

Nostalgia

Shuchanda: Playing her parts to the hilt

SADYA AFREEN MALICK

THERE is an irony behind actress Shuchanda's role as a doctor in her first film *Kagojer Nouka*. Who would believe that she used to steer clear of hospitals and close her eyes when anyone was merely pricked with a needle? However, she displayed her professionalism and grit when she went over to the Mitford Hospital in old Dhaka to closely watch an ongoing gall stone operation. "I almost collapsed. However, I was determined to give a realistic touch to my character," says a smiling Shuchanda. Since then there was no looking back. Her performance in producer Subash Dutta's film opposite two lead actors Akhtar and Hassan Imam was well received by the audience.

After a long hiatus, the veteran actress Shuchanda has recently ventured into directing and received wide acclaim for the film *Hajjar Bocchor Dhorey*, based on a novel penned by talented writer-director Zahir Raihan. According to Shuchanda, "It was a gamble against the current vulgarity and obscenity in filmdom. The story is a reflection of the simple rural life often intertwined with superstitions through generations." The era Zahir Raihan had portrayed in the novel, saw women being used as mere commodities which can still relate to the contemporary times. Shuchanda, Zahir's wife, took up the challenge to bring this immortal literary work to life on celluloid.

Currently, preparing the ground for a new film, she says, "It's indeed a delight to see a handful of talented filmmakers emerging on the scene."

Shuchanda and Razzak in *Jibon Theke Ney*

FILE PHOTO

However, far from being content, Shuchanda is apprehensive that without adequate government support the newcomers would possibly lose interest. "If our film industry is to thrive, the young directors should be encouraged," she adds.

Shuchanda has several suggestions to overcome the obstacles filmmakers face today. For instance, she pin points that in many cases on

the first day of a film's release, unscrupulous agents use "cut piece", (obscene clips added to the film) to make a quick buck. In her view, if the District Commissioners are vigilant and take effective steps to tackle the problem, the film industry could stand a better chance of providing neat family entertainment. She also suggests recruiting women in the Censor Board, who she believes, have a vigilant eye for

obscenity.

She is open in her criticism about the satellite culture that has led to a reduction of filmgoers. "This phenomenon, which began in the '80s, continued to worsen during the '90s. Today we are at a dead end," says Shuchanda.

With a twinkle in her eyes, Shuchanda shares fond memories of an era, of which she was an inseparable part. She talks about her

initial reluctance to act in the classic, *Jibon Theke Ney*, directed by the Zahir Raihan. "I was in the family way, so naturally I thought it best to avoid doing a film till I was fit to do the role. However, after listening to the story line from my husband, I was sold to the idea. This was a movie, which would inspire our freedom movement and had a definite political slant. It would have been a great blunder not to act in the film. I still thank my stars that I opted to be a part in it," she says.

In a reminiscent mood, Shuchanda continues, "There are countless memories of when the entire crew would wait sleeplessly in our living room to shoot for the film. For instance, on the day of shooting the 'Ekushey February' song, Anjad Hossain, Anwar Hossain, Rosy Samad, Razzak and cameraman Afzal Chowdhury along with the crew, waited with bated breath till dawn. At three in the morning, Zahir told us that it was time to go to the Shaheed Minar. On reaching the spot we saw a section of people had already gathered there. The nation was going through a charged moment. As we waited in our cars, the people were so excited that they heaved our car a few feet above the ground for a few moments to express their gratitude to us."

Shuchanda goes on "We are witness to an era when movies often reached their silver, golden and platinum jubilee. Now the culture could be revived if only the directors made a concerted effort to offer something spectacular for the viewers. I'm sure they can reap positive results. What the film industry needs is creative people to revive a once flourishing industry."

Streer Patra: Presenting the hard reality of women's lives

A narrative of oppression of women



Ferdausi Abedin Lina in the play

ERSHAD KAMOL

Famous American poet Adrienne Rich in her popular poem *Diving into the Wreck* depicts how through the beginning of civilisation, even in the era of legends, the women have always been oppressed in a male-dominated society. Tagore's popular short story *Streer Patra* reflects this observation.

Jion Kathi, a theatre troupe,

staged *Streer Patra* on September 28 at Natmandol, Dhaka University. Dr Biplab Bala has transformed Tagore's short story into a narrative with contemporary tone, which was presented by Ferdausi Abedin Lina.

