San Remo Film Lestrod's prize

enormously during these years

reaching " peak in the mid-

seventics. Between March

1974 and March 1975 Iran's

cinema attendance was esti-

mated at 110 million with

Tehran alone accounting for

an abrupt end. All local film

festivals were banned in the

country and cinema produc-

shown signs of changing. Iran's

cinema is again the talk of in-

ternational film circles. Lon-

don's prestigious National Film

Theatre recently mounted a

series of the latest films. There

are also plans afoot to launch a

European-based Iranian cable

network. Despite testing odds

Iran is witnessing a revival of

Iran's most respected ac-

tresses whose work spans

Parzaneh Tai 'Idi is one of

its cinematic heritage.

Recently this trend has

But in 1978 all this came to

45 million admissions.

tion fell drastically.

Cinema attendance jumped

for best director.

roon curtains of the stage. Despite the fact that each of the musicians was suffering from jet-lag, and were going to and fro Dhaka and Chittagong, while in Bangladesh, their enthusiasm and dexterity were undoubtedly admirable.

Out of a band of eight members, Jacques Benhamou, performed with excellence, and maneuvered the programme so effortlessly on February 17. when one had the opportunity to witness their skill and prowess, and one was amazed that the French could bring American music to Bangladesh with incredible finesse and suavity. The drummer, Olivier Michaud, although fairly young, won most of the applause, as he performed solo during the intermission, playing with his sticks on each and every instrument of the band - even the seat of the pianist.

The American songs that Danielle sang, had a cream-oncoffee effect, and her songs in cluded French and American ones, such as "Don't Mean a Thing", "Summer Time", "A Smooth One", "Bye-bye Blackbird" and "Dream a Little". One of the best performances of the pure instrumental presentation was the piece "Royal Garden Blues." The presentation, on the whole, left the audience intoxicated with the pure notes that ensued from each of the enthusiastic members of the band. It was remarkable that despite being French, they had presented a culture, borrowed and adapted, and had won the hearts of the listeners.

When asked how the band would compare jazz being played in France with that being presented elsewhere in Europe and USA, the leader, Jacques Benhamou, replied, "There are very good musicians in France itself, as jazz, as you well know, originated from there. We, the French, are like pupils of the jazz produced and performed in USA. However, we have good musicians ourselves like Maxime Sury and Stephane Grappelli."

Daniele, the singer of the band, of Italian-Australian origin, married to a Frenchman, added to the reply by Benhamou, on behalf of her

Pure Notes from Professionals Turned Part-time Musicians

by Fayza Haq

band, "There is a very strong formance, they elaborated, intradition of jazz in the modern cluded some typically French scene in France at present, compositions, and they were although 'free music' has not jazz samples. The songs and been well established as yet. tunes were most often stan-The performance of the bedard ones, which had been bop' and 'swing' have won enwritten by French jazz composers. They felt that their thusiasts in our country, and there is the National Orchestra presentation would appeal to of Jazz, where there is a the sensibility of the people in French composer for the Bangladesh, as they were aware that they were performpieces. ing before the elite of Dhaka, She added, "One finds quite a few established works in who were already accustomed

numerous jazz clubs which

group had chosen to play the

particular pieces that had been

presented on the day that one

had witnessed the perfor-

mance of the group, the play-

ers explained in unison that

the audience at Dhaka are bet-

ter oriented to traditional

classical jazz. The entire per-

The "Five o' Clock Jazz Group"

When asked as to why the

have a fair following."

various parts of Paris, although it is not easily accessible by the Jean Paul Voegelin added, average individual. 'New Orlto what had been said earlier, eans', for instance, is known by "Our group is aimed basically at a wider range of age group, as 'Dixicland' fans and is inspired it has been around for a long by the 'grand epoch' of Louis time, and I think that any Armstrong, and his contempomusic that has been raries, who appeal to our cars. established for a considerable There are inclusions from the period of time, can easily be repertoire of Duke Ellington as appreciated. To this, Michael Georges Critchon added his Talking about themselves, comment," We are having a renaissance in jazz in France and, in the process, we have

as individual performers, giving their background, Jacques Benhamou, who played on the saxophone and was the soprano alto as well, revealed, "I practise only half an hour a day, but the group practises as often as possible. It is an orchestra in which the majority of members are professionals, in the field of law, philately, commercial management, publishing of music books, and tri-lingual translations (in the case of Danielle

i.e.), computer engineering and being a regular student have the full-time occupations of the drummer and the bass

