

ART

Recalling the Recent Past

by Fayza Haq

PROSHANTA Karmakar's exhibition on Bangabandhu at the Gallery Tone was something that the young artist was aspiring for a long time, his being the first solo exhibition on the sensitive subject. Artists like Shahabuddin have dealt with the subject but no one so far has devoted an entire theme on a single exhibit. Proshanta has been working on the topic for seven months. The display included etchings on paper, silk screen photo etchings and acrylic works, the last prevailing over the rest as there is more fun playing with colours," as the artist puts it. There were 35 displays in all, and the approach varied from semi-abstract to realistic. "The exhibition was geared at the common man," Proshanta explained.

The artist had been intimidated about bringing out

abstract manner. She was a wife waiting for her man to return from the battle field. The backdrop was a beautiful melange of grey and salmon pink in which was an imposed impression of a stem of fern. It was a circular moon to the right to lend the element of romance. Further circles of white, grey and brown. Fragments of newspapers completed the composition. The detailed work on the woman drove home the fact that she was pining for the comfort of the company of her husband.

"History-5" had the face of a bearded father. There was a pile of corpses to the right. There was the face of the other parent to the centre, obviously frightened by all that she has seen of the Liberation War. Near the centre was the upright hand of the victorious freedom

the country had to make. The face of the grieving father was seen once more in "Endless Waiting". On his face was seen an envelope. This was pasted and the print was juxtaposed on it. The letter in the envelope represented the son who had left home at the call of Bangabandhu — during the Liberation period. The green and white in the background consisted of newspaper clippings of that time. This too brought in the theme of sacrifice by the common man.

"Victim of lust", woodcut etching brought in a woman who was beautiful but at the same time very desolate and sunk in doldrums. This was done with a three-dimensional effect. The outlines of the face and bosom had been done in a suggestive manner. It was semi-realistic and had the child like touch of the naive artists. The picture was



like some newspaper collage. The paints used ranged from green to gold. Images of four sheets of newspaper were used to balance them. These too, were again, embossed. These were sketched in with bars, circles and swirls of colours. The buoyant colours brought in the element of happiness contentment and passion of Liberation.

"History 1" had four scenes amalgamated into a single whole. These were images of deprivation, death and warfare — people amassing together with hunger, piling of corpses, parades with upright bayonets. On the fourth rectangle Bangla alphabets were scattered. Liberation was shown as a struggle for the people's language. This had won an award in '92 at the Shilpakala Academy.

Almost like an image in gold was seen the shadow of the proud father of the "muktijoddha" in the background in "Flame of Freedom". In front was seen the book of the freedom fighter and by its side was

placed a candle. The father's face was ablaze with pride over his son's great sacrifice of life for the country.

There were many portraits of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and one of the most impressive one was "Leader of the People". The portrait with moustaches and spectacles was suggested on the background, which was covered with dollops of colour — mainly red and green.

In "Bridge" — I, II and III the artist had brought in the leader making peace with leaders of other countries such as France, India and the Soviet Union, just after the Liberation War. The images are blurred newspaper clipping ones done on silk screen, orange, red and green along with black had been used in profusion.

Proshanta has participated in many overseas exhibit and this is his third solo show in the country, earlier ones being held at Faridpur, his home town, and at Alliance Francaise (Dhaka).



such an exhibition but political pressures have not daunted him. "I believe that we got our freedom quickly enough because of Bangabandhu. However, I am personally generally apolitical."

fighter. Nearby was seen the image of a large crowd, a bird which one often came across during the struggle for independence. The dark bold images had a soft setting. There was aquamarine with shades of white and yellow. The photographic images depicted well the suffering and effort that went into the Liberation War, and the sacrifices that

not dull or insipid although the theme was apparently a sombre one of mistreatment of women. The colours used were gold and pink, touched with grey. "Freedom", a woodcut, is again not totally realistic. Images of flying birds are embossed and appeared almost luminous. At the same time the doves appeared

Tribute to Stephen Spender

by A Staff Correspondent

THE Bishwa Sahitya Kendra recently held a memorial meeting on Stephen Spender, the front-ranking British poet, who died on July 16, 1995 at a London hospital. He was 86.

