

RISING STARS

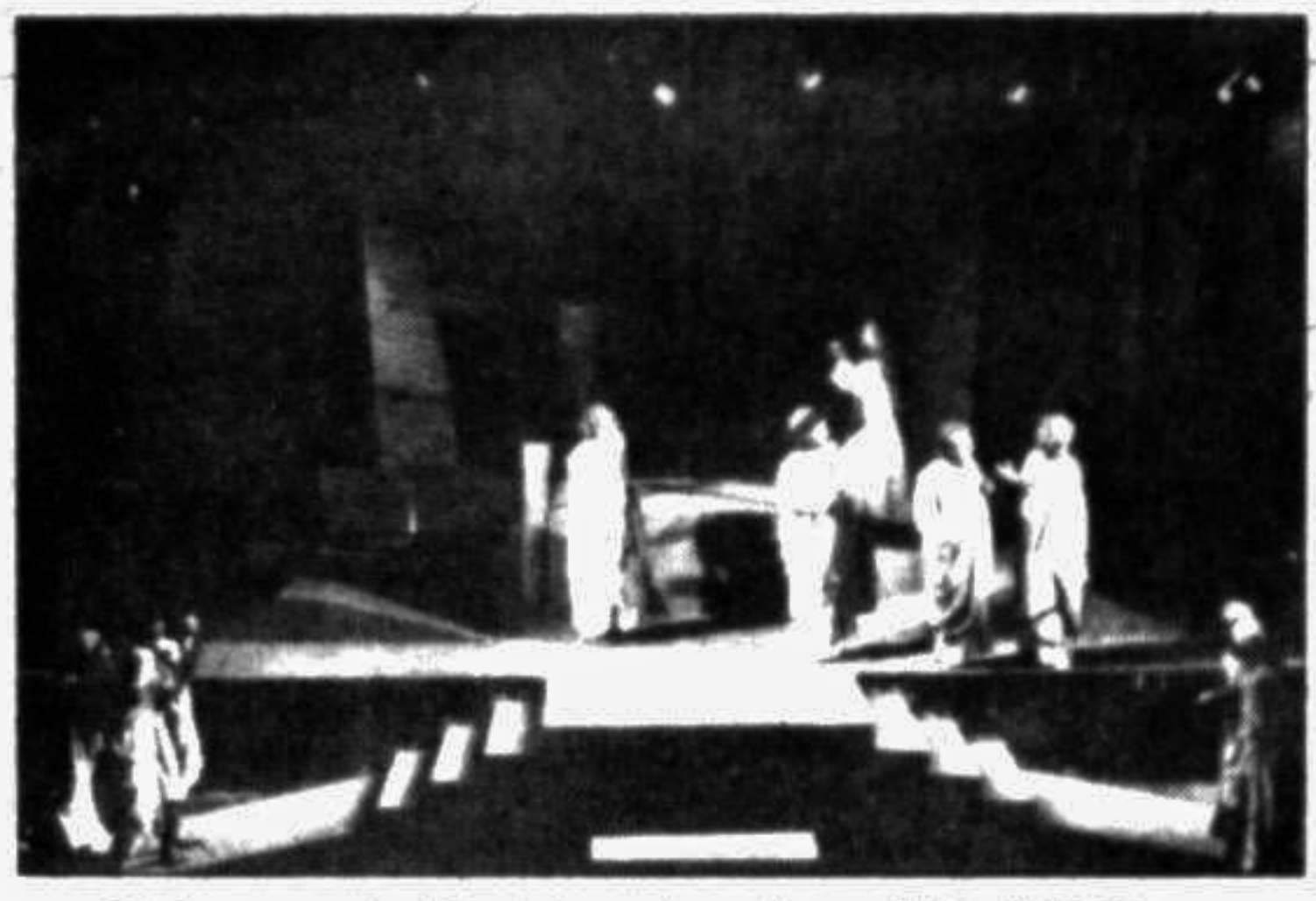
Drama in Bangladesh — Part I

by Sabah Moyeen

Drama has been the evolution of a creative and artistic expression innate in man and society, since ages untold. From the open amphitheatres of the Greeks, to the pagan and miracle plays of old England, until the Shakespeare theater and Broadway, it has not all been a big roller-coaster ride as it might seem to us sitting in the audience. For drama to arrive as, above all, a form of entertainment, from religious dogmatism and medical didacticism, has required a great inflow of inspiration, innovation, encouragement, technical progress, and of course finance.

