

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 started in the city at Mayasir. 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. till March 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 Abbus 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.



First Solo

The first solo art exhibition by Farah Deeba Zaman, a student of East West University is now being held at the university common-room (ground floor), Annex Building, EWU. The exhibition will continue till March 21.

Dhaka Theatre Uts

A taste of the sea

Hathadai was the second play to be performed as part of the Dhaka Theatre Utsav

EMILE CHABAL

IT was a heaving Mohilla Shamiti Auditorium which played host to 'Hathadai', the second play to be staged as part of Dhaka Theatre's celebration of 50 years of the language movement. Amidst suffocating heat in the hall, the audience was treated to a vivid depiction of ordinary life by the sea.

Hathadai is a play about the lives of the people of Noakhali and their intricate relationship with the sea. It doesn't tell one continuous story, nor does it have a linear narrative. The characters and plots intermingle to create an overall picture of the 'ordinary' country people. Throughout the play we see scenes of daily life, though not necessarily in chronological order. We are shown the numerous conversations, stories and events that make up a working day, from story telling to cock-fights and arm-wrestling.

For example, the main char-



Raisul Islam Asad in a reflective mood

acter, Anar (played by the renowned Raisul Islam Asad), is an old man who is an incorrigible dreamer. He imagines marrying pretty girls and travelling to Rio de Janeiro, and stubbornly

refuses to yield in front of numerous visits by the grim reaper.

Effectively, the playwright, Selim al-Din, wants to show through this work how local

Bengali dialects can also have poetry and prose. He points particularly to the sea as a source of inspiration for writing. In a small way, this performance is meant as a tribute to the many that work by the sea.

In the capable hands of the well-respected Dhaka Theatre, the performers did full justice to the play. Raisul Islam Asad, Ahmed Raja Rubel and Razi Siddiqui were especially good in their roles as the idealistic rural dreamers. They brought their parts to life with striking facial expressions and a confident interpretation of their characters.

Nasiruddin Yousuf's direction should also come in for praise. He has brought together the many elements required for a successful play. There were some excellent choreography and imaginative lighting. A notable highlight was the scene in which someone recounts a story that takes place in the sea. In order to show this, rapid, flashing blue lights were used to give the impression that the performer was actually swimming through the water. A mention also for Shimul Yousef's music. It provided a sensitive backing for the dance scenes and sounded in tune with the spirit of the play.

However, with an auditorium filled to capacity and many people being forced to stand, the ventilation was insufficient and it made for an unpleasant environment for performers and audience alike. Other than that, it was a very satisfying evening. There is clearly much to look forward to.

The Dhaka Theatre Utsav continues until the 22nd March and tickets are available on the door at the Mohilla Shamiti Auditorium. Check the paper for exact times.

Workshop

For the welfare of women

Speakers call upon the patriarchal society to treat women as equal

CULTURE DESK

SPEAKERS called men to change their mindset about women at a half-day workshop titled *Women at Work: Reality vs. Practice*, commemorating the International Women's Day, organized by Green Valley Shelter at Gulshan club last Friday.

They said that only the change of the perspective of men could ensure peaceful and happy life for women. All of them, in the discussion, asked the stopping of repressive action that's going on for so long in our society.

Kabari Sarowar chaired the workshop. Renowned actress Suborna Mustafa read the keynote paper *The Identity of Women in Profession, House and Work* of Professor Momtazuddin Ahmad in his absence, in Bengali. Mahmudul Hakim read out the key-note paper in English. The moderator on the occasion was Farah Kabir. Famous film-maker Abdus Samad, Italian Political and Cultural Councillor Rosana Masari, women's right activist Kushi Kabir, Suborna Mustafa, the president and the general secretary of the Film Director's Samity, respectively, Shohidul



Rosana Masari speaking at the workshop on Women at Work: Reality vs. Practice (From left to right) Kushi kabir, Selina Hossain, Kabari Sarwar, Suborna Mustafa.

Islam Khokon and Sohanur Rahman Sohan, Surayya Hakim, journalist Mahmuda Chowdhury, Zuin Chowdhury spoke in the workshop. Reputed novelist Selina Hossain was chief guest on the occasion.

"The women were given work at the initial stage of a project, but whenever the project becomes larger, and carries out larger scales of production, they get rid of the women labourers." The paper claims that it is the deliberate intention of the people to exploit women. The

excuses that the entrepreneurs invent are 'women need pre-natal leave, and also it is not wise to keep them at work at night.' Professor Momtaz claims that if it is a sin to become a mother, the father should also bear the responsibility.

