

# Fusion of rock and classical music

## James and Partha Sharathi perform at Shilpakala

ERSHAD KAMOL

SINCE Pandit Ravi Shankar's performance of Indian Classical music with renowned western musicians at the Woodstock concert in the '60s, several Indian musicians have been fusing North Indian ragas with western genres such as rock 'n' roll and jazz. Perhaps, this is for the first time that an Indian classical musician -- Sarathi Chatterjee -- has done a "jugalbandi" with a Bangladeshi rock artiste -- James.

The Indian High Commission, in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, organised a fusion music concert on September 12 at the National Theatre Stage.

Six improvised pieces along with one pure rock number were performed at the concert. Sarathi Chatterjee improvised with James in three popular songs -- *Dukhini dukkho koro na*, *Maa* and *Jatra*. Moreover, two improvised presentations based on ragas *Jog* and *Bagesree* and James' popular Hindi number *Bhigi bhigi* (from the Hindi blockbuster *Gangster*) were performed.

James as usual was playing lead guitar while singing. Sarathi provided *alaap*. Prasun Chatterjee, Funty, Tamal and Bulbul were on *tabla*, drums, keyboards and bass respectively.

Sarathi's vocals seemed to dominate the performance and no pure essence of electric guitar, drums or keyboard was found. Bulbul played



Partha Sharathi (L) and James perform at the concert

PHOTO: ISHTIAQUE BIN QUASHEM

hammering bass only in the raga *Bagesree*-based presentation. That was perhaps the best act of the evening, as it featured spontaneous performances by the musicians.

The melody of the first presentation of the evening -- a raga *Jog* based performance -- was also enjoyable. However, the raga *Bairagi-Bhairav* based performance was not worth writing home

about. There was room for bass, drums, guitar and keyboard improvisation in the composition with the festive mood.

Except in *Bhigi bhigi*, James did not seem to be in his best form, nor was he spontaneous as he usually is on stage. The rocker sounded monotonous. James began with his popular songs in slow tempo but eventually Sharathi took the lead,

improvising on raga *Pilu* and *Bhupali*.

Prasun Chatterjee's *tritala* presentation on *tabla* accompanied Sarathi's *tarana* at the beginning of the *Jatra* performance.

The concert can be an encouragement for musicians in Bangladesh and India to fuse music genres on stage.

# From child artiste to actor-director

## In conversation with Ishita

NADIA SARWAT

Rumana Rashid Ishita, better known as just "Ishita", is one of the leading actresses on the small screen. Starting off as a child artiste, Ishita soon won the hearts of many, demonstrating her superior histrionic skills as a lovable child, working as a domestic help, "Falani" at the National Competition *Natun Kuri* in 1988. The then head of the state was seen in tears on national TV, as Falani described abuse at the hands of her employers.

Though she has been trained as a singer and dancer, acting however, remains Ishita's main interest.

Of late, she has not been that frequent in TV plays though. "From the start, I've been very selective about the script, director and the production. I think this is the reason you don't see me frequently in TV plays nowadays. Moreover, at present I'm busy balancing my job and family life. But as long as I work in quality productions, the quantity doesn't concern me that much," says the actress.

Ishita is now busy working as the marketing executive of Channel i. She has also tried her hand at writing and direction recently. So far two single-episode plays *Nirjon Aranye* and *Swapno Swapneel*, directed by her, have been aired on Channel i.

"Direction is quite challenging. Till now, I've directed plays written by me. I have received encouraging response from the audience," she says. Another single-episode play titled *Godhuli Belaye* will be aired on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.



Do admit that I've had some difficulties breaking the lovable image of a child actor when I started doing adult roles

Does she find it necessary for aspiring actors to go through acting classes? "Well, there are several aspects that can be better comprehended through institutional training. Obviously one needs to have some inherent skills before even considering to take up acting as a profession," says Ishita.

Does she contemplate acting in films? "Not really. I've received several offers but refused all," her response.

What does she consider as the reason behind her success? "If you can call it 'success', I would say the reason behind it is my commitment and sincerity. I've always tried to stay true to my work and myself. I consider myself fortunate to have receive constant support from my family -- my parents, my husband and in laws," says the actress.

