

FOCUS

DANCE FESTIVAL '97

Taking Corporate Patronage to Art

by Ayesha Fariha



Leela Samson: Bharat Natyam



Madhabi Mudgal: Odissi

THE history of Bengal illustrates that Hindu zamindars patronised the arts. It is largely on account of the zamindars' avid interest in music, and their generosity that Bengal was the seat of many of the gurus, such as Alauddin Khan, the guru of Ravi Shankar, and Enayet Khan, father of one of the greatest living sitar players — Vayet Khan. Gradually, however, religion and politics interfered with the pursuit of the arts, and the debacle of the cultural demise in Bengal has been so severe that there are no good teachers left in our part of it. As classical music has no written notations, its existence is sustained through the vocal tradition of teacher to student, and if there are no good teachers, well...

The case for dance is far worse. There is no tradition of social or classical dancing in the Bengalis' heritage, until Rabindranath Tagore brought the first teacher in the late 1920s. His legacy, the Robindro Nritta Dhara and that of Uday Shankar, the Creative Dance Form, which are the only two forms of dance in existence in Bangladesh today are in great danger of vanishing, what with the mass appeal of pop culture and all.

Are there any solutions to obstruct the virtual extinction of the arts in our country? While most of us are not even aware of what cultural degradation actually implies, and complacently turn our attention to Channel [V] and Zee TV, Shadrona brings a glimmer of hope. From its inception four years ago, Shadrona, which is a small group consisting of five people, has done much to create awareness. Its purpose is to bring in classical teachers from India, and it has organised music and dance functions with such distinguished performers as Leela Samson, and the Kandy dancers of Sri Lanka, to name a few. At present, Shadrona is busy adding the final touches to its most ambitious project to date — the Fair and Lovely Dance Festival '97 sponsored by Lever Brothers, the aim of which is to emphasise the importance of classical dance. Says Alim-ur-Rahman Khan, the Chairperson of Shadrona, "It is hoped that the Indian performers will set a standard for

our local artistes, and inspire them to achieve that standard."

The festival extends from February 28th to March 11th and features two Kathak performances by Prerana Shrimali, two Mohiniyattam performances by Bharati Shivaji, two Odissi performances by Madhuri Mudgal, two Bharat Natyam performances by Leela Samson, and two dance dramas

by the local artistes. Of the latter, one troupe will perform Tagore's Chandalika, directed by Sharmila Bannerjee with the music direction by Rizwana Choudhury, at the opening night of the festival; a troupe consisting of students of the Jago Art Centre, the dance school founded by the late Gauhar Jamil, will perform the Folk Dance Drama called Kanchonmala at the closing. In be-

tween the festival performances the visiting Indian dancers will participate in two other functions. The International Dance Council, presided by Laila Hasan has organised a dance workshop at the Shilpkala Academy on the 3rd of March, and the Bangladesh Protibondi Foundation has organised a programme named "Sankriti", at the National Museum Auditorium on the 10th of March,

the proceeds of which will go towards the rehabilitation of handicapped children.

The four Indian performers each require about 5 accompanists, and their entourage includes a total of 22 persons. The local participants number include about 40 dancers and other artists. Unfortunately, the Chandalika and the Kanchonmala will be performed to recorded music as there are few musical instrument artistes in the country, and they devote most of their time to the commercial field. Mrs Roushan Jamil of the Jago Art Centre rues — "The movie industry pays these artistes so much, that the classical art programme organisers have little access to their talent" — which indicates that the main struggle of the culturalists is the procurement of funds.

In fact, if Lever Brothers did not pick up where the zamindars left off, there would probably be no Dance Festival '97. The cost of one Dance Drama amounts to at least Taka 2 lakhs, a sum that many indi-

viduals or families cannot afford, no matter how keen he or she or they may be. As one artiste puts it, "If the corporate world does not support art and culture, we have a bleak future." Mrs Geetika Choudhury, a representative of Lever Brothers as regards the Dance Festival, feels corporate patronage is necessary too. She envisions a fundamental link between the corporate world and the art world. "As a company we strive for the best product, and therefore we should support those who strive for the best in their fields," she says. Lever Brothers contribution has enabled Shadrona to keep the prices of the tickets to a reasonable Taka 500, Taka 300, and Taka 100. To gain the widest possible audience, the organisers are trying their level best to air a recorded performance on Bangladesh Television.

All parties involved in the organisation of the Dance Festival '97 have done more than their fair share of their respective dues. All that remains is the contribution of the audience. The top classical dancers and eminent local artistes are not joining forces to awe or impress, rather they are working together to drive home the point that the world of art and culture does not belong only to a few intellectuals, but to every member of the sub-continent. To show them a little appreciation requires only a little bit of our time.

