

RECOMMENDATIONS

Solo art exhibition

October 29 November 07
Painter Javed Jalil hosts a 10-day solo exhibition titled, 'BLACK LINE', at Shilpangan gallery (R # 5, Hse # 25, Dhanmondi R/A.) in the city that is to be inaugurated by Andre Raynouard, Cultural Counsellor of French Embassy in Bangladesh.

Japanese Doll exhibition

October 29 November 9
A Japanese doll show takes place at the Bangladesh Shishu Academy premises in observance of the ongoing Japan month in Bangladesh.

Group art exhibition

October 24-31
Entitled, 'Third Group Art Exhibition of Young Artists of Bangladesh', a group show goes on at the Russian Cultural center at Dhanmondi in the city and is open daily from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Group painting show

October 25 November 03
A group art exhibition of 18 young female artists of Nandan continues at the DRiK gallery at Dhanmondi in the city.

Event

Tagore fans relish a great thespian episode

Chitrangada resurrects through dance drama in the city

ASIZ AMIRUL

THE large auditorium on the first floor of the National Museum in the city experienced an almost crammed up situation on October 26 evening when fans of Tagore's literature flocked to witness a dance drama performance. This was a stage production that of Nahi Devi Nahi Samannya Nari, based upon Chitrangada, an epic theatrical and dance composition of the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

'Shadhona' an organisation for advancement of sub-continental dance and music in Bangladesh hosted the event with joint coordination and respective specialized performance from Lubna Mariam, a reputed dance artiste, Sara Zaker, an equally well-known theatre personality, Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya, a top Tagore singer and Sharmila Bannerjee, also a reputed danseuse of the country.

It was a fine presentation, based on a plot from the Mahabharata, where Chitrangada was a beautiful princess, a daughter of Manipuri King, Chitravahana. One of the pandava brothers, Arjun, while on a hunting trip to the densely forested territory of Manipur saw Chitrangada. Seeing a strong young man for the first time in her life, Chitrangada became thrilled and went close to Arjun. Things were proceeding smoothly for the love-sick couple had not Arjun noticed too much of a masculine attitude and adornment in the bold and strong character of Chitrangada. She laid aside all her male outfit and ornamentation, instead, wore usual female garment and approached Arjun for his hand.



Nahi Devi Nahi Samannya Nari

But due to reasons of celibacy and penance, Arjun refused her wish.

In the words of Tagore, 'Chitrangada is not the kind of girl who nourishes her despair in lonely silence, feeding it with nightly tears and covering it with the daily patient smile'.

The helpless yet desperate girl, having no other option, approached Madana, the god of love for a proper solution. Melted by her plea, the god provided Chitrangada with a magical charm only to keep her appearance changed for a year; to be the most beautiful girl of the world. When she returned to Arjun, the young warrior forgot all his earlier promises and fell in deep love with a new-looking Chitrangada. Soon the wise girl sought help of the god to recreate her original appearance as she realized the negative notion of falsehood and treachery which she, as truly felt, carried out to acquire the attention of Arjun. Meanwhile, Arjun had heard the bravery and royal attitude of Chitrangada from people of her kingdom and that she had left behind everything in quest of her

beloved. After much prayer and seeking, Chitrangada got back her earlier look and stood before Arjun to show him her original characteristics and beauty. The two met each other for the rest of their lives. Arjun ultimately discovered the true worth of the young, free-spirited Princess of Manipur, his bride-to-be.

It was a memorable evening for the honoured guests who had a great opportunity to watch the fine performance of the epic plot through a combined rendition and performance of dance drama with recitation. Sara Zaker, Bhasshar Bannerjee, Khaled Khan with other performers of Nagorik Natya Sampradaya rendered voice of characters while Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya, Pijush Barua, Azizur Rahman and other troupe members enchanted all with strong, appropriate Tagore numbers, as the various dance sequences continued uninterrupted. Dance direction, stage choreography and dress designing were done by Sharmila Bannerjee with assistance from a large combined units.

Anniversary

'Udichi' leaves its indelible mark

34th founding anniversary of the organisation observed

HARUN UR RASHID

THE largest cultural organisation in Bangladesh, 'Udichi Shilpi Goshthi', celebrated its 34th anniversary of foundation yesterday. Having its origin in the hands of Satyen Sen on October 29 in 1968, Udichi has a long legacy of struggle against all forms of oppression; a legacy of love and sympathy as well for the victims of those vices. Udichi's participation in and contribution to different social, political and cultural revolutions that have often changed the historical scenario of this Subcontinent, especially that of Bangladesh, has earned the organisation a permanent place of respect in the cultural history of the country.

This legacy of working for the oppressed has had its root long before Udichi had its formation-- during the late thirties of the twentieth century. Satyen Sen, a vigorous believer in Leninist Communism and working at that time to unite the farmers of Dhaka district, realised the necessity of a trained up group which would sing of humanity and would make the farmers aware of their rights. Sen was a cultural activist himself and found song easier yet more effective an aid to accomplish his purpose: to show the farmers their fateful tortured condition in the hands of zamindars (landlords). Sen started with performance of songs by labourers at the farmers' conference in villages.

With the passing of time, many other activists and singers came to join Sen's mission. Ranesh Dasgupta, Altaf Mahmud, Ajit Roy, Abdul Latif, Golam Mohammad Idu and many more became regular performers of Nazrul's songs, songs composed by members of this budding circle-- songs that were all rebellious and protesting in nature against injustice. A number of labourers would also come to participate in these performances even from far away Adamji. Young activists of newly formed 'Khealagar and Students' Union also started working with yet a nameless-Udichi.

