

RECOMMENDATIONS

Matir Moina Premiere

Oct. 24-25

A premiere show of 'Matir Moina', a much-awaited feature film, directed by Tareque Masud and produced by Catherine Masud, is going to be held at 6:00 p.m. at the auditorium of The British Council in the city.

Theater

October 22-28

A drama festival titled, 'Three decades of Theater' takes place at the Mahila Samity Auditorium in the city in observance of 30th anniversary of the group, 'Theater'.

Japanese Concert

October 24 - 25

FUSA & THE PLACE, a Japanese Blues Troupe presents a concert at Osmani Memorial Hall in the city at 7:00 p.m. (both days) as part of their South Asia tour.

Solo art show

Oct. 15-29

Artist Banizul Haq holds a solo art exhibition at the gallery of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy at Shegunbagicha in the city. The show remains open everyday from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and is open to all.

Music

A taste of fresh German jazz

Florian Ross sextet plays at Osmani Memorial Hall

FAYZA HAQ

FLORIAN Ross, the leader of Florian Ross Sextet that presented jazz pieces at Osmani Memorial Hall on 21st October, speaking before the performance, said, "Part of my group studied at the Cologne Conservatoire and others were part of the jazz scene so that we played in different bands together and that's how we got to know each other. The other players include Paul Heller and Matthias Erlwein on the tenor saxophones, Matthias Bergmann on the trumpet, Dietmar Furrh on the bass and Jochen Ruckter on the drums."

Asked if he had music in his family, Florian said that his father's hobby was banjo playing but that there were no professional musicians in his family. However, his parents were not against his taking up the music as his profession. He said that his choice of piano came automatically as there was a piano at his parents' house. He began playing on it as a child and got stuck with it, as he puts it. He had a classical teacher at age 12, and the tutor came to his house, after he had been playing on his own for a couple of years. He had his formal studies at the Cologne Conservatoire, beginning at the age of 20 in 1992. He studied there till 1998 and in between he was in London between 1995 and 1996 and New York in 1999. He learnt with John Taylor, Don Freedman, Bill Dobbins, Joachim Ullrich and Jim Mcneely.

Talking about whether he preferred composing to playing or teaching, Florian said that his interest in composing and playing were equal. While he is now a jazz player for him classical music training has been important too and as a classical student he learnt a lot of about how to play the instrument. He has always done a little bit of classical music along with jazz in his earlier days and it was not like he did classical first and then jazz. He has performed classical music too though not in concert halls. He adds that this ratio might change as there are months when he writes more

and days where he plays more. As for teaching, he said that this is not such a big part of his professional life so far as he is teaching at one conservatoire and he tries to limit the time that he devotes to this as he wants more time to play and write. He teaches piano playing and composition of music and he felt that both men and women student are good at music although jazz does not fascinate women in general going by the fact that he has only one female student although she is very good.

Dwelling on the history of jazz, Florian said "It has a long history starting in USA with slave music in the cotton fields. Then they started to use military instrument like the brass instruments and the drums in the 1920s. Ten years later New Orleans Dixieland started to use working bands that were recorded. After that came swing, be bop, cool jazz in 1940s. Up to now there is a huge variety in jazz styles. There are many individuals who have stood out in this musical genre so that it is hard to pinpoint the best in them. For me the piano players that matter most is Bill Evans, Herby Hancock. There are also other people like Miles Davis and John Coltrane, while Louis Armstrong was a great trumpet player. Singers for me have not had that much of an impact as I'm not a singer although I like Mel Torme".

Touching on the different instruments that the sextet played, Florian said that they were all typical jazz instruments with two tenor saxophones trumpet, upright bass and drums. They were horns and stringed instruments apart from the percussion and his piano. Elaborating on the piano itself, Florian stressed the fact that the piano played a vital part in western music throughout the centuries, specially classical music and not just jazz.

Florian said that all the members of his sextet listened a lot to classical western music because over the years jazz musicians have learnt a lot from classical music and vice versa. He said that jazz has a lot of influences in it specially now that it is being played all over the world.

