CULTURE

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Dance Festival Dhaka greets Soumitra, Mamta Shankar

Nrityanchal Festival 2002 opens in a festive note

TAWFIQUE ALI

HE atmosphere on the opening of the Nrityanchal's five-day long dance and music festival on January 10 evening at Bangladesh Shishu Academy auditorium was electric. People were eager to sock in the enthusiasm in the air surrounding the festival. The graceful presence of the two celebrated cultural personalities in the festival Soumitra Chattapadhaya and Mamata Shankar from West Bengal created quite a stir in the city's cultural circle.

In her brief note, Mamata expressed her gratitude to Bangladeshi people for being invited on such a great cultural event organised by Nritiyanchal.

"Pleasure of my first ever visit to Bangladesh this time is unbounded. I am not adept in expressing myself in words. Whatever I have to say, I can speak out in my dance. Mamata said in a voice choked with



Mamta Shankar becomes emotional while expressing her impression about the cultural atmosphere in Dhaka



A colourful sequence from the dance drama Mahua choreographed by Shamim-ara Nipa was preformed on the inaugural day of the festival

emotion

When invited to say a few complimentary words on opening ceremony. Soumitra commented. "There is an intimate cultural bondage between Bangladesh and West Bengal. I don't happen to visit Bangladesh without particular engagement. I have come to Bangladesh thrice before this time. But this time I am too happy with the honour, hospitability and love you have offered me. If any one asks who I am, my answer would be I am a Bangalee---a Bangladeshi. In that case I would mean a greater Bangladesh.'

He said what impressed him most was the planning of festival. He appreciated marks of aesthetic taste in the organisation of entire programme. "Art and culture is a media which manifests delicacy and excellence achieved in human life." Soumitra remarked pointing at Nrityanchal Festival. He further said, "Firm bondage between the two Bengals may be further enhanced through such cultural exchanges.

Muhammad Jahangir, convenor of the Festival Preparatory Committee, announced that Nrityanchal was proud to pay tributes to all the dedicated cultural personalities. Portraits of country's great luminaries of dance, Uday Shanker, Bulbul Chowdhury, Gaoher Jamil and G.A Mannan, were seen hanging at the entrance of the auditorium

Nrityanchal honoured four artists for their contribution in the field of dance including Bazlur Rahman Badal, Yogesh Chandra Das, S.Z. Jeenat Jahan and ustad Rashed Uddin Talukdar. They were accorded a reception on the inaugural day.

An eminent dance teacher of Rajshahi, Bazlur Rahman Badal comes from an aristocratic Muslim family of Maldah, India. In childhood he was inspired and initiated into dance by his mother. His first dance guru was Abul Kashem and later he learnt from Niren Chaki. After his Matriculation, financial constraints forced him to earn his living himself. Despite, it could not hinder his dance practice. After Indian partition in 1947 he settled in Raishahi and continued to learn dance with Ustad Monu Master and Ustad Dukhu Master. Being invited by Maharaja of Kuchbihar, Badal performed at the Royal court and charmed all present. In 1954 he earned audience's admiration at an



Legendary cultural personality Saumitra reads poems in the solo poetry reading evening organised by Ntrityanchal

international programme at Gulistan Cinema hall Dhaka. Besides this he performed at an international programme at Art Council of then Pakistan. Currently he is a dance teacher at a number of institutions including Rajshahi Shilpakala Academy

Yogesh Chandra Das fled away from home to India where he happened to meet Anita Das Gupta who was a dance teacher at Shanti Niketon. Yogesh started learning dance with her and when he came back to country, he had to face a very adverse situation as a dancer. Since the social environment then was not in favour of cultural activities, he had to travel a thorny path in

this field. Dance dramas like 'Mahua'. 'Nakshi Kanthar Math', Kabar', 'Ganani, Chitrangada performed in his direction earned huge public acclamation. A good number of dance artistes have come out out his dance school Notraj Shilpi Niketon. As an uncompromising dance exponent, Yogesh has been striving to give dance a ground in a very adverse environment.

