

International Dance Day

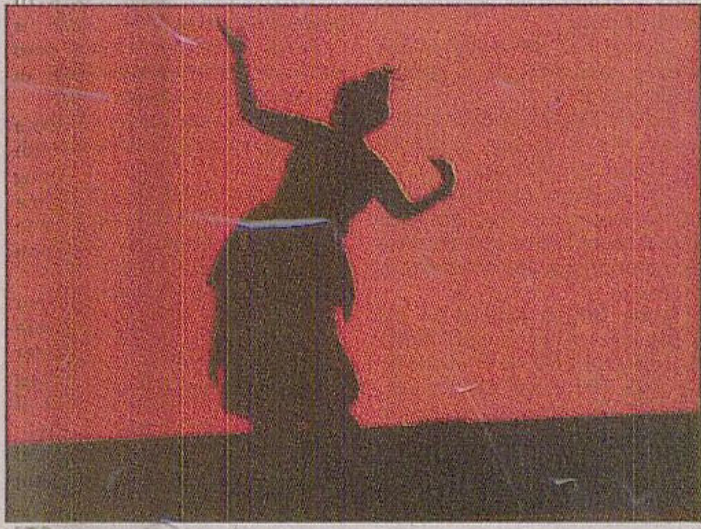


PHOTO: STAR

2005 International Dance Day Message

--- Miyako Yoshida

Dance is exclusive to no one. It grants joy and elation to all that partake or spectate. The language of dance knows no boundaries. It reaches beyond class, education, country and belief. Its vocabulary is infinite, as human emotion resonates through movement. Dance enriches the soul and uplifts the spirit. Dance lives within all that live. Let all the children dance and peace shall surely follow.

In 1982 the International Dance Committee of the International Theatre Institute (ITI - UNESCO), introduced International Dance Day to be celebrated every year on April 29. The date commemorates the birth of Jean-Georges Noverre, born in 1727, who was a great dance performer. The intention of International Dance Day is to bring all "dance aficionados together to celebrate this art form and its universality regardless of political, cultural and ethnic barriers. In 1995, in an effort to unite dance lovers throughout the world, the International Dance Committee, ITI - UNESCO entered into a collaborative effort to celebrate the International Dance Day with the World

Dance Alliance.

Every year a message from a particular dancer is circulated around the world. This year's message is by Miyako Yoshida, a UNESCO artist. Born in Japan, Miyako Yoshida began studying dance at the age of nine. After her initial training in Tokyo, she moved to London in 1983 to study at the Royal Ballet School after winning the prestigious Prix de Lausanne. In 1988 she was promoted to the rank of principal dancer at the Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet (now Birmingham Royal Ballet). In the course of her eventful career, she has won various prizes and honours including "Dancer of the Year" in 1991.

Dancers in Bangladesh have been celebrating the International Dance Day for quite some time now under the aegis of the Bangladesh chapter of the International Dance Committee of ITI. For the last couple of years the Bangladesh Dance Artists' Association has been observing this day on a grand scale. This year the annual festival of the Association began on April 23 and will conclude on the International Dance Day. Dancers in colourful costumes from all over the country will come to Dhaka to join the rally. Dance in Bangladesh has come a long way, with

many schools being run professionally by dancers trained in India. The earlier schools too have expanded their programmes to include the classical and traditional dances of Bangladesh. The observance of the International Dance Day motivates both young and older dancers to renew their pledge to expand the horizons of dance in Bangladesh.



Miyako Yoshida

National Dance Festival at Rajshahi

ANWAR ALI, Rajshahi

The second National Dance Festival 2005 drew a large audience at Rajshahi recently. The function organised by the Bangladesh Nrittyo Shilpi Sangstha (BNSS) was marked by colourful programmes at the district council auditorium. Hasib Panna, Rajshahi unit of BNSS, presided over a discussion that followed dance presentations by a number of dance-groups from Dhaka, Naogaon and Rajshahi. Child artistes of Nupur Ideal Education Institute, presented a folk dance while Benzir Akhtar Sumi presented a dance with a classical song. Daffodil Kindergarten Dance Department of Dhaka presented a group dance with folk song. Spondon Nrittyaloy of Rajshahi, Dhruvodi



Colourful dance sequences of the programme



Nrittya Shilpi Sangstha, Butpati Nrittyaloy's children group delighted the audience with their presentation. Nikkon Shilpi Ghosti displayed a dance on the freedom fighters which was one of the main attractions. The artistes also presented a tribal dance with *Holud Gandar Phul* and a santal dance accompanied with *dhol*. Dolon and Jhonkar Group of Rajshahi presented a classical dance. Nupur dance group presented a dance piece with the popular song *Ami Banglar gan gai*. The enthusiastic crowd included university teachers as well as people from all walks of life.

