

Music

Baul trio from Kushtia

Combining the ek-tara and a love for humanity

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

FOR most ordinary people, their interpretation of everything that surrounds us might strike a bit unorthodox. Their quest for satisfaction is a path that seldom compromises with an overweening ambition for material possessions. When the soft moon rises, the ek-tara strums into action, the lyrics come out, blended with pathos, the universe becomes a large place of mystery and the eternal search for the answer to life goes on. "Baul" is what they like to be called. Reflecting the true meaning of the word, they are mad, insane sometimes, but through this insanity they find a reason for living this illusion.

Bauls lived in the past and they keep on living in the new millennium. Dot Com obsession might have changed general perception, but for a certain group, modernism is no substitute for philosophy that they had embraced so devoutly. This is the living of life based on the ideals of soul-searchers, the life that picks up meaning from countless metaphors used in Lalon's songs.

Abdur Rab is a Baul. His love is music, his search is for the inner self. "I started to like the songs of Lalon Shah since I was very young. I gradually developed a liking for the Baul way of life", said Abdur Rab.

Asked why he was attracted to the Baul way of life he said that the love for mankind and the need to trust all humans had motivated him to choose this path. But wasn't there anything else? "Yes, as a Baul I follow the words of love, the words of union and spiritual awakening from our belief," he said. But, despite a preference towards a life comprised of a wandering and drenching in the songs of Lalon Shah, reality also demands a life like all others. Abdur Rab seasonally works in sugar mills. "We also have a normal side of life that we lead like others. Way back in the past, around the mid 19th century when Bauliana was developing as a sect, such blend was unheard of. But now with life becoming far more complicated and demanding, it becomes tough to be just a nomad in love with songs that open up the doors of metaphysical perception," said Abdur Rab.

Recognising that such music of spirit and soul may all too easily be lost in today's hi-tech culture,



Baul Abdur Rab



Aklima Baul

Benson & Hedges has taken an initiative to organise an event featuring Baul music.

"Participation in such an event would give us a chance to bring Baul music to the mainstream audience," said Abdur Rab.

While talking about Baul music, he said that people were aware of a handful of songs that have been made popular by artists like Farida Parveen, Khoda Baksh, Moksed Ali. "But to seek the core of mysticism, one has to immerse oneself within the massive well of lyrics that Shahji had left. I have about 950 songs in my collection, and all my life with pass trying to sing them all," he added. Abdur Rab like many other

Bauls gives his own rhythm and tune to Baul songs.

Baul tradition has it, that a singer should be accompanied by a female companion. As a matter of fact the presence of female partners fulfilled the demand for the 'utmost bliss' that was deemed necessary to achieve the form of the true Baul. Time and strict social codes had changed that to a certain length, but the idea of the male and the female singer performing together still persists. Enter, Aklima Baul, whose ardour for Lalon's sayings is no less than that of Abdur Rab. Those scarred lines around her eyes are not mere reflection of age. They have a singular aura of wisdom. A



The Baul trinity

kind of percept, that had come over years of nurturing the words of Lalon. "We wear white, because there is the shade that must symbolise our thoughts and actions. White becomes dirty easily, so caution must be practiced to avoid dirt, similarly, the same ritual has to be followed in keeping the soul purified," said Aklima Baul. Aklima speaks little, but whenever she does she has a message to relate. "For me Lalon's sayings form the complete guide to living", said Aklima who had been initiated to this form of life since she was 12 years old.

Abdur Rab has travelled to India, Thailand, England, Nepal. Aklima went to England in 1999 to perform

in the London Festival. When asked about the reaction they received abroad, she said that Lalon's songs appealed to the expatriate Bengalis and the foreigners alike. The same comment was made by Abdur Rab. Aklima is also accompanied by her husband Rabiul Islam, who by the way is the son-in-law of famous Baul Behal Shah. Rabiul Islam plays the ek-tara and performs in programmes with Aklima.

In the meantime, already winning a name for presenting opportunities for young and new musicians to air their talent, Benson and Hedges is now giving urban exposure to the bauls. While the bauls, and their

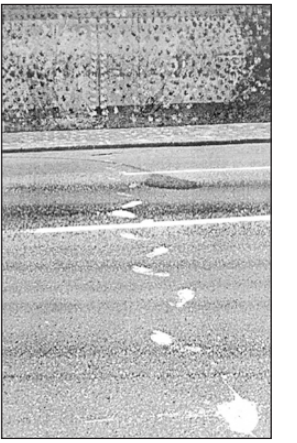
contemporary "soul mates" of modern music will be getting together under the Benson and Hedges sponsored Baul festival, the city music lovers too will have a chance to listen to baul music, pure and unadulterated.