Jakaria Shirajee at the meeting presented the keynote paper on Spender, better known as Oxford Poet. Poet Abdul Mannan Syed and writer Khandakar Majharul Karim took part in the discussion on the paper presented on the leading poet of the thirties. Professor Zillur Rahman Siddique was on the chair.



Stephen Spender (1909-95)

Shirajee in his paper says, there are some poets or writers, in every age, who are — rightly or wrongly — considered as the representative of their age or times. Spender is one such poet who is generally regarded as the voice of the tumultuous thirties. He is also labelled as the Shelley of the generation of thirties, the Rupert Brooke of the age of Crisis. The literary movement that centred on W H Auden. Spender was the hero of it and always at the centre stage of all the activities.

In his remarkable book on the time of tribulation prior and leading to the Second



Jakaria Shirajee presenting his keynote paper.

World War "The Thirties and After", Spender wrote, Shirajee mentioned, "It was the decade when young writers consciously involved themselves in politics." And it was also the time Spender identified as "spiritually barren". The age, in Spender's illustrious contemporary W H Auden's phrase is "The Age of Anxiety". Spender's poems are replete with themes, Shirajee observed, of unemployment, politics, restlessness and a sense of aimlessness which are also the identifying marks of the time. The result was a sort of loneliness and one would defini-

tely encounter the images of loneliness that comes as a leitmotif in his poems. Poet Mannan Syed discussing on the late poet explained how the Bengali poets of the sixties, including himself, were influenced by Spender and to what extent.

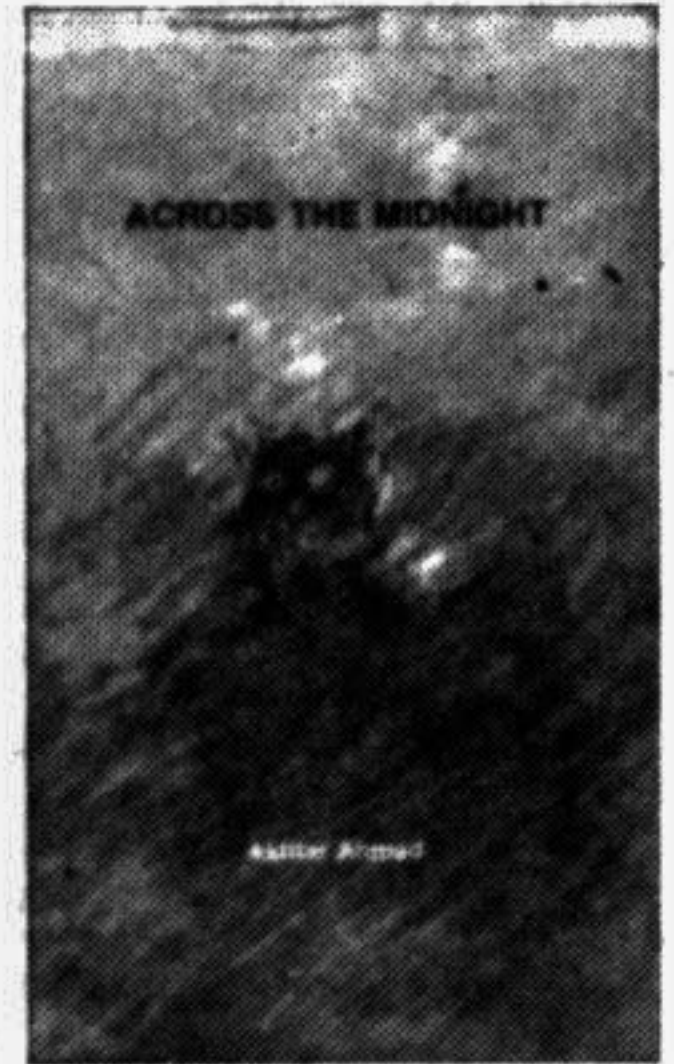
Siddique in his presidential speech said Spender throughout his life brooded over the fate of mankind. And he always believed that the greatest power of man is his love for his fellow human being. Siddique read out a number of poems by Spender before rounding off.

