

RECOMMENDATIONS

Painting exhibition

Art works of Bangladeshi landscape done by an American artist, Sarah Suto, is being exhibited at Divine Art Gallery at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon hotel in the city. The exhibition is open for all from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. everyday till March 18.

First Solo

The inaugural ceremony of the first solo art exhibition by Farah Deeba Zaman, a student of East West University will be held today at 10:30a.m. at the university common-room (ground floor), Annex Building, EWU. Dr. Md. Farashuddin, President, Board of Governors of East West University will inaugurate the exhibition as chief guest. The exhibition will continue till March 21.

Festival

To commemorate the completion of fifty years of Language Movement, Dhaka Theatre organises a series of programmes including Theatre Festival, Seminar, Village Theater Convention and Reception from March 16 to 22 at Mahila Samiti Auditorium in the city. A two-day seminar on the key notes like Art, Theatre, Poetry and Music will be held on March 21 and 22.

Saree display

A three day saree exhibition of Indian designer, Abha Dalmia starts in the city at Mayasir from March 17. Abha presents a large collection of traditional Indian sarees and the display is open for all from 10:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. on March 17, 18 and 19.

Art Exhibition

Japan and Bangladesh are holding a joint art exhibition at the National Museum art gallery in the city. The exhibition will end on March 20 that is featuring works of renowned Bangladeshi artist Mohammad Kibria, those of Noriko Yanagisawa, a Japanese contemporary artist and works of Kazi Ghiyasuddin, a Bangladeshi artist who is presently based in Japan.

Solo exhibition

A solo art exhibition of Abdus Shakoor is being held at Bengal Art Gallery at Dhanmondi in the city. The exhibition features recent works of the artist who is inclined to pause and look back, to lift the fraying mantle and energeise a willing legacy. The exhibition will remain open for all from 12 p.m. to 8p.m. till March 29, 2002.

Theatre

A thoughtful jubilee

The 50th anniversary of Dhaka Theatre will be both a celebration and a time for reflection on the development of the art in Bangladesh

SAIFUL ISLAM

DHAKA Theatre, a well-reputed nattyadol or theatre group, is going to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the language movement with a number of programmes highlighting the achievement of Bangladeshi theatre and literature during the last few years by holding a theatre festival, opening today at mahila samity, and seminars, beginning March 21.

A number of seminars, a weeklong theatre show, receptions, and the fifth convention of the Bangladesh Gram Theatre will be held commemorating the glorious achievement of the language movement. 'Please notice one thing, after the four star poets of Bengali literature, Modhusudan, Rabindranath, Kaji Najrul, and Jibananondo our achievements have never touched the climax again. And in the fields of the other branches of art and culture how far have we moved', says Nasiruddin Yusuf Bachu, the president of the organising committee which is working hard to make the celebration successful.

'We, the theatre people, are gathering in Dhaka from across the country to stand face to face and ask each other the question What have we achieved in these years and why have we achieved so little?' adds Nasiruddin. To find out

why there have been so few achievements, the planning committee has thought of holding seminars on some core and important issues such as, *Modernism in Bengal Art and Literature, Our Quest for Drama and Poetry and Art and Music.*

The keynote speakers on *Modernism in Bengal Art and Literature and Our Quest* will be Debesh Roy, the author of 'Tista Parer Britanto', which claimed the *Academy Award* of India and eminent writer Hasan Azizul Huq. The other speakers attending the discussion will be novelist Selina Hossain, renowned short story writer Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam, poet Mohammad Rafique, and publisher of the *UPL*, Mufidul Huq. The discussion will be presided over by writer Professor Anisuzzaman. Bivash Chokroborty and Selim al Din will present the treatise on Theatre, the other speakers will be Ataur Rahman, and reputed actors like Abdullah Al Mamun, Ramendu Mojumdar, Mamunur Rashid, and Bimol Chokroborty and Afsar Ahmed. Writer and columnist Professor Sirajul Islam Chowdhury will chair the seminar side of the celebration. Critic Abdul Mannan Syed and Arun Sen will present the thesis on *Poetry*. Poets like Nirmolendu Goon, Rafique Azad, and Farhad Mazhar will attend the discussion. Educationist and media man Abdullah Abu Sayed



will preside over the discussion. The topic of the last discussion to be held is *Art and Music*. Artists like Korunamoy Gossami, Jogen Chowdhury, and Nisar Hossain will outline the treatise to be discussed. Also present will be, cartoonist Rafique-Un Nabi, art-critic Ziaul Karim and people like Mrdulakanti Chokrobortie, Sujit Mustafa, Krishnapad Mondol and Sandip Bhattacharya. Artist Mustafa Monowar will head the discussion. The weeklong theatre show, starting on the 16 March, will present a carnival of contemporary popular theatres like *Notpala, Hathodai, Joiboti Konyear Mon, Pracho, Bonpanshul, and Mrittu Na Hatya*. The theatres to be presented will largely focus on the heritage and tradition of Bangladesh and will seek to illuminate the social and political trends in Bengal.

