

Weaving a wizardry of words

In conversation with Emdadul Haque Milon

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

EMDADUL Haque Milon attained popularity as an author in the '80s. His wizardry of words has won him the hearts of many. The writer has branched out and become a TV personality through writing TV plays and hosting a talk show titled *Ki Kotha Tahar Shathey*. The Daily Star recently caught up with the busy writer. Excerpts from the interview:

What are you writing now?

I am involved in several areas now. In the past my writing was limited to short stories, novels or articles for newspapers. Now I'm also writing for television. I have written a number of plays in the last couple of years. Currently I'm working on two TV serials.

You started working as a journalist recently, but did not continue. What was reason for that?

I got involved with *Doinik Amar Desh*, with the desire to do something new, six months before the paper started publishing. However, I felt that my aspirations were facing impediments. I saw no other option but to resign.

You are a popular talk show host now...

Several TV channels offered me to host at least one talk show for them. I'm hosting two talk shows currently – one on ntv called *Ki Kotha Tahar Shathey* and the other on Rtv on teacher-student relations. Recently I have taken part in another talk show on family-issues titled *Album*, expected to be aired soon on Channel-i.

You are primarily an author, why are you absent in shows on literature?



Emdadul Haque Milon

I have not thought of doing any programme on literature or writers as of yet. However, I hope I'll be a part of programmes related to literature in the coming days.

You once said that you were

contemplating making films, any development on that?

Though I would love to make films, I don't think I have the technical expertise required for the job. I'm not thinking of making films right

now. However, I do have plans to work on some scripts. At present I'm working on a piece titled *Meyetir Naam Aaina*. Salahuddin Lavlu will direct the film. Besides, Kabori is making a film based on my novel *Priyo*.

Do you feel this generation of writers enjoy more opportunities than your generation?

When we started, getting out work published was quite difficult. Today one can publish a book or write TV play with considerable ease. I'd say this generation of writer certainly has it easy.

You contemporaries and writers from this generation whose works have impressed you...

Not many quality writers have emerged in the last fifteen years, as should be. Anisul Haque is certainly one of the best. Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal is extremely popular though he usually writes for adolescent readers. Sumanta Aslam is quite promising. But I do not want to make comments on them right now. Anisul Haque and Masum Reza have written some impressive TV plays.

You have won several awards, which was the most gratifying?

I have received many awards in my country. But last year I received an international honour that was rare achievement for a Bangladeshi. Every year Japan Foundation, an organisation of the Japan Government, selects an Asian writer to deliver four lectures on his/her native literature or culture at four international centres. Last year the organisation selected me to deliver lectures on Bangladeshi literature and culture. It was one of my proudest moments.

Prachyanat's production of "Raja"

Introducing multimedia theatre to Bangladeshi audience

AHSAN HABIB

Theatre group Prachyanat is all set to launch the first ever multimedia theatre production in Bangladesh by bringing to stage a Tagore classic, *Raja*. Prachyanat's production, "Raja...ebong annanyo" ("King of the Dark Chamber" ... and others), is an experiment pushing the boundaries with politically and socially relevant ideas, as well as visually stimulating live performance that is accessible to a wide-ranging audience," said Azad Abul Kalam, director of the play.

The production utilises media technologies as an integral component to connect actors to the audience and create a virtual space. "In this digital age, use of electronics and multimedia can become a significant part in modern theatre for greater connectivity with the audience," believes Azad.

Explaining the conceptual design of the play, Azad informs that, throughout the performance, the audience will experience performance by actors interspersed by audio-visual clips of contemporary world events. Moreover, a ramp will be used to introduce certain characters as modern day individuals in the context of showbiz reality.

Themes are drawn from the Tagore's classic *Raja*. The story evolves in an imaginary country, in somewhat ancient times, portraying a utopian governance where no one sees the king of the land but his presence is felt in every sphere of life. There is no exploitation, justice is always



Actors of Prachyanat rehearsing for the play

upheld without discrimination and humanity is cherished.

