

LIVING

The Delightful Duo Cordier-Kirschner

by Fayza Haq

BLOND and curly haired Remy Cordier and solemn faced Michel Kirschner enthralled the Dhaka audience recently with their dedicated and superb duo performance of the flute and the guitar. The evening at the American International School proved to be an excellent soiree for lovers of music; despite their youth, the two musicians revealed their long experience of duet concerts, uniting a perfect complicity with a solid instrumental technique.

Michel Kirschner revealed his mastery of the difficult task of playing the guitar in Lobo's "Prelude No 3," which is an old well known European piece, while Remy Cordier made a dazzling demonstration as he accompanied his partner in Sor's "Encouragement", Piazzolla's "Tango 1900", Cimarosa's "Sonate en re", some Irish compositions, Sarasate's "Romance andalouse", Joplin's "The strenuous life", Paganini's "Sonate concertante", Debussy's "Syrinx", Piazzolla's "Night club" and "Carnival Venice".

The audience appreciated the warm velvet sonority of Remy who had Michel to accompany him on the guitar, which was precise, ample, and endowed with an irreproachable accuracy.

The duo performance sponsored by Association Francaise d'Action Artistique was quite complete, but Michel was equally competent in the solo guitar when he played Lobo's "Prelude", while Remy played elegantly, when performing by himself. Michel was a student of Minoru Inagaki and Alexander Logoya. People say, "His instrument is an extension of himself." They compare him also with Stogoria for the superb sounds created by his classical guitar.

Their greatest concern is not to be taken too seriously, they say. "We are beginning to make ourselves known. We are fortunate, the first year, to have criticism in the Washington Post and also in France-Amerique, which is read by all the people of the States. This has put us on the scene."

They added, "We search the scores, copies, adapted to instruments, and become original composers, mainly due to Gerard Iglisia who works with us: Our goal is to present pieces that we are the only ones to play."

Michel, 41, the guitarist explained that he picked up playing the guitar when he heard his friends playing it. He has been playing for 25 years

and teaching for 18 years. He is a professor of guitar in many schools. He himself practices for four hours every day and advises his student to "listen and practise".

"I met Remy in a musical school in '83 and realised that we had the same taste in music, and we both cared for classical and modern music. That is when we formed the duo. Personally my favourites are Piazzolla, Villa Lobos and Bach," Michel said.

Dwelling on whether the popularity of concert music was dropping or not in Europe, Michel remarked, "Many children in France and western European countries have regular music lessons. I believe that the popularity of concerts is the same as say two decades ago. In fact, now in France we have more concerts than before. Of course, these concerts are not all classical. I feel that the quality of concert performances all over Europe is the same."

During their recent tour the

duo gave eight performances at Trivandram, Pondicherry, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Goa, Ahmedabad, Poona and Bhopal. They also gave two performances at Sri Lanka. They liked the places as well as the audiences, Michel commenting, "I felt that the audience in Poona and Hyderabad were most enthusiastic. After playing at Dhaka and Chittagong, we proceed to Lahore, Islamabad

and Karachi. We have travelled before in South America, playing on cruises at Brazil and Rio," Michel informed.

Talking about guitars, Michel explained that there were three types of guitars — folk, electrical and classical (Spanish). He himself plays the classical guitar.

Dwelling on eastern music Michel commented, "I have heard Ravi Shankar and liked him very much." Considering the matter of combining notes of east and west in compositions such as the Beatles had done, he said, "I believe it is difficult to combine the eastern and western notes as they are intrinsically so different. There is only one renowned piece for the flute and guitar in which the notes have been mingled, as far as I know. In terms of classical music the two are different to mix. In modern music, however, if it is well done, I like it."

He admitted, "It is difficult to live on concerts alone and one must teach to make ends meet.

I myself have a fairly comfortable life. I give about 30 concerts a year. As for my students, I have 85 of them and do not find any difference in the performances of the boys and girls."

While Michel is relaxing, he likes to listen to country music of Joe Cash, Elvis Presley and Led Zepplin. He admitted that with the invasion of video programmes, more people now prefer to stay at home and become potato couches rather than make the effort to go to concerts.