An interesting exhibition of the famous *Chinnopotro* by Dr. Nowazes Ahmed is the final part of the celebration. Dhaka Theatre has also decided to give out a number of receptionsa reception to Bivash Chokroborty will be one of them. Maksudush Shalehin reception, Bazul Karim reception, and Faozia Yasmin Shibli are some other awards to be given to people of achievement.

Festival

Inspiring young minds

Childrens' drama festival completes fifth day amidst enthusiasm of young performers from across the country

AZIZ AMIRUL

THE premises of Central Public Library, at present, is full of life and vigour from the joyous moods of several hundred children, on the occasion of 5th National Childrens' Drama Festival 2002 that began from March 11.

Former Chief Advisor of Care-taker Government, Justice Habibur Rahman inaugurated the festival by releasing a bunch of colorful balloons. A number of eminent cultural personalities of the country including Sara Zaker, Aly Zaker, Professor Syed Manzoorul Islam and Ali Ahmed attended the inauguration ceremony. A rally was held on the opening day in which around 500 children took part. The rally members comprised almost half of the total participants of the 12-day long theatre event.

'I am highly pleased to observe that besides organising and practising group theatre activities, the drama activists of Bangladesh are bringing a revolutionary change in



A scene from the play 'Dalim Kumar'

the field of childrens' theatre', mentioned Justice Rahman, in his inaugural speech. 'The hosting of childrens' drama festival is a good

news for all of us', added the elderly cultural connoisseur.

Liakat Ali Lucky, Secretary General of Peoples Theatre Association, in his speech mentioned about the difficult job of arranging such a big festival. 'We can be inferior as human but the work which we are doing with involvement of children and youth is a very big and important task of the society', stated Liakat Ali.

On the first evening two plays 'Swapner bhubon' and Dalim Kumar' were staged, respectively by, Theatre Ambition and Biborton Jessore.

Liakat Ali informed about the possibility of an entertainment park that would soon be set up in the city where children from across the country would be able to come and enjoy facilities of various types of games and other suitable entertainment disciplines.

'Different groups are coming daily from outside the city to perform at the festival and leaving the capital on the same night or early next morning. The children are leaving for home with a sad mood unable to watch any following proceedings of

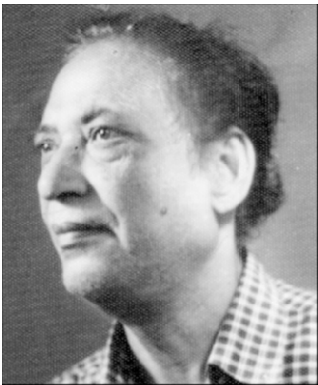
the festival. We wish that the children could spend a day or two in the city and then could manage to develop some friendly relationship with members of other groups', said Lucky in a statement that was published in one of the Utsav bulletins of the festival.

A number of special events were held yesterday including a childrens' gathering at the nearby Shishu Park, video screening, drama workshop for children and a puppet show by eminent artist Mustafa Monwar.

The grand meet of juvenile artists comes to an end on the evening of March 22 with a cultural event to be performed by child artists of national

Anniversary

Poet Shamsul Islam turns 60



CULTURE DESK

POET Shamsul Islam completes 60 years on March 17. A classical poet of contemporary times, Shamsul Islam was born on this day in 1942 in Feni. The poet has so far published ten books of his poems with a total of 24 including of prose and juvenile literature.

At present, Shamsul Islam is the editor of literary quarterly *Barnik*. Many of his Bangla poems have been translated in other languages.