In our country, drama, on stage, on before the camera, is of a different dimension altogether. More than just entertainment, it usually tends to provide a means for social understanding and political awareness. I do not think it would be libelous to suggest that drama rarely gets what it justly deserves in Bangladesh. For the uneducated lot who form the majority—going into cinema halls and jatra, and who ironically form more of an audience before the television rather than the people who employ them, the essence of the subject matter being portrayed, is lost. The educated mass is nearly always too busy chasing business ventures, attending meetings and going to dinners: the children are in the realm of Ninja Turtles and the busy housewife somehow makes time to relax before the screen — with a Hindi movie. Yet, in the world of Star TV Hollywood, Hindi films and MTV, drama, in Bangladesh has survived, appreciably. Overwhelming credit should go to dedicated playwrights,

directors, producers and a team of extremely talented acting personnel with whom one can easily boast of. With a lineup like Humayun Faridi, Abul Hayat, Asaduzaman Noor, Aly Zaker, Shuborna Mustafa, Ferdousi Majumdar etc, it could be sufficient to take on the world. One should not even begin to compare them to Bangladeshi movie stars — huge, melodramatic females, either sobbing away, or trying to shake the earth with euphoric thumping (pathetic all the same) and weird males with a gory sense of dressing, oscillating between the earth and the villain's head in mid-air, ten times per second! The big screen has tried to ape Bombay, failed miserably and become ludicrous. On the other hand, the small screen has continued to provide us with such memorable events as 'Shokaal Shondha', 'Ayi Shob Din Ratri', 'Bohubrihi' and of course the unforgettable 'Ayomoy'. 'Shongshoptok' was an intense drama, with Humayun Faridi at his best (and that in itself is a lot) and Ferdousi Majumdar in a characteristic powerful and awesome role. Romjan and Hurmott have become indelible characters almost like Iago and lady Macbeth have 'Ayomoy' was a class apart. The biggest tragedy was that it had to end. I think it was the only Bengali serial for which people left their VCRs running had they been forced to attend a dinner party. Abul Hayat and Asaduzaman Noor gave magnificent performances; in fact the latter's portrayal of character has come to be known as the 'Mirza mood'. Truly fantastic, Shuborna Mustafa made a late entry but did not lose time to show her talents. Indeed she



Shakespeare's "Coriolanus" performed by Aranya

overshadowed the rest sometimes. Sara Zaker was perfect for her role. When 'Ayomoy' took the bow, it was standing ovations all the way, to perhaps the most impact causing Bengali drama of our time.

Comedy too has not lost its essence on the small screen. 'Bohubrihi' was a masterpiece. favourable impression he left. But Aly Zaker, Abul Hayat and Humayun Faridi continue to be personal favourites along with Ferdousi Majumdar and Shuborna Mustafa.

The stage, is a different ball game altogether, one with which we are not all, well acquainted. There is much more need to be paid for. The auditorium is usually nothing more than a dark, dingy, mosquito infested community centre converted to stage plays. People who visit them are few and nearly always a set crowd of theatre goers. (there are exceptions) with an avid interest in drama. The actors and actresses who perform on stage are not different from the ones who act on small screen, but they usually do not get paid for stage work. Yet, enthusiasm on their part is not lacking and this must be attributed to their firm dedication and love for acting. With the majority, acting is not their main profession, but a love which they have nurtured and taken pains over (a hobby sounds too frivolous). Many pursue other careers quite diverse from acting. About Hayat is an engineer, while Aly Zaker is the successful entrepreneur of an advertising firm. Nevertheless, despite the difficulties, what appears on stage is powerful, intense and impact causing. There is a dire scarcity of playwrights. Whereas Dhaka Theatre has its own playwright many of the other groups have to depend on translations and adaptations. Several dramatists who write plays for television are not comfortable with the stage. Shakespeare, Irwin Shaw and Ibsen provide a good source, but the favourite continues to be the prolific German playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956). Brecht's determined effort to divert the epic theatre from conventional theatrical illusions to social and ideological themes (for leftist causes) has served as an overpowering inspiration for Bangladeshi producers and directors.