The people who play it bring their own thing, he pointed out, as in Africa its presentation is totally different from that say in Hawaii or India. Thus it has a lot of world music influences nowadays. He says, "Western music, Indian music and jazz are all different yet they too have a link of a sort. It is hard to say what tells them apart."

Asked about how German jazz rates in Europe, Florian explained that in jazz that it is not countries who matter but individuals. There are successful individuals in almost any European country, he added. "You wouldn't say this is some French jazz but the product of some French guy. Similarly you wouldn't say it is Norwegian music but that of Garbarek."

Questioned about his possible interest in rock and pop music, Florian said that the group mainly listens to jazz but they do sometimes listen to rock and pop music and he likes Joni Mitchell, the American pop singer. He said "If we listen to pop music it is not the top ten as usually what is in the top ten is no all that great." Touching on fusion music, Florian says that it is good as long as it makes sense. He said that he does not like fusion music when it takes place when someone just wants to do something new. "It is an easy way of doing something new which does not necessarily have a lot of meaning," he commented. "If it makes sense musically I've nothing against it. I don't think that eastern and western music cannot be combined after learning the two. If you cook a new dish and you want to combine something Indian with something German you have to know about both of them in order to make a good dish. It's the same thing in music. If you don't listen to all types of music then it is hard to combine them."

Asked if he had been exposed to the "sitar", "tabla" and the "santoor" during his trip to the east, Florian said, "Not only that, there are a lot of south Asian groups who come to Europe to play the sitar and 'tabla' in Germany and my group and I listen to them often and enjoy

eastern music quite a bit. We started off in Mumbai, the second was in Bangalore, third Delhi and this is our fourth concert. We get very little off time and don't really get to see the cities where we perform although we'd like to very much. Today we had time but were too tired to do any sight seeing after our eight hour journey and we take off early tomorrow. Thus in this tour there is no time to explore and learn about people. The east of course is very different from Europe but despite the difference we were very happy for the response to our concerts." Apart from India and Bangladesh, Florian himself has performed in parts of Europe, all across North America, Russia and Siberia. He said he'd dearly like to play in Africa and South America.

Talking about whether he had any difficulty in choosing his sextet members Florian said that he has known them for years so he knows how they play and he knows them personally too. He added that they were sponsored by the Goethe Institut.

Florian has released his first album as a leader in 1998 "Florian Ross quintet -- Season and places" followed by "Suite for soprano sax and string orchestra beat". He teaches jazz and composition at Johannes-Gutenberg University in Mainz, where he is the head of the department. Among the various prizes for his piano playing and writing, he has received the first prize of the Thad Jones Competition of the Danish Radio Big Band in 2000. Florian wrote music for the Metropole Orchestra, the Vancouver Jazz Orchestra, the BMI Jazz Orchestra, Joe Lovano and Irish Radio Symphony, the Brussels jazz Orchestra and many others.

Talking to the rest of the group in the green room, one hears from Matthias Bergman, the trumpet player, that they met each other while playing in different groups rather than studying together. He said that his father played the piano and this naturally introduced him into musical world. Paul Heller, who played the sextet, said his brother is a jazz bass player while both his

parents were amateur musicians. The rest too came from music loving families. Paul said that the reason why he went into jazz rather than any other genre of music was that his elder brother was into jazz and this influenced him. Similarly, Matthias said that his parents' love for jazz brought him into this form of music. Dietmar said that he likes the possibilities of experimentation that jazz provides as he loves improvisation. Most of them have had formal training for about four years each. The members of the sextet all sounded their interest in fusion music and said that they played this type of music themselves sometimes. They had all played all over Europe and other parts of the world too. They all had CDs in which they were included but not one with this particular band as this had been put together just for the tour.

Paul, speaking for the group, said that they were happy that there were a lot of people in the audience at every concert in their tour of the Subcontinent and that the ambience that surrounded them had been very encouraging. Asked if they liked eastern music, Paul, Matthias (of the saxophone) and the others added that it was "very interesting but hard for us to play although we hear it regularly. Similarly the exotic food specially the 'palau and korma' and the vibrant colours of the clothes that we have been confronted with here are also fascinating. It is a pity that we could spend only so little time here."