"The underlying theme of *Raja* relates to the contemporary time in the sense that it contradicts the existing socio-political structure to a large extent. In this age of power abuse, exploitation, and aggression at every level, the benevolence of one 'Raja' mirrors the exact opposite. As we struggle to claw our way out of a web of geo-political victimisation, *Raja* helps us define the void and provides future directives.

Rabindranath Tagore's *Raja* bears strong relevance to current world politics," Azad explains the reasons for turning to Tagore's classic text.

"Breaking away from the structure of traditional Tagorian performance and adopting a modernistic approach are much needed in order

to represent *Raja* in the current context and to make it relatable to the audience," says Azad.

The play is largely generated during the collaborative rehearsal process when all the elements – concept, text, designers, performers, and directors – have the opportunity to interact with and influence each other. Everyone enjoys freedom during this creative process.

"My job was more of a conceptualiser than of a director. I have incorporated my concepts and placed the story in contemporary global situation. I have taken elements from the original work, as much as I need. It is a kind of an exploration," Azad explains his role in the play as the director.

"The fusion of real and virtual space, the mixed-reality perfor-

mance," argues Azad, ruptures the demarcation of the real and the virtual, creating a new kind of space. The relationship between the performers and the participants, within this structure, involves a two-way flow of information. The play has that scope of interaction with the audience.

Azad shares his experience of being a part of collaborative works in Denmark and Japan in multimedia theatre and hopes, "Audience here will have an entirely new experience of watching a performance where theatre and video come together and complement each other."

CULTURAL FEAST

Art Exhibition

Title: Lines of Madness
Venue: Goethe Institute Gallery
Date: June 4-14
Time: 10am-8pm (closed Friday and Saturday)

Nazrul Anniversary Celebration

Organiser: Chhayanaut
Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium, Central Public Library
Date: May 9
Time: 7pm

TV Watch

Amjad Hossain in "Amar Ami" tonight

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Hosted by Aupi Karim, the popular talk show *Amar Ami* will be aired tonight at 8:55pm on Banglavision. Each episode features one or more noted personality, usually from the cultural arena. The show highlights achievements of the guest and

gives an insight to his/her off screen life as well. Noted filmmaker Amjad Hossain and his son actor-director Sohel Arman are the guests in tonight's episode.

Amjad Hossain dominated the Bangladeshi film industry in its golden period with National Award-winning films like *Golapi Ekhon Train-*

e. award-winning. Amjad is also a popular among the TV audience for his unforgettable portrayal of "Jobbar Ali". Sohel Arman is one of the busiest TV actors now. Sohel has tried his hand at direction as well. The father and son duo will share their experiences on and off screen in tonight's show.



Sohel Arman and Amjad Hossain in tonight's *Amar Ami*

Theatre

Troupe: Palakar
Title: Mangala
Venue: Experimental Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy
Date: June 10
Time: 7:00pm

Dilip Kumar Retrospective

Organiser: The High Commission of India in Dhaka

June 9 **Mashaal**

June 10 **Dunia**

Time: 6pm

Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, House 25, Road 96, Gulshan-2

Complementary passes can be collected from the High Commission of India, House 2 Road 142 Gulshan 1 & the Indian Cultural Centre House 25 Road 96, Gulshan 2

Time: 7pm

Prionon

On ATN Bangla at 3:45pm

Talk show

Today's guests: Shahed, Kaniz Shuborna

ATN BANGLA

10:30 **Talk show: Aktel**

Onnordroshi

11:05 **ATN Music**

12:15 **Shurer Madhuri**

12:45 **Shathdin**

01:30 **Nari**

02:40 **Drama: Guptobidya**

03:45 **Talk show: Prijon**

04:20 **Shesh Okhor**

05:00 **Gram Gonjer Khobor**

05:30 **Talk show:**

GrammenPhone

06:20 **Gondhoraj Samsung**

08:00 **Cine Aha**

08:40 **Mega Serial: The New Sobuj Opera**

09:20 **Mega Serial: Laal Neel Beguni**

12:00 **Grameenphone**

11:30 **Lead News**

12:00 **Shuprobhat**

12:00 **Bangladesh**

12:00 **Lead News**

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