Richard woke up with a start and sat in the middle of his bed, streaming with sweat. He'd been having the same recurring nightmare about Susan for the past six nights. She seemed familiar to him — like a relic from the long gone past. Then again everything felt that way when he was with his Swedish Venus, Inga. He had thought Inga was the one to make him happy when they'd met, but somehow, she was not.

Then he'd met Susan and finally found a woman he could both love and respect. But sadly, since late, he was beginning to love her less and respect her more. She was like the teacher in grade school on whom he'd had an enormous crush who was a figure of respect, rather than fascination. So he'd come back to Inga because... what? Susan was a little too old fashioned for him? Poppycock!

Gradually he felt a feeling of immense guilt creep over him. He felt like a little boy who'd been caught stealing his Dad's liquor-filled chocolate! Then there was this nightmare too. Susan would be standing at the end of this tunnel, so far away

The Miracle

by Judith G. De Costa

Susan waited and waited for him to call until she felt like screaming and scream she did, so much so that her whole apartment reverberated with the sound of the high-pitched sound. She felt useless and weary — the only thing she would do would be to replay those golden moments with Richard in her mind. Where had they gone? For that matter, where had he gone?

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asked Susan, recognizing Richard's voice instantly. "Not even close!" "Where are you calling me from?"

"The airport. I could begin to tell you how awful I feel for being so neglectful here, or I could have a shower and then come over to your place and do it at leisure."

"Hmm," she said. "Suppose you started here and finished off at my place?" "Tyrant! I'll see you in an hour or two." And he was gone.

Will I ever understand him? She wondered. She had been waiting for him to get back so eagerly that now that he was back she couldn't believe it! Susan understood that Richard was hers for keeps the minute she heard his voice. If he had to leave me, he would have done so when he was gone and sent me some stupid letter with some stupid explanation. Or worse, he wouldn't have written anything! But, he's back and he called! I feel awful for neglecting you, she thought to herself. He felt awful because I wasn't by his side, or just talking to him! He honestly missed me! Susan felt jubilant in her triumph and confident, oh so confident that Richard had confirmed that she was the leading lady in his life. Devil may care what he has to say, she thought, sure that what ever it would be it was not going to be good by. Tonight was going to be a night to celebrate. Richard had come back home and so had she.

"I was beginning to lose faith in miracles, Richard," she said aloud to the empty room, "but thank heaven I didn't lose faith in you!"

An Urge for Living

by Sonia N Ahmed

The room is full of people, the lights have all been lit, people are wandering about all over the house, yet I feel all alone I feel as if I am in solitary confinement why do I feel like this? I guess it's a feeling within me, something that always possesses me, something I can't get rid of unless I find my destination.

I am totally oblivious of my surroundings, everything I picture seems to be of another time. There the setting is the same, I can sense it is this very house, but no one is there, only me, in dark solitude.

"Well my girl, your parents have hosted a nice housewarming party, haven't they?"

I snap out of my reverie as I hear the General's booming voice.

"Yes they have," I answer "have you had your tea? Oh look! I think that's my father looking for you."

Saying this I abruptly move away, I, surprised at my own strange behaviour, I quietly slip out into the garden. The air smells of blooming rose buds and the dark sky hangs above me like a heavy blanket, soft and warm. But there it is again whenever I feel at ease my

Unwanted Fate

by Rehan Chowdhury

(Class VIII)

As I sat under the palm tree, my memories recalled the past. Only last year, I was a quick and active boy of 13. Then my mother died and a new mother came, causing me, to be a runaway.

Surrounding me was the eternal turquoise-blue sea and the golden sand. The sea-breeze blew gently on my face taking the grains of sand for a ride while the high tides came one after the other. The water looked young and fresh; just the way a 13 year old boy should feel.

It was twilight now. The sky was purplish-orange. The gulls, seeing that night was about to intrude, flew about swift and freely searching for a place of rest.

Everything around me, was just as it should have been. The warm golden sand tickled my feet. The only smell that reached which inserted my nose was that of the salty sea-waters. I grasped a handful of sand and let it run through my fingers. Suddenly, I felt lonely.

Soon, nightfall conquered the twilight. It was a full moon night. Every thing quietened ted down. The waves stopped racing, the wind decided to stop blowing and the branches of the nearby trees stopped swaying. Everything was peaceful.

STAR PROFILE

Larry Mullen Jr of U2

Full name: Laurence Joseph Mullen — Larry
Date of birth: 31/10/61
Born: Dublin
Lives: Dublin
Marital status: Single
First hit: "Fire"

Did you know:

- Larry only added the 'Jnr' to his name in 1984 when his father, also called Laurence, kept getting his son's enormous tax demands!
- Larry is a fully-trained blackbelt in karate but he doesn't practice as much as he used to because now he's more interested in fishing and motorbikes.
- U2 are called 'The Jacks' in Ireland. Another affectionate term for the band is 'the boys' eg "Haven't the boys done great, eh, who'd have credited it?"
- On their 1987 US tour, U2 booked themselves into hotel



concert was at the Half Moon pub in Putney. Nine people turned up.

Recently during the worldwide Zoo Station tour, Larry was suffering from severe cramps in his hands after performances and was told by doctors that he might have to give up drumming!

As I lay on my back, I looked at the night sky and suddenly saw the first star of the night, emerging.

I sang to myself. I began, 'star-light, star-bright, I wish, I may, I wish, I might, get the wish I wish tonight.'

Then I wished that I could be happy and gay like the sea, active like the wind, independent like the sea-gulls... if only... they would come true!



No More

by Trishna

Dear mother, dear father, look at me and see. See the change, I'm no more the child I used to be. That child in me no more plays with a doll, I'm no more, mother, to be kept under your shawl. That small field is no more my playground to play, But now its the whole wide world I'd rather say. I no more bug you for bedtime stories or toys, And I no more come crying to complain about the naughty boys. I don't hold your hand during every step I take, Not your footstep, but I follow my heart for decisions I make. The world has changed and so have I, See it for yourself and you too won't deny. I've grown up and to my childhood have said goodbye, But those days, were the sweetest and I don't know how they passed or why. Dear mother, dear father, look at me and see, See the change, I'm no more the child I used to be. Now I'm no more the baby in the cradle who cried, But I've grown and soon will leave you, I'll become a bride.

Riddles

It has a leg, but no thighs
It has a head but no face
Answer: A mushroom
It comes it goes
It does nothing but blows
Answer: A crab
When we use it, we throw it away but when it is not used, we keep it at the head of a boat.
Answer: An anchor

QUIZ CLUB

Here are this week's quiz questions. Please send in answers by next Thursday. If you get all of them right, you may win a very attractive prize!

- Name the saint who is believed to have introduced Christianity in India in about 50 A. D.
- What is known as Cleopatra's Needle?
- Where was Napoleon born?
- In which year was Martin Luther King assassinated?
- Name the only country having a double triangular shaped flag.
- Where is Adam's Bridge?
- Which star is nearest to Earth?
- What is 'Dutch courage'?
- Which place is called the key to the Mediterranean?
- Which is the world's biggest library?

Answers to August 29th's Quiz Club

1. Con Chaney
2. Bangkok
3. Napoleon's army
4. Cuttle fish
5. Charles Persault
6. February 15, 1950
7. Geneva
8. Kilauyu
9. Prof. T H Bullock
10. Inability to concentrate

Picture Quiz

Here is a new picture quiz. Can you guess what it is? The answer will be given next week.



Fill out this form and send it to us, and you will be a member of the Rising Star Club. Send in your writings, illustrations, and cartoons. It is an ideal opportunity to express yourself through the print media.

Name: _____

Father's Name: _____

School: _____ Class: _____

Full Address: _____

Telephone No. _____