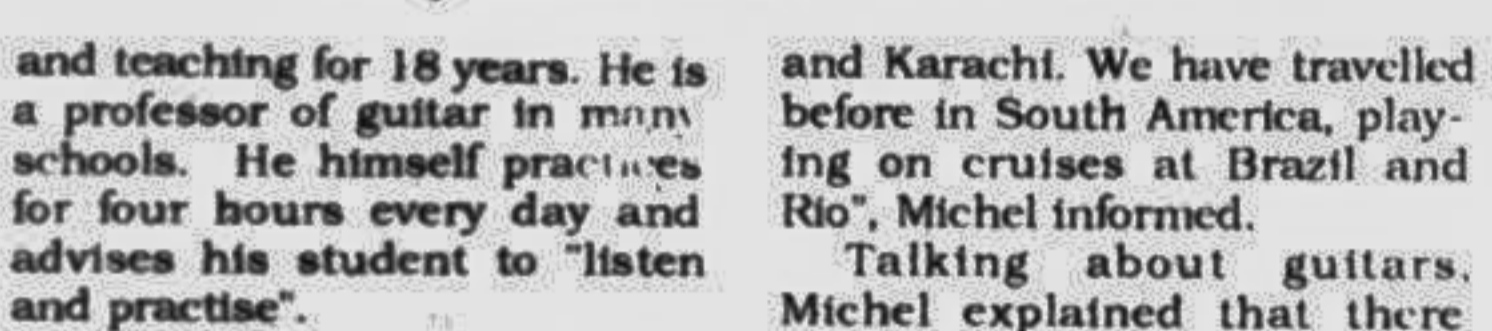
Remy Cordier the 34 year flautist, who looked much younger than age, began playing in public at the age of ten. He said, "I was very pleased with my audience in the Subcontinent. I found them very responsive. Coming from the west and looking at India and Bangladesh, I was not at all depressed by the dust and poverty — I found it different and was pleased with the warmth and hospitality of the people."

Speaking about his career Remy said, "I am the only musician in the family and my people have never objected to my profession."

Talking about his favourites he named Vivaldi, Boccherini, Mercadante among the Italians and Jolivet and Messian among the French. Having played the flute for 20 years and having been a teacher for ten years, his advice to music students is "Listen well and practise". Remy was well aware that the Subcontinent was a place of fantastic flute playing and had listened to Indians playing the flute earlier. He was exposed to eastern music while at France. Dwelling on the idea of mixing western and eastern notes, Remy commented, "The concept of combining the two music is interesting but the result is not necessarily successful."

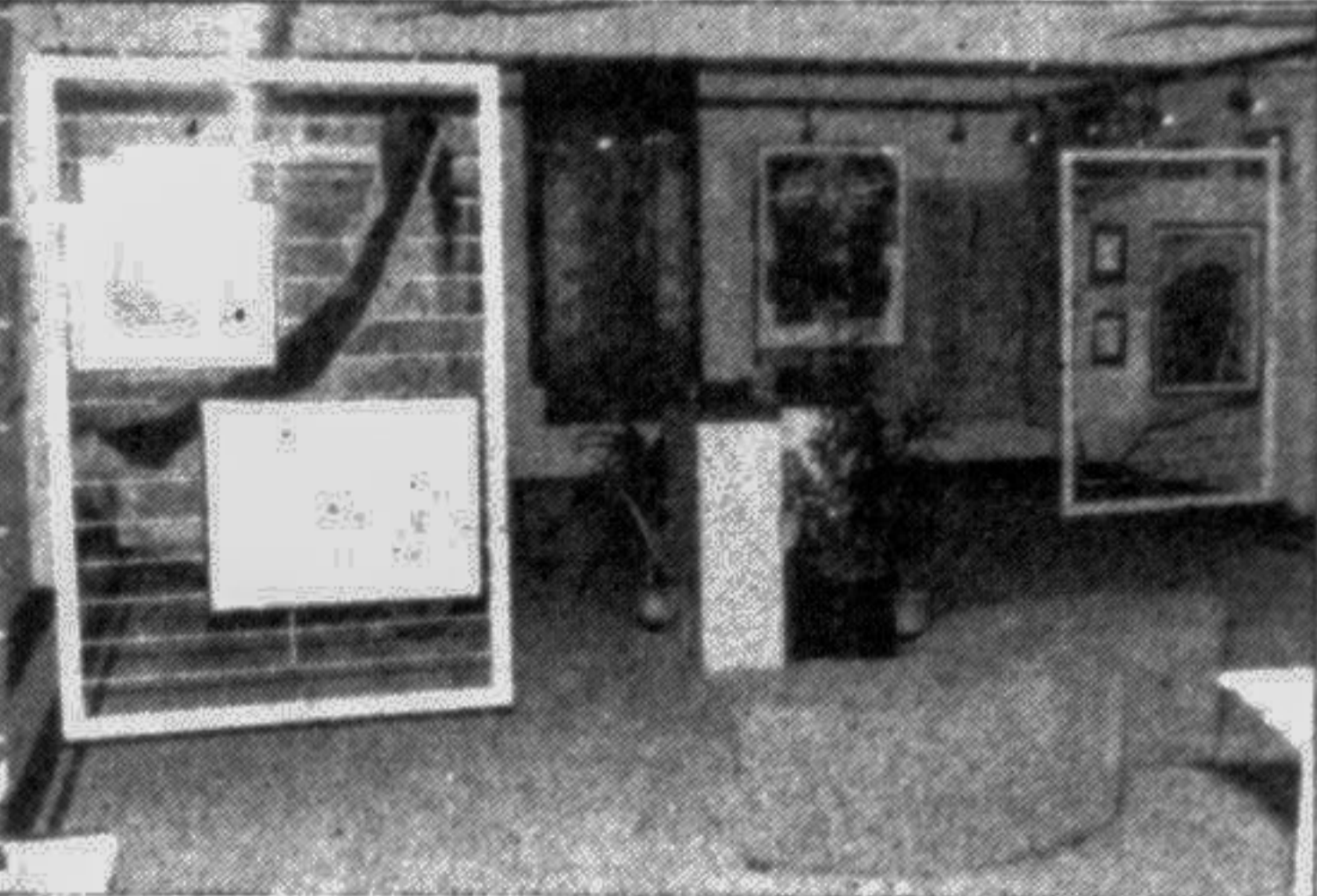
The duo concert was a welcomed entertainment for an autumn evening, as it is not often that foreign musicians come to Dhaka to let us sample their expertise.