The schedule for the Fair and Lovely Dance Festival is as follows: 28th February — Chandalika, a Togore Dance Drama. 1st & 2nd March — Kathak. 4th & 5th March — Mohiniyattam. 6th & 7th March — Odissi. 8th & 9th March — Bharat Natyam. 11th March — Kanchonmala, a Folk Dance Drama.

Tickets available at Tangail Shari Kutir, Baily Road & Dolce Vita Ice Cream Parlour at Dhanmondi and Banani. Rates — Tk 500, Tk 300, Tk 100.

Dhaka Day by Day

Just a Reminder of Brisk Shopping!

by Anindita Sarkar



Dhaka city certainly wears a very forlorn look these days. Gone are the hoards of eager Eid shoppers and the traffic problem seems to have eased a lot and the streets bear a mildly deserted look. Only the hoarding, billboards, banners and the likes still clamour for your attention — a mute reminder of the festivities just gone by.

Perhaps one would be wrong to call them mute because in today's consumer world their voice is singly the most powerful weapon that makes or breaks a product. Advertising is the buzz word and anybody worth his salt who dreams of making it big has latched on to it. So strategically placed billboards sell the concept of mobile phones, the internet, real estate, company name and brand or simply a brand of moulded luggage. The recent festivities saw a spate of banners and fliers around the main shopping areas, especially Elephant Road, advertising a new shopping complex, a new designer collection of menswear, hand painted sarees, the ever popular block printed shawls

kameez sale or yet another new beauty parlour or restaurant in town. The list is long and equally varied.

The contents of these hoardings and banners are more or less same: they espouse the salient features of the product advertised and what better way to do it than to use clichés and jargons that are making the rounds in the city. So some resort to outlandish names to catch the customer's eye while others tickle their weakness by proclaiming that they have an authentic cuisine replete with a cook of that origin! "Herbal," "designer," "never before" are the more hackneyed ones but innovations are not far behind. But whatever it is, garish designs or atrocious garments, they sure do manage to turn your head.

The latest entrants in this field are the "blimpies." These colourful gas balloons that dot Dhaka's sky carry names of popular brands. Though their number is limited to less than ten at present it will surely go up soon because in this field sky is the only limit!

The South Needs Sit-ups

The disagreements between the North and the South over core issues like trade, foreign investment and labour standards at the World Trade Organisation's (WTOs) recent Singapore summit makes it obvious that developing countries need to unite and draft an alternative text that serves their collective interests. And, although the WTO is not the South's favourite negotiating platform, it must be strengthened to counter the Northern moves, writes Adil Najam

IT is an irony that the Group of 77 (G-77) — a caucus of over 130 developing nations in the United Nations (UN) system — originally created at the first UNCTAD is the only global forum where meaningful global trade negotiations take place.

The WTO and its predecessor General Agreement on Tariff and Trade (GATT), is understandably, not the South's favourite forum for global dialogue.

However, after the recent stripping down of the UNCTAD's mantle and the steady erosion of its secretariat's efficacy as a credible think-tank for developing countries, the WTO has become the single most important negotiating forum for issues on trade and development.

The negotiations which took place recently at the WTO held in Singapore are not only going to effect the trade rules for the next century, but could effectively determine how and which developing country develops along which particular lines in future.

The very fears that had first

spurred the South to united under the banner of G-77 in 1963 — the creation of a global order that would take away from the South the token ability to make their own developmental decisions — are now materialising into reality around those polished tables at the majestic WTO office on the Rue de Lu-

sanne in Geneva.

Officially, an institutional decision has been made by the WTO (and the GATT before it) to bar the G-77 from representation; unofficially, a bruised G-77 suffering from pangs of self-doubt seems to have given up on the fight and resigned to being a mere bystander.

This is not a to say that the South has sat entirely helpless at the WTO. Regional coalitions particularly countries of the Association of South East Asian Nations have played a leadership role at the negotiations. However, the absence of an organised G-77 has already cost the developing countries dearly. Arguably, an organised G-77 at the WTO would even help the interests of the organisation's leadership by stream-

lining the deliberations and allowing the developing countries to arrive at a joint platform, instead of taking the discussion into all sorts of trajectories as each country pushes for its own particular micro-interests.

Common platform negotiation by the South at the WTO/GATT under the G-77 banner has long been considered a theorem in impossibility by several Northern as well as Southern nations. However, the historical precedents for considering it as such no longer exist.

With the UNCTAD reduced in size, scope and significance, the South can no longer afford to ignore the WTO and chant the mantra of the UNCTAD being the more important global trade organisation.

