

RECOMMENDATIONS

Art Exhibition

A solo exhibition of artworks by artist Nazia Andaleeb Preema is being held at the DRIK gallery at Dhanmondi in the city. The exhibition continues till February 12, 2002. The exhibition is open for all everyday from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Thursday & Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Book Fair

Amar Ekushey Grantha Mela, a three-week long book fair at the premises of Bangla Academy is in progress. The fair is open everyday from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Seventh Solo

The 7th solo art exhibition of artist Samiran Chowdhury is being held at Divine Art Gallery in Hotel Sonargaon. Samiran's 25 works in water colour, mixed media and acrylic are on display. The exhibition will remain open for the visitors from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. till February 16.

Drama Festival

Nattyotsav 2002, the national festival of drama is going on at the Mahila Samity auditorium in the city. A drama of a particular group is staged everyday at 6:30 p.m. The festival will continue till February 20 organised by Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation.

Satranji Exhibition

A Satranji exhibition by Shafiqul Alam Selim is being held at WVA auditorium from February 8 till February 15. The exhibition will remain open for all from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. everyday.

Solo Painting

The first solo painting exhibition of Zakia Khan Chandana is being held at the Zainul Gallery of the Institute of Fine Art at Shahbagh in the city. The show will remain open for all till February 14 from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. everyday

Art Exhibition

A 12-day painting exhibition by renowned artist Maruf Ahmed started at the Shilpangan Art Gallery in the city from February 7, 2002. The show will remain open for all till February 18, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. everyday.

Theatre

Dhaka greets Twentieth Century Girls

The Kosh, a UK-based physical theatre, stages Twentieth Century Girls for three nights,beginning today, at The British Council

SAIFUL ISLAM

THE British Council Dhaka presents a three-day performance of UK-based physical theatre, The Kosh, for the lovers of drama. The Theatre Company stages its latest production The Twentieth Century Girls on 12, 13, 15 February 2002 at 6:00 p.m. at the Council auditorium. A press conference was held last Sunday evening at The British Council premises where the two performers of the theatre group, Sian Williams and Fiona Creese and the producer Michael Merwitzer were present.

This is Kosh's first performance in Bangladesh and first in the sub-continent as well.

Founded in 1982, by Michael Merwitzer and Sian Williams, The Kosh is a London-based touring company with a unique style of physical theatre. In the last nineteen years the Kosh has performed in twenty-six different countries and have won international awards in dance, theatre and film.

The Kosh is currently touring its latest production twentieth Century Girls and developing an installation, performance event refugees and the survival of the human spirit-A Square of Sky. It is also involved in two arts education programmes and workshops for the elderly and the collage students and Being Seen And Heard, a video project with young people, in collaboration with the National Children's Bureau.

Financial support for recent and current projects has been provided for the Adult and Community Learning Fund through the Department of Education and Skills, The British Council, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, London Arts, the Association of London Government and the National Lottery through the Arts council of England.

The Kosh and The British Council hope that the company will be able to attract the audience by their vivacious performance though The Twentieth Century Girls is an English piece in nature. What is going to strike the audiences' attraction is perhaps the blend of exuberant dance performances and the fascinating music to be orchestrated during the show. Actually dance on stage and music played at the background during the dramatic



Members of The Kosh Theatre at a press briefing at British Council on Sunday. Seen in the picture (From L to R) Michael Merwitzer, Fiona Creese, and Sian Williams.

performance is not new to the Bangladeshi viewers. The Jatras and the Palas are perhaps two, integral parts of our tradition and culture. But what is unique to the performance of The Kosh is perhaps the sheer physicality of their piece. They reflect the patterns of the mind by the moves of their body. The idea is, Michael says, "to make our piece accessible to any kind of audience, to any kind of people,"; the language is not the medium but the physical performance. The movement of the body articulates the ideas, feelings, and the emotion of the performers. Limbs of the body and dancing steps are used to set an aura of images. It is a truth that the moves of the body were the earliest forms of communication.