Towards Nocturnal Tranquillity and After

BOOK REVIEW

AKHTAR Ahmad is a Marxist by heart but has firm belief in the after-world. Among his occupations are teaching, NGO services, business executive

in comparison with the vast circle described by the sun, and let him wonder at the fact that this vast circle is itself but a very fine point in comparison with that de-



Across The Midnight : A Collection of Poems by Akhtar Ahmad First Ed. June, 1995. Published by Shahida Khanam. Price Tk 25.00.

and at times odd jobs. Was an athlete in his young days and now is in his mid forties. This is his first effort as a poet. He told about his poetic utterances in a lucid poem: "The nature synchronized/With my thought./As if/I made an unuttered pact/With the rivers, mountains, trees, birds, etc./Which betrayed me in its due course./Is the nature as helpless as I am?/Maybe yes, may be no./Who the hell knows! The title of the poem is: 'The Gist Of My Poem'.

Pascal expressed immaculately in Pensées: 'Let man contemplate the whole of nature in her full and grand majesty, and turn his vision from the low objects which surrounded him. Let him gaze on that brilliant light, set like an eternal lamp to illumine the universe, let the earth appear to him a point

scribed by the stars in their revolution round the firmament. But if our view be arrested there, let our imagination pass beyond; it will sooner exhaust the power of conception. The whole visible is only an imperceptible atom in the ample bosom of nature.' Wittgenstein admonished: 'Whereof you cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.' In his epoch-making 'Tractatus', as if to substantiate him Akhtar Ahmad reiterates in the poem, 'Mere Words': 'Silence can be understood;/With a very attentive mood;/If silence is ever revealed;/Will not it be much, much more/Than what was ever said?/Alas words are always inadequate.'

Mallarme wrote: 'Poetry is written with words, not ideas.' The poems of Akhtar Ahmad have so many undertones, form and content.

Reviewed by Syed Faizur Rahman

ENTERTAINMENT

A Novel Effort

by A Staff Correspondent

THE other day artists of the Bangladesh Freedom Fighting Artists' Association met after nearly twenty-four years of its foundation. In the days of the liberation war, they inspired the freedom-loving people in the training camps, liberated zones, and refuge camps through their songs, puppet show and other events.

Participants at the meeting included Benu Mahmud, Shaheen Samad, Bipul Bhattacharya, Tareq Ali, Swapan Chowdhury, Nalla Khan, Millia Ali, Sharmeen Morshed, Lubna Mariam and Moshad Ali. Their discussions were recorded in cassettes and cameras for the package magazine programme 'Tomar Pare Thekal Matha' to be telecast by Bangladesh Television produced by the organisation, 'A Demain'.

Apart from the gossips of the artists, the subject of the programme included a restored document on the liberation war from the USA. Noted US producer Liar Levin filmed the happenings of the liberation war in 1971 coming all the way from his country. For this programme,

an interview of Levin had been arranged in New York. From the footage of Liar Levin and having procured documents from various countries, Tareq and Cathrine Masud have produced 'Songs of the Freedom'. Interview of these latter two, story of the pictures and other rare pictures will be contained in the package programme.

Novelist Hasnat Abdul Hai has initiated the effort of writing a novel basing on the Artists'

Association. Levin's work and Songs of the Freedom. In an interview he has mentioned about this.

Many documents of our liberation war are scattered over in many countries and a number of personalities have viewed in this programme how those could be retrieved.