Simultaneously, the bosses in Geneva can no longer live under the false assumption that the only capitals they owe allegiance to are in North America and Western Europe. Neither can now claim any justification for why the G-77 is still not operable at the WTO.

Having said all of the above, it is necessary to comment that it was unrealistic for the developing country delegates at the recent WTO to wait for an invitation from the organisation to muster themselves under a G-77 (or a similar) structure. They have missed a wonderful opportunity to unite.

In 1963, it was not the UNCTAD which formally invited the South to unite itself; that was the South's decision emerging from the necessities of time, and enacted with significant opposition from the North.

Whether the G-77 is immediately admitted to the WTO an institutional entity is not the point. The point is that the developing countries of the South must act in union at the preparatory, position-formulation stage of these negotiations.

To call for the developing countries to organise themselves at the WTO is not a call for a new confrontation; it is exactly what it is purported to be — a call for better organisation.

CSE/Down To Earth Features

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide



The Chandali

The Kanchanmala

Monday 17th February
(All programmes are in local time. There may be changes in the programmes.)

BTV

3:00 Opening announcement
Al-Quran Programme summary
3:10 News in Bangla 3:15 Patriotic song 3:20 Recitation from the Bible 3:25 Cartoon Film: The Lone Ranger 3:50 Relecast of selected programmes 4:45 Educational programme 5:00 News in Bangla 5:25 Dolan Champa 5:50 Sports programme 6:30 Anu Paramanu 6:50 Open University 7:00 The News 7:25 Band show 8:00 News in Bangla 8:45 Package Drama 10:00 News in English 10:30 Janamta 10:50 Comedy series: Seemla 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Tuesdays' programme 11:40 Close down

BBC

6:00am BBC World News 6:10 World Focus: The Money Programme 7:00 BBC Newsroom inc. World Business Report/Asia Today 24 Hours 10:00 BBC World Headlines 10:05 The Money Programme 11:00 BBC Newsday 2:00 BBC World News 2:15 World Focus: The Money Programme 3:00 BBC World News 3:30 Time Out: Top Gear 4:00 BBC Newsdesk 6:00 BBC News Headlines 6:05 World Focus: Assignment 7:00 BBC World News 7:15 World News Report 7:30 BBC News 8:00 Business Agenda 8:30 Star News 9:00 Sky News 9:30 Aerobics Oz Style 10:00 Ann William's Look And Cooks 10:30 Videofashion: The News 11:00 Kate & Allie 11:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show 12:30 Serial: Dynasty 1:30 Santa Barbara 2:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 3:00 Hindi Serial: Reporter 3:30 Hindi Serial: Bunyiaad 4:00 Hindi Serial: Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro 4:30 Land of the Giants 5:30 Black Beauty 6:00 Kate & Allie 6:30 Ann William's Look And Cook 7:00 Living on the Edge 7:30 Star News (Hindi) 8:00 Small Wonder 8:30 Hindi Serial: Tu Tu Main Main 9:00 Hindi Serial: Imtihan 9:30 Star News 10:00 British Comedy 10:30 TBA 11:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 12:00mn Santa Barbara 1:00 Star News 01:30

CHANNEL V

STAR SPORTS

6:00am Frame by Frame 7:00 Rewind VJ Sophia 8:00 Frame by Frame 9:00 Jump Start VJ Alessandra 10:00 Frame by Frame 11:00 The Vibe VJ Luke 12:00 Rewind VJ Sophia 1:00 By Demand VJ Trey 2:00 Frame by Frame 2:30 Liberty First Day First Show 3:00 Videocast Mangat Hai 3:30 (V) 1's 4:00 Frame by Frame 4:30 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 6:00 Rewind VJ Sophia 7:00 By Demand VJ Trey 8:00 The Vibe 9:00 BPL Ovel 10:00 The Liberty First Day First Show 10:30 Launch Pad VJ Samira 11:30 The Ride 12:00 Over The Edge 12:30 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 1:00 Hayas 2:00 Frame by Frame 3:00 Big Bang VJ Alessandra 4:30 Asian Top 20 Trey

STAR PLUS

6:30 Niainad 7:30 Star News 8:00 Business Agenda 8:30 Star News 9:00 Sky News 9:30 Aerobics Oz Style 10:00 Ann William's Look And Cooks 10:30 Videofashion: The News 11:00 Kate & Allie 11:30 The Oprah Winfrey Show 12:30 Serial: Dynasty 1:30 Santa Barbara 2:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 3:00 Hindi Serial: Reporter 3:30 Hindi Serial: Bunyiaad 4:00 Hindi Serial: Jaane Bhi Do Yaaro 4:30 Land of the Giants 5:30 Black Beauty 6:00 Kate & Allie 6:30 Ann William's Look And Cook 7:00 Living on the Edge 7:30 Star News (Hindi) 8:00 Small Wonder 8:30 Hindi Serial: Tu Tu Main Main 9:00 Hindi Serial: Imtihan 9:30 Star News 10:00 British Comedy 10:30 TBA 11:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 12:00mn Santa Barbara 1:00 Star News 01:30