The members of the sextet not only played well but appeared affable and warm as individuals. Among the numbers that they had played were "The sound of your voice", "Richard called", "Four W" (a tribute to Kenny Wheeler), "Toss and turn", "Trip to the water cooler", "Dhaka blues and "Prince Valiant". These were all Florian's compositions. The programme had been organised by the Goethe Institut and the tickets had been reasonably priced.

Cinema

Clay Bird brought out of cage

Tareque Masud's internationally acclaimed film Matir Moina releases in the city today

HARUN UR RASHID

JUST when Matir Moina was being screened at the Cairo International Film Festival in Egypt, Director Tareque Masud formally announced the much-awaited release of the film at home today at the Madhumita Cinema Hall. Accompanied by four actors of the film -- Rokeya Prachy, Shah Alam Dewan, Russell Farazi and Lameessa R. Reemjheem -- a happy Masud appeared before an audience of journalists at a press conference held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity Auditorium on October 22.

Masud said that he had felt both happy and embarrassed when the film had been shown and praised at the Cannes Film Festival and in other foreign countries; for he could not yet at that time show the film to his countrymen due to some censorship complications. But now that the misunderstandings were over, he felt relieved. Masud expressed his gratitude towards the press for extending to the film a sympathetic support. He said that it had not been just a support for the cause of freedom of expression of an artist, but for the freedom of the audience too as regards their right to test, and then, to accept or reject a work of art.

As is already known to all from the reviews and criticism published in foreign media Matir Moina is a tale of a young boy, Anu, who is sent off to a madrasa by his deeply religious father. Through diverse experiences of Anu, the film projects 'divisions within a family that reflect the wider clash between moderate and extremist views'. Although the film is based on Masud's own childhood experience, and it had been completed before 11 September 2001, in the consequent global context the film emerged with new meaning and significance. So, Masud feared the possibility that the western audience might have made an issue of the film's not getting censor approval, instead of watch-

ing the film in its own light. However, the film has finally been approved by the Censor Board, and is about to be released soon; and Masud urged to the viewers of the country to treat the film as a brief, but not confused and unrealistic, reflection of the pluralistic image of our society. He said, "It is the responsibility of any progressive and thinking being to stand on the side of the oppressed." As fellow Muslims, even those of us who prefer to call ourselves secular, we should sympathise with the Muslim community, particularly in the Middle East, [which] is subject to discrimination and oppression by certain quarters", Masud said. But at the same time it is also necessary for us to be self-criticising of our own drawbacks. Masud said that he had tried to convey this message in his film.

Regarding the edits he had to make on the film for censorship clearance, Masud informed that the changes were not big and prominent ones -- especially that they had not affected the artistic spirit and revelation of the film. Chiefly a few dialogues and scenes had to be cut, which by no means were part of the message he had conveyed in the film.

About the film's release country-wide, Masud said that if audience response comes in favour of the film, and distributors come forward, Matir Moina will be released all over the country soon. He grieved that he had to distribute his own film whereas international distributing and producing house MK2 had been his eager distributor at international level. But Masud was quite hopeful that people would accept the movie.

The one-hour-and-forty-five-minutes long movie has been shot on 35 mm film, and made with technical assistance of the 'South Fund Cinema' sponsored by the government of France for competition of best script. Regular shows of the movie starts from 12 noon at Modhumita hall in the city today.

TV GUIDE

Table with TV channel listings for BTV, HBO, ESPN, and Channel-i, including program names and times.

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TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

Section containing 'HALLMARK' and 'PICK OF THE DAY' with images and descriptions of featured programs like 'Star Trek: Voyager' and 'The Phantom'.

Table listing various sports events and programs such as 'World Sports', 'Yemen Vs Syria', and 'Asian Festival Of Speed'.

PICK OF THE DAY

Section featuring 'The Phantom' with an image and a detailed description of the movie's plot and cast.

Table listing various sports events and programs such as 'Sportsline', 'Ecb International', and 'Cricket Natwest Series'.

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