Though dynamism is a trait of language, it is contracted in space and time. On the other hand the moves of the limbs are easily understandable. The music is included to take the physical moves near to the audience by creating harmony. The mixed presence of both the kinesthetic and the auditory images is, perhaps what is extraordinary and subtle about their production.

Naturally, one may become curious about the structure of this

kind of theatrical performance which is carefully woven, Sian says though the performance is wholly physical the theme is always worked out beforehand in writing "we decide a ploy and then grow it up by playing, trying, and experimenting. About their superb theatrical performance

The Guardian says "full of charm ... laid back and easy ... disarmingly simple ...dizzily vast ... their dance bumps up against shocking events."

Actually the concept of the group is to uphold the fact that life must go on regardless of the political disasters the world undergoes. Michael puts it nicely, "we do love our child returning home though a very important political leader had been assassinated in the morning.

The title Twentieth Century Girls has a special significance actually the first performance happened to take place in a day care centre where many old men and women found the performance inspiring and felt empathy to the two performers dancing on stage.

"The performers are two women who go through their everyday choir and reminds the audience about their past memories" ads Fiona. The piece starts its journey portraying

life from the 40's to the present. It includes jibes and tangos which were popular to the Britons during the 50's and 60's inspiring the elderly people to live a happier life.

Sian Williams (performer) was trained at the London College of Dance and Drama. She founded The Kosh dance theatre company with Michael Merwitzer in 1982 and performed in all of its production. Choreography and theatre awards include Manchester Evening News Dance Theatre Award, Cairo Experimental Theatre Award, New York Film and Television Festival Bronze Medal etc.

Fiona Creese(performer) was Trained at London Contemporary dance School. She performed with The Kosh in The Act, Marked Cards, Telling Tales. She has performed with the Slackdance and Manact.

Michael Merwitzer (producer) obtained Ma's in Marketing and Education at Lancaster University, lectured in marketing at Otago University. His professional arts career later from 1976 when he was education advisor of the Ludas Dance Company.

Exhibition

Gems from Kolkata

A group art show by six young painters from Kolkata going on at Indian Cultural Centre in the city

TAWFIQUE ALI

INDIAN High Commission in Dhaka presents International Young Artists Organisation Kolkata with its firstever art exhibition titled 'Ahna' in Dhaka. A ten-day long event, the show comes as an outcome of endeavour made by the organisation to provide a platform to any promising creative Bangalee painter working at any part of the world. The show, inaugurated on February 7 by Prof Rafiqunnabi who profusely praised works displayed saying "There are some interesting pieces". The show contains works of six young painters done in acrylic on canvas mostly in abstract or semi abstract forms.

While introducing objectives of his organisation, its founder Tapos Mallick says, "while studying at Shanti Niketon, the idea of founding an organisation to bring all the Bangalee creative painters together and accommodate them in a platform regardless of their any other identity came to my mind. Though student of Bangla, I am an art admirer and simply this very fact moved me forward to build a platform for uniting Bangalee painters and hold shows of their works in either of two Banglas -- Dhaka and Kolkata. The organisation, which came into being in 2001, aims at organising any artist, by heart, wherever he/she may be, and keeping an exchange of idea and experience on. This would facilitate to draw appreciation of art enthusiasts for Bangalee painters."

The six participating young painters include Anjan Das, Bhabatosh Sutar, Jnanesh Sekhar Ray, Partha Roy, Sanjoy Majumder and Swapan Sarkar.

Anjan Das, born in 1968 in Kolkata, is a self-taught painter, says about his work, "I thematically deal with object and space," when asked what he focuses upon in his paintings. "Very particularly, I try to determine a mutual relation of space and object to each other which rises from a tension between two. There is space both within and outside of an object. I apply my splashes of colour on the canvas to discover and establish a verdict of space and object in relation to each other. Concern of my work is to settle status of an object in its surrounding space, if I note it simply."