Remy Cordier and Michel Kirschner



Five Years of La Galerie

This year La Galerie's auction will be preceded by a week long exhibition of the paintings to be auctioned. This opened on December 10th and will remain open to the public till December 16th from 9 am to 8 pm. The auction will take place on December 17th, 11.30 am onwards.



La Galerie

La Galerie's dream is to go beyond the national art world by inviting participation from outside the country. In this venture it has been very successful with exhibitions by two noted painters from neighbouring West Bengal, India: Shuvaprasanna and Sovon Som. Those who saw Shuvaprasanna's series on birds will long remember it. Sovon Som's exhibition was followed by a lively seminar on contemporary art of the region. La Galerie's vision is to make more and more such delightful events possible.

Today Dhaka sees a boom of art galleries. When La Galerie had started its journey, there were few private art galleries in Dhaka. So far, the organizers have been able to keep the

gallery running without making it a totally commercial venture. La Galerie believes that art exposure to public is at an embryonic stage and therefore thinks frequent exhibitions help the public to acquaint themselves with art. Some might criticise and relate its activity with what the producers of powdered milk product did by giving away the free powdered milk through the Red Cross back in the sixties. Unfortunately, this is the way of inducing the people to get used to something. Sometimes it is good, sometime it is bad.

In Bangladesh, collectors of art have so far been limited to a small circle of urban elites. Few middle class art lovers can afford to spend thousands of taka on a painting or a sculpture.

But the rapid growth of art galleries in Dhaka in the recent years indicates that art now attracts a wider circle of people. It is true, that the major collectors are still those people with money to spare; nevertheless, art lovers with limited resources are also venturing into the market, albeit timidly. With the growing number of galleries and exhibitions, people in general are getting an opportunity to see, enjoy and appreciate art.

To promote enthusiasm and excitement about art among the artists and art lovers, La Galerie held an auction of art in December 1991. It was also an attempt to raise some funds for the non-commercial gallery. Almost all the leading artists of the country participated in the auction. Shuvaprasanna, a renowned painter from India also joined in. The auctioneer, despite his total inexperience did an excellent job. Tim Bridges, an expatriate British gentleman has now become La Galerie's permanent auctioneer. It was great fun and excitement. So it has been the last year, with more artists taking part in the event. And hopefully, it is going to be the same this year.

Fifty artists are participating in the 1993 exhibition/auction of La Galerie. Artists both young and senior are participating in this annual event. The names include: Professors Saifuddin, Mohammad Kibria, Abdul Baset, Amjad Islam, Qayyum Chowdhury and Abdur Razzaque.

—G.B.

