

Dance Festival by Shadhona and UNESCO ends

'Badolo Borishoney': A spectacular production by Nrityanchal



A scene from the dance-drama

PHOTO: STAR

Birju Maharaj and Shamim Ara Nipa.

Badolo Borishoney, a short story by Kazi Nazrul Islam, is a romantic tragedy. A young traveller, Shyamol, arrives at a valley during the 'Kajari' festival (celebrating monsoon; common in Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Bihar in India) and falls for a dusky village belle named Kajari.

Shyamol's love for Kajari is reciprocated. Their moments of bliss however, do not last long. The story is a metaphor for the relationship between earth and monsoon.

yearning throughout the year for each other and enjoying a brief season of union.

Through Shyamol and Kajari's story, as an undercurrent, Nazrul hits a social issue: colour discrimination in the subcontinent. The 'fairer is better' ideology is nothing new to us. Throughout the ages -- in literature, films, social and family life -- this concept that 'dark skin is not attractive' has been apparent.

Only a few progressive philosophers, social activists and litterateurs have made it a point to rescue the 'insecure dusky beauty' (Tagore's *Krishnokoli* for example). In Nazrul's *Badolo Borishoney*, the dark complexioned Kajari cannot believe that someone might actually find her attractive. She takes Shyamol's love for her as some cruel game, fearing their liaison might end in heartbreak and humiliation because the world around her constantly makes her feel 'un-pretty'.

Nrityanchal's production was spectacular in every sense -- beautiful costumes, apt use of props, excellent stage lighting, an impressive cast of over 56 male, female and child dancers and all that jazz. The audience was not stony when it came to appreciate the performance either. Throughout the evening the theatre resonated with sounds of applause.

Shamim Ara Nipa deserves a special mention. The seasoned dancer captivated the audience with what was perhaps one of her finest performances. Mainly based on the Kathak style, her performance highlighted all the emotions of a lover in agony. Unrequited love is rarely this attractive.

Classic Nazrul songs of rain like *Shaono ashilo phirey*, *Ke eley nupur paye*, *Mor ghurmoghorey eley monohor*, *Borosha elo bochora*, *Aaj badolo jhori mor ekela ghorey*, *Chonchola shyamola elo gogonay* and more rendered by Khayrul Anam Shakil and Firdaus Ara have been aptly incorporated in the production. Khayrul Anam Shakil was in charge of music direction. Shamim Ara Nipa and Shibli Muhammad were the dance directors.

Badolo Borishoney was originally adapted into a dance-drama by Dr. Rafiqul Islam. Khayrul Anam Shakil and Shamim Ara Nipa made a few modifications to that.

Kudos to organisers Shadhona and UNESCO for putting together the Dance Festival. The event was sponsored by Grameenphone and GMG Airlines. Dance enthusiasts in the country will look forward to more such quality productions.



Shamim Ara Nipa as Kajari

National Rabindra Sangeet Conference begins



Artists of Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilon Parishad perform at the programme

AHSAN HABIB

The 26th annual conference of the Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilon Parishad (JRSP) began with a call to translate Tagore's thoughts into practice in building the nation at Chhayanaut Sangskriti Bhavan auditorium on March 30.

Veteran educationist Professor Khan Sarwar Murshid inaugurated the three-day conference.

Over 300 artists and representatives of 46 units of JRSP from all over the country are taking part in the conference. It is the largest annual assemblage of Tagore exponents and singers in the country.

The inauguration was followed by the final round of the Rabindra sangeet competition for the adolescents. Forty-five competitors selected for the final round per-

formed at the show. Eminent artists and Tagore exponents Professor ABM Nurul Anwar, Mihir Nandi, Selina Malek Chowdhury, Lili Islam, Moinuddin Nazir, Mita Haque and Laisha Ahmed Lisa were the judges of the contest. Winners will be announced today.

A seminar on the topic Bangladeshi Culture: looking back after 35 years, was held. Shantanu Kaiser presented the keynote paper; and Dr. Atiu Rahman, Rezwana Chowdhury Banya and Golam Rabban shared their thoughts on the issue. In his paper, Shantanu gave a mapping of developments in different cultural fields and stressed the need for deconstructing the Bangladeshi culture.

