

Dhaka Day by Day

Where Sentimentality Pays

by Fayza Haq

"You really missed something!" said connoisseurs of classical music to those who had failed to turn up at Gulrez Nahar's performance at the Alliance Francaise.

Gulrez, who has been learning music from Akhter Sadmani, won various children's shows on TV before she won a scholarship to the Sangeet Bhaban of the Viswa Bharati University. Graduating with honours in '82 her pragmatic desire for more was rewarded by further scholarships under the tutelage of one of the maestros of yesteryear, Meera Banerjee, the 'shagird' of Bade Ghulam Ali, keeping in line with effectiveness of Guru Shisya Parampara.

Four years of rigorous training in Kheyal and Thumri established her foundation further.

Progress in her chosen field of specialisation came with her reach when she was offered studentship at the Sangeet Research Academy. Here Padmabhushan and Padamashree Giritja Devi trained her under her personal guidance in various forms of classical music.

"It was a different world of music in India. When I went for the first time to Shantiniketan I thought it was a dreamland. There were moonlit nights, rides on bicycles, and no uncomfortable or embarrassing accumulating of water after a shower," said Gulrez about her life as a student.

"There were experts like Shanti Dev Gosh, Konika Banerjee, and Nilima Sen. They were all well-known teachers of Rabindra Sangeet but they had no pomposity. They were extremely affectionate. The chances of learning and appreciating Indian classical music was vast because the country had endless resources," she narrated.

"In Bangladesh people have taste but have limited opportunity to satisfy their longings for vocal classical music. I was surprised to see how much the foreigners appreciated our traditional music," Gulrez commented.

Speaking about her training the confident singer recounted, "I was taught to appreciate the word and the meaning. The tune came later. Your feelings develop only when you understand what the song is about. I had to learn the history of music. I travelled, met and heard internationally famous musicians like V G Jog, A T Kanan, and Malabika Kanan. They were extremely encouraging."

"With Giritja Devi I learnt how the mode of expression had to be subtle. You did not give out orders or commands in your songs but made gentle, subtle requests. She gave me gifts on Eid and when she went away on holidays I felt very lonely. Even the cultural director of Shantiniketan, Tariq Sultan, would treat me like his daughter. I was absolutely at home in India and could have lived on there forever, if given the chance," Gulrez recounted her life in India.

She had all sorts of friends where she studied. These included American, Japanese, Korean, Chinese and Filipino students. The day they would get their scholarship, they would pool their money together and go for an eating binge.

Gulrez admits that she is very sentimental.

Yet, she insists, sentimentality is essential for the Dadra, Thumri and all other songs. Speaking about classical vocal songs, many of which she rendered on the evening of her performance, she explained that Thumri was a short song in the light classical form, with romantic overtures. "Its origin can be traced to the late eighteenth century under the patronage of Nawab Wajed Ali Shah. It was composed of various Ragas", she said, "like Kafi, Pillu and Bhairavi."

She elaborated that the Dadra was usually preceded by Thumri. "It was a style of singing where the tilt of rhythm was given emphasis



Gulrez Nahar

and the delineation of 'bol' were short and constantly maintaining the tilt." She explained that the Kajri that she sang was a folk song, normally sung in the rainy season. The theme was "blues" and was in keeping with the mood of the monsoons when even the sky appeared to shed tears. The Tappa was in the light classical variety, and was perhaps one of the most difficult of all forms to render. Unlike Thumri it had little emotional value, Gulrez pointed out. Its intricate embellishment of patterns like filigree and rhythmic surprises were meant to hold the listeners spellbound.

Hori, the singer further told me, was also seasonal and was generally sung in spring after the monsoon. It was sung to depict happiness, festivity and gaiety, she added. Commenting on the Ghazal she explained that it was the tete-a-tete between the lover and the beloved. Each couplet of the Ghazal was complete poetry by itself. It appealed to both lovers of music and poetry alike.

Gulrez also sang Kheyal, Jhula and Bhajan. What is vital for being a successful singer? According to Gulrez you have to have time for sentimentality. You need to be emotional to render emotional pieces. You should know the pronunciations well. You have to develop from the basic. As a student she practised four to six hours a day apart from the normal lessons. There were performances to be given once or twice a month. "You must get your voice ready by hours of dedicated practice or you cannot rise above being just a bathroom singer. You develop confidence by regular 'rewaz'. You also require the 'dimagh' to render what is taught to you," Gulrez insisted.