LET me confess at once that my interest in looking at pictures stems from adolescent prurience. As a schoolboy I remember whiling away many hours in the British Council and USIS libraries gazing at the voluptuous Titans, the titillating Tintoretos and the recumbent Goyas; the list could go on. The beauty and magnificence of the female form was first revealed to me through these art books, and willy-nilly, as I began to leaf through them,

Galleries Galore

by Shaukat Hussain

produced a thousand times cannot provide the same aesthetic satisfaction of reading a book that millions of other readers are reading simultaneously. Art books, reproductions and posters can develop taste, increase awareness of trends and traditions and generate

paramount importance is that these galleries afford viewers the opportunity of first hand experience of Bangladeshi art. Non-commercial institutional galleries (sometimes little more than a corridor and a room) like the Institute of Fine Arts DU; Shilpakala Academy; Alliance

loving home-makers (or corporate officers) to see and possibly buy some of them. As an interior designer, Akku Chowdhury found that blank walls had to be filled up and there was no place to buy good paintings; he solved his own problem by setting up "La Galerie." Now, five years later, the gallery is booked heavily for a whole year with back to back exhibitions each week. The last two to three years have also been very busy for "La Galerie" with weekly ex-

dabbler and the dilettante) places in which to experience the direct aesthetic encounter even if it baffles more often than it pleases. Galleries simply bring together the art entrepreneur, the artist and the viewer in one place — and that is a good thing.

Bangladeshi art is on display today on a scale and frequency unimaginable even two years back. For those of us who are neither art wheelers nor art collectors, these galleries provide regular exposure to productions in the art world that would otherwise remain unknown. Art wheelers are those who through carefully cultivated friendships, through flattery or cajolery, have built up impressive collections which could turn them rich overnight; art collectors, of course, are persons with fat wallets, some with discriminating tastes who buy what they want, and some who are hustled to buy when they do not know what they want. In the middle are persons of modest means who yearn to buy but cannot. We all know that there is no direct relation between the production cost of a painting and the price that it fetches — when it sells at all. Only the mysterious mystique of art can partially explain the price of a Van Gogh which recently fetched over 43 million dollars at an auction. Very few Bangladeshi painters can aspire to the high price of a Zainul, or a Quamrul, or even a Sultan or Kibria, and it might be worth while for gallery operators and artists to consider pricing the pieces more reasonably. The issue is more complicated than I have stated it, but it is well-worth considering.

Two other concluding remarks come to mind: the frequency of exhibitions and the quality of brochures/catalogues published to introduce the exhibitions. My own feeling is that galleries should, if possible, have a permanent or semi-permanent collection of good art ("Shilpangan" comes to mind) and must not always feel the necessity of "exhibiting" each week.

Second, and more important is the quality of the brochures/catalogues that are published: they mostly look good but are invariably very badly written. Hastily written introductions with innumerable printing errors are inexcusable, and it is up to the gallery owners to take this up seriously. If this cannot be done, then simply let the paintings speak and spare us the agony of the language that seeks to explain them.



Shilpakala Academy

prurience took a back seat, and I became fascinated by the power and mystery of great art. Later as a college and university student I started buying my own art books, not one of which cost more than Taka 20. It was as a graduate student in North America in the late '70s that I had my first truly exhilarating and liberating experiences of confronting great art face to face.

A painting or a sculpture, by the very nature of the art, re-

excitement: It is the next best thing to an actual visceral contact with a real Van Gogh. Eighteen years back when I first saw a real Van Gogh in the National Gallery in London I instinctively reached out to touch it and was promptly snubbed by one of those ubiquitous security men. Now I know better.

There are about a score of art galleries of various kinds in Dhaka and my hands are always in my pocket when I go to one of them. What is of



Shilpangan

hibitions of artists good and bad, minor and major, well-known and anonymous, local and foreign. Perhaps a little too much of a good thing?

Since 1992, five or six new art galleries have sprung up in the most unlikely locations: "Shilpangan" on Rd 4, Dhanmandi, "Jolon" in Central Road, and "Gallery Tone" in the ground floor of a house off Rd No 1 in Dhanmandi. A cluster of art galleries in one area seems to be a good idea.

Certainly this phenomenon of galleries sprouting up in each street corner (a bit like the garments industry) is encouraging; these new galleries are giving artists — young and old — walls on which to bang their works, and art-lovers of all kinds (the conscious, the serious, the



A scene from a Christmas party for children held recently at the residence of the French Ambassador Jean-Paul Lacombe. Cakes, sweets, presents and a Walt Disney video film thrilled the children. Santa Claus arrived in a white horse carriage.