Danielle had this to say about herself, "At school learnt French songs at the kindergarten stage, and I got 'hooked on' to singing in this manner. I have been giving my voice in bands for six years. My favourites in jazz are Ella Fitzgerald and Diana Washingon. I appreciate classical music as well, naturally. practise and study with my husband, a professional musician. Michel Zagaradsky, who

played the slide trombone, claborated about himself," was a teacher of Mathematics, but now being sixty, I have retired and deal with philately, I like 'swing', while my favourite musicians are Duke Ellington, Count Basic and Louis Arm strong. As a teenager, when the Germans occupied France, I had been exposed to jazz. As hobbies, I love the traditional French 'throwing of the balls' as well as swimming. Meanwhile, I am proud of my wife, four children and eight grand children".

Forty-year-old Michel-Georges Crichton, the jovial pianist, said in his tired but amicable voice." I study a lot of classical music apart from jazz, I had some blues records. which were given to me at the age of thirteen, and these helped me appreciate, and prompted me to take up, jazz. I love listening to Beethoven. Chopin and Mozart, and I often listen to music from BBC as well. Gharret is my favourite in jazz, while Arighum Ellor Gaerner is my best choice in classical music. I have two children, who give me intense joy and contentment."

Oliver-Camille Michaud. who played the drums with the expertise of a meacstro, said briefly about himself, in his self-effacing manner. " watched the TV at the age of fifteen and played at a band. I also studied the drums at a 'municipal' school, 30 kilometers from Paris. I think the quality of jazz that we play, can be compared to that which is generally presented interest of Europe and USA. As I believe, we are good enough. Incidentally, we are all born in Paris, except for Danielle."

The gutarist, Frederic-Michel Bonneau who smiled amiably throughout the performance, could unfortunately not be interviewed, as sleep had overcome him, when one approached the band, at a local hotel room.

In replying to the question as to whether it is possible to mix the various genres of music in the world, the leader of the group Jacques Benhamou, replied, "We have not experimented ourselves, being short of time, keeping our main jobs as the focal point in our lives. We have not found the occasion or respite to experiment as yet."

The band has performed regularly at jazz clubs in France rad overseas. They have also participated in the French Channel 12/13". They have played before prestigious clubs, and their performances, as the one seen on February 17, have been held for charitable purposes, such as ones for orphans (as in Dhaka), paralized infants, and for cancer research units. They also played at the Film Fantastique Festival of '92 and 93, as well as the American Film Festival in '92. Furthermore, they perform regularly for private functions, such as the Club Mediterrancan in '93.

For part-time musicians, the group displayed tremendous energy, enthusiasm, skill and know-how. Such presentations from overseas shall surely create more pleasure for western music enthusiasts in the country, despite the fact that only the well-to-do can attend such performances - unless supplied with a free ticket, as was the case with the journalists of Dhaka, or if one was given tickets by friends, as one gathered from some of the members of audience present at the function.

The Veils are Going Up on the Iranian Screen

Beverly Andrews writes from London

In the 1970s Iranian cinemas were attracting up to 110 million people a year and its films were winning international recognition. The revolution changed all that. Many film-makers and artists were forced into exile. But despite restrictions from the government many film makers continue to excel. A season of Iranian films was recently organised in London. Gemini News Service reports on the revival of Iran's cinema.



FROM THE IRANIAN FILM DAWANDEH (THE RUNNER)

OPULAR images of Iran are of veiled women, fanatical soldiers and malevolent religious leaders. With growing Western unease about the spread of militant Islam, Iran has largely become a scapegoat for prejudice.

This society, a descendant of the great Persian empire, is often painted as barbaric and medieval with no cultural history. Western audiences would therefore be surprised to find out that Iran is rapidly becoming a cinema capital of the Islamic world where courageous film-makers under severe restrictions are making challenging films which are attracting an international audi-

The subjects of the films are diverse and include themes such as the traumatic affects of the Iran-Iraq war on returning soldiers in Marriage of the Blessed, a love triangle in the Iranian underworld in Nargess or Majid Nirumand's extraordinary autobiographical film. The Runner, the story of an orphaned child's fight for survival on the streets of Iran. It has been interpreted as a cry for resistance against oppression. The film is now widely being proclaimed a masterpiece.

These films are only a small sample of the current cinematic output in Iran which totals more than 70 films a year lout producing Britain by over three to one).

Film-making in Iran is not a recent development. These

films are simply the latest offering in a cinematic history which dates back to the turn of the century when the fifth Shah of the Qajar dynasty purchased a cine-camera for his court photographer Akkas Bashi while touring in Europe. All subsequent royal engagements were filmed.

Ebrahim Khan-Khalif Bashi an antique dealer and political progressive began to screen domestie and foreign films in the back of his shop in the early 1900s. Demand was so great, that he opened Iran's first cinema in 1905. He eventually encountered royal disapproval which forced him into exile where he subsequently died. This started a pattern of artistic achievement and official disapproval which would plague Iranian artists throughout this century.

By the thirties the political climate had changed again. Cinemas were opening throughout the country.

The first full length feature was shot in 1930 titled Abi and Rabi and was screened in 1931 in Tehran. Iran's first sound feature was shot shortly afterwards and started a love affair between the Iranian people and their cinema.

Directors have since made films which have received critical accolades and collected international awards. The Stone Garden made in 1976 received that year's Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival. In 1977 Marva Nabili, one of Iran's first woman directors, received the

three decades and includes theatre, cinema and television. She has appeared most recently in the controversial American film Not Without My Daughter. She told of her own plight under the Iranian government's tight grip on film-makers: "I stayed on for eight years

after the revolution but was eventually forced to leave because the government wanted me to act in a film which was simply propaganda. I refused and found myself banned. I had to leave like many other artists." And like many artists who

have struggled against the present regime she treats with cynicism recent moves towards a more liberal policy by the government: "If things are becoming easier it's because Iran wants a better relationship with the West not because they believe in giving democracy to the people." However, she is hopeful

about the future: "They will not be able to suppress the people forever, they (the mullahs) are simply keeping a lid on the pressure which will eventually Whether these films are the result of government liberalisa-

tion is debatable. What is more likely is that today's film makers are continuing in a longtradition started by many of Iran's first feature directors. that of bringing extraordinary films to the screen despite government opposition.

The hope is that their films' will not only help to humanise Iranian society to the West but also bring about a change in conditions within the country. Perhaps even artists like Parzaneh Tai 'ldi will soon be able to return. She certainly speaks for more than one extle when she says: "I am tried of foreign places I simply want to go home.

US-born BEVERLY AND REWS is a theatre actor currently working in London.

Sleepless Dream

by Gazi Sadeq

1 fell in love: Never before the world was so beautiful, Like many other beautiful things My love also didn't last long.

When happiness looms large Like pleasant dusk It disappears as quickly As the dusk does, as if A well-concerted conspiracy Brings forth a destined end of a sweet- weekend.

Memories are then the burden On the back of a tortoise crawling: Nights are heavy--- so heavy That they can be cut to pieces With a sharp sword.

Sometimes few city-dwellers

Live like a tree Dead but not fallen. If the winter moon can go totally waste If wasted is the miser's riches Or the youth of the poor The love of the Shakespearean youngman May very well be doomed.

I was condemned For being a night bird Like a truck-load of smuggled goods.

Heavy drinking added momentum To my already-achieved ill-fame. Being in love Couldn't bring me More ill-fame Than the pains of my heart.

I could tell ills of others To get the fake praise But brick-batting Kicks me not.

Could I not sleep at all In the winter nights If I would so desire?

I did never drink During my youthful days For my drinking lips Were imprisoned nights-long In a pair of flower-petals.

In those youthful winter nights I slept like a dead For then I used to dream. New sleep I never do And where There is no sleep There is no dream.

Cue taken from a Bengali poem by Asafuddowla.

Bangladesh in Diplomatic History

Continued from page 9 Bangladesh. This was an alltime record in the history of diplomacy when diplomats defected en masse to an emerging country. The news of large scale defection at Pakistan Embassy in Washington, DC on 4 August, 1971 received world wide at-

tention. Among the high ranking diplomats, who declared their allegiance for Bangladesh, names of Abdul Fatah, Abdul Momin and KK Panni are worth mentioning. All of them were holding Ambassadorial

Technically the first Bangladesh Mission was set up in Calcutta on 18 April, 1971 when Bengali diplomats stopped normal functioning at the Pakistan Deputy High

Learning the ABCs

Continued from page 9 Pakistan, or the Maldives. governments eventually en brace the method, a regional standard could even be in sight. A major boost to Southeast Asian economics has been a strong educational backbone. Forsberg cheerleads the workshop, "Let's get competitive. Let's put South Asia ahead in education"

Governments in our region have been harshly criticized by their own staff for a singular lack of attention to the necessity of hard data. Information gathering is woefully ne gleeted. Research branches of bodies like our Ministry of Education are punishment posts, lacking power or glamour, and manned by the flotsam of government service recruits. These essential information sources have pretty much run dry.

"Information is a tool of accountability," says Chowdhury. Al3C can be used to grade the government's performance. It will also give the government a chance to improve its grades before it's too late.

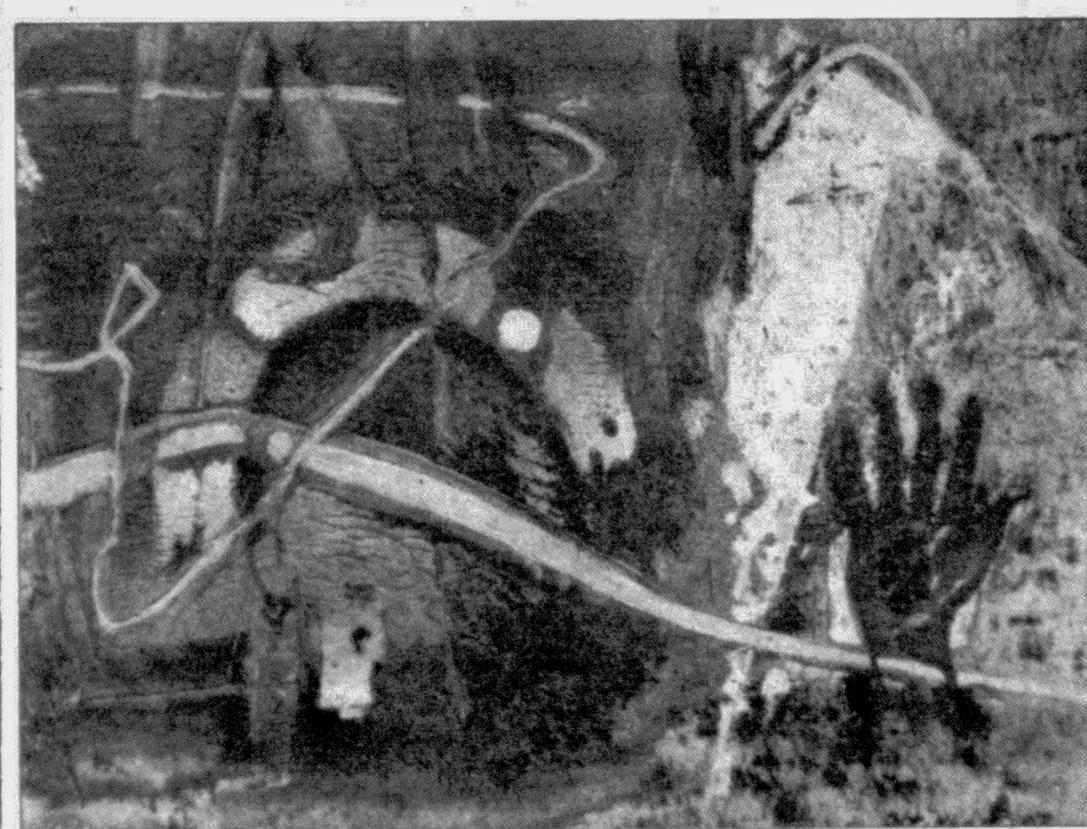
For a follow-up, see next week's Education page.

Commission and converted it into Bangladesh mission. It was followed by an information Centre which was set up in New Delhi on 26 April with KM Shehabuddin as its chief. On 6 December, 1971 Bangladesh Government in exile decided to open trade mission like trade representation of USSR, Romania, Czechoslovakie etc to establish commercial relations with different countries until Bangladesh is recognised by international community. The Covernment of India gave green signal to operate Bangladesh trade mission from Calcutta. That was indeed a success story of diplomacy in pre-liberation days. The role played by late

Justice Abu Sayced Choudhury after quitting the position of Head of Pakistan delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, was very effective. Late Justice Abu Sayeed Choudhury along with Bengali diplomats in different parts of the globe played a significant role in mobilising public cpinion against geno cide and in favour of recognition of 3angladesh. The role of the first Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Government in exile late Mahbubul Alam Chashi, who resigned, in protest, from Pakistar. diplomatic service during Ayub regime, has many caps to his credit in dealing with foreign policy. It would not be fair to ignore the role of lqbal Atar, a l'akistani diplo mat, who resigned in protest in 197! against repressive measures in erstwhile East Pakistan. Iqbal Atar joined the diplomatic corps of the newly independent Bangladesh and contributed single handedly towards improving the image of Bangladesh in Arab and African countries.