As the circle expanded with people from various social strata--labourers, students, service-holders, bankers and workers of the Communist Party, Satyen Sen now anticipated the realisation of his dream of a lifetime. But the barriers were still numerous. The most

recurrently felt problem was that of a place where these comrades could meet, if not regularly, at least for rehearsals before performances. In the very beginning they would gather in Saidul Islam's house at South Moishundi of Old Dhaka. Later Professor Mojafer let them use his NAP office at Topekana. During the early 1968, at a time when the mass upheaval of '69 was taking shape, the group had to shift from Old Dhaka to Chamelbagh of Malibagh in the northern part of the city. But still the place was not the group's own; for it was actually a mess arranged by Monayem Sarker for the leaders and activists of NAP. It was at this mess where Satyen Sen one day proposed the name 'Udichi' for the group, and everyone acquiesced.

'Udichi' in Bangla means 'north'. Satyen Sen chose this name for ideological and symbolical purpose. North sky is where the Polestar is seen, which in ancient times guided seafarers and travellers in deserts to keep on the right direction. Sen believed that their aim too was to guide the oppressed towards freedom and happiness.

The first committee was formed attributing different responsibilities on Satyen Sen and Mostofa Wahid Khan. With them were Golam Mohammad Idu, Ikram Ahmed, Badrul Ahsan Khan, Kamrul Ahsan Khan, Monjur Morshed Chowdhury, Monayem Sarker, Rajia Begum and others. Ranesh Dasgupta prepared the first draft of the constitution of Udichi. Artist Amin Ahmed designed the logo with hammer-scythe and an 'ektara'-- a one-stringed musical instrument. Artist Anwar Hossain added the idea of the sun rising in a white peaceful sky.

But the same old problem of a permanent address did not leave Udichi until 1973. The group had meanwhile experienced some brief stays at different places at different times-- a few days at Gopibagh under the shelter of artist Hashem Khan's wife, and in the houses of advocate Nizamuddin and Shahed Ali. In 1973, at last, Udichi was allotted an office room on the third floor of a building at Topkhana Road, which has been its address till today.

Udichi was not merely a cultural group. In 1971, its activists took direct part in the Liberation War, but not wholly putting aside the harmonium and tabla. Some of them started organising defensive strug-



Satyen Sen

gle, some collecting muktijoddha for the fight, and some worked as guides to the Freedom fighters. Some even took up arms and fought with the enemies face to face. But still those inspiring people's songs were in their hearts, which they would often sing out in chorus.

In the liberated Bangladesh, Udichi appeared even more irresistible a revolution. Numerous branch organisations of Udichi sprouted at every nook and corner of the country. The central Udichi also started enriching as many famous personalities-- writers, artists, intellectuals, cultural performers-- joined the group. At present a total of 71 organising associations are operating at district level, the Dhaka Udichi being the centre of them. These district-level associations have 212 branches, the total number of members of which is about ten thousand. At the international level also Udichi has four branches in the United States, Canada, Australia and England.

The post-Liberation Udichi has also widened in its media of activities. Whereas the group was quite proud of itself before 1972 with an only squad of music, at present five more departments are working with theatre, dance, recitation, fine arts and literature.

Music is at the heart of Udichi's existence itself. The group's music department is immensely rich with songs of various kinds. Songs of protest apart, Udichi performs songs of Rabindranath Tagore, Nazrul Islam, D.L. Ray, Rajanikanta, Hemanga Biswas, Lalou Shah, Hason Raja, and songs of Satyen Sen and other lyricists of the group. Besides, it has

adapted famous poems of Sukanta Bhattacharya, the prodigious rebel poet who died young.

Udichi's theatre has also earned much reputation. The central Udichi has so far staged about 26 dramas, nine of which are theatre and 17 street plays. A musical piece named 'Ithash Kotha Kow (Speak out, history)' by Mahmud Selim has been performed for the highest one thousand times. Apart from this, plays have been chosen from works of Safdar Hashmi, Mamtazuddin Ahmed, Manoj Mitra, Tagore, Chekov and Gogol.

The dance department of Udichi started in 1972. The compositions have quite often been based on poems of Tagore, Nazrul, Sukanta and other poets. Some of Udichi's notable compositions are Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury's greatest poem 'Amar bhaier rokte rangano Ekushey February', Nazrul's 'Dhanya jiban dhanya tomar', Bhupen Hajerika's songs, and Shamsur Rahman's unforgettable poem 'Swadhinota tumi'.

In 1985 Udichi introduced its recitation wing. Famous poems of poets like Sukanta, Subhash Mukhopadhyay, Shamsur Rahman, Nirmalendu Gun, Asad Chowdhury, Rudra Mohammad Shahidullah, Rafique Azad, Mohammad Rafique and many others include in the choice of Udichi's recitation.

The literature section of Udichi has brought out several issues of a magazine called Charon (Minstrel). A newsletter titled Udichi Barta is another publication of the group.

Udichi has also given reception to honourable personalities of Bangladesh including a number of language-warriors. It has been regularly holding a festival of folk music every two years. At this festival, original folk singers from remote rural areas of the country come to participate.

Udichi's cultural activities have proved far into other spheres of our history. Everywhere Udichi has left a mark of conscience, which has been shaped by our historic Liberation War, also by the very tradition and culture of our country. And through this conscience Udichi will ever exist in times to come.

TV GUIDE

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Table with TV channel logos and program listings for PHILIPPINES Event, STAR SPORTS, and various sports channels.

Table with TV channel logos and program listings for TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS, including HBO and STAR SPORTS.

Table with TV channel logos and program listings for PICK OF THE DAY, including STAR PLUS and STAR NEWS.

Table with TV channel logos and program listings for STAR PLUS, STAR NEWS, and NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC.

Table with TV channel logos and program listings for STAR GOLD and CHANNEL [V].