The paper also focuses on the manifold contribution of women in the fields of art, literature, and science in Bangladesh, and tries to find out the reason for the prejudice of the patriarchal society.

Liberation War Museum turns six

Liberation war museum has drawn up weeklong elaborate programmes to mark its 6th founding anniversary and 31st Independence Day beginning on March 21.

Below is the programme schedule.

March 21: at 6:30 p.m. at Osmany Memorial Hall

The Concert in Bangladesh -- A tribute to George Harrison and Pandit Ravi Shankar. This concert participated by the popular musicians is a remake of the 1971 'The Concert for Bangladesh' held in the Madison Square Garden to raise funds for the refugees of Bangladesh.

The concert will be held at the Osmany Memorial Hall with the collaboration of the musician community to raise fund for the museum.

Card for this concert is available from the Museum/Astra Club in Gulshan; the Travel House and Cyber Cafe at Dolce Vita in Banani.

March 22: at 10:00 a.m. at Museum's Cafe Theater

The 6th anniversary programme of the museum begins with the children's programme. At 5:00 pm eminent cultural researcher Shamsuzzaman Khan will present anniversary speech to be followed by *Baul* presented by different groups of Bauls from various regions of Bangladesh.

March 23: at 6:30 p.m. at Museum's Cafe Theater

Banglar Gaan (Music of Bengal) by Shubir Nandi to be followed by dance performance by Nitrom Dance Troupe under the direction of renowned dancer Tamanna Rahman.

March 24: at 6:30 p.m. Sunday at Museum's Cafe Theater

The Chayanaut cultural group will present gongs.

March 25: at 6:30 p.m. Monday at Museum's Cafe Theater

Lightning of Candles in remembrance of the martyrs of the dark night of 1971 when Pakistan Army began the massacre of Banglaeas. Poetry recitation by leading Poetry Recitation Groups.

March 26: at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at Museum's Cafe Theater

People's song by Protul Mukhopaddya, original singer and lyricist of the well known song 'Ami Banglar Gan Gai. Ami Banglar Gan Gai...'

Cinema

China's Ying Ning wins top prize in documentary competition

AFP, Paris

CHINESE director Ying Ning has won the top prize at the 24th Cinema du Reel, an international documentary film festival, for his film "Xiwang Zhi Lu" (The railway of hope), organisers announced.

More than 100 films were screened at the festival, held at Paris's Pompidou Centre, including 32 entries from 22 countries in the official international competition. Twenty films competed in the

French competition.

The Chinese film-maker took home the top award of 8,000 euros (7,060 dollars) late Saturday.

The 2,500-euro prize for the best short documentary was awarded to Lithuania's Kornelijus Matuzevicius and Diana Matuzeviciene for their film "Sicionykste" (A woman from here).

Lei Feng of China won the prize for best young film-maker for "Xue Luo Yili" (Snow on the Yili), also worth 2,500 euros.

Music



Roger Waters of "Pink Floyd" performs in Caracas during the "Festival Pop" concert 17 March, 2002

Dhaka Theatre Utsav			
Date	Time	Drama	
Production			
March 19	7:00 p.m.	Pracchya Dhaka Theatre	
March 20	7:00 p.m.	Bonopangshul	Dhaka
March 21	7:00 p.m.	Mrittyu na hottya Nandipaati	

AFP, Rome

WITH his impeccable green suit and round glasses, Geronimo Stilton poses a bigger challenge to Harry Potter than the many demons and devils the world's most famous boy wizard has ever battled.

Stilton, a mouse who doubles as a journalist and amateur private eye, has sold more than 1.6 million copies in Italy since the first of his 34 adventures was published two years ago, his publisher Piemme said.

Stilton now finds himself just trailing behind J.K. Rowling's best-selling "Harry Potter" series, whose four Italian editions sold a total of 2.7 million copies.

Although he can't claim Potter's success of having his stories translated into more than 30 languages -- including Latin and ancient Greek -- or into a box office smash, Stilton has taken Italy by storm and is getting ready to sail abroad.

Publishing giant Bertelsmann



A scene from the movie Harry Potter

has bought the German rights to the series, and Stilton is getting ready to descend upon Brazil, Belgium, France, Japan, Turkey, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, and Spain.

Might Stilton close in on the Potter phenomenon, which saw the four books selling over 100 million copies worldwide?

A cartoon set to be released in 2004 has caused a stir in Italy, but it would be hard-pressed to match the success of the film of the first Potter novel, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone," which broke box-office records around the world.