Conversation

Nakeeb's musical ventures

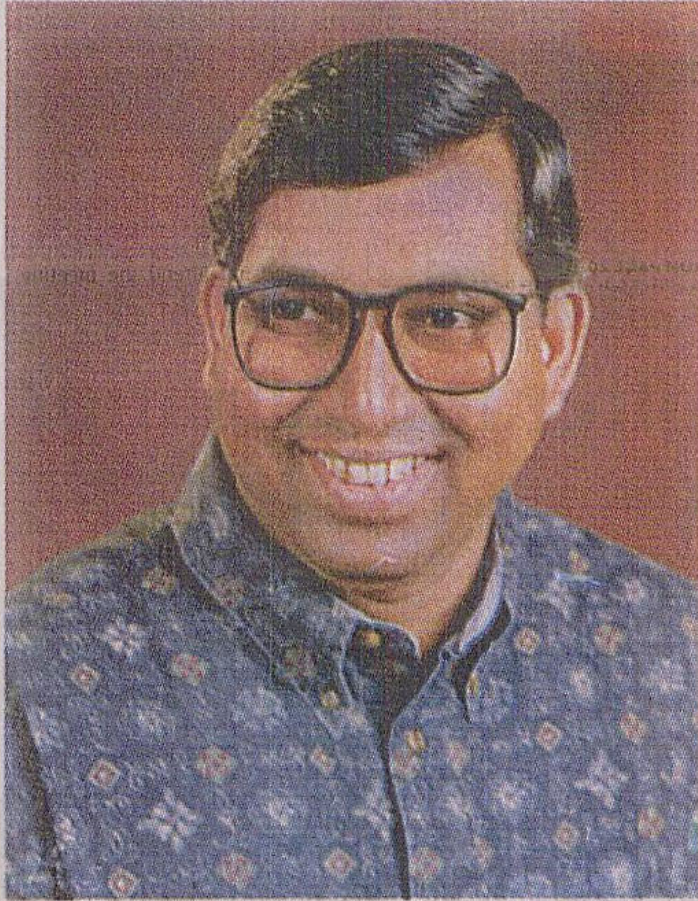
KARIM WAHEED

"Renaissance's music is targeted towards mature listeners"-- Nakeeb Khan.

Nakeeb Khan is a musician sought after by both youngsters and adults in our country. He has been active in our musical arena for nearly three decades. A member of the eminent band -- Renaissance, he is equally at ease as a vocal artiste, a key-boardist, a lyricist and a music composer. His fans believe that by promoting the true soul of the Bangalee culture and articulate, meaningful songs -- Nakeeb has definitely enriched our music.

"So, why does he feel that Renaissance's, as well as his music only targets a mature audience? Maturity doesn't necessarily imply a certain age limit. It comprises of people who are capable of dealing with complex issues and subjects, people who can comprehend and cherish well-thought-of songs. A teenager can be more mature than a middle aged in that sense. My songs and Renaissance's are not meaningless, sleazy songs or songs that address issues that only the youngsters can relate to," explains Nakeeb.

Nakeeb started his music career as a member of Souls, one of the earliest bands that attained huge public accolades. Soul's claim to fame *Mon shudhu mon chuechey* was penned and composed by Nakeeb. "I was a part of Souls from 1974 to 1983. After that I moved to Dhaka and since Souls was based in Chittagong, it became difficult for me to be an active part of the band,"



reminds Nakeeb. "I, along with my friends, formed Renaissance in 1985. The unique feature of the band is that all of the members were accomplished musicians by the time we formed the band and we made a pact that we would never compromise when it comes to quality and high standards of our

songs, even if it took years. That's why Renaissance has only produced four albums in 20 years."

How does he categorise Renaissance's songs? "I'd have to say fusion. To be more accurate, Renaissance's songs embody western harmony and eastern melody. We try to feature the mystic

qualities of our music tinged with light-hearted western notes," answers Nakeeb.

Nakeeb's vocal capabilities are undatable. He can hit the high octaves as well as lows, breathing life into his music, making his fans emotive along with him. He's solo album *Shoppojodano*, which came out in 1989, was very well received. Among the songs *Tumi eley paye paye*, a duet with Samina Chowdhury and *Tumi tho potey aanka chobi naw* are hummed by fans to this day.

