

In conversation with Abdul Kuddus Boyati

A lifelong commitment to 'palagaan'

ERSHAD KAMOL

ORIGINATING in the greater Mymensingh region, palagaan or narrative folk ballad, is usually based on the stories of the puranas and folktales. A palagaan has an introduction and a prologue in praise of a legend. Its narration in prose is brief and the rest consists of metaphysical discourses, shlokas and songs.

Vivid descriptions and realistic portrayals of characters are special features of these palagaan, which use dialect and folk melody. Many of the popular palagaan have been included in Moimensingha Geetika and Purbabanga Geetika.

Abdul Kuddus Boyati is a leading palakar (narrator in palagaan folk genre) in the country. He has composed over 80 palas based on legends such as Holek Badshah, Kanchan Badshah, Feroz Khan Dewan, Mahua, Malua, Kamola Rani, Dewan Madina, Rupaboti, Bhelua and Mehernegar. Kuddus Boyati has become an icon of the folk genre amongst the urban dwellers in Bangladesh for his unique presentation of the palas.

During the presentation of a pala, not only his stentorian voice modulation, but also his spontaneous acting of the legendary characters moves the audience. Using normal props such as small doll, sari, pillow, whip, wooden sword and more he can perform 20 characters simultaneously in a pala. And his smooth transformation from narration to several characters is an example of the rich indigenous performing art forms of Bangladesh.

Kuddus had to struggle to succeed like many other folk artists. To quote him, "I was born in an impoverished family. Since childhood I was fascinated by palagaan. I began to learn pala from my uncle Mansur Ali, a blind rural bard with a melodious voice. However, my father was against my taking up music as he had lost his property doing jatrpalas. To earn bread and butter for my family I had to sell nuts and betel leaf at bazaars. Late at night when everyone was fast asleep, I would leave the house and participate at the palagaan performed by my mentor Mansur Ali. This way, I continued as his dohar (supporting vocal in a pala who introduces a new



Abdul Kuddus Boyati delivering a charged performance

topic) for over three years.

"A turning point in my life was the performance of Holek Badshah Pala, while my mentor took a brief rest and requested me to continue. It was a sad sequence, and I gave a soulful performance. My mentor blessed me and advised me to continue my career indi-

vidually. Initially, I used to get Taka 9 for singing the whole night. At that stage of my career, I used to perform over 30 shows a month. Then I gradually developed my own style: acting out the characters of the pala during presentation"

In November 1988, Kuddus performed at

Mahila Samity Stage, Dhaka. His performance not only attracted the audience, it gave new ideas to the urban theatre practitioners. To quote him, "Seeing the performance of Indian artiste Padmasree Teejan Bai, who stages Mahabharat in narrative and enacts different legendary characters, theatre personalities looked for similar artistes in Bangladesh. Then Saidur Rahman, a Bangla Academy employee, came to Kendua, Netrokona looking for me. He requested me to perform a pala at Mahila Samity Stage. I performed Feroz Khan Dewan and Moriom Bibir Pala, based on a true story of Jangalbari, Kishoreganj.

"My performance, especially the handling of narrative and smooth transformation of the characters, impressed the theatre personalities. Selim Al Deen, the then chairperson of Department of Drama and Dramatics took me to Jahangirnagar University to conduct a workshop on narrative for the university students. Subsequently, I conducted several workshops for the theatre activists in Dhaka"

From then onwards he never looked back. He performed at the silver jubilee celebration of BTV and several other TV programmes. His performance of the Unicef commercial Ei Din Din Noy Aro Din Achhe gave Abdul Kuddus Boyati wide popularity. To quote him, "Director Humayun Ahmed gave me this opportunity. I'm not an educated person, I can't even write a word, but in the commercial I lead the children to school, which was to introduce the universal primary education in Bangladesh in 1992."

Kuddus thinks that our rich traditional palagaan genre is now in a precarious condition. "Like me most of the rural bards are illiterate. It's the time to preserve the presentation of the traditional palagaan, otherwise the oral tradition of folk genre will be lost for ever," said Kuddus.

Besides, performing palagaan, Kuddus also renders other folk songs. He has staged shows in USA, UK and India.

Exhibition

Joy of experimenting

FAYZA HAQ

The joint exhibit, Untitled6 at Zainul Gallery, brings out the beauty and ugliness of life. The young artists try to portray the world around them, the seasonal changes, the wonder of seashells, suffocating urban life, male domination and fascinating images of horses at gallop. The artists, Aysha, Mintu, Mita, Protick, Remo and Sohali have all gone in for the abstract and semi-abstract. They are experimenting and have yet to go a long way but nevertheless they have presented images that stir the mind.