STAR MOVIES

12:30 Family : Falsely Accused 12 (Arabic Subtitles) 9:30 Clasic: Pick Up On South Street 12 (Arabic Subtitles) 11:30 Adventure : Munchief Strikes Back 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 Adventure : Rescue Me 15 (Hindi Subtitles) 3:30 Family : Sam And Me 15 (Arabic Subtitles) 5:30 Family : Planet of the Dinosaurs 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 9:30 The Week That Year 10:00 Comedy: House Party 18 12:00 World Cinema: Johnnny Stecchino 18 (English Subtitles) 2:00 Action : The Lawmower Man (Arabic Subtitles) 3:00 Nam Angels 4:00 Horror: The Lawmower Man 18 5:30 (Hindi Subtitles) 9:30 This Week That Year 10:00 Comedy: House Party 18 12:00 World Cinema: Johnnny Stecchino 18 (English Subtitles) 2:00 Action : The Lawmower Man (Arabic Subtitles) 3:00 Nam Angels 4:00 Horror: The Lawmower Man 18 5:30 (Hindi Subtitles) 9:30 Janamdin 10:35 Educ Prog 11:00 Nazrulgeeti 11:15 Folk Songs 12:30 Monorama Cabin 1:00 Janmabhumi 1:30 Trishna 2:30 Aly Chandee 1:30 Ananday 3:00 Bahari 1:30 Feluda 3:00 5:30 Nepal Programme 5:30 News 5:35 Dashi Bidesher Khele 5:30 Pali Katha 6:30 Batayan (Drama Serial) 6:55 Bhangan (Serial) 7:30 Bangla Sambad 7:55 Dindan 8:00 Bigapi 8:30 Feluda 30 9:00 Janmabhumi 9:30 Monorama Cabin 10:00 Bengal Movie Club Film Show 1:00 Closed

ZEE TV

6:00 News 6:30 Jagan 7:00 ZED 8:30 Disney Hour 9:30 Gaane Anjaane 10:00 Nirma Hum Paanch 10:30 Dream Merchants 11:00 Daak Ghar Apna Ghar 12:00 Helpine 12:30 Dhara Zaike Ka Safar 1:00 Jevan Mirtu (Serial) 9:30 Yes Nadi Ho Saki (Serial) 10:00 Chamatkar (Drama Serial) 10:30 Ghaaf 11:00 The Young And The Restless 12:30 O'Maria (Serial) 1:00 Raahat 2:00 ZED 6:30 Disney 2:00 Shapath 2:30 TM 4:00 Dastaan 4:30 Ghoomata Aina 5:00 Jagran 5:30 Surtai

DD 7

10:30 Janamdin 10:35 Educ Prog 11:00 Nazrulgeeti 11:15 Folk Songs 12:30 Monorama Cabin 1:00 Janmabhumi 1:30 Trishna 2:30 Aly Chandee 1:30 Ananday 3:00 Bahari 1:30 Feluda 3:00 5:30 Nepal Programme 5:30 News 5:35 Dashi Bidesher Khele 5:30 Pali Katha 6:30 Batayan (Drama Serial) 6:55 Bhangan (Serial) 7:30 Bangla Sambad 7:55 Dindan 8:00 Bigapi 8:30 Feluda 30 9:00 Janmabhumi 9:30 Monorama Cabin 10:00 Bengal Movie Club Film Show 1:00 Closed

SONY ET

8:30am Yaadon Ki Baarat 9:00 The Three Stooges 10:00 Dennis The Menace 10:30 Dream Of Jeannie 10:30 Surf-Wheel Of Fortune (Game Show) 11:00 Faasle (Serial) 11:30 Civil Lines (Serial) 12:00 Jagadur 12:30 Cover Story-Hostel (Serial) 1:00 Jane Kaha Mera Jigar Gaya Ji 1:30 The Young And The Restless (Eng. Serial) 2:30 Cine Maline-Hindi Feature Film 5:30 The Three Stooges 6:30 Dennis The Menace 7:00 Yaadon Ki Baarat 7:00 Premier 7:30 I Dream Of Jeannie 8:00 Surf-

Wheel Of Fortune 8:30 5 Star Xpress 9:00