Care-Free Legs

treatment and prevention of such conditions.

Varicose Veins
Varicose veins occur when the little valves in the leg veins break down and therefore stop the free circulation of the blood.

If you let them become a serious problem, they will not only spoil the look of your legs, but cause you a great deal of pain and discomfort.

With care and a simple routine, however, you can prevent varicose veins from forming.

Make a point of putting your feet up whenever you can — always at a slant, so that the blood can round back down again easily and ease the pressure in the veins.

When you have a bath, finish off by splashing your legs alternately with hot and cold water. This is good for improving circulation generally, and will also give you a beauty bonus by keeping your skin smooth and free from goose-pimples.

If you find your legs get tired easily, or you notice the beginning of varicose veins, it is a good idea to wear elasticised support hose or a special supporting stocking.

Bad cases of varicose veins can be treated by a minor operation. In any case, if you have even slight traces of swollen veins, you should consult your doctor immediately.

Swollen Ankles

Thick ankles and swollen ankles are another drawback to shapely legs. If yours seem swollen all the time or swell up very easily and often, consult your doctor, as this might be a sign of kidney or heart trouble.

But a far more common cause of swollen ankles is just plain tired feet after a hard day. The best way to avoid this ankle-swelling is to make sure that your shoes are really comfortable and not too high-heeled if you have to be on your feet a lot.

Girls with standing-all-day

jobs should take a medium-heeled pair to change into at work. Cramming your poor feet into those oh-so-elegant-but-just-too-tight shoes never pays off. No matter how smart the shoes are, no girl is at her best with a look of strain on her face, due to aching, swollen feet and ankles.

If your ankles do swell after a long day's shopping, sit with your feet up for 15 minutes. Then plunge your feet into hot and cold water alternately.

You will find your feet will stay more comfortable if, before going out in the morning, you apply one of the preparations for keeping them cool and fresh throughout the day.

Ankles which are least likely to swell up from tiredness are those which are taken good care of regularly. So every night at bedtime make a point of massaging your legs from the ankles to the knees, always working upwards. It is a good idea to rub them with hand lotion before you start. This not only makes the massage movement easier but also gives a soothing, softening treatment to the skin of the legs.

—MS

Cookery

Cauliflower Canapes

boiled cauliflower
thick white sauce
grated cheese

seasoning of powdered mustard
white pepper
fried bread croutons

Cut out some of the sprigs of the cauliflower very carefully, to avoid breaking them up, and separate each little "flower" head as neatly as possible with a sharp pointed knife. Season the white sauce very well with the mustard and pepper, add enough grated cheese to give a good flavour, and re-heat in a double saucepan, stirring well until the cheese dissolves. Leave to cool slightly, then mix in the prepared cauliflower. Cover the pan with a cloth wrung out of hot water, and leave to become cold. With a small teaspoon put a heap of the mixture in the centre of each crouton, cover with grated cheese, and place under a hot grill just long enough to brown the top lightly.

N.B. This method of preparing Vegetable Savouries may be adopted with almost any cooked vegetable, but asparagus, leeks, mushrooms, a mixture of peas with diced carrots and turnips, and cabbage are, perhaps, the most suitable.

Egg Boats

3 hard-boiled eggs
about 2 rounded teaspoonfuls butter
2 dessertspoonfuls cream
cheese
gherkin to garnish
ovals of bread and butter

white pepper
salt

Remove the shells from the eggs very carefully, cut into quarters, and put the yolks through a fine sieve to powder them. Wipe out the yolk-cavities with a damp cloth, and allow the egg cases to chill in a covered dish.

Mix the cheese and butter with the yolks until a very smooth paste is formed, season to taste. Cut the gherkin into long strips, very thin, and cut into angle-shaped pieces to

form the "sails" Pipe a small round of the yolk mixture in the centre of each piece of bread, and fix the egg-quarters rounded side down, to look like small boats. Fill in the cavities with the piped mixture in a neat, very small pattern, carrying the decoration up to the two pointed ends of the egg. Press in the gherkin sails, and chill until wanted.

When cream cheese is not available use any soft cheese. Grate very finely, or press thin slices through a fine sieve, then pound to a smooth paste or mash against the sides of a basin with the back of a wooden spoon. If the cheese is not quite smooth, the mixture will stick in the icing tube, the grains of cheese creating a blockage. SL



Australian fashion a) blouse with Peter Pan collar b) black printed blouse with tie collar.