Cinema

A summit of "Golden Lions" from Venice

Zahir Raihan Film Society presents 11 "Golden Lion" winning films from Venice Film Festival at the Goethe-Institut Dhaka

CULTURE DESK

THE first ever international film festival in the whole world was held in Venice in 1932. Since then, 58 editions of the Festival were held. Venice is considered as one of the three best film festivals in the world alongside Cannes Film Festival in France and Berlin Film Festival in Germany. Winning the Best Film Prize in any of these prestigious film festivals is considered a great honour to any filmmaker in the world. Venice Film Festival is not an exception. Getting the "Golden Lion" at Venice is any filmmaker's dream.

Zahir Raihan Film Society, in its series of international film festival best prize winning films, has come up this time with Venice Film Festival. It will screen 11 Best Film Award "Golden Lion" winners from 1951 to 2001 at the Goethe-Institut, Dhaka, from 17<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2002. It has already screened 11 "Golden Bear" winning films from Berlin Film Festival in February, 2002. The "Golden Palm" winning films from Cannes Film Festival will be presented in May, 2002.

The aim of the First Venice International Film Festival in 1932 was to make the Italian film enthusiasts familiar with the best in the world cinema. Initially two Best Film Prizes were given - the Best Italian Film and the Best Foreign Film. But later on the prizes came to be known as the "Grand Prix", and yet later, the "Golden Lion of St Mark" which has been shortened to the "Golden Lion".

Recently a controversy developed concerning the Venice Film Festival since the Government of Italy led by Sylvio Berlusconi took the responsibility of running and organising the Festival. Personalities who are not associated with the cinema are appointed in different key-posts of the Festival. For instance, Felice Laudadio, the then Director of the Festival, was replaced by a sociologist who has never been associated with film. As a result, the filmmakers, the artists, the cine-journalists all are demonstrating against the government's controversial decisions. We hope that everything will be settled down properly for the betterment of the cinema in Italy as well as in the world. Different steps are being taken to save Venice the "Unesco Heritage City". We hope that this



prestigious film festival will also be saved from cinematic alternatives.

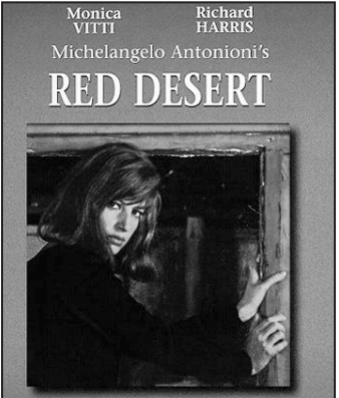
The selection includes some of the very best films of the film history of the last 50 years will be screened in the Film Session. Following is the detailed screening-schedule and synopses of the films (The year in the parentheses is the year in which the film was awarded the "Golden Lion"):

**Before the Rain** (Macedonia; 1994; 110 minutes). Director: Milcho Manchevski. (On Sunday, 17 March, at 8:30 pm).

A solemn triptych that transports us from the ethnic tensions of Macedonia to the urban strife of London, and back again. In Part One, "Words", we see a monk break his vow of silence to shelter an Albanian Muslim girl from a lynch mob; in Part Two, "Faces", Anne (Katrin Cartlidge), an English picture-editor, refuses to accompany her photographer lover Aleksandar (Rade Serbedzija) to the village where he grew up, and tells her estranged husband that she's pregnant; while in Part Three, "Pictures", Aleksandar returns home for the first time in 20 years, and struggles to make sense of the madness infesting his country. Filmmaker Milcho Manchevski's tragic drama of ethnic tensions is a brave compelling work which demands serious attention.

**The Red Desert** (Italy; 1964; 116 minutes). Director: Michelangelo Antonioni. (On Sunday, 17 March, at 8:30 pm).

Perhaps the most extraordinary and riveting film of Michelangelo Antonioni's entire career; and correspondingly impossible to synopsis. Monica Vitti is an electronics engineer's neurotic wife, wandering in bewilderment through a modern industrial landscape (the



film is set in the industrial city Ravenna in Italy) which Antonioni has coloured in the most startling and original way imaginable. The film is an aesthetic feast but don't let that distract you from the haunting intricacy of the plot and the performances. Actress Monica Vitti's portrayal of the confused girl, alienated from the stark technological landscape around her, is among her very best. Richard Harris, as Corrado, the mining engineer becomes her refuge but is just passing through.