Was the transition of a child artiste to a mature thespian difficult? "I consider these two phases as quite unique, yet related. The child actor Ishita is the foundation of today's Ishita. I do admit that I've had some difficulties breaking the lovable image of a child actor when I started doing adult roles. Then again every child actor in the world goes through that phase," Ishita explains.

Which does she consider as her most remarkable work? "Actually when an artist says he/she has done the most remarkable work, that particular career is done and over with. It's the constant urge to do better that makes an artist move forward," the actress smilingly says.

# Indigenous cultural show held in Tangail



Indigenous artistes perform at the programme

PHOTO: STAR

MIRZA SHAKIL, Tangail

A three-day cultural programme highlighting performances by artistes of the Manipuri and tea-picker communities from the Sylhet region, and Nayakrishi people from Tangail, ended here recently.

The programme was held at Bishnupur in Delduar upazila while NGOs -- Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD) and Unnayan Bikolper Niti Nirdharoni Gabeshona (UBINIG) -- jointly

organised the event.

Manipuri and Tea-picker performers and the hosts, Nayakrishi people, staged traditional songs and dances at the Bidya Ghar of UBINIG.

Manipuri artistes performed traditional *Rash*, *Gostholela*, *Udkha* and *Mridanga* dances. Musical instruments of the Manipuris including *pena*, *moibu*, *mandila* and flute were used with the dances.

The Tea-pickers performed their traditional *Kathhi*, *Chhat*, *Pata*, *Jhumur*, *Pala* and *Santali*

*Junth* dances.

Thongam Dharendra Singha and Parimol Singha Baraik led the Manipuri and Tea-picker groups respectively.

Among others, Pathrail UP Chairman Abdul Aziz Chand Khan, Atia UP Chairman Khaled Hossain Chandan, project coordinator of SEHD Partha Sankar Saha, coordinator of UBINIG Jahangir Alam as well as representatives from different cultural organisations and NGOs attended and spoke at the programme.

## Mini Screen

# "Opekkha O Ekti Mrityu" on Channel 1 tonight

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Channel 1 will telecast single episode TV play *Opekkha O Ekti Mrityu*, today at 3:00pm. The play is written by Mezbaur Rahman Shumon and directed by Pervez Amin.

Nila, a journalist, is awakened one day by a phone call from her boss; he asks her to go to the Dhaka Medical College morgue. As she arrives there she finds the dead body of a student who has

died in a road accident. She finds his diary from the police and starts to read, as she turns each page, a tragic story of a love affair starts to emerge-- Aditya, a college student falls for one of his college mates, Meghla, but can't express his feelings as she is married. He starts to write to her everyday. Meghla in time becomes curious about the writer and starts to develop feelings for him. Srabonti and Shojol have done the central roles in the play.



Srabonti in a scene from the play

# "Mrityunjoyee Nitun Kundu" on Channel i

## Observing the first death anniversary of the artist



Nitun Kundu

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

On the first death anniversary of eminent sculptor Nitun Kundu, Channel i will air a special programme titled *Mrityunjoyee Nitun Kundu* as a tribute to the artiste, on September 15 at 3:05 pm.

National Professor Kabir Chowdhury, Dr. Anisuzzaman, artist Qayum Chowdhury, Dr. Syed Manzoorul Islam, Subir

Chowdhury, Animesh Kundu, Amiti Kundu and Ziaul Karim will discuss on Nitun Kundu's life and works.

The programme will also include an interview of the late artist (recorded previously), documentary, display of some of his paintings, sculptures and more. SAARC Fountain in Dhaka, *Shabash Bangladesh* at Rajshahi University and *Sampan* in

Chittagong, among other works by Kundu, will be shown in the programme.

Directed by Raju Alim, the programme will be hosted by Sharmin Lucky.

Nitun Kundu, a valiant Freedom Fighter and an artist-entrepreneur with a unique vision, passed away on September 15 last year, following a cardiac arrest.

# Upcoming actress optimistic about "Brick Lane"

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

It is seldom that an international film focuses on Bangladeshi expats in Britain. It is even rarer that an Indian actress is looking forward to such a film to push her into the big league of international cinema.