S.Z. Jeenat Jahan was born in 1940 in Kushtia at a culturally aristocratic family. She showed an ardent interest in dance in her very childhood. She first got admitted to 'Nritya Bharati Institute' and her first dance guru was 'Prahlad Das'. Jeenat visited Srinagar in 1961 to take part in a dance programme held in honour of the then prime minister Baksi Golam Muhammad of Kashmir. In 1962 she performed Manipuri dance and dance drama Chitrangada at All India Dance Festival organised by 'Nritya Bharati.' Since the birth of Bangladesh Television in 1964, Jeenat has been working as an enlisted dance artiste and dance director. She has proved her talent in teaching dance at several dance institutions at home and abroad.

Ustad Rashed Uddin Talukder is an inseparable part of cultural progression in the country's southern region. Emergence of dance and music in greater Khulna region owes much to his relentless efforts and devotion. He had a great inclination to dance since his childhood. He spent much of his youth as a persevering apprentice of dance while a student at Khulna B.L. College. At this time he came in contact with eminent music guru Shuklal Chakrabarti and S.A. Razzak from both of whom he received taalim in music. He learnt classical music and Nazrul song Nader Chand.

from Pratham Nath Chowdhury of Pabna. To earn higher education in dance, he got admitted to 'Natraj Kalakendra' of West Bengal in 1964. Later, having returned home, Rashed established an institution called 'Nazrul Academy' in Khulna where he used to train dance and music learners. During this time he earned an immense fame, performing dance at notable programmes across the southern part of the country. His popularity went very high. Among many other outstanding

works of Rashed, much acclaimed dance drama 'Raktakta Jerusalem' (a bleeding Jerusalem) written about prolonged political suffering of the Palestinians is mention worthy.

The inaugural ceremony concluded with the recital of a dance drama 'Mahua' which enthralled the audience most. Mahua portrays a splendid triumph of love over social discrimination and death. This folk tale sings joy of love's victory. It shows the victory of love and universal human spirit above all forms of meanness and sectarian differences. Central character Mahuawas played by Shamim Ara Nipa while Shibli Mohammad acted

RECOMMENDATIONS

Theatre festival A five day long dance drama festival, organised by Indian High Commission in Dhaka, in collaboration with Centre for Asian Theatre and Indian Council for Cultural Relations, has opened at the National Museum Auditorium. Shows will be held at 6:30 p.m. everyday till January 16. Today's show: Meghnad Badh Kabya directed by Rudra Prasad Sen Gupta, Nandikar, Kolkata. On January 16: Urubhangam directed by Kamaluddin Nilu of Centre for Asian Theatre, Dhaka. On **January 17**: Meghnad Badh Kabya at Muslim Institute Auditorium, Chittagong

Art show of three **Bengali pioneers**

An exhibition showcasing works of pioneer artistsZainul Abedin, Qamrul Hassan and S.M. Sultan -- of Bangladeshi art movement is being held at the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts at Dhanmandi. This show is the second of a series presented from the collection of Abul Khair, chairman of Bengal Foundation.

Group Art Show

The 45th Grand Group Art Exhibition of leading Bangladeshi artists organised by Saju Art Gallery is now being held at its gallery space at Gulshan, North Super Market 2nd circle. The month-long show, open to all, will run until February 7 from 10 am to 8:30 pm barring Fridays.

2nd solo exhibition

The 2nd solo art exhibition by artist Rezaul Hoque Liton will be inaugurated at the High Commission of India Cultural Centre (754 Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi) today at 5:30 p.m. Eminent artist Professor Rafigun Nabi will inaugurate the exhibition as chief guest while Steve Wallace Country Director, CARE Bangladesh will be present as

special guest. The exhibition will continue everyday from 3:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. till January 24.

TV GUIDE											
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