Maybe Bauliana does not exist with most of its recondite spiritual perceptions anymore. Ideals that were once thought to part of Bauliana may appear unfamiliar to most Bauls, the matter of self pleasure, sexuality and an unencumbered surrender to passion have gone through too much distortion. But, the ek-tara and the words of

Lalon are still the cause for living for people like Rab, Aklima and Rabiul. Even in the millennium with too much reliance on technicality, they can still find peace and solace in songs that will always be known as "bhaber gaan".

And in today's world of hustle and bustle, peace and solace are much sought-after 'Luxuries'. Benson and Hedges is now making an effort to resuscitate this indigenous musical heritage, to bring people back to music with meaning, music steeped in centuries of heritage.

RECOMMENDATIONS



Paintings on the Berlin-Wall

A photography exhibition by Pierre Claquin on the paintings of the Berlin-Wall is now being held at the Goethe-Institut. The exhibition will remain open to all till April 12.

Masuda Kazi

A solo exhibition of recent artworks by artist Masuda Kazi is now being held at Gallery 21. The exhibition will remain open everyday from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. till April 3.

Art Exhibition

Asolo show by Nasim Ahmed Nadvi is now being held at Ariel Centre. The exhibition runs from 2-8 p.m. till April 9.



EKUSHEY TV

2:00 Ekushey Headlines
2:05 Akjer Potrikyak 2:15
El Shoptaho 2:40 Classic
Cartoons 3:00 Ekushey
Headlines 3:05 Mega
Serial: Noorjahan 4:00
English Film : Broadcast
News 6:00 Ekushey
Headlines 6:05 English
Series : MacGyver 7:00
Mukto Khorob 7:30
Ekushey News 8:00
Special Drama: Shoat
9:00 Bangla Film :
Kiyamat. Theke Kiyamat
10:30 BTV News 11:15
Ekushey Late Night News

CHANNEL-i

6:15 Bijoyer Galpo 6:50
Akkatorer Dinguli 7:00
Sritithe Akatorer 7:40 Your
Choice Ole Ole 8:00 Din
Protidin 8:15 Akkatorer
Gane 8:25 Drama : Kajol
Rekha 10:40 Muktiyudho
Amar Ahongker 11:15
Bijoyer Galpo 11:50
Akkatorer Dinguli 12:00
Akkatorer Gane 3:00
Bangla Cinema: Utham
Paton 6:00 Reciting from
Holy Quran 6:10 Suvo
Sandha 6:40 Drama :
Shesh Dekha 7:15 Balaka

BBC WORLD

6:00 BBC News 6:30
World Business Report
7:00 BBC News 7:30 Asia
Today/World Business
Report 8:00 BBC News
8:30 Asia Today/World
Business Report 9:00
BBC News 9:30 Asia
Today/World Business
Report 10:00 BBC News
10:30 Hardtalk 11:00 BBC
News 11:30 Talking
Movies 12:00 BBC News
1:00 Question Time India
1:30 Click Online 2:00
BBC News 2:30 Dancing
in the Street 3:00 BBC
News 3:30 QED 4:00 BBC
News 4:30 Holiday 5:00
BBC News 5:30 This
Week 6:00 BBC News
6:30 Dancing in the Street
7:00 BBC News 7:30
Horizon ICE Mummies
8:00 BBC News 8:30 Click
Online 9:00 BBC News
9:30 QED 10:00 BBC
News 10:30 Hospital
11:00 BBC News 11:30

CNN

4:00 World Business
Today 4:30 Inside Asia
5:00 CNN World View
5:30 Moneyline News
Hour 6:30 World Beat
7:00 World News Ameri-
ca 7:30 The Artclub 8:00
Larry King Live 9:00 World
News 9:30 World Sport
10:00 World News 10:30
Showbiz Today 11:00
World News 11:30 Sci-
ence and Technology
Week 12:00 World News
12:30 CNN Hotspots 1:00
World News 1:30 World
Sport 2:00 World News
2:30 Style with Elsa
Klensch 3:00 Larry King
Live (replay) 4:00 World
News 4:30 CNNdotCOM
5:00 World News 5:30
World Sport 6:00 World
News 6:30 ebizAsia 7:00
World News 7:30 World
Beat 8:00 World News
8:30 The Artclub 9:00
World News 9:30 Style
South Asia 10:00 World
News 10:30 CNNdotCOM
11:00 Business Unusual
11:30 CNN Indiadotcom

