

RECOMMENDATIONS

Theatre

January 28

Vision Theatre premières its third production Chourasta on January 28 at the Central Shahid Minar premises at 6 pm. The drama is written by Moloy Bhownik and directed by Rehana Yasmin. Liyakat Ali Lucky and Akeruzzaman of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation will be present at the opening show of Chourasta.

Exhibitions

January 13-February 12

The 11th Asian Art Biennale is being held at Osmani Memorial Hall, Shilpa Kala Academy and National Museum. The show will remain open for all from 11 am to 7 pm everyday.

January 13-February 12

Saju Art Gallery is holding the 50th Grand Group Art Exhibition of reputed Bangladeshi artists with 128 art works by 87 artists at the gallery premises (F40-41, DCC, North Super Market 2nd Circle, Gulshan). The display will remain open for all from 10 am to 8:30 pm everyday except Fridays.

January 29

DRK Gallery is holding prestigious photojournalistic exhibition titled *World Press Photo* from January 4. The display remains open for all from 3 to 8 pm everyday.

January 18-27

Dhrupad Gallery holds an exhibition titled *Solo Oriental Painting Exhibition* by Cacoly at the gallery premises (House-36, Road-5, Block-G, Banani). The display will remain open for all from 10 am to 8 pm everyday.

January 19-29

Goethe-Institut holds an exhibition titled *Along the Rivers* by German artist Hans Benda at the exhibition hall. The display will remain open from 2 pm to 8 pm everyday except Fridays and Saturdays.

January 23-30

Mokhlesur Rahman's solo art exhibition is being held at Shilpgram Art Gallery (Road 5 House 25, Dhanmondi) from January 23. Titled *Ruposh Bangla*, the exhibition is open for all from 10 am to 5 pm.

Folk Festival

January 26

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy has arranged a weeklong folk festival at the academy's National Natyashaala at 6:00 pm everyday. The schedules are as below:

January 26

Shujan Bedar Ghat by Bhodra Jatra Unit of Shatkha

CD Launching

January 26

Shaeen Samad: *Abhisar*

January 27

Meeta Haque: *Chirobondh Chironirbor*

Venue: Bengal Foundation
Time: 6:00 pm

Music

Our inherent treasure: the folk songs

Mustafa Zaman Abbasi's CD, *Urilo Shonaar Payra* launched

SADYA AFREEN MALICK

IMAGINE on a lazy afternoon, sailing gently down the river, on a village boat or a *Bojrawra* with hundreds of kilometers of virgin uninhabited forests on either side and the warm sun on your back... all you need then is the melodious and passionate folk songs which bring back memories

A live presentation by Abbasi enchanted the select audience and fans who flocked in to listen to a truly gifted and dedicated artiste.

Abbasi is full of enthusiasm, wit and passion even at 66. His evergreen voice speaks of his affinity with a culturally weathered family. His father, the celebrated folk singer of the country, Abbassuddin Ahmed surely instilled the passion for music in him.

Abbasi is himself a collector of folk songs and has been dominating the cultural field for more than half a century. He has been hosting several popular TV shows on folk songs for the past 20 years, titled *Amaar Thikana*, *Amaar Bhubon*, *Loukik Bangla* and *Bhora Nodir Bankey*. Abbasi has been travelling from place to place in search of our lost treasure.

In the CD *Urilo Shonaar Payra*, MZ Abbasi presents his *Bhawaiya* and *Chatka* songs—songs of the northern Bangladesh.

The famous Chatka *Abo Nao Darita Maria* is about a young man lamenting over the death of his

sweetheart—all these common sentiments centre around the folk songs.

'Folk songs are a part of our rural culture and surely arouse sentiments of the commoners with its in-depth message. The lyrics are simple, yet powerful,' in its content', said Abbasi during the launching of his CD titled *Urilo Shonaar Payra* at the Bengal Foundation. Inam Ahmed Chowdhury, Chairman of Privatisation Commission,

wife. The frustrated man gives an account to his grandmother (Abo) about the sound and echoes which his sweetheart has taken away from his life.

In English, this is onomatopoeia, sound echoing the sense. George Gearson, D.C. of Rangpur during the British rule and a famous folklorist, first collected the two-hundred-year-old song. The song was later printed in the *Linguistic Survey of India*, Volume XIII and was first recorded some 70 years from now by Abbasi's father late Abbassuddin Ahmed.

Similarly *Nak Dengaran Betata*, a comical song, narrates how a lady, married to an imposter, later on realises that she is deceived by false promises.

'This album,' says Abbasi, 'not only comprises authentic folk songs of Bengal but is also a verbal documentation of the relevant

songs'.

Abbasi presents the famous lyricists of *Bhawaiya* namely Abdul Karim (his paternal uncle, who composed the best *Bhawaiya* songs of Abbasuddin Ahmed), Mahesh Chandra Roy of Rangpur, Rafiqul Huq and others. His artistic skill in voice modulation and *Bhawaiya* songs were a treat to the listeners.

Many countries put in rigorous work to preserve their national treasure of music. Bengal Gallery has similarly taken initiatives to preserve the golden voices of eminent artistes. MZ Abbasi regretted that the album could have been recorded at least twenty years ago, which could have helped in spreading our cultural heritage. More albums of such nature and other folk songs could be preserved for posterity by Bengal Foundation as well as other sponsors.'



Mustafa Zaman Abbasi performing in front of an august audience at the Bengal Foundation

Cover jacket of the CD

of lost love.

'Why are folk songs so appealing?' I ask Mustafa Zaman Abbasi. 'The answer is simple,' he replies. 'Firstly, the melody, its rhythm, lyrics and techniques are very close to one's heart. The story of a village belle drawing water from the river, and looking far beyond, for her lost love, or the boatman travelling to far away lands yearning for his

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