The central character of the noteworthy *Streer Patra* is Mrinal, a housewife. Her narrative tells the story of women's oppression, lack of freedom and gender inequality in a middle class family. Through

Mrinal, viewers get to see how women are not even allowed to express their emotions within the family. The play also depicts how women are relegated to the position of objects and portrays how women often go against each other. They are simply the 'objects of entertainment'. The interesting part of the play is the presentation of the fact that even one woman in the family has no respect for another. Mrinal's revolt is a symbolic protest against male domination.

Director Biplab Bala takes a narrative approach to the play. His projection of a family through a single artiste deserves plaudits. To support him, set designer Sudip Chakraborti has created a suggestive inner ambience of a middle class family. The use of a painting portraying a free pigeon in the midst of nature is effective to reflect Mrinal's emotions.

However, Sudip's light design needs to be honed. He could have effectively used back blue to create the depth on the stage. His division of the performing space into 'three zones' is not effective for a narrative.

Actress Ferdausi Abedin Lina's enactment of Mrinal's character demonstrated how difficult it is to have a successful solo performance. Her body movements and lukewarm voice modulation failed to move the audience.

Photography Exhibition

Bringing voodoo dancing to Dhaka

FAYZA HAQ

Lino Dalle Vedove, a Spanish photographer visiting Bangladesh for five months, is holding a photography exhibition at Alliance Francaise. "This exhibition shows a relationship between religion, corporal movements and expressions. The photographs deal with voodoo practices in the island of Santa Domingo, in the Caribbean, near Cuba. I spent three years on this subject as I'm interested in the corporal expression of dance. Earlier on, I was working in the Opera de Paris of Bastille, in France. Incidentally I've been to Mexico too. I'm basically a choreographer. I wanted to study the significance of dance in people's lives, particularly in their religion and rituals. The Pre-Christian pagan gods are believed to possess bodies of the dancers in Santa Domingo. Different choreography is used to worship each deity."

"The pictures don't focus particularly on movement or person. The photos build up the ambience for dancing to appease the gods. Here in the exhibition is a presentation of worshipping of the pantheon of 21 voodoo gods. The voodoo practices were introduced to the island when the slaves were brought to Santa Domingo to serve the white masters. The local people mixed African religion with Catholic festivals," says Dalla Vedove.

Dalle Vedove, who is now 36, began photography at the age of 12. He used films to make documentaries of the theatre school, as he went along, the main aim being to capture the beauty of the dance. He went to Jean Verrier's school of photography, and studied



One of Lino Dalle Vedove's photographs

with Carlos Warner, the official photographer of the archives of Paris. He was also influenced by Boubat and Sebastian Salgado. When photographing, he focuses on the movements and the facial expressions of the dancers. He has used a lot of black and white as through it you can best focus on the movement. He has used colour too but when he has done that, there is lack of clarity in the action of the dance, as he explains himself.

"Black and white best helps you focus on the forms," says Dalla Vedove, "I like colour and black and white both, preferring each for different subjects. I

used colour when I brought in the background of the composition in a big way. I also used colour in some to heighten the effect."

Asked to name a memorable incident in his career as a photographer, he said, in Santa Domingo, the traditional whiplash of the voodoo dance was once so intense that accidentally it hurt his eye, so much so that he was afraid of losing it.

Dalla Vedove is in Bangladesh to study Baul culture. He finds the traditional life in Bangladesh very appealing, especially the music, dance and clothes.

Sweetie, Intekhab and Tania to feature in three new serials



Sweetie

NOVERA DEEPIITA

Popular actor-turned-director Shahiduzzaman Selim is working on three new TV serials: *Agantuk*, *Gaurochandrika* and *Nakol Poshak*. *Agantuk* is a 104-episode mega serial written by Pantho Shahriar. Made for a new TV channel RTV, the serial features Zahid Hassan, Tania Ahmed, Rossy Siddiqui, Fima, Intekhab Dinar, Sharmili Ahmed and Masud Ali Khan. Under the banner of Dream Factory, the serial is about a young villager who comes