Indian actress Tannishtha

Chatterjee is excited about her role in the screen adaptation of Bangladesh-born British author Monica Ali's best-selling novel *Brick Lane* directed by Sarah Gavron.

Of course, international spotlight for Tannishtha, the 28-year-old student of Delhi's National School of Drama, is nothing new.

The world became a stage for her

when she got the break in the German film *Shadows of Time* directed by Florian Gallenberger and this was followed by movies like *Strings*, *Divorce* and *Bibar* for which she earned the best actress award in OSIAN film festival last year.

She was also a part of Indo-French co-production *Hawa Aaney De* directed by Paris-based Partho Sengupta.

After its world premier at the recent Toronto International Film Festival, BAFTA award-winning *Brick Lane* is likely to be screened before the British royalty in October this year.

Among the films specially screened for the royalty previously were *Chariots of Fire*, *Krammer Vs Krammer*, *A Passage to India*, *Titanic*, *Casino Royale* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Besides, a wider audience awaits *Brick Lane*, which also has Indian actor Satish Kaushik and Christopher Simpson, as Sony Pictures has acquired the distribution rights of the film in North and South America.

In the film, Tannishtha plays the role of Nazneen, a Bangladeshi woman, who arrives in London, leaving behind her beloved sister and home, for an arranged marriage and a new life. Trapped within the four walls of her flat in

East London, and in a loveless marriage with the middle aged Chanu (Satish Kaushik), she fears her soul is quietly dying. Her sister Hasina, meanwhile, continues to live a carefree life back in Bangladesh, stumbling from one adventure to the next. Nazneen struggles to accept her own lifestyle, and keeps her head down in spite of life's blows, but she soon discovers that life cannot be avoided -- and is forced to confront it the day when the hotheaded young radical Karim comes knocking at her door.

Apparently, Tannishtha won the role of Nazneen over well-known Indian actresses Nandita Das and Konkona Sen Sharma.

Although Monica Ali's book is set in 80's London, the movie is set in the backdrop of post September 11, 2001.

Although the shoot of *Brick Lane* had run into protests from a section of Bangladeshis in London, Tannishtha is confident that reservations about the film will go away once people get to see it.

In India, Tannishtha is at present working with debutant director Abhik Mukhopadhyay for his film *Bhoomi* in which she plays the role of an Assamese activist. She also reportedly has a couple of other offers.

# New "Indiana Jones" film title revealed



Shia LaBeouf, Steven Spielberg, Ray Winstone, Karen Allen and Harrison Ford on the set of Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull

The title of the new *Indiana Jones* movie, directed by Steven Spielberg and starring Harrison Ford, has been revealed.

*Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull* will be in theatres May 22, 2008.

The title of the long-awaited fourth instalment of the adventure series was announced by Shia LaBeouf, who co-stars with Ford in the film, at the MTV Video Music Awards in Las Vegas last Sunday.

The new Indy adventure, which is set in the 1950s, also stars Cate Blanchett, Ray Winstone, John Hurt, Jim Broadbent and Karen Allen.

Sean Connery, who played dad to Ford's

globe-trotting archaeologist in 1989's *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, will not reprise the role in the new movie.

The series began in 1981 with *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, followed by *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* in 1984.

In promotional photos, the 65-year-old Ford appears fit as ever.

"I have to say, he looks amazing," Kathleen Kennedy, the film's co-executive producer, along with George Lucas, told *The Associated Press* in July. "He looks fantastic in the outfit."

Source: Internet

# Oscar Bangladesh Committee asks to turn in films

Oscar Bangladesh Committee in a recent press release has requested the Bangladeshi filmmakers to submit films, released after October 1, 2006, to take part in the Best Foreign Language Film Category at the 80th Academy Awards.

Forms are available at International Film Festival Office, Eastern Commercial Complex, Room 7/9, 73 Kakrail, Dhaka (10am to 5pm). Copies of the films with English subtitles and authorised forms by Oscar Bangladesh Committee have to be submitted within September 20 at the above-mentioned office.



A scene from *Rakkhushi* staged recently at Jasimuddin Hall, Faridpur

PHOTO: STAR



Tannishtha Chatterjee