Mintu Dey, in his four water colours on monsoon, has presented the feeling of joy during the rain with trickles of mauve, blue, sap green and royal blue. Of all our seasons the time of rain, with its cool winds and bursts of rain stirs him up most. A student of University of Development Alternative (UDA), Dhanmondi Mithu -- like the rest of his colleagues -- has tried to capture the sounds of rain and the feeling of well being at that time. He does this with squiggles, crosses, lines and other abstract images on muted shades of colours. Streams, trees, leaves and sky are brought in along with the fishermen's nets. He has brought in different textures to give the landscapes character and interesting details.

Mintu likes to do abstracts as he feels that they can best depict his innermost feelings and emotions. His teachers include Abdus Sattar, Rashid Amin and Nisar Hussain. He has taken part in more than 12 exhibits and has two awards.

Ayesha Afros has gone in for pure abstract. She does this to portray many painful feelings and emotions, which she says one cannot share with others. "I use circles which capture the moments of pain and call my work Stoned. One is in orange, black and white;



City-1 by Sk Istiaque Remo (top) and Music 006 by Sabira Sultana

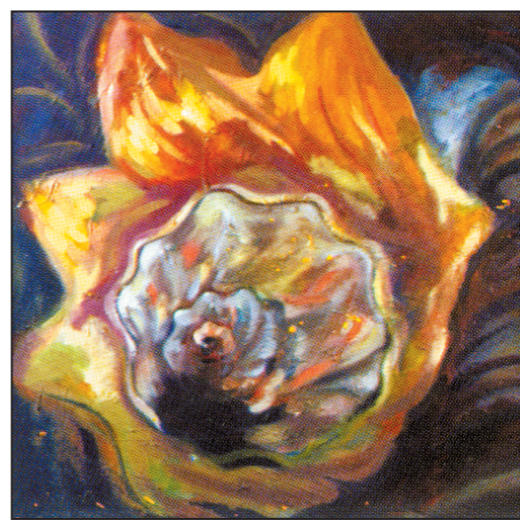
one is in a mass of black touched with orange; one is in yellow, black and white. The artist has tried to bring in the texture of stones in her work. "When people are hurt they turn into silent stones," Ayesha explains. She is now in the fifth semester at UDA. She plans to stick to painting and in future hopes to go into figurative work and more experimental work. She has taken part in six joint exhibits and in three workshops.

Istiaque Remo has dealt with cityscapes in which he depicts the lack of planning of the streets and houses. Sharp blue and green lines and other geometrical shapes depict this in mixed media. Along with street-lights and roads he has brought in sketched in figures of tired men, bent double with pain. He has taken part in six joint exhibitions and has won two awards.

Pervin Yesmin Nahar Mita has presented distorted human figures with the story line of tortured women who cannot free themselves from their fate, once they are within the confines of unhappy marriages. Mita has taken part in four joint exhibits.

Sabira Sultana has featured seashells and through them she wishes to present the intriguing sound of seashells. Detailed depiction of galloping horses is brought in Ehsan-ur-Rashid Protick's paintings in mixed media.

The exhibit ends on July 30.



CULTURAL FEAST

Film Screening

Title: Ontorjatra
Venue: British Council Auditorium
Time: 5:00pm and 7:00pm (except Sundays)
Title: The Hours
Organiser: Ananya Film Club
Venue: Noton House, 10/14 Iqbal Road
Date: July 29
Time: 5:00pm

Exhibition

Artist: Six upcoming artists
Title: "Shironamhin 6"
Venue: Institute of Fine Arts, Zainul Gallery
Date: July 24-30

Musical Soiree

Title: Phele asha diner gaan
Organiser: Srijon
Date: July 29
Venue: National Museum, Shahbag
Time: 6pm



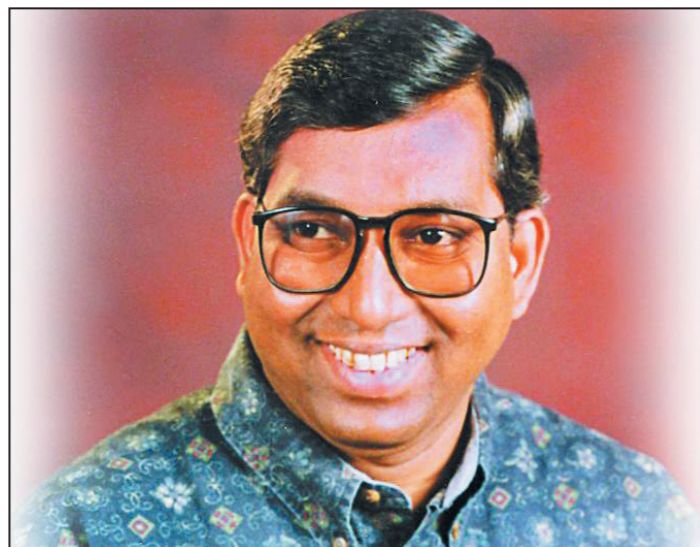
Bangla feature film Nacholer Rani, based on the turbulent years (late 1940's and early 1950's) in the life of Ila Mitra, noted activist of 'Tebhaga Movement' will be aired today on ATN Bangla at 3:10 pm. The film is directed by Syed Wahiduzzaman Diamond and produced by Pankowri

Nakib Khan working on his second solo album

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Popular musician and vocalist of the band 'Renaissance', Nakib Khan is currently working on his second solo album. His first album Swapno Jarono was released in 1989 and was a huge success.