Talking Movies 12:00 BBC

News 12:30 This Week
1:00 BBC News 1:30
Earth Report 2:00 BBC
News 2:30 Dancing in the
Street 3:00 BBC News
3:30 Talking Movies 4:00
BBC News 4:30 Horizon
ICE Mummies 5:00 BBC
News 5:30 AUS Dir

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

6:30 Eyewitness II 7:00
ESPU-The Series 7:30
Outer Bounds I&II 8:00
Without Warning I 8:30
Lonely Planet IV 9:30
Cafe Digital 10:00 Medical
Detectives 10:30 Extreme
Machines IV 11:30 Amazing
Worlds 12:30 Wild
Asia 1:30 Ultimate Guide
2:30 Trauma IV- Life in the
ER 3:30 Uncharted Africa
4:00 ESPU-The Series
4:30 Decisive Weapons
I&II 5:00 Popular Science
5:30 Assignment Discov-
ery 6:30 Real Kids, Real
Adventures 7:00 Splat IV
7:30 Medical Mysteries
8:30 Health Showcase
9:30 New Detectives III
10:30 Journeys to the
Ends of the Earth 11:30
Trailblazers II

HBO

7:00 Hud 9:15 My Fellow
Americans 11:30 The Fury
Within 1:30 The Freshman
3:30 Reality Bites 5:30
City Hall 7:15 Demolition
Man 10:00 Arlington Road
12:15 Maverick 2:45
Reality Bites 4:45 Steel

12:00 World News 12:30

ebizasia 1:00 World News
1:30 CNN Hotspots 2:00
World News 2:30 World
Beat 3:00 World News
3:30 Golf Plus

STAR MOVIE

6:00 Drama : Tucker 8:30
Comedy : The Air Up
There 10:00 Comedy:
Pushing Tin 12:00 Com-
edy: Cemetery Club 1:45
Comedy : Masterpiece of
Murder 3:15 Action :
Killer's Edge 5:00 Action :
Instinct 7:00 Thrillennium :
Angel Heart 8:45 Drama:
Lip Service

STAR WORLD

7:00 The Simpsons 7:30
Things People Do 8:00
The Bold & The Beautiful
10:00 TV Com 10:30
Travel Asia 11:00 Fox Kids
Goosebumps 11:30 Fox
Kids Spiderman 12:00 Fox
Kids Biker Mice From
Mars 12:30 Fox Kids X
Men 1:00 World Champi-
onship Wrestling World-
wide 2:00 Mission Impos-
sible 3:00 Baywatch 4:00
Hercules 5:00 Xena 6:00
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's
The Lost World 7:00 First
Wave 8:00 Water Rats
9:00 3rd Rock From the
Sun

STAR PLUS

6:30 Star Geetmala 7:30
Cine Jharokha 8:00 Hit Ya
Fit 8:30 Good Morning
India 9:30 Fox Kids 10:30
National Geographic
Special 11:30 Hit Ya Fit
12:00 Kuchha Papad

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



Saturday movie Broadcast News on Ekushey TV on March 31 at 4:30 p.m. Boasting a spectacular cast of Oscar winners like William Hurt, Holly Hunter, and Jack Nicholson, Broadcast News depicts the eternal dilemma of style vs. substance through the eyes of a network news producer, Jane Craig.

Pucca Papad 12:30 Mirch Masala 1:00 TSN 1:30 Gharwali Uparwali 2:00 Tu Tu Main Main 2:30 National Geographic Special 3:30 Tea Time Cinema : Dahej (Prithviraj Kapoor, Jayshree) 4:30 Musaffir Hoon Yaroon 7:00 Chhupa Rustam 7:30 Chalti Ka Naam Antakshiri 8:30 STAR Mast Movies: Jaane Jigar (Jackie Shroff, Mamata Kulkarni) 11:30 Aaj Ki Baat 11:45 Jaane Jigar (contd.)

ZEE MGM

6:30 Benji The Hunded 8:30 Original Sound Track

Comfort 10:00 Music Zone

10:30 Heartbreak High 11:30 Touched By An Angel 12:30 Emma 1:30 ER 2:30 Can't Hurry Love 3:00 Out of this World 3:30 Too Close for Comfort 4:00 Evening Shades 4:30 Police Academy 5:30 The Soprahos 6:30 Touched By An Angel 7:30 Heartbreak High 8:30 Here's Lucy/Police Academy 9:30 Emma 10:30 La Femme Nikita 11:30 Late Show With David Letterman