The last session of the day included a musical soiree, recitation of poems and dance performances. Aly Zaker delivered a speech titled Rabirashmi. He expressed hope of continuing a struggle to uphold humanity and build a society based on the principles of equality by implementing Tagore's thoughts.

Asaduzzaman Noor and Khaled Khan recited poems by Tagore.

Sukla Sarkar, Proma Abonti and Warda Rihab performed Bharatnatyam, Odissi and Manipuri dance respectively.

The musical part of the programme started with choral renditions by Narayanganj unit of JRSP. Over 35 artists performed Tagore songs. Nilufar Jahan and Luva Nahid Chowdhury rendered songs of Atul Prasad. Promila Chakraborty and Shuma Rani Roy presented songs of D L Roy while Sabrina Akhter and Neelotpal Sadhyo rendered songs of Rajanikanta.

KARIM WAHEED

It was a great evening for dance. National Theatre Stage at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy was packed, to the extant that people were seen sitting on the floor. The Dance Festival organised by Shadhona and UNESCO wrapped up with Nrityanchal staging the dance-drama *Badolo Borishoney*.

Nrityanchal, one of the leading dance schools in Bangladesh, is run by Shibli Muhammad (a disciple of Kathak Maestro

Images from Ibsen's life and plays

Photography Exhibition

Title: Amar Dekha 71
Photographer: Abdul Hamid Raihan
Venue: Drik Gallery, House 58, Road 15A, Dhamondi
Date: March 25-April 3
Time: 3:00pm-8pm

Exhibition

Title: Made in Germany: Architecture + Religion
Organiser: Goethe-Institut Bangladesh
Venue: Auditorium of Goethe-Institut Bangladesh
Date: April 2-12
Time: Sunday-Thursday 10am-8pm

Art Exhibition

Artist: Biplob Kor
Title: Binary Opposition
Organiser: Alliance Francaise de Dacca
Venue: Gallery Zoom, Alliance Francaise, 26 Mirpur Road, Dhamondi
Date: March 23-April 5
Time: 9am-12pm & 5pm-9pm

Rabindra Sangeet Festival

Organiser: Jatiya Rabindra Sangeet Sammilon Parishad
Venue: Chayanaut Sangskriti Bhavan, House 72, Road 15A, Dhamondi
Date: March 30-April 1

Anniversary programme

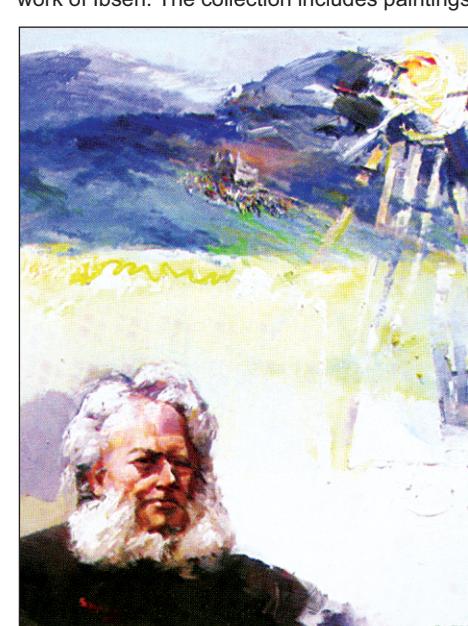
Organiser: Mahila Parishad
Musical Soiree by Mita Haque & Khairul Anam Shakil
Play: Binduini by Dhaka Theatre
Venue: Engineers' Institution
Date & Time: April 4 at 3:30pm



Samples of paintings on Ibsen by Bangladeshi artists

The art exhibition featuring images of Ibsen and plays by 32 Bangladeshi artists, held last year in Dhaka, has found a permanent position in the Ibsen Museum in Norway. This has been organised by the Centre for Asian Theatre (CAT) and the Norwegian Embassy and marks the playwright and poet's 179th birthday.

This endeavour creates a cultural bridge



between Norway and Bangladesh. It has created an opportunity for works by Bangladeshi artists to be appreciated by foreign critics. It also provides Norwegians a chance to study the Bangladeshi art scene. The works don't only mirror Ibsen's work but at times deconstruct them and build them up again.

