

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.

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 energise a wailing legacy. The exhibition will remain open for all from 12 p.m. to 8 p.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.

Childrens' Drama Festival

The ongoing 5th National Childrens' Drama Festival comes to an end on March 22 at the Central Public Library Shawkat Osman auditorium with a cultural evening to be presented by child artists of national status. The festival is presenting 48 dramas of juvenile theatre groups from all over the country. In addition to theatrical productions, the festival has so far presented puppet shows, workshops and video shows since inauguration on March 11.

Documentary

In the land of promise

Dhaka-based architect Shakoor Majid's documentary captures Bangladeshis living in the US



Shakoor Majid interviews Mohammad Ali who had settled in America 50 years ago

MOSHED ALI KHAN

WHEN architect Shakoor Majid travelled to the USA last year, he had his digital video camera handy. The Dhaka-based architect had a goal of his own... Majid went ahead and documented some of the most intriguing aspects of Bangladeshis living in the USA. Among many aspects covered, he looks at how they arrived in the USA, how they are leading their life and how they are trying to hold on to their culture.

During his two-month stay, Majid travelled from state to state to meet Bangladeshis, most of whom he had never met before. By the time he completed his tour of New York, California, Michigan, Dallas, Boston and New Jersey, he had interviewed over 100 Bangladeshis and possessed nearly 26 hours of video footage on his interactions with them.

"Every time I heard about a story of a Bangladeshi I rushed there to talk to the person or the family, of course I never forgot to switch on my DV camera while talking," Shakur said, during a premiere show of a documentary serial called Shapner Deshey... Shapna Bangher Deshey (In a land of dream... in a land where dreams shatter), at the Goethe

Institute in Dhaka recently.

On his arrival in Dhaka from the USA, Majid sought help from some of his professional friends involved in filmmaking. Kausar Chowdhury, a renowned short filmmaker helped the newcomer into the world of documentary. For the next ten months Majid, also a prolific drama writer who has written TV dramas like Londoni Kanya and Naori, took to the painstaking task of editing with the technical help of Goti Media Ltd. and View Finder.

Although Majid's idea came under criticism, he decided to make a series of seven episodes with his long footage. The first of the episodes, 'Conquer of a Dream', is about 30 minutes long, in which Majid tries to explore how first batches of Bangladeshis arrived in the USA and settled down. Then in the following six episodes, Majid said he focuses on their professions, the conflict between home and host culture, a new generation, nostalgia and finally, brain drain.

In 'Conquer of a Dream', Majid finds Mohammad Ali, a Bangladeshi from Sylhet who jumped off a ship in 1949 and settled in the USA, marrying an American lady. As an elderly Mohammad Ali now recalls those days, he feels sorry for his family, particularly his pregnant wife back in

Sylhet, who he left behind 50 years ago. But for Mohammad Ali it is almost too late to return home. He married for the third time and lives in a suburban villa. Ali has children and grandchildren. Shakur talks to Ali's daughter Lisa who narrates her feelings of being married to a man she had never known. Back home Shakur travels to Sylhet to find Ali's wife and relatives.

'Conquer of a Dream' is the result of sheer hard work and determination by an individual with a vision. The film is elaborate but shows clear signs of Majid's inexperience in the domain. At times, the background interpretation of the interviews in Bangla distracts the viewers from the reality. One is gripped with a feeling of an unnecessary intervention in the middle of a flow of thoughts generated by interviews of compatriots living in a faraway world.

The idea of breaking the 26-hour collection into seven short episodes is also an undesired option for many viewers. Majid's efforts could be more rewarding if a single documentary had been gleaned from his precious collection. Apart from these points however, Majid's attempt is praiseworthy.

A challenging art of performance

Aerial dance is getting increasingly popular in the American society

ANITA AMIRREZVANI

A few years ago, Jo Kreiter climbed an 80-foot crane at San Francisco's Hunter's Point. When she got to the top, a fierce wind was blowing and the waters of the bay were churning a long, long way below. At first, all she could do was sit there. The second day, she gathered enough courage to release one hand. The third day, she stood up. Little by little, Kreiter felt free enough to create a new dance in the sky.