Intekhab

to Dhaka in search of a better life. The story revolves around his relationship with the city. According to Selim, "Apart from the story and cast, the viewers will find a new element in the serial as most of the shooting has been done outdoors." Created for Bangla Vision, the 26-episode drama serial *Gaurochandrika* has been written by Ejaz Munna and directed by Selim. Featuring Sweetie, Dilara Zaman, Shahiduzzaman Selim, Azra, Milon, Raisul Islam Asad, Adnan Faruq Hillol and Tanzika, the



Tania

serial hopes to bring to light a true depiction of the local fashion circuit as well as its darker sides. The third serial is another 104-episode serial for One TV titled *Nakol Poshak*. Written by Harun ur Rashid, the shooting of the serial will begin from next November. The story of the serial is about a young man who is a lackey to an influential person. It also portrays the whole entourage, he is a part of. Featuring Azad Abul Kalam, Tarin, Sharmili Ahmed, Raisul Islam Asad and Selim himself, the serial is a fiction.

Pita Mata Putra O Moumita premiered

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The premiere show of special TV play for the International Day of Older Persons, *Pita Mata Putra O Moumita* directed by Abdullah Rana, was held at the Bengal Shilpalay Café in Dhanmondi on September 27.

The TV play depicts the harsh reality of the lives of elders in our society. The retired Mahtab Ali has a son who works in a video-editing firm late into the night. The old couple is on the look out for a bride for their son. As luck would have it, a sophisticated lady named Moumita appears at their residence.

Popular actor Aly Zaker stated in his role, "We should recognise the problems of the elderly people and

bring such issues to the forefront. The government and the other people in the society should be aware of their sufferings and raise their voices in support of the cause; only then can we have harmony in our society."

The director Abdullah Rana said, "It was a good opportunity to work on the theme of senior citizens. Making a play is fulfilling because I can work on important issues."

The cast of the play includes Aly Zaker, Wahida Mallik Jolly, Joyanto Chattapadhyay, Runa Khan, Biplob, Monir Khan Shmil, Intekhab Diner, Mita Noor, Mustafa Hira and Ushnish Kishore Chokrabarti.

Under the banner of Dhoni-Chitra Limited, the special TV play *Pita Mata Putra O Moumita* will be aired on ntv at 9pm on October 01.



Wahida Mallik Jolly and Aly Zaker in the TV play

Sharmila Tagore

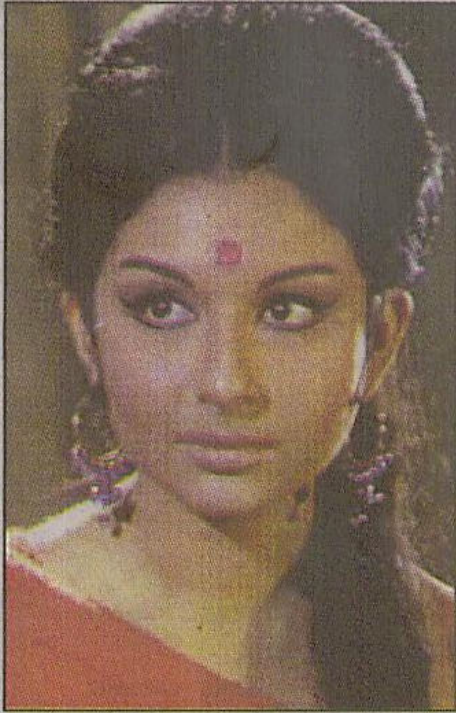
The actress with class

Veteran actress Sharmila Tagore made her entry into films as the young wife in Satyajit Ray's *Apur Sansar*, the final film of the Apu Trilogy. A mere 14-year-old girl, she had no prior acting experience. As the shooting began, Ray had to shout instructions to Sharmila during the takes. However, she was a natural in the film. Ray gave her a role in his next film *Dev* too. In the film she was cast as an incarnation of Goddess Kali.

Sharmila began her career in Bollywood with a romantic musical, *Kashmir Ki Kali* (1964) opposite Shammil Kapoor, directed by the famous director Shakti Samantra. In 1966 she took up the titular role of Anupama in the Hrishikesh Mukherjee film. Though she sported a stylised bouffant, she wowed everyone as the simple, shy and soft-spoken girl.

In 1967 she essayed a double role in *An Evening in Paris* which catapulted her to the position of a popular and glamorous actress. Millions went gaga over her coquettish expressions in the song *Akele Akele Kahan Ja rahe ho*.