When talking about how he



Composition by Partha Roy

works and what style he employs, Anjan further says, "Though the subject matter is specific I sometimes have an impulse which rises from human feeling to determine a strange relation which bridges space with an object and I like to exchange my idea with others. My journey in the world of painting has been as long as a decade during which my style and perception have undergone changes through a process of purification." In Anjan's series work "upside down" reversed state of abstract and semi abstract forms depict an interaction between object and space in which prominence of colours remain absent. Born in 1974 in Kolkata, Bhabatosh Sutar is a graduate from Government College of Art and Craft, Kolkata who says about his work, "I don't set to work with a preconceived idea of any particular subject or message. I must start working putting colours on canvas and its my strokes which take me to find expressions of innermost feeling and desire a human being possesses. Different emotions -- bestial and humane -- of a human find expressions through distorted human figures taking shapes as a beast, a bird symbolising bestial desire and tranquil state of composure."

His series work on 'Inner War', being showcased at the show, convey painter's expression of conflicting desires of human beings delineated with clear lines and splashes of dull colours. Bhabatosh



Untitled by Anjan Das

imprints his pieces of art works with 'Untitled' in which case he expects his viewers to title them and interpret on their own.

Jnanesh Sekhar Roy's works on display, are mostly done in black and white in abstract forms and lines. A graduate in Fine Arts from Sarba Bharatiya Sangeet-o-Sanskriti Parishad, Kolkata, he viewed about his work saying, "In my work too, space is an important factor I dwell upon. Based on scientific facts, there is a conflict in the endless space outside the universe. Two conflicting objects gives birth to a new form through an evolution. My efforts are to capture such a creative interaction between two objects which virtually results in a new creation on my canvas."

Festival is another series work by Partha Ray, which depicts movement, and nature's force and mystery in the form of evolution and water fall made vivid with brilliant splashes of maroon, blue and yellow. Image of whirling water is prominently present with hint at the force of nature.

Abstract forms of human figures and brooding women figure occupy Swapan Sarkar's 'composition' with a dismal ambience in dark blue and ash.

The show provides the art connoisseurs with a new instance to debate over and country's emerging young artists with a chance to exchange their idea and experience with the participating painters.

Award

Director Robert Altman says bad films were greatest influence

AFP, Berlin

US director Robert Altman, who accepted the Berlin film festival's lifetime achievement award Sunday, said that watching bad movies had taught him most of what he knows about cinema.

"I remember through my whole lifetime of seeing films, I would see a film I thought was dreadful and I'd say 'I want to be sure I never do anything like that,'" he told reporters before a gala screening of his new period mystery "Gosford Park" at which he received the honorary "Golden Bear" award.

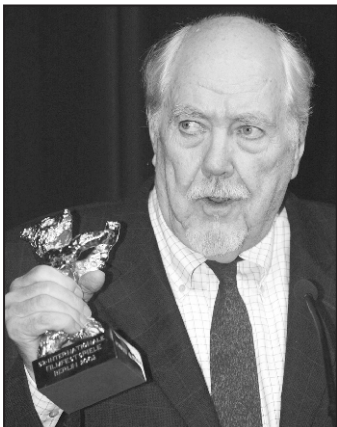
"So the directors who influence me the most, I don't know their names."

The maverick filmmaker, renowned for ensemble pieces such as "MASH", "Nashville" and "Short Cuts", said he believed the secret to great filmmaking was allowing good actors the freedom to develop their own characters and allow a certain "magic" to develop from the cast's chemistry.

"What I want to see is something that I've not seen before," he said.

"You start with a two-dimensional plan and fill that with actors and partners. They take that into the third dimension and occasionally, into the fourth, that's that thing that makes the film work and nobody knows why."

"Gosford Park", a critical and commercial success since its release in the United States and Britain, presents a stellar British cast in an "Upstairs, Downstairs"



US director Robert Altman holds the honorary 'Golden Bear'

style comedy of manners peppered with a murder mystery.

Veteran actress Maggie Smith, who plays the prickly Constance, Countess of Trenham in the new feature, said it had been a "joy" to work with Altman.

"Anybody loves to be in a Bob Altman film -- they fall over themselves to get them," Smith said.

"He's an actor's director. He really does understand how actors work and that we're nervous wrecks and we really aren't too sure of what we're doing."

Jeremy Northam, who plays 1930s actor Ivor Novello in the latest Altman film, said that the renowned improvisation in Altman's features often masks the vision behind them.

"Nobody knows how he really

does it except him," Northam said. "Of course he's telling huge fibs saying it's got nothing to do with him, it's all done with the cast. But he knows much more about what's going on of course than he lets on."

"He treats everyone with tremendous respect, so that you feel the responsibility of doing your own work as well as you can with the rest of the cast."

Altman, who keeps his distance from the US film studio system, had a fierce reaction to a reporter's question about comments attributed to him in which he appeared to blame violence in Hollywood movies for helping to provoke the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.

"I'm an American citizen, I love my country, I always have," Altman said. "I'm not a fan of the current administration -- that has nothing to do with this. I'm not a politician, I'm not qualified, I'm an artist."

"What was reported is not true. It's not my feeling. I've been injured by this."

Altman who will turn 77 on February 20, said that he was honored to receive the lifetime achievement prize at the Berlin film festival, where he has been a frequent guest over the past two decades, but said it did not mark the end of a career.

"I hope it doesn't mean 'lifetime' - I have plans."

Altman will in May begin filming "Voltage", based on the novel "The Shortage of Engineers", in New York.

Festival

Mardi Gras: a tale of three cities

AFP, Paris

WHENEVER carnival is mentioned, three cities spring immediately to mind -- Venice, for its sinister elegance; Rio de Janeiro for its sheer splendour; and New Orleans for its brash and brassy popular parade.

Venice

With its labyrinthine network of canals giving the impression it has only just been saved from the sea, Venice has an air of unreality about it at the best of times.

But in carnival season, it takes on an altogether more sinister visage.

The characteristic image of carnival is of the plain white mask, worn for best effect beneath a hooded black cloak, on a figure borne along the water in a black gondola.

But come the final day on Tuesday, the city will be awash with revellers all trying to outdo each other with the magnificence of their costumes and with elaborate masks of gold or silver.

The masked balls and the traditional parade, the "lison", through the streets and squares will be the occasion for showing off the best that the revellers can offer, before it all degenerates into a wild party in San Marco waiting for the bells to toll midnight and ring in the season of Lent.

But it will still be a far cry from the old days when the Tuesday was marked by scenes of sheer lunacy and debauchery, following bull-fights and car-races all day long.

Thousands of masqueraders used to run amok through the streets celebrating the last few hours of freedom, bearing torches which lit up the whole city; wild singing and dancing in San Marco left the crowds gasping for breath



Dancers of the Sao Clemente samba school perform February 10, 2002, during the first night of the annual Carnival Parade in Rio de Janeiro. Sao Clemente led the opening parade.

and a bonfire was built between the pillars of San Marco square.

An effigy wearing the mask of Pantaloon from the Commedia dell'Arte is burned while the crowd chant "It's going, it's going, the carnival is going" as the bells of San Francesco della Vigna toll the end of the festivities.

Rio De Janeiro

The Rio carnival is without doubt the showstopper of them all. Millions of dollars a year go into the preparations, the lavishly-decorated floats and the scantily-clad men and women who make up the show, marching and dancing to the incessant samba rhythm, make it a spectacle not to be missed.

Officially, total nudity is forbidden, but almost every year someone falls foul of the ruling, desperately trying to explain that the skin gloss or glitter they have smothered their otherwise naked body in really constitutes "clothing".

Rio is nothing if not "over the top". The scale and the splendour, the crowds and the absolute enthusiasm for the occasion have transformed it from a simple fête into one of the wonders of the modern world, a spectacle of magic and beauty.

Sumptuous balls and street celebrations take over the city, especially on the climax of the festival on the final Tuesday.

All along the Marques de Sapucal Avenue, crowds gather to watch or take part in the "samba schools" parade, with thousands of dancers in fancy costume, percussionists and nowadays sound trucks, laser light displays and

fireworks all adding to the sense of the spectacular.

Occasional outbreaks of violence, thefts and muggings on the fringes of the event have given it a bad press in recent years, but in the sweltering southern hemisphere summer heat, the beat goes on and Rio attracts tourists from all over the world.

Tight security will accompany US former first lady and presidential mother, Barbara Bush, on a visit to Rio to participate in the annual Carnival.

For the "cariocas" (the inhabitants of Rio) themselves, disguise is of the essence and carnival time is traditionally a moment to forget or recall an old love affair, to celebrate a new passion or go in search of new romantic experiences.

In the past, young women would hurl objects from their balconies down into the street and usually the target would be handsome, wealthy young men whose attention they wished to attract -- and then, as now, romances would often flourish as during carnival, all the usual social rules were suspended.

New Orleans

Mardi Gras in the once-sedate French Quarter of New Orleans is an occasion for bawdy behaviour, drunkenness and gifts all played out to the backbeat of marching jazz bands.

The annual processions are organised by the city's "krewes", the masking and parading clubs, reminiscent of the secret societies of medieval Europe, each with its own rules of membership and its own elected "king" and "queen" each year.

Where once merry-makers would carry bags of flour to shower at each other, now the key feature of

the processions is the "throws".

Throughout the parade, masked riders on the floats throw plastic cups, women's underwear, beads and metal "dubloons" inscribed with the krewe's insignia, to the expectant crowd.

It is not unknown for riders to spend more than 1,000 dollars of their own money on these "throws".

The crowd demand such rewards for their attendance and many will go to great lengths to get something to take home for their pains, fighting and jostling for anything hurled from the floats, often at the risk of being crushed beneath a wild scrum.

It is something of a badge of honour to be able to go home with more "stuff" than your friends.

It remains to be seen whether bumped-up security in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks dampens down any of the traditional revelling. In recent years, the carnival mood has become brasher and brasser and where once the traditional cry of "Throw me something, Mister" was the norm, now young women are resorting to more blatant methods of attracting attention, baring various parts of their anatomy in the hope of receiving a small trinket or a string of false pearls from the car.

The most valued prizes are the hand-painted coconuts offered by the krewe of Zulu -- the Zulu Aid and Pleasure club, founded in 1909 and which held its first parade in 1914. The krewe's first celebrity "king" was jazzman Louis Armstrong in 1949 and it remains the only krewe to allow the king to choose his own queen.

Where once merry-makers would carry bags of flour to shower at each other, now the key feature of



PHOTO: AFP



PHOTO: AFP

Former Eurythmics stars Dave Stewart and Annie Lennox pose during a photocall before a live concert to promote the release of an album "When Love Speaks".

Movies

Arnie flick set to take US\$ 15.1 million in launch weekend

AFP, Los Angeles

ARNOLD Schwarzenegger's film "Collateral Damage" was expected to make some 15.1 million dollars in its launch weekend, according to preliminary figures Sunday.

The movie will be in lead position at the North American box office but estimated receipts were on the low side for the opening of a Schwarzenegger action movie.

By comparison, "Batman and Robin" earned 42.8 million dollars in its debut in June 1997 and "Terminator 2: Judgment Day" raked in 31.7 million when it opened in July 1991, according to Exhibitor Relations.



Meanwhile, "Big Fat Liar" opened in second place this weekend, earning about 11.7 million dollars, followed by "Rollerball" which takings of around nine million dollars in its debut.

But "Black Hawk Down" slipped from the top spot -- which it had held for three weeks -- into fourth place with earnings of an estimated eight million dollars.

It was followed by "Show Dogs" (6.7 million), "The Count of Monte Cristo" (6.3 million dollars), "A Beautiful Mind" (5.8 million), "A Walk to Remember" (5.7 million), "The Mothman Prophecies" (4.9 million) and "I Am Sam" (4.5 million).

Final figures were due out Monday.