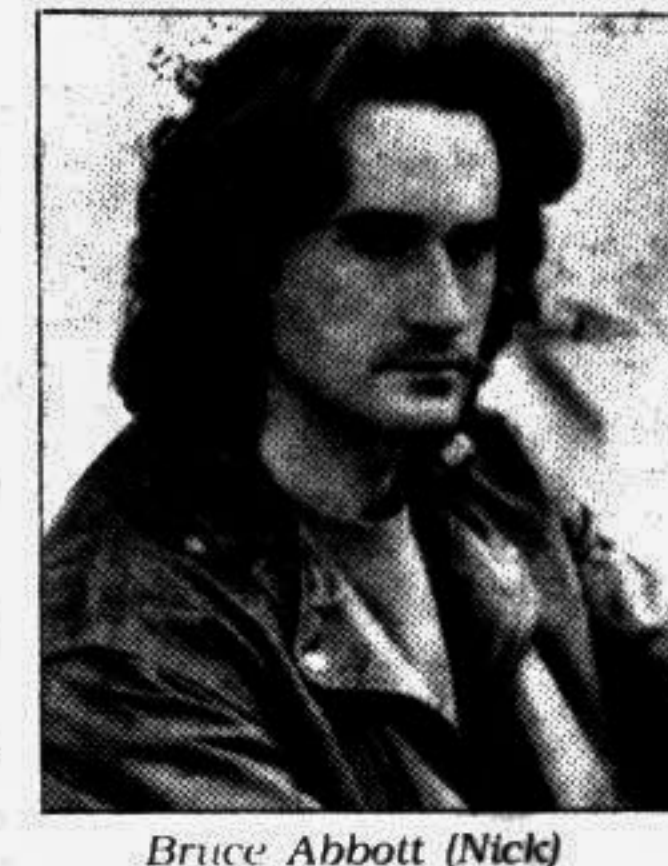
This is the first package magazine programme of 'A Demain'. This organisation has decided to undertake regular programmes on many untold events of the liberation war of 1971.

The work on 'Tomar Pare Thekal Matha' will be ending this month.



Dark Justice: "Jail Bait"

A small child is kidnapped and held for ransom by a criminal named Jake Traxler (Anthony Dean Fields). But, just as the money is delivered, Traxler suspects that police are in the area, and kills the child. He escapes with the money, but his accomplice and girlfriend, Lorna Biggs (Terry Donahoe), is captured by the police. Though she is wrongly accused of the child's murder, Lorna refuses to testify against Traxler. Therefore it is nearly impossible to prove him guilty.



Bruce Abbott (Nick)

Judge Nicholas "Nick" Marshall's (BRUCE ABBOTT) friend, Kelly Cochran (Janet Gunn), investigates the case and realizes Traxler is guilty. Kelly volunteers to pose as a prisoner and share a cell with Lorna. Kelly plans to tell Lorna that Traxler is also Kelly's lover. Then Lorna will testify against Traxler in a jealous rage. Nick's loyal friends Arnold "Moon" Willis (Dick O'Neill) and Jericho "Gibs" Gibson (Clayton Prince) give Kelly information about Traxler's private life, so her story will be convincing.

When Traxler poses as a guard and breaks into prison to free Lorna, she turns on him, believing that he has betrayed her with Kelly. A riot breaks out in the prison. So on the police arrest Traxler for murder, with the help of testimony from the bitter Lorna.

Time Trax: "M.I.A"

DARIEN Lambert's (Dale Midkiff) physical prowess in capturing a fugitive impresses Ev Rankin (Ronny Cox), a bystander. Ev asks Darien to help rescue Ev's son, John (Nique Needles), who was taken as a prisoner during the Vietnam War. Sympathetic to the old man, Darien suspends his fugitive retrieval activities to accompany Ev to Cambodia.

