

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hashem Khan's Solo Exhibition

September 27 October 7
Renowned artist Hashem Khan holds a solo exhibition, 'Art Fair: Six Seasons' at Shilpangan gallery at Dhanmondi in the city.

Group art show

Sept. 22-28
Five contemporary young artists, Rajan, Shulekha, Nazmul, Salma and Nasima hold a joint exhibition of fine arts at the Zainul Gallery at Fine Arts Institutes in the city that is open daily from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Photography exhibition

Sept. 21-30
Entitled 'A Glimpse of Bangladeshi Heritage', a photo exhibition of Babu Ahmed, a photojournalist, continues at the DRIK gallery at Dhanmondi in the city.

Solo painting

Sept. 15-30
Artist Sadrul Hassan Rafi's solo exhibition continues at Alliance Francaise in the city and is open daily from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. & from 5 to 8 p.m.

Six celebrated artists' show

Sept. 20 Oct. 7
Akku Chowdhury hosts art exhibition of 6 celebrated artists of the country, Jamal Ahmed, Kanak Champa Chakma, Khalid Mahmud Mithu, Saidul Islam Juisse, Fareha Zeba and Nisar Hossain at La Galerie, Kamal Ataturk Avenue.

Photography

September 25-30
Amateur photographer Mozharul Haq Monju holds a solo photography exhibition at the Fine Arts Institute in the city that displays works of the photographer framed in Keokradang around tribal families of various cast and creed.

Interview

The play 'Begum Akhtar' is my gurudakshina to my teacher

Saiful Islam, a staff writer of The Daily Star recently interviewed Indian classical singer, Professor Rita Ganguly who visited Bangladesh with a solo musical play 'Begum Akhtar'

PROFESSOR Rita Ganguly, an eminent theatre director, musician and dancer, was nurtured in a highly cultural family. Trained originally in Dhrupad by Gopeshwar Bandopadhyaya of Vishnupur Gharana at Shantiniketan, she was a serious student of Kathakali as well.

that in past two centuries any other woman has been more successful than Begum Akhtar. The very fact, she started her career in the twenties and in the new millennium we are still taking her name.

DS: Can you give your interpretations as a feminist?
RG: If that pleases you, no problem, but this is the truth. You can call it feminist but this is the truth.

DS: You are known to listeners in love with classical music in Bangladesh. Have you been in the major towns with your play? How do you see the music lovers here?

RG: This is not my first visit here, as I had been to this place when I was two and half years. I went to my mother's home at Rajshahi. After that I came here with the Bishwabharati troop.

DS: You have talked about both mirth and woe in her life. Why did you come up with such a venture of presenting her life to people?
RG: In the new millennium I hope women, especially the working women are going to find newer horizons.



Professor Rita Ganguly

ers. If you get caught you are automatically out. Another comes, they experiment, people take it, keep and quiet, if they do not like it, out you go. Justaposing that to what Begum Sahiba sang, even to day people are listening her, the very fact that when I looked at the audience the seventy percent of them were young people.

reason? The reason is truth and hard work of that woman, Begum Akhtar, the story that I was narrating. So only hard work and only and only hard in anywhere, you succeeded.

So this is an age-old form of theatre, which lasted for a long time. I was just doing that, this is not a fiction, this is truth. There was no need to bring in other characters.

DS: How do you think people will recognize you, as an actor, or a singer, especially people in this part of the world, if this becomes your last visit to Bangladesh?

RG: People will not remember me if I am not worth remembering. People have very short memory. But I suppose I am essentially a vocalist. And today is the narrow days of specialization.

DS: Did you hear the classical singers of Bangladesh?
RG: Many singers of Bangladesh have come to India, and they have learnt and come back and they have become great ustadis.

RG: For five thousand years, in Indian sub-continent the earliest way of theatre was telling a story. The kathakar who told the story from Veda Veds who spoke about Mahabharata. It was not written, the story was told. It was told with singing, with narration, with references.

world, perhaps are doing better than what India is doing today. I am very happy to hear them. I am not saying that one needs to be a classical singer. Very soon even Tagore music is going to be classical music.

DS: Your play is often visited by a modern bit of music, what made you do this?

RG: I did that because it is today's world that is having this flashback. So the immediate ambience of today's popular music is the essence against which we see the other work. This is essentially from the perspective that you get the perspective. So that is why the pop song which was there was also a ghazal written by an eminent writer but it is treated in a very contemporary way.

DS: Do you have any plan to fuse the western classical music and the Hindustani classical music?

RG: I did a pioneering work before Nusrat Fateh Ali sang. May be I am the first person who sang Shakti Chatterge, contemporary poetry with hard rock. But I wouldn't say that I have ever tried experimenting with western classical music.

DS: What do you think about the contemporary trend of fusion?
RG: I am not against any contem-

porary experiment. That may not be my line but that doesn't mean that I don't like it.

DS: Tell us something about the National School of Drama in Delhi. Do you enjoy teaching?

RG: In theatre every human being is a swayambhu, this word does not have any English translation. People like them emerge on their own. And that is precisely why I enjoy my term in national school of drama. Because every year, for past thirty-four years, I meet twenty angry, arrogant, overconfident, well read youth. And for me I learnt a lot, I do not know what they have learnt from me but I learn from them.

DS: Would you say that you are ambitious?

RG: There is nothing wrong in being ambitious, I was in ambitious in my own way. My ambition was not to win the world. I wanted to do good music. Whether you have heard or not, I did not want to go in front of anybody, I just wanted to win the affection of my teachers. And till this date my head bows down in front of my teachers, who left me even twenty years back. Begum Akhtar passed away in 1974, and now it is 2002. Obviously I can sing on my own, I can act. But why am I doing the play Begum Akhtar? I have brought this play Begum Akhtar to Bangladesh. It could have come as a singer and you would have heard me. This is the kind of gurudakshina that I have liked to give to my teacher. And I know that in the whole of Bengal, Bangladesh and West Bengal, Begum Akhtar is popular for her jochona koreche ari. I am happy that I could tell the story, I can understand that people here, and especially the working women are struggling. They need inspiration, may be this would provide that necessary inspiration.

TV GUIDE

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