Kreiter is one of a growing group of choreographers in the Bay Area who are liberating dance from the ground. In recent years, these artists have been dancing on window ledges, rooftops, clock towers, grain elevators and mountain peaks, not to mention suspending themselves over stages. They have achieved these dramatic feats by exploiting rock-climbing gear, by creating new hanging devices to dance on and by pioneering new ways of moving.

Aerial dance has many roots -- circus traditions such as the flying trapeze, modern sports such as bungee jumping, postmodern dance. Some of the Bay Area's aerial dancers and circus artists will converge at an all-women's festival called "Sky Dancers" Friday through April 7 at the Dance Mission studios in San Francisco.

Festival organizer Krissy Keefer includes as many kinds of apparatus in the show as possible, including bungee cords, a trapeze, suspended fabric, hanging rope, rock-climbing harnesses and creative new devices. The goal of each piece, and each artist, spans a wide spectrum of interests. "The work ranges from the spectacular to the deeply meditative," Keefer says.

At one end of the spectrum are the circus arts specialists. San Francisco resident Leslie Tipton, for example, is an acrobatic contortionist who earned a 2002 Guinness World Record for fitting herself into a tiny box measuring only 26 inches by 27 inches by 22 inches -- with two



A captivating performance of aerial dance

was used for 30 years in coconut processing), and her piece for Sky Dancers is about homelessness. "The stage is a place for me to express my political points of view, which are often feminist-based," she says.

It's possible to tackle any subject while dancing on the ground, so why take it into the air? One reason is

that it gives these artists new freedoms. Their dance floor can be as vertical as the side of a mountain or as wide as the sky. They can fly, soar, spin dozens of times or float for five or 10 seconds after they jump, like astronauts on the moon. "As dancers, we dream about stuff like that," says Amelia Rudolph, founder of Project Bandaloop, one of the festival participants.

Aerial dancers also can go where few have gone before. Last year, Rudolph led a team over the Sierra as part of her "Crossings" project, which involved creating dances in

that is an especially intriguing place to innovate. For her piece on homelessness, "The Economics of Place," Kreiter conceived of a large hanging umbrella made of steel pipe -- a visual metaphor for a temporary shelter. Two of her dancers perform a duet within its steel spines that evokes images of change, instability and loss.

Even though these choreographers stress safety in the air, the word "scary" often comes up. Kreiter once fell off the top of a 20-foot pole -- and caught herself before the audience noticed. Rudolph, an experienced rock climber who has scaled El Capitan in Yosemite, once clipped into a rope and descended 200 feet to get from a ledge to a dance floor. When she describes the experience as "super-scary," she's not kidding.

Rachel Shaw, a modern dancer who has performed with Flyaway Productions and Project Bandaloop, has been working in the air for about two years. She has had to undergo a fierce training regimen to develop strength in her biceps, shoulders and stomach while learning about the strange new physics of aerial devices. "It was probably the hardest process I've been involved in for a very long time," she says.

But perhaps it's no surprise that aerial dance has such a strong following among women. Kreiter, who describes herself as "a fairly small person," says that developing the strength for aerial work has boosted her sense of personal power. "I think the audience gets it," she says, "that these are very empowered women they're watching."

At the Sky Dancers festival, the Project Bandaloop dancers will

Dhaka Theatre Utsav

Date	Time	Drama
March 20	7:00 p.m.	Bonopangshu
Dhaka Theatre		

Source: Internet

March 21	7:00 p.m.	Mrityu na hotya
Nandipaat		

Source: Internet

Music

Honouring a music icon

Sheltech Award 2001 goes to Firoza Begum

CULTURE DESK

FIROZA Begum, one of the country's most accomplished Nazrul song exponents, has been honoured with the Sheltech Award, 2001 at a ceremony held at the National Press Club lounge on the morning of the 19th March, the Sheltech chairman, Tapas Chowdhury, handed over the award to the recipient.