Nakib Khan has already composed music for most of the songs to be featured in the upcoming album. A few of the songs are composed by Prince Mahmud and Ponkoj. Lyrics of the songs are written by Dr Arif, Shahid Mahmud Jongi and Asif Mahmud.



Movie Watch

'Miami Vice': A shadow of its former self

It would take just a single mullet sighting and maybe a pastel jacket to bring the whole operation down with some audience snickers.

So writer-director Michael Mann went the other way with the big-screen version of the '80s popular TV show, Miami Vice: no bright colours, no swagger, no banter, no fun cameos with the original stars, no reprise of Jan Hammer's machine-gun theme.

There's a boilerplate plot: Detectives Crockett (Colin Ferrell) and Tubbs (Jamie Foxx) pose as drug runners to infiltrate a vicious South American cartel after a leak causes the death of an informant buddy and some undercover feds. In the process, they must stand down powerful drug lord Montoya (Luis Tosar) and his nasty middleman Yero (John Ortiz). True to the boilerplate, Sonny risks getting in too deep as he gets involved with Montoya's lovely assistant, Isabella (Gong Li).

Mann remade his 1989 TV movie, LA Takedown, for the big screen in 1995, and the result was the brilliant film Heat. But unlike that or Collateral, which earned Foxx an Oscar nomination, Vice is no showcase for the two great leads. Farrell and Foxx don't get the chance to display the mutual charisma in this hyper-procedural that would make a great buddy flick. The talk (and exposition) is so rapid-fire and low that if you don't listen closely you'll barely know what's going on but for the shooting.

Although the show is preposterously dated now and the stuff of clichés, it was groundbreakingly dark for TV when it premiered in 1984. The Miami Vice film won't



Gong Li and Colin Ferrell in a scene from the movie

have that impact, but it's as slick a ride as one of Crockett's cigarette boats. When Mann settles in for a high-speed night chase, a tense standoff with a live grenade, or a complex and brutal shootout, there's no one better to have in the driver's seat.

Source: Internet

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) 8:20am, 7:00pm. Telecast of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm. Latest News (Bangla) at 9:00 am, 10:00 am, 11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm, 4:00pm, 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm. ntv News Headlines (Bangla) at 10:00 am, 12:00 am, 6:15 pm, 9:30 pm. News (Bangla) 7:30 am, 2:00 pm, 5:00 pm, 7:30 pm, 10:30 pm. Telecast of BTV News (Bangla and English) at 11:30 pm. 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

BTV 09:05 Open University 10:00 Satellite Broadcast 12:15 Shangkbad Potrer Pata Thekey 12:30 Shawastho Tatthya 01:00 Nibedon 01:30 Cartoon 02:15 Sisimpur 02:40 Bangla Feature Film 05:05 Selected Programme 07:00 Selected Programme 07:30 Musical Programme: Prio Sur Prio Gaan 08:50 Drama: Anutaap 10:25 Teknaf Thekey Tetulia

CHANNEL i 09:45 Public Reaction 09:50 Grameenphone Tritiyo Matra 11:05 Grameenphone Na Bola Kotha Mukto Bazar 11:30 Aj Dupurey O Citycell Tarokakothon (Live) 01:05 Ebong Cinemar Gaan 01:30 Shangkbadpotrey Bangladesh 01:45 Public Reaction 02:40 Shath Rong 03:20 Dhaka Guide 04:05 Educational Programme 04:25 Shothyer Shondhane 06:00 Music Plus 06:20 Drama Serial: Shath

07:50 Goyenda Drama Serial: Bishuddho Onprobesh 08:20 Drama Serial: Ar Holo Na Jaowa Hridoye Mati O Manush 10:00 Jhora Patar Kabyo 12:00 Grameenphone Ajker Shongbad Potro ATN BANGLA 10:30 Onyodrishti 11:05 Drama Serial: Hortoner Bibi 11:35 Char Dealer Kabyo 12:15 Shurer Madhur 12:50 Drama 02:30 Job Vacancy 03:10 Bangla Feature Film: Nacholer Rani 06:20 Purakirtir Bangladesh Drama Serial: Jol Pore Pata Nore 08:30 Drama Serial: The New Shabuj Opera 09:00 Drama Serial: Lal Neel Bagune 09:30 Drama Serial: Ek Jonome 10:40 Citycell Shustho Thakun(Live) ntv 08:35 Ajker Shokal 10:05 Magic Magic 10:30 Hip Hip Hurray