Among Renaissance's songs *Bhalo lagey jyotsna raatey*, *Hridoy kadamaatir kono moorti noi*, *Aaj jey shishu and Chotto belar shathi* are hugely popular. In particular, the last song makes the listener nostalgic and has the capability to take one on a journey in to the past, fans concede. The band's most recent album, *Ekushi Shotokey* was also a favourite of the critics as well as the masses.

Is he satisfied with the current music scene? "Yes and no. Nowadays a lot of artistes are willing to take the short route to shady fame with ridiculous, low-grade songs. It's easy to become a familiar face to the public, thanks to the trend of music videos now."

"On the other hand, a new generation of artistes like, Bappa Majumdar, Dolchut, Ornob, Shumon and bands like Black and Raaga are on the rise. These youngsters are talented and they are experimenting with music passionately making us, the seniors proud," smiles a content Nakeeb.

Celebrating 50 years of Pather Panchali Sharmila Tagore goes back in time

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

Nostalgia, so goes the saying, is an escapable part of life. More so when the person is actress Sharmila Tagore and the occasion is celebration of 50 years of maestro Satyajit Ray's epoch-making debut feature film *Pather Panchali* in New Delhi over the weekend.

Sharmila was just 13 years old when Ray had chosen her to play the role of Aparna in *Apur Sansar*, the final part of his celluloid "Apu" trilogy and she understandably found it difficult to get to the bottom of the character.

"I was too young to understand the complexities of the character. But when I watch the film now, it brings to me a new understanding about the beauty, significance and strength of the character," said Sharmila at the function.

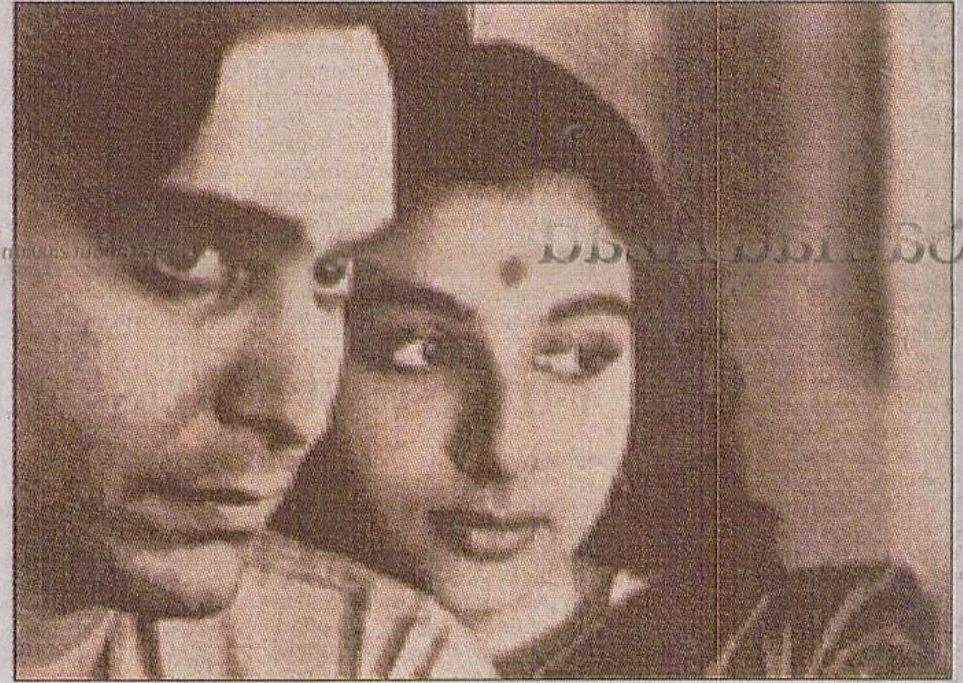
In getting Sharmila to act in *Apur Sansar*, Ray displayed his ability to get the best out of uninitiated actors and she acknowledges it. "He made me an instant hit. He has the ability to get the best out of a person with consummate ease," said the actress who also went on to act in Ray's *Devi* (1960), *Nayak* (1966), *Aranyer Din Ratri* (1970) and *Sheemabaddha* (1971).

"For me, *Pather Panchali* depicted the crisis, conflicts and struggles of Apu, the lead character, with a blend of modernity and tradition," Sharmila said.

"You cannot forget Apu. Any teenager can identify with Apu," she added.

"Ray will always remain relevant as his themes are universal and timeless. He created human archetypes, which are unforgettable," said the actress who is now the chief of the Indian Censor Board.

According to Sharmila, Ray redefined filmmaking in India. Before him, Indian cinema was theatrical, acting was overdone, dialogues were



Soumitra Chatterjee and Sharmila Tagore in *Apur Sansar*

bookish and the music loud. He changed all that and reflected reality through his films.