**Michael Collins** (Ireland; 1996; 135 minutes). Director: Neil Jordan. (On Monday, 18 March, at 5:00 pm).

Writer/director Neil Jordan's film tracing the career of Irish Republican hero Michael Collins, from the Easter Rising to his death in 1922, depicts a man whose belief in violence is finally transformed by the horrors of civil war into a desire for peace. It's a dense, stirring tale, with Collins (Liam Neeson) under threat from both the English and his compatriots. Is Ned Broy (Stephen Rea) a spy or an ally working from within Dublin Castle? How serious is his split with Eamon De Valera (Alan Rickman), who prefers to fight on for a Republican than settle temporarily for the Free State brokered by Collins? And what of bosom pal Harry Boland (Aidan Quinn), who feels personally betrayed when his girl Kitty (Julia Roberts) transfers her attentions to Collins? This is Neil Jordan's most ambitious and satisfying movie, a thriller with a real sense of scale, pace, menace and moral import. Chris Menges' camerawork and Anthony Pratt's designs perfectly evoke a country falling apart with no one, it seems, able to halt the tragedy.

**The Green Ray/Summer**



(France; 1986; 99 minutes). Director: Eric Rohmer. (On Monday, 18 March, at 7:30 pm).

It's July, and Delphine (Marie Riviere), a young Parisian secretary, is suddenly at a loss regarding her holiday; a friend has just backed out of a trip to Greece, her other companions have boyfriends, and Delphine can't bear spending August in Paris. She also hopes to find a dream lover, but receives only the unwelcome attentions of pushy predators, until... There's a whiff of fairytale to this particular slice of realism a la Rohmer, but what's perhaps most remarkable is that the film was almost completely improvised; though not so as you'd know it. It's as flawlessly constructed, shot and performed as ever, with one of France's greatest living director effortlessly evoking the morose moods of holidaying alone among crowds, and revelling in the particulars of place, weather and time of day. Deceptively simple, the film oozes honesty and spontaneity; the word, quite bluntly, is masterpiece.

**Rashomon** (Japan; 1951; 88 minutes). Director: Akira Kurosawa. (On Tuesday, 19 March, at 5:00 pm).

If it weren't for the closing spasm of gratuitous, humanist optimism, *Rashomon* could be warmly recommended as one of Kurosawa's most inventive and sustained achievements. The main part of the film, set in 12<sup>th</sup> century Kyoto, offers four mutually contradictory versions of an ambush, rape and murder, each through the eyes of one of those involved. The view of the human weaknesses and vices is notably astringent, although the sheer animal vigour of Toshiro Mifune's bandit is perhaps a celebration of a sort. The film is much



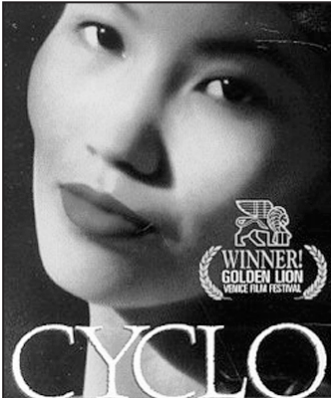
less formally daring than its literary source, but its virtues are still plentiful: Akira Kurosawa's visual style at its most muscular, rhythmically nuanced editing, and excellent performances. No doubt why it is considered as one of the greatest films of all time.

**Atlantic City** (France; 1980; 105 minutes). Director: Louis Malle. (On Tuesday, 19 March, at 6:30 pm).

Eclectic, pacy and hard to categorise, it's part crime thriller, part love story, part fairytale, and part a gentle, generous examination of certain dying aspects of American culture. Bert Lancaster turns in the performance of his career as the ageing petty crook, running a numbers racket, indulging in nostalgic delusions about his past experiences in the Big Time with Capone at all, and finally getting a chance to discover true self-respect when he gets involved with a young hippy who's stolen a stash of coke from the mob. Between the gripping and beautifully staged action sequences, director Louis Malle contrasts the rather sad and slightly seedy lives of various loners with their romantic dreams of success, wealth and fame, while never treating his characters with condescension or contempt. Witty, warm, but never sentimental, it also benefits from being set in the fading glories of the resort town of the title: grand seaside facade behind which lie more mundane realities, surrounded by decay and demolition.