In Cambodia, the sadistic Colonel Tenn (Francois Chau) keeps John captive, torturing and starving him. Tenn sends a videotape of John to the US Embassy and demands a ten million dollar ransom for his release. Darien's computerized companion, Selma (Elizabeth Alexander), searches her history files and reports that although the payment will be made by a US corporate entity, John will be killed anyway. Darien must

which the orphaned Darien never experienced himself. On Wednesday (30-8-95) at 9:00 pm on BT. On Sunday (27-8-95) at 9:00 pm on BT.

Viewing Video

by Lenin Gani

Squanto A Warrior's Tale is the story of a young Indian. Squanto (Adam Beach) is about to be married. However what was to be the proudest moment in his life is rudely interrupted when a group of foreign bounty hunters kidnap him and another Indian and take them back to England.

Upon arrival in the new land Squanto manages a daring escape. His journey leads him to a seclusive band of monks.

Initially the leader of the monks doesn't hold Squanto in high esteem. Squanto finds a friend who is eager to learn about the Indian's origins.

Gradually he is accepted by all and sundry. In fact he teaches them a thing or two. Now two years have passed and he is feeling homesick. Sensing this the monks make arrangements for his passage home.

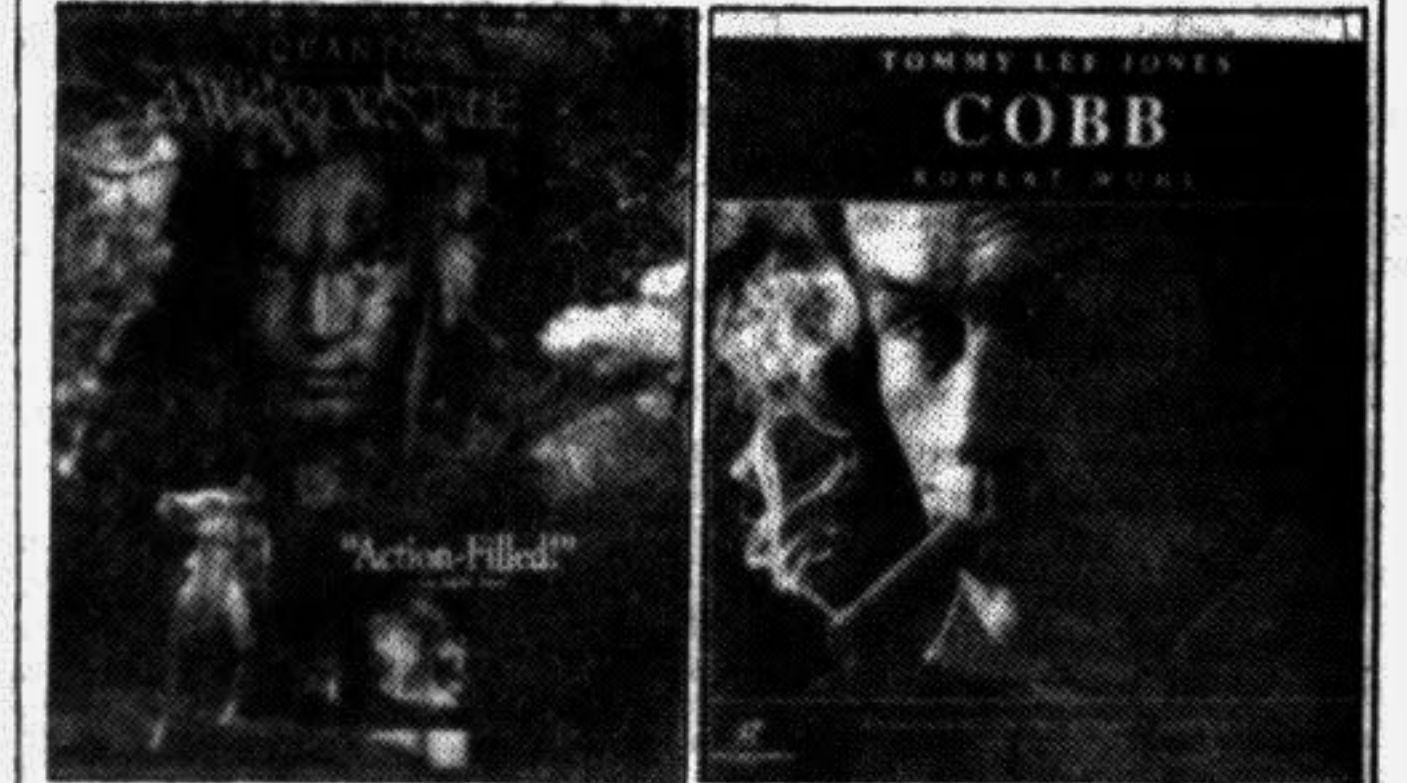
Squanto finds home is not what it used to be like. The first white pilgrims have begun setting up settlements.

