

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drama Festival

Natty Utsav 2002, the national festival of drama will begin from February 1 and will continue for the next three weeks till February 21. To be organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, the drama festival will feature 'Natty Jalsa' after the staging of the theatrical productions, each evening. Each Jalsa will include cultural events to be performed by members of the theatre groups. Coinciding with the drama festival will begin the 'Street Drama Festival 2002' that will continue till February 7, 2002.

Exhibition by Russian artists

Organised by the Russian Cultural Centre, Dhaka a show of contemporary art by Russian artists Poliakov Vasily and Persidskiy Konstantin is being held at the Exhibition Hall of the Russian Cultural Centre, House #510, Road # 7, Dhanmondi R/A. The show ends on February 8, 2002.

Art show of three Bengali pioneers

An exhibition showcasing works of pioneer artists Zainul Abedin, Qamrul Hassan and S.M. Sultan-of-Bangladeshi art movement is being held at the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts at Dhanmondi. This show is the second of a series presented from the collection of Abul Khair, chairman of Bengal Foundation. The exhibition will be open from January 12 to February 7, 2002 from 12 p.m. till 8 p.m. everyday.

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.

Documentary

Ymako is a 51-minute colour documentary film in French with English subtitles. The film, based on events of street performance in Ivory Coast, will be exhibited on January 29 at 6 p.m. at the auditorium of Pathshala, a photography school at Dhanmondi, Road # 27. The same show will exhibit 'Ethnic', a documentary with settings in North Vietnam.

Three videos on Children's Daily Life will be exhibited at the auditorium of Goethe Institut at 6 p.m. on January 31, 2002.

Event

A day for the birds

Bird Lovers' Day, organised by Loreeto School, held yesterday

AZIZ AMIRUL

It was a very special day for the students and teachers of an English medium school in the city. The school Management committee of Loreeto observed 'Bird Lovers' Day' yesterday at its Dhanmondi premises.

To observe the day, a painting contest, photo exhibition, Bird-related Quiz contest and Slide show on birds were organised. Noted bird photographer and expert Enam Ul Haq was invited to conduct the day's proceedings and later on distribute prizes and certificates among the winners.

Enam Ul Haq, who is the founder-coordinator of Bangladesh Bird Club, brought in 32 of his bird photographs, specially enlarged and framed for the purpose of the exhibition. These pictures were hanged alongside the walls. Children sat in front of the hanged photos and started their artwork. Some used watercolour to paint the

birds while others used crayons and coloured pencils.

Around 300 students of the school took part in the art contest that was divided in three groups. It was a sight to relish with each and every young mind opening up at the fullest and expressing their imagination as they painted birds in refreshing colours.

Earlier in the morning, Enam Ul Haq inaugurated the Bird Lovers' Day, amidst atmosphere of joviality one of a kind seldom seen. 'Today we have gathered here to teach the children something very important about our natural environment and wildlife', said Enam, while inaugurating the events of the special day. 'We should be proud for the reason that Bangladesh has a total of 600 plus bird species including the guest birds and it accumulates more than fifty per cent of the total bird species found in the Indian subcontinent', he added. The veteran ornithologist stressed on the issue of guest bird hunting and

urged all to be aware against trapping and killing of these harmless, rather useful migratory birds.

The slide show was a major event, a source of pleasant excitement among the kids. As the slides in the projector went on focussing bird photographs one after the other, the young viewers explored a world, completely new to them. 'I would have never known that Bangladesh was so rich in bird population had not I viewed this slide projection, said a senior teacher of Loreeto, after the show.

Next came the quiz contest that was participated by around 100 children. It turned out to be the most attractive event of all. After a brief discussion on birds of Bangladesh, Enam Ul Haq placed 20 questions to the participants. The children proved to be too smart in tackling the queries and showed extraordinary talent while giving out the correct replies.

An additional item was the arrangement of reading books by



Children paint their bird of imagination at a competition organised as part of the Bird Lover's Day



Sensitizing future citizens of the country: Students of Loreeto look at bird photos on the Bird Lovers' Day yesterday

the students, on bird topics. A huge pile of publications related with birds was laid out on a table. As the doors of the room were opened, curious groups of children rushed inside trying to pick up the best book of his or her choice. It was truly a pleasant scene to watch so many young readers enriching their talent with knowledge on birds and nature.

The final moments of the eventful day was another scene to relish. Major (Retd.) Fazlur Rahman, Bir Pratik declared the names of winners of the painting and quiz contest, as anxious participants waited in front of the guests. It was very encouraging to see the winning of a single spot by more than one contestant in different group that proved the closeness of the affair of general knowledge.

Few of the guardians, who were present at the scene, and a large



Bird photographer Enam Ul Haq handing away prizes to a tiny painter

number of teachers, expressed their thanks and gratitude for organising and observing such a splendid day.

'This kind of event is something completely new to me and I think that this should be repeated in other schools, to bring eco-awareness among the young generation', mentioned Hosne Ara, a mother who brought her daughter to the festive occasion.

With all these activities, there came the successful end of a memorable event that was participated by a hoard of young talented students of our society. On one hand, the special day served in favour of the natural environment while on the other, it came as a blessing for the artistic minded children, some of whose talent would have otherwise remained locked up in the closet.

Photo credit: M.A. Muhi

Cinema

Zorro at Modhumita

Hollywood blockbuster *The Musk of Zorro* premieres at Modhumita cinema on Thursday

CULTURE DESK

WITH the flash of a smile, a graceful leap from a high balcony and mastery of athletic fencing, buckles are swashed again, and the spirit of Flynn returns to the silver screen of

Modhumita from this Friday and will be running four shows everyday.

The movie 'Mask of Zorro' deals with the history of California's independence when Spain struggled with local people in order to keep peace. While the rich people enjoyed having lots of food, horses,

houses and land; the poor people, the majority of population, suffered hunger and punishments.

Directed by Martin Campbell and co-written by John Eskow, Ted Elliott, and Terry Rossio the movie stars Antonio Banderas, Anthony Hopkins, Catherine Zeta-Jones and many more.

Zorro began life in a 1919 pulp novel. Since then two movies (Douglas Fairbanks in the Twenties, Tyrone Power in the Forties) and a TV series have camped him up something rotten. As a Mexican masked hero, who protects peasants from the cruelties of the Spanish upper class, he has the instincts of Robin Hood and enough hot-blooded passion to hyperventilate swooning señoritas.

Played here by a dashing older man, Dr Lector himself, he has the privilege of being treated with respect, as Anthony Hopkins does nothing by halves and would be incapable of walking through a role with the casualness of, say, George Clooney. At the moment when Zorro is thinking of sheathing his blade in favour of responsible parenthood, the wicked Spanish governor (Stuart Wilson) of what will become California throws him in a dungeon, burns his house, kills his wife and steals his baby girl. Twenty years later, he escapes and takes on a pupil, Alejandro (Antonio Banderas), whose experience as a bandit has been tragically marred by incompetence. Alejandro worships the memory of Zorro, as do the suffering poor. Soon, after a strict training regime, which he does not like at all, he gets to wear the mask and fight the good fight.

Banderas is adept at comedy and more than a match for Flynn in chandelier swinging. His swordsmanship is complimented by an energy and commitment that exemplifies the film. Campbell has encouraged enthusiasm amongst the cast and welcomes exuberance. Hopkins holds the centre with great dignity and Catherine Zeta-Jones is more than a pretty face, as Zorro's grown-up daughter. She fights like a lynx and, naturally, fancies the audacious Alejandro.

The premier show of the movie will be held this Thursday at 11:30 p.m.



Catherine Zeta-Jones portrays the character of Elena



Antonio Banderas as Zorro



Central characters of the film portrayed by (from L to R) Anthony Hopkins, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Antonio Banderas

Interview

'Children are the audience that I search for'

Hariprasad Chaurasia, India's most renowned flautist, tells Shivranjini Krishnamurthy that Indian classical music is under no threat because "anything created by god is here to stay"

When did you realise that music was your world, and that's where you would excel?

I'm still in the process of realising

that. I'm a student, and the learning process never ceases. But, otherwise, I started my musical pursuit when I was 15 under the guidance



Hariprasad Chaurasia

Theatre

Definition of sight

Bangladesh Child Film Society stages a press show of *Chokh* at Guide House auditorium on January 26

CULTURE DESK

LOT of the drama evolves around an eccentric King who likes to act on his own will. Subjects of his empire have no other way than acting according to the King's desire. If the King claims the sun rises in the east, that is granted.

One day, all of a sudden, a debate rises on the definition of human eyes in the palace. The King claims that a man has only two eyes but the court's physician says a man has three eyes. Out of rage, the King imprisons the physician.

One day the King loses his sight and a different situation arises in the palace.

Suddenly a magician appears in the palace and discovers an intricate plot. The King narrowly

escapes his death. The magician proposes to treat King's eyes but the King disagrees. The King realizes that a man's real eye is his conscience.

Script and direction of the play is



Chaurasia playing at the Westbrook music hall in Lincoln

of Pandit Rajaram.

You started as a vocalist: why did you switch to the flute?

I was 15 when I began learning vocal techniques. But, within a year, I switched to playing the flute, as my vocal chords weren't suited for singing. My guru, Pandit Bholanath, suggested singing through the flute, so I started playing the flute. I trained under him for eight years.

Having come from a non-musical background, how difficult was it to establish yourself in the world of music?

It was very difficult, indeed. I got the initial break in 1957, when All India Radio (AIR), Cuttack, hired me as a musician. In 1962, I was transferred to AIR, Bombay. But my performing career really took off after 1965, when I left AIR.

How does it feel to get such vast recognition and awards?

Oh! It is really a great feeling. I was thrilled to receive the Padma Vibhushan from the Government of India. But what I cherish most are the personal compliments I receive after every concert or performance. Your mother wouldn't feel as satisfied receiving a certificate as she would if you give her a hug and say she's a great cook.

What kind of support did you receive from your family?

I come from a wrestlers' family, and my father wanted me to continue the tradition. But I had different plans - of proving myself in the world of music. My father had no clue about my practicing vocal music, and, later, the flute. My two brothers and sister had a certain interest in music, and they were very supportive during my formative years. I used to fake a reason, saying that I was going to the library to read the newspaper, and would then practice playing the flute. I initially worked as a stenographer with the state government while continuing my training as a wrestler. It wasn't until I got a job at the AIR in Cuttack that my father came to know about my classical music training. He was shocked and cried bitterly, but he understood that I had my foot in an altogether different world.

Who was your guru?

As I said earlier, I initially trained under Pandit Rajaram, followed by Pandit Bholanath. But it was under Guru Annapurna Devi, daughter of

Ustad Allaadin Khan, that my music achieved a new depth - essentially, the characteristics of the Maihar Gharana.

Why did you choose to learn the flute from a surbahar exponent instead of a flautist?

I realised that music seemed incomplete without stringed instruments. It was a niche that these instruments had created for themselves in the world of music. I wanted to find the same individuality for the flute, so I learnt to play the flute from a great surbahar player, Annapurna Devi.

With people increasingly switching to rock and pop music, do you see a threat to classical music?

Of course not. Anything created by God always exists, and will always be bright. It is so bright that foreigners have started chanting *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* in Indian temples. Don't you remember John Higgins, who was so overwhelmed by Indian classicalism that he came to South India to learn and sing? Remember the Kumbh? All of Hollywood came down to India for a dip in the same Ganga that they accuse of being dirty.

You've been performing for young audiences for a while now through the Society for Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Amongst Youth (SPIC MACAY). Have the youth influenced you?

Oh, the children are just great. They've loved me, and, more importantly, they enjoyed my art. This is the audience that I search for. You cannot enjoy the art if you already have knowledge of it. You then end up being a critic. If you are a good cook yourself, you would never enjoy anybody else's food.

Source: Internet



Choke: A memorable performance