**Hana-Bi** (Japan; 1997; 103 minutes). Director: Takeshi Kitano. (On Tuesday, 19 March, at 8:15 pm).

Takeshi Kitano's prize-winning film mixes tenderness, violence and droll humour. A recently retired



cop drifts towards a one-off crime, to help out a suicidal colleague crippled in a disastrous stake-out, and to take his terminally ill wife on last trip around Japan. It's exceptionally assured, imaginative and idiosyncratic: the violence is sudden, brutal almost all in the editing; the working of Kitano's own delightful paintings into the story is astonishingly resonant; the *mise-en-scene* as sharp and inventive as in his film *Sonatine*; and it's all held together by Beat Takeshi's unprecedentedly taciturn, impassive, but expressive performance, which is crucial to the film's emotional punch. Fans of Jean-Pierre Melville, Buster Keaton, Howard Hawks and Sam Peckinpah should be specially impressed, but anyone with a modicum of patience, an open mind and a little love in their heart will probably recognise it as a masterpiece.

**Au Revoir les Enfants** (Good-bye Children!) (France; 1987; 104 minutes). Director: Louis Malle. (On Wednesday, 20 March, at 5:00 pm).

Plotwise Louis Malle's autobiographical film, set in a Carmelite convent school in 1944, is simply itself. 12-year-old Julien doesn't understand why new boy Jean Bonnet -- real name he later learns is Kippelstein -- is bullied by the other pupils and protected by the teachers. Only with the arrival of the Gestapo does he see the full implications of Jean's 'difference.' If the outcome of this sombre, lovingly detailed film is unsurprising, its emotional power remains undeniable, precisely because Malle never sentimentalises his material (neither boy is particularly loveable, nor is their friendship free of petty rivalries and cruelty). Instead, he creates an authentic mood of



unspoken suspicions and everyday secrecy, drawing upon performances, decor, even, nature itself to paint a wintry portrait of childhood on the brink of horrific discovery. The film's quiet integrity finally depends on its avoidance of heroic cliché and stylistic bombast, and on the unadulterated generosity extended towards his characters.

**Belle de Jour** (Daytime Beauty/The Beauty of the Day) (Spain; 1967; 100 minutes). Director: Luis Bunuel. (On Wednesday, 20 March, at 7:00 pm).

Luis Bunuel's cool, elegant versions of Joseph Kessel's novel is an amoral comedy of manners. Beautiful, bored and bourgeoisie Severine (Catherine Deneuve), married to a surgeon, decides to while away her afternoons by working in a high class whorehouse, where she encounters a variety of characters -- a Chinaman with a strangely erotic box, a depraved duke, and a gangster with gold teeth, with whom she falls in love. Or does she? Allowing us no indication of what is real, what is not, Bunuel constructs both a clear portrait of the bourgeoisie as degenerate, dishonest and directionless, and an unhistorical depiction of Severine's inner fantasy life, where she entertains dreams of humiliation galore. For a film about such a potentially sensationalist subject, it's remarkably discreet and chaste.

**Monsoon Wedding** (India; 2001; 114 minutes). Director: Mira Nair. (On Thursday, 21 March, at 5:00 pm).

(For synopsis see The Daily Star, 2 March, 2002.)

**Cyelo** (Vietnam; 1995; 129 minutes). Director: Tran Anh Hung. (On Thursday, 21 March, at 7:00 pm).

The story is set in motion by the theft of a pedal cab (cyclo) essential to the economic survival of an 18-year-old Vietnamese. But forget *Bicycle Thief*, and forget, too, writer/director Tran Anh Hung's debut feature, *The Scent of Green Papaya*. When the 'cyclo' (Le Van Loc) tells his boss that his vehicle's been stolen by professional rivals, he finds himself at the mercy of the Poet (Tony Leung Chiu-Wai), a taciturn gangster who diverts the boy from self-improvement (as advised by his late father) and into a life of crime. What the boy doesn't know, however, is that the poet has also lured his sister (Tran Nu Yen Khe) into prostitution: in the desperate, hustling world of Ho Chi Minh City, it seems, innocence is unprotected. With its dazzling camerawork, feverish energy and dark, visceral power, this admirably unsentimental film paints a compelling portrait of moral derailment and salvation in a city in social and spiritual turmoil. The plot is packed with absent, uncaring, or malign father figures; the tone is alternately tender or brutally violent; and the use of water and fire as symbols of purification and destruction gives rise to vivid dreamlike imagery. It'll have you reeling.

Entrance is free of charge and open to the members of Zahir Raihan Film Society and guests specially invited. However, persons interested to watch these famous films can do so by joining Zahir Raihan Film Society as members during the film session at Goethe-Institut, Road No. 9, Dhanmondi, Dhaka-1205. Members have a free access to all the film sessions organised by the Film Society during the whole year (Last year, the Film Society screened 215 films).