The fortitude, sagacity and sacrifice shown by Bangladeshi diplomats during the period of national crisis, will be remembered by the nation in the years to come. In the history of diplomacy their role will remain as an epoch making episode.

Reaching Beyond the "Isms"



FTHIKHARUDDIN Ahmed, who had his exhibition of paintings at "La Galerie" recently, excelled himself in the experimentation of "isms", combining nouveau themes, thoughts and styles of both Bangladesh and the West.

"I have two ideologies," said Ifthikhar, speaking about his works. "I keep in mind the sotal environment which in cludes rickshaws and stray women of Dhaka, as well as the rural landscape of the country, which I always pine after." Continuing about his pre-

sent works the artist procecded to say that he wanted to progress beyond the established "Isms" of Europe and U.S.A. "Mostly," he explained, 'I do experimental work, in which I want to bring in all the modern genres found overseas and depict the life that I see around me both in the city and the rural area

"We know that abstraction has come to a point of no progress beyond that which

has been already been established in the west. I believe that abstraction has come to a point of no progress, but I want to break this deadlock, and proceed ahead. I long to break out of the shackles and bars of the 'isms', although I am well aware of the fact that this will be a difficult venture for me to undertake. However, I believe that if an individual struggles non-stop, with zeal and determination, he may finally achieve what he ultimately seeks," the artist explained about his work.

The painter, scheduled to study at Paris shortly, added to his expression of beliefs, "Although I live in a third world country, where there is little scope for local art enthusiasts to view my latest endeavours, and I must depend largely on art magazines to get the latest information of what is going on in the art world globally, yet I believe my work will not be in vain."

In Paris, Ifthikhar clabo-

rated,"I expect to study all forms of art. In the meantime. I am pursuing an intensive course in French at the Alliance Française, in order to equip for the purpose of learning and practising a standard of painting that excels what I and my contemporaries have been doing in the past. In the process of my stay and studies at Paris, I hope to combine the best of the elements of the east and the west in my future works, I believe, in this mariner, I can present something. new and worthwhile to the world."

In his "Rejected Rickshaw", the artist depicted a broken rickshaw, with a background of ochre, and black and brown rectangles, as well as bars and streams of brilliant orange, outlined with black. While depicting the rejected rickshaws, the artist had in mind the broken dreams and the hopeless future of the poorer strata of so-ciety in Bangladesh. The effect

composition, the texture and the symbolism. "Revolution from '52-'71"

was powerful as regards the

delineated the back of a bievcle with crucifixes, and the important dates of 52, 69 and '71 of Bangladesh history were painted at the back of the speeding rickshaw. The dates were in Bangla, while the crucifixes were in white, grev. bright red and blue. Yellow arrows completed the design on the back of the rickshaw.

Another impressive piece was simply termed "Composition' with its brilliant triangles, semi-circles, balls and a backdrop of a melange of grey, brown and blue, depicting the confusion in the lives of the average Bangladeshi, who simply eke out an existence. This experimental and symbolic work with the depiction of branches, strings, and a section of a battered gun, was a careful composition that definitely made an impact on the art lovers of Dhaka.

Another piece, once again termed merely "Composition", had circles, a ball, strings, dried leaves in royal blue, yellow-ochre and vermilion. The melange of the objects again depicted the perpetual crises that the average Bangladeshi faces every day, to make a living. This was pulsating with colours, as was the case of each and every entry at the

"Sacrifice" was similarly a painting with intense feelings as the basis of the composition. Meanwhile, the images. colours, and style found in the painting were presented with care and dexterity. Our cultural heritage was carefully brought out in the garlanded sacrificial bull, and the strings of paper flags, found at festivals. The pale gold backdrop had a bold and dramatic effect when combined with the dark hues of the forefront.

Ifthikhar, who passed with flying colours in Fine Arts at D.U., has participated in three solo exhibitions and 18 group exhibitions. One can only say "bonne chance" to an artist of Iffhikhar's sense of values and integrity.

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