PICK OF THE DAY Hridoye Mati O Manush On Channel i at 09:35pm Agricultural Programme Host: Shykh Seraj Birth On HBO at 09:30pm Genre: Drama Starring: Nicole Kidman

01:05 Mukhtangan Drama Serial: Kachher Manush Tomader Pelo Bangladesh 03:15 Shuprobhat Bangladesh 03:50 Chokh Maley Dekhi 04:25 Horlicks Poribar Bangladesh 05:15 Din Darpan/ Iltahasher Ei Diney 05:20 Alokpat 06:20 Shubho Shondhya 06:50 Amra Ekon Unish Kuri 08:25 Drama Serial: Ramizer Ayna 09:10 Bhalobesho Mor Gaan 11:25 Dindarpan CHANNEL 1 08:40 Shuprobhat Bangladesh 09:30 Chokh Maley Dekhi 10:00 Shoptaho Sheshey 10:30 Taka Ana Pai 11:30 Nimognotay Srot 12:30 Drama: Fapor 03:30 Drama Serial: Taxi Driver 04:30 Drama: Dui Dugune Panch 05:15 Shoptaho Sheshey 06:00 Saaj Bela 06:30 Top News 06:45 Jonotar Ishthar 07:00 Bishwa Jurey Shath Din 08:15 Baker Pathay 09:00 Shondhi Khoney 09:30 Drama Serial: Dui Duguney Panch BANGLAVISION 08:35 Shuvo Shokal 09:00 Ichchhey Ghuri 09:30 Drama Serial: Sheidin Chitro Mash 10:00 Talk Show: Shomoy 09:20 Talk Show: Amar Ami 09:50 Drama Serial: Sukher Kata HBO 10:00 3 Ninjas: High Noon at Mega Mountain 12:00 Dumb and Dumber 02:15 Lethal Dose 04:15 The Big Preview: Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest 04:45 A Civil Action 07:00 Blade 09:30 Birth 11:30 Spider-Man 2 02:00 Freddy VS. Jason STAR MOVIES 08:45 Out Of Reach 10:35 King Kong 01:10 Federal Hill 03:10 Fong Sai Yuk li 05:10 Hide And Seek 07:15 Hamlet 11:45 White Noise STAR WORLD 08:30 Smallville 09:30 Pride Fc 09:30 Wonderfuls 10:30 The Bold And The Beautiful 12:30 Rendezvous With Simi 01:00 Travel Asia 01:30 For The Record 02:30 The 2006 Miss Universe 04:30 Smallville 05:30 Desperate Housewives 06:30 Sports Illustrated 07:30 Philly 08:30 Tna Xplosion 09:30 Lifetime Achievement Awards 11:30 Lost NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC 08:00 WWS 08:30 Wild 09:30 Untamed 10:30 Dogs With Jobs 11:00 Dogs With Jobs 12:00 Nat Geo Junior 12:30 Seconds from Disaster 01:30 Air Crash Investigation 02:30 Naked Science 03:30 Is It Real? 04:30 MegaStructures 05:30 Wild Safari 06:30 Dragons of the Namib 10:30 The Sea Hunters 11:30 Nat Geo Investigates STAR SPORTS 08:30 Pride Fc 09:30 Pride Fc 10:30 Tna Impact 11:30 Ioc Cricket World 12:00 Football Asia 12:30 The Golf Club 01:00 Cricket Classics Bangladesh Tour Of Zimbabwe 01:28 Cricket Classics Bangladesh Tour Of Zimbabwe 05:00 Cricket Classics Bangladesh Tour Of Zimbabwe 09:00 The Senior Open Championships ESPN 08:00 National Spelling Bee 11:00 Sportscenter Week In Review 11:30 Pakistan Tour Of England 01:00 Cricket Classics 01:30 Nba Anthology 02:00 Cricket Classics 02:30 Pakistan Tour Of England 03:58 Pakistan Tour Of England 06:00 Cricket Classics 06:30 Pakistan Tour Of England 11:00 Formula One Qualifying TEN SPORTS 08:30 Gamer TV 08:30 NFL Superbowl 09:00 Indian Golf Show 11:00 SA Tour to Sri Lanka: 1st Test Day 2 H/Ls 06:00 SA Tour to Sri Lanka: 1st Test Day 3 07:00 WWE: Experience 07:45 World of Athletics 09:45 Sahara Hockey Champ Trophy (MEN):Pak v Arg 11:45 Sahara Hockey Champ Trophy(MEN):Spain vNetherlands 02:00 Sahara Hockey Champ Trophy (MEN):Aus v Ger