

Film

Mystic songwriter Hasan Raja in silver screen

Mohurat of the film Hasan Raja held

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BANGLADESH is a land wallowed in folk music. The ennu, the desire for a spiritual union with the supreme being, and themes of everyday life of the cultivator, fisherman, boatman, weaver, potter, blacksmith are expressed in folk songs.

The variety of folk songs is rich and as many as 70 types are recognised by the experts. When it comes to folk music of Bangladesh Lalon Shah and Hasan Raja are the two-unrivalled maestros. These composers have reached the heart of the millions with their mystic soulful numbers.

We know very little about these great musicians who have created a magic spell on the millions for over a century now. Research on these virtuoso composers can be counted on finger. And films on their lives and works are a rarity. But film production company Hask Productions is about break that jinx.

'Nesha Lagilo Re Baka Du Noyone Nesha Lagilo Re' this celebrated song by Hasan Raja was being played in the background at the Mohurat or claspstick ceremony of the film Hasan Raja, a full length feature film on the life of Hasan Raja, the great poet, musician and philosopher on October 8 at the FDC (Film Development Corporation). Famous Nazrul song exponent Firoza Begum was present as chief guest at the ceremony while Motiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor daily Manob Jomin and Dewan Mohammed Tasawar Raja the grandson of Hasan Raja were also present as special guests.

Renowned film director Chashi Nazrul Islam makes a come back in the Bangladesh film scenario after quite some



Actors, actresses, director, producer and guests of the mahurat pose for a shot at the FDC on October 8

time with this film. Produced by actor Helal Khan the story, screenplay and dialogues of the film are created by noted playwright Professor Montajuddin Ahmed. Sujejo Sham is the music director for Hasan Raja while composer Sri Bidit Lal Das is being associated with film as music advisor. The central characters of the film are portrayed by Helal Khan, Shomi

zaman Uthpol, Amol Bosh, Abul and Professor Momt-ajuddin Ahmed. 'If I am able to complete this film on the great poet and musician Hasan Raja, then it is will be a great victory against the current of the present trend,' said Chashi Nazrul Islam at his welcoming speech at the Mohurat. With the presence of

his speech actor Amjad Hossain, film directors Jahangir Khan and Badal Khondoker spoke on the occasion. They all focused on the necessity of decent films. 'I am what I am today only for Hasan Raja,' said Sri Binit Lal Das, music advisor for the film. He also said that before this the initiative for making a film on the life of Hasan Raja were taken twice but unfortunately they failed.

'My father use to say, 'I could not understand him' about my grandfather', said Tasawar Raja the grandson of Hasan Raja, 'I also feel the same way. My grandfather can be defined in many ways. He was a Jamindar (landlord) of Sylhet but lived a very simple life. It is sad that the people of Bangladesh do not have a clear idea about him. I hope this film will serve that purpose.'

'I knew nothing about Hasan Raja' said Professor Momt-ajuddin Ahmed, 'I did not think him as an ordinary man at first, but when I went by the river Shurma, saw his Bojra (boat), saw his house, his cloths, came to know about his life I realised what a simple man Hasan Raja was.' He continued, 'Maybe this

is my last work. I did not want to make an art film, I wanted to make a film which will be enjoyed by everyone and people will realise what a great man Hasan Raja was.'

While talking about the film Motiur Rahman Chowdhury, editor daily Manob Jomin said that he thinks the film industry is in the right track now and these decent films will change the concept of the film scenario in Bangladesh.

Chief guest of the occasion Firoza Begum said, 'I want the people involved with the film in such a way that people like us can go to the movies and watch it.' She continued, 'For 60 years I am in the music industry but I first heard Hasan Raja's songs after the War of Liberation, but I should have heard it long before that. The philosophy of his songs is exceptional.'

The 'Mohurat' ceremony came to an end when all the actors and actresses who will be starring in Hasan Raja came on stage. Before this attempt, there were at least two attempts to make film on the life of Hasan Raj, but unfortunately those were aborted. Hasan Raja was born Deowan Hasah Raja Chaudhury on January, 1855 in the village of Lakhansiri near Sunamganj town, in Sylhet, Bangladesh. His father Dewan Ali Raja Chaudhury was a very powerful landlord of the area. His properties included the area of Laksmansiri and Rampasha in Sunamganj, as well as the Amberkhana, Sadagarhata, and Tilagarh sections of Sylhet city.

Today most Bangladeshis are familiar with the name Hasan Raja and many can sing or cite at least a line from one of his songs, but most of them know a very little about his life. He was said to be extremely obstinate and uncontrollable as



Chashi Nazrul Islam gives his welcome speech at the mahurat of Hasan Raja

a child. He disliked school as a child, so he never really had the benefit of a formal education. In his later years he regretted his lack of schooling and donated quite a bit of his wealth for the education of those who could not afford it.

There are many conflicting accounts of his early years as years as a zamindar. To some of his subjects he had a reputation as a cruel, greedy landlord and a decadent womanizer who was

people living on his land. To others he was a generous and beneficent landlord who was compassionate to humans and animal alike.

The name of Hasan Raja might have remained obscure if not Rabindranath Tagore took an interest in this mystic poet. There are many references of Hasan Raja in various articles and lectures of Rabindranath Tagore. His name was also mentioned in the lecture entitled



Renowned Nazrul song exponent Firoza Begum speaks at the claspstick ceremony of the film Hasan Raja

more interested in his hobbies of horse racing and the breeding of birds than the welfare of the

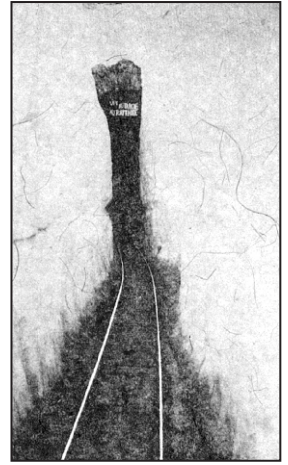
The Religion of Man, Tagore gave as part of the Hibbert lecture series at Oxford in 1930.

RECOMMENDATIONS



The Mummy Returns

This Hollywood blockbuster runs at the country's premier cinema hall Modhumita from tomorrow. The Mummy Returns is the sequel of The Mummy and have all the ingredients of its earlier one. With its spine-tingling adventures against breathtaking landscapes, The Mummy Returns is sure to thrill cine buffs. Hordes of canine bodied Anubis warriors-literally hounds from hell-bound across the Sahara in attack formation while carnivorous pygmy mummies ambush their pray in the jungles of the Nile.



Graphic prints show

Noted French artist Jean-Michel Alberola's solo exhibition of graphic prints is now being held at the French cultural centre, Alliance Francaise, at Dhanmandi.

Six Seasons

Shilparag Gallery at Dhanmandi (House#15, Road# 27 old) presents an exhibition on the theme six seasons. Leading artists of the country have captured in their canvas the rich variety of our seasons and their ambience. The month-long show will continue till October 14 everyday from 11 am to 8pm.

TV GUIDE

Table with TV channel listings for BT, ATN, and Channel-i, including program names and times.

Table with TV channel listings for Star Plus, Star World, and Star Gold, including program names and times.

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TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

Advertisement for the TV show Spartacus, featuring a picture of the title character and promotional text.

Table with sports listings for ESPN, Star Plus, and Star World, including event names and times.

PICK OF THE DAY

Advertisement for the TV show Spartacus, featuring a picture of the title character and promotional text.

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ALPHA TV BANGLA

Table with program listings for Alpha TV Bangla, including program names and times.