Cobb narrates the true account in the life and times of the probably the meanest ever player to don a baseball cap - Ty Cobb. Tommy Lee Jones plays the part to perfection.

Despite being the first Hall of Famer, his reputation for dishing out frequent racist and nasty remarks, swinging his fists often overshadowed his personal milestones. Hence he was the player crowds would love to hate.

Even in his final days he loved to womanise and was fascinated by guns.

A budding journalist Robert Wuhl has the task of glorifying Cobb for what he was not in Cobb's biography. Though Wuhl is determined to give the facts so he devises a method of compiling to contrasting versions.



ENGLISH		
Name	Type	Cast
1. Andre	(True story)	Keith Carradine/Tina Majorino/ Chelsea Field
2. Sunset Grill	(Act / Thriller)	Peter Weller/Lori Singer/ Alexandra Paul/John Rhys-Davies
3. The Thing (Dir: John Carpenter)	(Sci-Fi/ Horror)	Kurt Russell
4. Incident at Deception Ridge	(Act/Adv)	Michael O'Keefe/Ed Begley Jr/Linda Purl
5. Fence	(Drama)	Stacy logan Billy Wirth
6. Rollerblade	(Act/Adv)	Warriors
HINDI		
Name	Type	Cast
1. Dil Ka Doctor	(Comedy)	Anupam Kher
2. Hum Dono	(Rom /Act)	Rishi Kapoor/ Pooja Bhatt/ Nana Patekar
3. Ajeeb Dastan Hain Hai	(Musical/ Rom)	
4. Duets All The Way Vol-3 (Film Fair Video Presentation)	(Romantic Melodies)	
5. Naya Nagme		
Vol-35		

Source: Film Fair Video and other clubs

Book News

A Perspective in Development: Gender Focus by Raana Haider, Published by the University Press Limited

The study of women and development in a gender perspective is the re-examination of the myth that development is gender blind; that the trickle-down benefits of development equally reach women and men; and the assumption that all household members enjoy the same benefits and the same constraints; the intra-household allocation of resources being equal. In fact, gender bias at the macro-level development and at the micro-level household unit is pervasive and manifests itself in the differential allocation of the benefits of cash, food, education, training, credit, land title and health care. Gender in development focuses on the relationship between availability of resources and accessibility to those resources.

A Perspective in Development: Gender Focus analyzes the interrelationship between women and development, its manifestation on the lives of women in developing countries and the underlying importance of empowering women for sustainable development. The book

A PERSPECTIVE IN DEVELOPMENT Gender Focus



is envisaged as an introduction and further resource material for policy-makers, academicians, researchers and students of development. The author, Raana Haider is a sociologist, lectures in Women and Development at the Cairo Demographic Center (CDC) 1994-1995. She was a member of the Bangladesh delegation to the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 1994. She has published a number of articles on population, development and environment linkages and gender issues, including women's role in development, women and the environment and the feminization of poverty.