The project was not simple as the text does not easily give way to images but nevertheless the artists projected the true spirit of the life and work of Ibsen. The collection includes paintings by Ahmed Shamsuddaha, Alekesh Ghosh, Shahjahan Ahmed Bikash, Shishir Bhattacharjee, Mansur Ul Karim, Ranjit Das, Sheikh Afzal, Rabi Haque, Goutam Chakrabarti, Rokeya Sultan and others.

Shamsuddaha's Oil, Ibsen has a lightening streak, which appears to give life to a tree trunk that bears resemblance to the playwright's head. He is suspended and appears to take nourishment from the storm. Bathed in light, containing a moor and snow in the backdrop is Alokes Ghosh's portrait of Ibsen in acrylic. Shahjahan Ahmed Bikash's oil, Character and personality has feathers for The Wild Duck included in the portraiture. The portrait appears to be forgotten and yellowing. Symbols of deception and death as found in Ibsen's plays are seen in Shishir Bhattacharjee's untitled acrylic. The caged and framed characters of Ibsen's plays are seen as a gray mass in Bipul Shah's Spirit of Brand, done in oil.

Ranjit Das in his untitled oil shows faces of a couple in love -- Agnes and Einer -- with a vague image of a church in the back. To delineate seduction in the air for poetry lovers are Goutam Chakrabarti's faceless blue and gray characters. The wax-like contemplative portrait of Ibsen shows the crumpling of old social values in the backdrop. Dilara Begum Jolly portrays Ibsen's 'Nora' as part woman and part bird. In the painting, Nora is caged and expected to sing and dance. The woman in Rokeya Sultan's Doll's House holds on to a snake -- referring to the 'original sin', trying to break free. The subject is shown as dreaming and floating in sunlit air. Jamal Ahmed's Destiny depicts Heda Gabler belonging to a class that is on the verge of extinction.

The Goethe Institut celebrated the day with recitation of Ibsen's works, in German, Bangla and English on the evening of 22nd March.

Ethnic-diversity theatre festival begins tomorrow

A five-day theatre festival titled Ethnic Diversity Council, featuring the diverse cultural heritage of the ethnic minorities spread over different corners of the country, will begin tomorrow, says a press release. Kumudini Hajong, leader of the Tonk movement will inaugurate the festival.

Six theatre performances -- *Kania*, *Tunya*, *Srikrishna Kirtan*, *Hokkanir Dhanpana*, *Mangula* and *Raarang* -- will be staged by Sadri Theatre, Har Gayen Dal, Manipuri Theatre, Joomi Aesthetics Council, Palakar and Aranyak Natya Dal respectively in the festival.

Though Mangula and Raarang are performed by Bengali artistes of Dhaka, the plays feature the continuing oppression on ethnic minorities by the ruling Bengalis. The rest of the theatre performances will be staged by the ethnic minority groups.

Japanese piano teacher Kuniko Teramura, right, accompanied by her daughter, Nao, smiles after breaking the world record for a non-stop concert by one hour after a band of musicians including Teramura, reached 182 hours performing the concert at Torii Moto Station of Omi Railway Corp. in Hikone, central Japan, 10 a.m., Saturday, March 31, 2007. An official of London-based Guinness Book of Records who was present at the concert that began at 8 p.m., Friday, March 23, approved the new record. The previous longest concert was 181 hours set in Canada in 2001. The Japanese reads: "Reached 182 hours." (AP Photo/Kyodo News)

TV GUIDE

PICK OF THE DAY



ICC World Cup 2007
On BTV at 7:15pm
West Indies Vs Sri Lanka
Live from Providence Stadium, Guyana

Out Door
On ATN Bangla at 8:00pm
Drama Serial
Cast: Apurbo, Sweety

ETV
10:30 Adventure Bangla-desh
01:00 Mon Mon Re Amar
02:00 Shurje Nichey
03:00 Amader Kotha
03:30 Chitro Geeti
04:00 Drama Serial: Mon
05:00 Drama Serial: Shundukhoney
06:00 Shundukhoney
07:00 Ranger Manush
08:15 Shanto Kutir
08:50 Musical Programme
09:40 Bhalo Basha Mondo

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