"What is vital, of course, is that you get yourself a good 'guru'," she admitted. Does she think the cheap Indian video songs and dances will smother all love for serious forms of music? Twenty-eight year old Gulrez, with her 12 years' training from India, believed that they will simply coexist because it takes all types to make the world. Lively and full of fun, she likes Hindi films with Rekha and Smita Patil. But her favourites in the musical world remain the conservative Vilayat Hussain Khan and Bismillah Khan.

She added her husband Tushar has been an important factor in her career. Through his constant letters from USA, he encouraged her to study, and today supports her in her ambition as a public performer.

What's on Today & Tomorrow

Dhaka City AL rally

Dhaka city Awami League will hold a rally today (Thursday) at 4 pm at Bangabandhu Avenue to demand the withdrawal of value added tax (VAT) and new tax on edible oil and agricultural products. The rally will be addressed by central and city leaders of Awami League.

DUEAC meeting

A meeting of the Dhaka University Education Atmosphere Council (DUEAC) will be held today (Thursday) at 12 noon at the university's administrative building. Vice-Chancellor who is also the head of the DUEAC, will chair the meeting while the DUEAC members including Syndicate members, the PVC, provosts, president and general secretaries of the DU teachers' association, officers' association, employees' association, 22 student organisations, Proctor and Treasurer are expected to participate in the meeting. The meeting has been convened by the VC to discuss the campus situation prior to reopening of the university on July 6.

Eid reunion

Eid reunion of the New Government High School Ex-students' Association will be held today (Thursday) at 7 pm at the hotel Hwang Ho in the city. All the members of the association have been requested to attend the programme. Cards to join the reunion are available with the Vice-President Abdus Samad (tel-400827) or the Treasurer Zaker Hossain (Tel 506200).

Janata Dal meet

An emergency meeting of the central executive committee of Bangladesh Janata Dal will be held tomorrow (Friday) at 3 pm at the party's central office of Asad Gate in the city. The meeting will discuss the prevailing political situation.

Joy Bangla Sangskritik Jote

A meeting of 45 units of Joy Bangla Sangskritik Otkya Jote (cultural unity alliance) will be held tomorrow (Friday) at 9 am at the Awami League central office at 23 Bangabandhu Avenue in the city.

Jessore Dist School reunion

A meeting of the old students of Jessore District School has been convened tomorrow (Friday) at 4.30 at 67, Segun Bagicha in the city. Concerned persons have been urged to attend the meeting to prepare a reunion of the old student due on July 18 and chalk out the day's programme.

The reunion is scheduled to be held at Ladies' Club in the city on July at 5 pm.

Ex-students of the school along with the in family members are invited to participate in the reunion.

Organisers of the programme have asked the concerned persons to have their names registered by July 10 for the reunion. They have also nominated two of the old students to contact about the programme. They are Kazi Wahidul Alam, Triune (Private) Limited, 76 Segun Bagicha (third floor) Tel-834306 or 416418, and Dr Kazi Mesbahuddin Iqbal, Anesthesiology Department, IPGMR, Tel: 501899 (office) or 834269 (residence).

Press conference

Kazi Nasiruddin P. Hd will hold a press conference today (Thursday) at 11 am at the Jatiya Press Club to brief the journalists about the prospect of opening a vocational training school in the USA for the Bangladeshi students. Nasiruddin is now teaching at a US vocational training school.

National literacy award

Bangladesh Jatiya Sahitya Sangsad (National Literacy Council) will deliver the national literacy awards to the recipients at a formal ceremony at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium tomorrow (Friday) at 4 pm. The awards include a gold medal and a certificate for each of the recipients.