ZEE CINEMA

6:30 Ram Bharat Milan- Film 9:30 Pehlu 10:00 Bollywood Top 5 10:15 Movie Fare 10:30 Garam Masla - Film 1:30 Top of the Tops 2:00 EK Thi Ladki- Film 5:30 Bollywood Top 5 5:45 Film Time 6:00 Jeevan Mrityu-Film 9:45 Gunjan 10:00 Making of A Legend 10:30 Kanoon -Film

ZEE MUSIC

6:00 Dial M 7:00 Aalap 7:30 Tararum 8:30 Hit Pe Hit 10:30 Hit Mix 11:00 Fillers 11:30 Zee Music Box 12:00 Best of the Best 1:00 Hit Pe Hit 2:00 Jharokha 2:35 Compact Disc 3:05 Tararum 4:00 Hit Pe Hit 5:00 Zee Music Box 5:30 Hit Mix 6:00 Just Jammin 6:30 Dial M 7:30

Hit Pe Hit 8:30 Zee Music

Com 9:30 Zee Music Box 10:00 Sizzlers 10:30 Jharokha 11:05 Zee Music Live/Cool-Age 11:35 Zee Music Live/Pyar Mohabbat Etc 12:00 Phoren Maal

ALPHA BANGLA

7:00 Monihar 7:30 News Bulletin 8:00 Alaap 9:00 News Bulletin 9:05 Bharat Bhromon 9:30 Cine News 10:00 Mayuraskhmi Tumi 10:30 Daibadho 11:00 Ki Darun Drishya 11:30 Grihasajja 12:00 Bahari Aahaar 12:30 Swapno Niye 1:00 Ingeet 1:30 Chena Mukhachena Manush 2:00 Nayantara 2:30 Feature Film 5:00 Saregama 6:00 Alpha Khabor 6:25 Jhankar 6:30 Hiralal Pannalal/Alpake Bandha 7:00 Wah Ki Darun Drisha Kash Bitorka 7:25 Jhankar 7:30 Purobi 7:55 Jhankar 8:00 Sastrang 8:30 Chokher Bani 9:00 Jonotar Darbare 9:30 Tritiy Purush 10:00 News Bulletin Bengali 10:05 Saat Kahan 10:25 Ek Palake 10:30 Khehar Duniya 10:55 Ek Palake 11:00 Alpha Khabor 11:25 Ek Palake 11:30 Ki Darun 12:00 Netaji Subhash Chandra 12:25 Ek Palake

STAR SPORTS

6:00 Golf Programming Golfglobe 2001 6:30 West Indies Cricket The Cable & Wireless Test Series Barbados, WEST INDIES South Africa @ West Indies 3rd Test, Day 2, Highlights(R) 8:00 West Indies Cricket The Cable & Wireless Test Series Barbados, WEST INDIES South Africa @ West Indies 3rd Test, Day 2, Highlights(T) 8:00 English Premier Football League London, ENGLAND Tottenham Hotspur @ Arsenal Fc(L) 10:00 Nba Basketball Portland, OR USA New York Knicks @ Portland Trailblazers (R) 12:30 Italian Serie A 2000/2001 Vicenza, ITALY Fiorentina @ Vicenza (L) 2:30 Nba Action 3:00 Tennis Masters Series By Mercedes-Benz The Ericsson Open, Miami (Tennis Masters Series) Key Biscayne, FL USA Men'S Semifinal Match #2(S) 5:00 World Of Rugby The Irb'S World Of Rugby (T) 5:30 Sportscenter: International Edition (S)



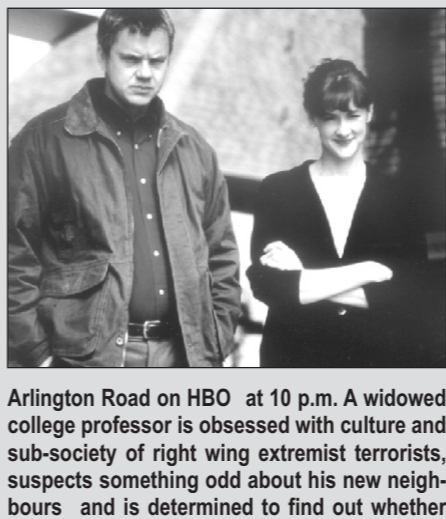
Xena: Warrior Princess on Star World at 5 p.m.



Qayamat Theke Qayamat on Ekushey TV at 9 p.m.



Drama Sawat on Ekhushy TV at 8 p.m.



Arlington Road on HBO at 10 p.m. A widowed college professor is obsessed with culture and sub-society of right wing extremist terrorists, suspects something odd about his new neighbours and is determined to find out whether they are terrorists or whether he's just too paranoid.



Earth Final Conflict on BTv at 7:25 p.m.



First Wave on Star World at 7 p.m.