"The fear of war, of death, of solitude, of growing up" -- these are

the many themes Stilton tackles in his adventures, Piemme spokesman Valeria Marietti said.

Children aged seven to 13 -- who comprise the majority of Italy's reading public -- can't seem to get enough of the curious mouse.

And like Potter, he appeals to adults as well, with his subtle satirical commentary of Italian society.

But he never goes too far and is "very politically correct," his publisher assures, noting that the young Stilton is a single non-smoker whose only sidekick is an unpredictable secretary who revels in the Internet and the newest technology gadgets, like so many Italian kids.

So who is behind the intelligent little rodent, who enjoys a game of golf as much as the next guy?

"He's like Santa Claus -- we don't ask who's really inside," Marietti said.

No author's name adorns the books, a tactic which Marietti plays to "the magic of childhood."

The only hint given about the

series' author is the name of Stilton's "godmother" Elisabeth Dami, head of Piemme's children's book division, Steamboat.

Stilton, who is Italian throughout and-through despite his last name (taken from an English cheese), is riding high on a new interest in

children's literature.

He captured the moment perfectly with his "Little Book of Peace," published after the September 11 terrorist attacks in the United States.



Still from Harry Potter

Oscar

Hollywood on the movie campaign trail as Oscar voting ends

AFP, Los Angeles

AS Academy Awards voters finalize their Oscar ballo , 'an army of stars and spin doctors enlisted by Hollywood are waging a last-minute battle aimed at win the hearts and minds of voters.

In the final stretch of an Oscars race dogged by whispers of alleged foul play and dirty tricks by studios hoping to give their nominated films a leg up, or to hobble the competition.

"It's a real campaign frenzy," said Oscars author Tom O'Neil. "It's a classic Oscar W Dbale which has even the most standoffish stars out kissing babies along Hollywood Boulevard."

As the Oscars race moved towards its crescendo ahead of Tuesday's bouing deadline for the return of completed voting ballots from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences 5,739 members, the stars were out in force.b "Nominees, or those linked to nominated movies, have been mobilized to appear on even the most obscure of radio and television talk shows, doing their public bit for their mov-

ies.

"I go where I am pushed," said veteran director Robert Altman whose film "Gosford Park" is nominated for best picture, he said adding that competition was very stiff and that everyone had to rally round to promote the picture.

"A film like 'Gosford Park' had a small budget that can't possibly compete in the marketplace with the biggest films, (so) our job as actors is very instrumental in getting the people to the theaters," said best supporting actress nominee Helen Mirren.

Even contenders like best supporting actor nominated for Wilkinson who recoil from publicity campaigns, are reluctantly peddling their wares.

"I would like not to do it, but you just can't stop campaigning," he said.

And while the pundits are furiously putting odds on the winners of cinema's holy grail awards, to be given out at a glitzy ceremony on March 24, the studios are putting their money where their mouths are.

Studios have spent around 60 million dollars on glossy adds in the



trade flies and other publicity material on this year's nominees -- up around 20 percent over last year's spending, according to estimates.

But they may have spent up to that much again on local television advertisements in Los Angeles, which are aimed more at influencing Oscar voters, many of whom are based in the city.

The frenzy underscores the fact that an Oscar is not just an honour from industry peers: it's also big, big business.

A film's box office takings can leap exponentially with Oscar recognition, as proved by 2000 best-picture winner "American Beauty" which saw receipts leap by 35 percent after its nomination and by another 26 percent following its win.

Producers hope that huge spending as much as 10 to 15 million dollars per major picture can help bring the golden guy home to them, while actors' careers can be made by a win.

"The studios will fight to the death right up to the night," O'Neil said. "This is a fight for immortality, for your place in history and if there one more day of skulduggery to do,

they're going to do it."

An indeed, seasonal rumours of skulduggery are swirling trough Hollywood again this year, focusing this time on the favourite for best picture, "A Beautiful Mind," which is also nominated for seven other statuettes.

Its furious producers, Universal Studios, have hinted that it was a smear campaign that made so much of the omission from the film of allegations that its real-life hero, Nobel laureate John Nash, was anti-Semitic and gay.

Its star Russell Crowe and director Ron Howard have hit the publicity trail, coming out fighting in the studio's corner.

"I know the studio is upset about (the alleged dirty tricks) and from what I gather I don't blame it," Howard said last week.

He said that while it was acceptable for people involved in a film to help sway Academy voters through publicity, "attempting to undermine another candidate's credibility, that's a shame, that's tragic."