The daughter of a renowned lawyer, Khan Bahadur Mohammad Ismail, Firoza Begum was born at Gopalganj in 1930. Both of her parents were music admirers. She received musical tutelage from music gurus like Chitya Roy and Komal Dasgupta. But she taught herself music on her own efforts since her very childhood. Qualifying in an audition test, she got a chance to perform on All India Radio as a child artist while reading in class VI. Her long play and radio performances of Nazrul songs stirred her audience. She has 12 LPs, 4 EPs, 6 CDs and around 20 cassette albums to her name. She has travelled in several countries including China, America, Canada, Australia,



Firoza Begum is honoured with Sheltech Award 2001 yesterday

England and Scotland and has enthralled her foreign admirers since 1967. Having performed 380 solo shows, Firoza's contribution to the retention of pure lyric, tune and notations of Nazrul song is immense. Apart from Nazrul song she is also accomplished in semi-classical songs, Tagore songs, Ghazals, Hamd, Naat, Kawali and other musical genres.

She has also been honoured with a good number of prestigious

awards at home and abroad. The most notable being Swadhinata Padak, Ekushey Padak, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Gold Medal and Jatio Television Puraskar. Her foreign recognition was marked with an Honourary D.Lit. degree conferred on her by Subdhan University, the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Swarak, the Satyajit Roy Swarak, and the Nazrul Academy Swarna Padak to name but a few.

Beethoven rolls over and tells the Beatles he's news

VANESSA THORPE

THE Beatles and Beethoven have emerged as the favourite musical choices of celebrities. As the Radio 4 programme Desert Island Discs looks back this weekend at 60 years of shows, the composers John, Paul, George and Ludwig are way ahead of the rest.

A top 10 list of the record selections made on the programme in recent years has shown that Beethoven remains an enduring figure in the modern musical canon. Two of his works make the grade, with 'Ode to Joy', the last movement of his Symphony No 9 and now adopted as the European anthem, topping the list.

Among the popular music chosen by castaways since the Sixties, the Beatles outrun those by any other composer or performer. When it comes to a single work, the Adagio of Schubert's String Quintet is also established as a timeless classical choice. It has outstripped other familiar works by Beethoven, Dvorak, Mendelssohn, Rachmaninov, Mozart, Bach, Handel and Debussy.

Foreign classical composers are not entirely dominant, however. Elgar has two works in the top 10, Pomp and Circumstance March No 1 and the first movement of his Cello Concerto.

The BBC points out that a hard and fast ranking system has been impossible to draw up over the long life of Desert Island Discs because tastes have changed too dramatically from decade to decade. But research carried out this year by Sue Lawley, the current presenter, has turned up the new league table.

A top 10 drawn up for the programme's 50th anniversary contained this year's numbers 1, 3, 5 and 8, but none of the rest.

When the original presenter of the show, the late Roy Plomley, wrote his account of the programme in 1975, he noted a whole range of other favourites which had come up time and again during his period and which have dropped away in recent years. These included Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1; Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 4, Piano Concerto No. 20 and Eine Kleine Nachtmusik; Bach's St Matthew Passion; Richard Strauss's Also sprach Zarathustra; and Wagner's Tristan und Isolde.

Source: Internet

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

Bangla 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 Banglaeers. 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 Mukhopadhyay, original singer and lyricist of the well known song 'Ami Bangla Gan Gai'. Ami Bangla Gan Gai...'

Music

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame 2002

CNN, New York

An eclectic mix of punk rock, country, and soul music legends were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Monday (March 18) night at a ceremony at New York's Waldorf-Astoria hotel.

Kicking off the 17th annual ceremony was inductee Isaac Hayes, who sang the theme song from "Shaft".

Because aerial dance is relatively new, choreographers are still experimenting with approaches to movement and with how to move aerial apparatus. "We're in the very early stages of anything that might be called technique, and everybody's doing a huge variety of things," Rudolph says.

For some choreographers,