Jamaat Ameer's conference

The conference of District Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami will be held on July 26 and 27 while the meeting of the central Majlis-e-Sura will be held from July 28 through July 31. All the concerned persons have been requested to attend the meetings.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

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| ACROSS | Ten of — | Answer to Previous Puzzle |
| 1 Burst | 36 Lose color | SAW BALL TEEM |
| 4 A Williams | 37 Adventure stories | LET AREA RANI |
| 9 High mountain | 39 Native of Lebanon | ARE STANDARDS |
| 12 Hearing organ | 42 Dinnerware piece | POLLS NEON |
| 13 Eagle's nest | 43 Covers | DE YES SALE |
| 14 Born | 44 Brown kiwis | DIS BAD HOTEL |
| 15 Cavalryman | 46 Crown | AM RAM GAM OK |
| 17 Estate of a lord | 48 Restricts | CADET SOT INS |
| 19 Chore | 51 Limb | EMIT MET AN |
| 20 Bill of fare | 52 Feast | UPON DISCS |
| 21 Imitates | 54 Pinch | TERRITORY IRA |
| 23 Frightens | 55 Insect | ETONERIE DOT |
| 27 Data | 56 Wise persons | DABS SAGS EWE |
| 29 Solo | 57 Pippen | |
| 30 Early morn | | |
| 31 Away | DOWN | |
| 32 Shooting star | 1 Fondle | 6 Go astray |
| 34 Anglo-Saxon money | 2 Paddle | 7 Three-toed sloth |
| 35 "Just the | 3 Guard | 8 Rashness |
| | 4 Hits lightly | 9 Cancel |
| | 5 Fumes | 10 Mr. Durocher |
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| | | 16 Kite |
| | | 18 Plaster |
| | | 20 Female horse |
| | | 21 In a tangle |
| | | 22 Hesitation |
| | | 24 Domesticates |
| | | 25 Merits |
| | | 26 Shelter |
| | | 28 Disgraces |
| | | 33 Poems |
| | | 34 Prayers |
| | | 36 Comely |
| | | 38 Hebrew month |
| | | 40 Censure |
| | | 41 Expiate |
| | | 45 Morsels |
| | | 46 Flap |
| | | 47 Anger |
| | | 48 Scold |
| | | 49 Humorist |
| | | 50 Secret agent |
| | | 53 Babylonian deity |

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Concern over display of arms on campuses

By Staff Correspondent

The speakers at the installation ceremony of the Government Titumir College Students' Union Wednesday called for creating congenial atmosphere in the educational institutions. They expressed concern over the display of arms by the terrorists who had been vitiating the academic environment in the country.

Presided over by Bazlur Rahman, Principal of the College, the ceremony was attended by Barrister Motiul Hussain as chief guest and Reazuddin Ahmed as special guest.

DUCSU V P Amanullah Aman, MP, RUCSU V P Rizvi Ahmed, newly-elected VP of Titumir College Students' Union, Shamsul Huq and General Secretary, Abdul Kader addressed the function.

The speakers recalled the heroic role of the students in defeating the autocratic forces from the country and establishing a democratic order. They asked the students to devote more to studies to avoid loss of academic year.

The function was rounded off with a lively cultural function.

Two drowned in abandoned well

By Staff Correspondent

A young man and a girl drowned in an old abandoned well at an under-construction house in Mirpur on Wednesday when he tried to rescue her.

Police said that the tragic incident occurred when Rabiya, 11, a maid at 115/1 Sheorapara, accidentally fell into the well and Shahid, 22, a construction worker at the house, instantly jumped to save her.

They both drowned as people in the area failed in their attempts to rescue them. Later, Fire Brigade personnel recovered the bodies and sent them to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital for post-mortem.

Attack on newsman condemned

By Staff Correspondent

The Chairman of the Bangladesh Human Rights Commission, Justice K M Sobhan, has strongly urged the government to ensure the security of journalists.

Justice Sobhan said that in the interest of the nation, journalists' need to do objective reporting.

TV Thursday

- 5-00 Opening and recitation from Al-Quran
- 5-15 Recitation from the Geeta
- 5-20 News in Bangla
- 5-30 Esho Gan Shikhi
- 5-55 Cartoon film : Captain Planet and the Planters
- 6-30 Jibaner Alo : Religious programme
- 7-05 Antoranga
- 8-00 News in Bangla
- 8-30 Movie of the week : Fantasy Island
- 10-00 News in English
- 10-25 Parliament roundup
- 10-40 Remaining part of the movie
- 11-45 Close down

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