She said Ray's struggle to accumulate money to make films was in a way a boon as this had made him innovative. She pointed out how Ray and his cameraman for *Pather Panchali* Subrata Roy introduced the "bounce lighting system" which is widely used now.

The function also marked the screening of Ray's "Apu trilogy" and Sharmila said there should be more shows of the master's movies at a time when Hollywood is looming large over third world cinema and sponsors are hijacking film festivals.

Kopeniker Captain

Nagorik's play with a message



A scene from the play

ERSHAD KAMOL

It is not the man but the uniform that creates panic amongst the people in a police state. Anybody in 'uniform' becomes an autocrat. German playwright Carl Zuckmayer's play *Kopeniker Captain* sheds light on this fact.

Nagorik Natyasaampradaya staged their current

production *Kopeniker Captain* at the Mahila Samity Stage on April 27.

Carl Zuckmayer, in his play, written in the early 20th century, proved that military power can drive a nation towards destruction. It's a satire on military dictatorship in Germany.

The play depicts a middle-aged poor Prussian named Wilhem Voyognot buying an old army

uniform from a tailor's shop, resulting in an extraordinary array of incidents. He claims himself as an army captain and occupies the town hall of Kopenik. Voyognot, in an army uniform, plays the role of an army officer in a state where martial law is enforced.

Aly Zaker has re-written *Kopeniker Captain*, maintaining the authenticity of the original play. In the opening scene of the play, a priest advises the convicts to dedicate their lives for the betterment of the Kaiser and his family.

As a director, Aly Zaker is realistic and has followed the European Narrative trend. Handling three sequences simultaneously, he has created 49 characters using only 21 actors. Through a narrator he has unfolded each sequence of the play. He has successfully created the dramatic tension in the play. Not using the proscenium stage, Faiz Zahir has used a round set containing three steps at the middle of the theatre hall and the audience was placed in a semi-circle covering three parts of the set. His three-step set helps the director to create different sequences in a scene and facilitates characterisation as well.

Light designer Nasirul Haq Khokon's design in the play is different from his usual style. He has not used any cyclorama and symbolic colour effects, rather most of the time he has used general light. Using dark-shadow effects he has created the mood and tempo of the play.

All the performers in the play are upcoming artistes. The teamwork deserves praise. Pantha Shahriar plays his role well; his transformation after donning a uniform particularly is superb. Auni and Rwanak also act well.

RAFIQUE SARKER, Rangpur

Music lovers are in for a feast. The occasion: a three-day Bhawaiya festival organised by Bhawaiya Academy of Rangpur unit at the public library ground from April 27. Popular Bhawaiya singer Rothindranath Roy, was the chief guest while Deputy Minister for Food and Disaster Management Asadul Habib Dulu, inaugurated the festival.

A large number of people thronged the festival. Artists from Kurigram, Rangpur, Gaibandha, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat participated in the festival.

The recent function brought Bhawaiya music form to the masses. Bhawaiya originated from the Bangali word *bhab*, meaning love. Bhawaiya has been a part of the daily lives among the common folks of our country for ages. However, researchers have affirmed that it is an inextricable feature of our heritage, particularly in Rangpur and Dinajpur in Bangladesh and West Dinajpur and Cooch Behar in India.



Rothindranath Roy renders a popular number

Bhawaiya festival attracts viewers



Artists of Rangpur Bhawaiya Academy performing at the show

History says that a community called Rajbongshi, originated from the lands adjoining the Himalayas during sixteenth century. They were also known as 'Kouch'. They gave Bhawaiya music a shape that has been continuing with refined tunes.

In the course of time, with the introduction of modern technology, the chasm between towns and villages narrowed down. Meanwhile, a large number of people migrated from villages to towns. As they were well acquainted with Bhawaiya, they introduced the tradition to the cities.

Dotara was the main musical instrument for Bhawaiya in the past. With the passage of time *Dotara* has been accompanied with other instruments such as: harmonium, *tobla-dugi*,

ektara and khol.

Maestros Abbas Uddin, Horolal Roy, Mahesh Chandra Roy, Surendranath Roy, Kochim Uddin, and Kheraj Ali helped spread Bhawaiya at home and beyond the boundaries.

A number of Bhawaiya organisations have been formed in different areas in the northern districts. These organisations, amidst a lot of setbacks, are trying to uphold the uniqueness of this genre of music. Many of these organisations are working even at upazila levels. Recently Bangladesh Bhawaiya Academy was formed in Dhaka to preserve and enrich this music form. This academy has branches in several northern districts.