In 1968, she got married to the Nawab of Pataudi, the former Indian Captain Mansoor Ali Khan much to the disappointment of her fans. Though her detractors were sure that she would not be able to combine marriage and acting, she gave her best performances in films after she married and did not keep away from the tinsel town for long.



Back to Bollywood, she returned with the smash hit *Aradhana* (1969) with Rajesh Khanna. In tow with director Shakti Samantra, she went

in for a complete change of image in this movie as a total deglamorised mother.

Rajesh Khanna and Sharmila gave other box office hits such as *Safar*, *Amar Prem*, *Daag* and the artistically acclaimed *Aavishkar*. In between these schedules she also had her first child Saif Ali Khan who is now a star in his own right.

The year 1975 saw Sharmila as the obscenity-spewing streetwalker in the film *Mausam*, again a dual role, opposite Sanjeev Kumar directed by Gulzar. This movie also garnered her the coveted National Award. Her other movies with Sanjeev Kumar include *Charitraheen*, *Grihapraves* and *Namkeen*. After *Mausam* she moved to Delhi and also had two daughters Soha and Saba.

Less successful was her pairing with co-stars such as Shashi Kapoor (*Aa Gale Lag Ja*, *Waqt*, *Aamne Saamne*, *Suhana Safar*) Dharmendra (*Devar*, *Chupke Chupke*, *Satyakam* and of course *Anupama*) and the superstar Amitabh Bachchan (*Faraan*, *Besharam* and *Desh Premee*).

Later she was seen in *Mann* (1999) and *Dhadkan* (2000), but was a huge disappointment to her fans in not-so-well etched characters. Another film was *Shubha Muhurat*, a Bengali film directed by Rituparno Ghosh. Sharmila has lately enacted a role in *Viruddh* (2005). Her fans would welcome more hits from her.

Compiled by Cultural correspondent

Teri Hatcher

From Lois Lane to a desperate housewife

When you think about it, Teri Hatcher is the personification of doing a lot with a little. She is most known for her role in the mid-'90s TV phenomenon, *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*, in which she starred as a post-feminist Lois who whipped Clark Kent into shape. And who can forget the sweet and naïve Penny Parker in the mega-hit show *MaGyver*.

Teri Lynn Hatcher was born December 8, 1964, in Sunnyvale, California. She was the only child of a nuclear physicist and a computer programmer. With her parents' occupations, one would think that Teri was bound for high school glory in the math club or chess team, but destiny would dictate otherwise.

After high school, Teri went on to study acting at the American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco while also pursuing a degree in mathematics and engineering at De Anza College in Cupertino, California.

Teri went to Hollywood with a friend and ended up winning her first paying gig on Aaron Spelling's *Love Boat*, as part of the Pacific Princess' resident entertainers, The Mermaids. Teri went on to do small roles and had her first big break as an egomaniac actress in the 1989 satire, *The Big Picture*. She went on to some comic supporting roles in films such as *Tango & Cash* with Sylvester Stallone, *Soap Dish* with Whoopi Goldberg, and *Straight Talk* with Dolly Parton.

In 1993, Teri starred in one of her biggest projects, as Lois Lane in *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*. The show made her a



household name and brought her into living rooms around the globe. After a four-year run with *Lois & Clark*, Teri remained a force in Hollywood with high-profile roles in the 007 extravaganza *Tomorrow Never Dies* and *2 Days In The Valley*, but she is still well-known for her hilarious role as Jerry's girlfriend on *Seinfeld*.

For years Teri has been known more or less, for her physical attributes. In fact, her alluring 'doe eyes' and flawless physique earned her the title of 'most downloaded woman on the internet'. However, Teri got tired of being dubbed as a 'bimbo', as she was once quoted: "Despite the fact that my fans think I look great, I have the opportunity to show the world that is not my only attribute."

And she did a fantastic job at that. She stayed out of the industry for a little while before nabbing a major role in the dark unconventional sitcom *Desperate Housewives*, which could have been a huge mistake. But the show took the world by storm and is considered to be one of the rare TV shows that have attained mega-popularity status in its first season. The show catapulted Hatcher to the A-list again and her character, divorced mother Susan Mayer has been consistently named as the favourite 'Desperate Housewife'. According to Hatcher, she finds many similarities with the character, as she too is a single mother.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent