, the trees with their branches and foliage, as well as fish and fowl around him. He has used a lot of opalescent gray-green, turquoise blue, jet-black strokes, lines, dots and curling doodles. These are impressions of the wind, rain, fog, water and land masses of Bangladesh and Japan, which he has simplified, and put together in mind-whirling paintings. He has used oil on hand-made paper -- most of his materials being brought from Japan.

"I stay in Tokyo and come here twice a year to work at my studio-

cum-residence in Savar. People regard my work as abstract but I'd differ with them. In my mind the representation of my environment is to please myself first and not necessarily the viewer in Bangladesh, although here too the viewer, has for many decades, been exposed to abstraction. I express what I understand. I did a lot of realistic academic work as a student, and continued in the same genre, putting in a lot of labour into my landscapes. My experimentation is a progress from my youthful days. I believe in being forward looking, and progressing with the times."

Today he works in both watercolour and oil. He includes his feelings and emotions, along with what he sees around him. He says that his reactions to images naturally differ from that of others. He combines these feelings about the images in his environment in a manner that is not only abstract, but also that which has its inspiration in our folk craft, *nakshikantha* (stitched quilts of Bangladesh).

Dwelling on the state of the arts in Bangladesh, Kazi Ghiyas says that he feels that the leaning towards experimentation in our artists -- both young and senior ones -- is something that is recommendable.



by Kazi Ghiyasuddin

# U2 upstages Mariah at the Grammy '06

The Grammys finally showed Mariah Carey a little love -- with an emphasis on "little". Though Carey, 2005's biggest pop success, had a leading eight nominations and the chance to make history with the most Grammys won by a female artiste in a single night, she went home with just three trophies last Wednesday night.

She lost in all of the major categories she was nominated for, including record, song and album of the year.

Instead, U2 got all the Grammy glory, as the perennial favourites captured five Grammy awards for their album *How to Dismantle An Atomic Bomb*, including album of the year.

It was the second time U2 had won the prestigious award (the first was in 1998 for *The Joshua Tree*), marking their 20th Grammy award and their eighth for this album (it won three last year).

The three wins marked Carey's first Grammys since she was a fresh-faced ingenue in 1990, winning two awards that year, including best new artiste. In the years that transpired, Carey has more than lived up to the promise of that trophy, becoming one of the best-selling artistes of all time.

But personal and professional stumbles a few years ago made many wonder if she would ever be a blockbuster artiste as she had been in the 1990s. Carey proved her



Mariah Carey performs at the 48th Grammy Awards

doubters wrong with her stunning comeback.

Besides losing album of the year to U2, Carey lost best female pop vocal performance to Kelly Clarkson's triumphant *Since U Been*

*Gone*, song of the year to U2 and record of the year to *Green Day*. Clarkson also won the award for best pop album.

"I'm sorry I'm crying again on national television," said the for-

mer *American Idol*, tearful and shaking as she held her first Grammy. "Thank you so much, you have no idea what this means to me."

John Legend won three awards: best new artist, best R&B album for his debut, *Get Lifted*, and best male R&B vocal for the piano ballad *Ordinary People*. His mentor, Kanye West, also won three, including best rap album for *Late Registration*.

A highlight was the appearance of Sly Stone, the mercurial, psychedelic soul-rock pioneer who disappeared from the music scene decades ago and hadn't performed in public since 1993.

Former Beatle Paul McCartney was featured in the night's most intriguing mash-up, walking onstage to sing *Yesterday* with rockers Linkin Park and rap mogul Jay-Z.

Alison Krauss & Union Station also had three awards, including best country album, while Stevie Wonder, who released his first album in a decade last year, had two.

A brief, impromptu performance by Wonder and Alicia Keys was the first to energise the crowd. Wonder pulled out his harmonica and the two soulfully sang his classic *Higher Ground* as a tribute to the late Coretta Scott King, who was buried Tuesday.

Source: Internet