

Solo Exhibition

Title: Perception
Artist: Abdul Muqtadir
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts,
House 275/F, Road 27 (old),
Dhanmondi
Date: March 6-17
Time: 12pm-8pm



Photographic Exhibition

Title: Nanstan
Artist: Arabella Plouviez
Venue: Dik Gallery, House 58,
Road 15A (new), Dhanmondi
Date: March 8-17
Time: 03:00-08:00 pm



2nd Jatiya Manabdhikar Natya Utshob '08

Venue: Rabindra Sharobar,
Dhanmondi
Date: March 9-11



Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Horse Sessions of My Mind
Artist: Anif Al Karim Bhuiyan
Venue: Goethe-Institut
Bangladesh, House 10, Road 9,
Dhanmondi
Date: March 3-12



Soulful images held in meshes of time

FAYZA HAQ

"My theme is perception," says Abdul Muqtadir, whose exhibition is on at the Bengal Gallery. "I observe certain events which are significant to me. It is an energy which inspires me. Perception leads to conviction. The delicate mesh of the background holds his objects, whether they are birds or cats or the smiling face of a child. One feels the figures are seen in a lonely afternoon, with the coming of nightfall with a wan moon."

Muqtadir says, "When I translate the energy through colour there are nuances

which I bring on the canvas or paper." In one of the scenes one sees a resting woman under a tree. "It is what it is and no more," the artist comments.

In one of the paintings is a cock, which brings in the bird flue scare in the country. All around the bird are figures done in minute squiggles. In the painting on "krishnachura" he brings in the colours and motives he sees in a scene. In another is a fountain falling through a green hill. What attracts him is the relation between the elements of nature. In four more pieces of paper Muqtadir has done four varieties of birds with pen squiggles and washes of

water colour.

Muqtadir graduated in 1960 from Dhaka College, with Zainul Abedin, Qamrul Hassan and Safiuddin Ahmed as his teachers. Asked to comment on the standard of teaching in his time and now. "One learns by oneself. Nothing can be thrust on the student," he says. "The teacher gives examples and discusses, it is up to the pupil to pick up."

He works straight away and does not depend on sketches. As if he painted when his mood took him he says moods depend on emotions. I go by something that inspires me, anything that I hear or remember. I

respond to inspiration and do what satisfies my inner need to express myself."

Born in 1936 he graduated from the Graphic Design from the College of Arts and Crafts in 1960. He pursued promotion and development of traditional crafts during 14 years of his career with Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries. He left the job later to join Bitopi, where he worked for three decades. Even after his formal retirement from communications media he is still connected with it. "When my friends insist that I do some illustrations, I work for them," says Muqtadir.

The exhibition ends on 17 March.



Artworks by Abdul Muqtadir, on display at the Bengal Gallery

Talent hunt
Channel i "Shera Kontho" gets underway

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A press conference was held to launch the first Channel i *Shera Kontho* 2008 at the Winter Garden of Hotel Sheraton on March 8. The registration for the musical competition will take place between March 13 and April 15. Regulations related to applications will be aired on Channel i.

Faridur Reza Shagor, chairman and managing director of Channel i; Afzal Hussain, media personality and project officer of Channel i; Matiur Rahman, editor of *Prothom Alo*; and singing divas Sabina Yasmin and Runa Laila,

spoke at the launch and responded to questions later.

The primary auditions will be held at the six district towns of Rajshahi, Barisal, Khulna, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong along with a separate one for Dhaka Metro. Contestants can register through letters, telephone calls, sms. Expatriates can take part through the Channel i website.

Faridur Reza Shagor said that the age limit would be between 15 and 27 years, and all Bangladeshi nationals are free to apply. The top 10 contestants will be awarded album contracts, with two each for the top two.

The competition is being sponsored by Channel i, in cooperation with *Prothom Alo*, Annex Communications, Radio Foorti and Sound Tech. It was learnt that musicians would perform live throughout the programme and none of the songs would be pre-recorded.

Singer Ferdousi Rahman made a guest appearance and related in her speech that she started singing on radio for Tk 5 and on TV for Tk 200 only. But young singers are now so saturated with flats, cars and Tk 10 lakh cheques that they no longer make the effort to perfect their craft.



Eminent cultural personalities at the press conference

PHOTO: STAR

Classical Music Festival held in Pabna

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR
TOPU, Pabna

A classical music festival was held at Bonomali Auditorium in Pabna last Tuesday evening. Shuchona Sangeet Academy arranged the festival and a discussion on the occasion of the organisation's 14th anniversary.

Sankar Bishwas, director of Shuchona Sangeet Academy, chaired the discussion. Noted classical music artiste Sanjib De was the chief guest. Former Head of Bangla Department, Pabna Edward College, Md. Kamruzzaman and Principal of Government Bulbul College, Professor Shibojit Nag spoke on the occasion as special guests.

The speakers expressed unanimously that the practice and appreciation of classical music in the country is on decline, which is disconcerting as it is the foundation of all genres.

Earlier Shuchona Sangeet Academy accorded a reception to artiste Sanjib De.

The classical music performers at the function included Asit De, teacher at Chhayana; Sankar Bishwas, director of Shuchona Sangeet Academy; Pradip Kumar Das and Maisha Fahmida Esha.

For the last three years, the Academy has been regularly arranging such festivals in the district.

"Patho Natok Utshob '08" ends

MAINUL HASSAN

The weeklong Patho Natok Utsab (street theatre festival) by Bangladesh Patho Natok Parishad (BPNP) at Central Shaheed Minar premises ended on March 7. On the last day nine street plays were staged at the venue.

Talking about the festival, Mizanur Rahman, general secretary, BPNP said, "This year's festival was successful. We have had a huge audience enjoying street plays almost everyday." This year a total of 48 troupes from all over Bangladesh -- 32 from Dhaka and 16 from outside Dhaka staged their productions at the festival. Likewise, 22 new productions were staged. Among them 12 were by

troupes outside Dhaka.

"One of the main reasons behind organising the event is to provide theatre troupes a platform to stage their productions. Theatre troupes in our country are constantly on their toes, working on new productions. Through events such as this, the groups get a chance to test the quality of their latest work as the plays are staged to a live audience."

Titled "Bangladesh Pothonatok Utshob '08", this year's event was the eighth consecutive festival by BPNP. The organisation has regularly held the event every March, since 2002. BPNP held the first street theatre festival in 2000. However, due to unavoidable circumstances, no street plays were staged in 2001. The slogan of this

year's programme was *Mukhto Koro Ei Bonadho Duar*.

On March 7, the last day's programme began at 4:30 pm. Unmukhto Theatre, Tongi was the first performer of the day. The group staged their production *Bhabmurti*, written by Malay Bowmik. The play was directed Shekanul Islam Shahi. Next Spondon Jessore staged *Hottomalar Oporey*, written by Badol Sharkar and directed by Hassan Hafizur Rahman. The third performer of the day was Theatre Mohola. They staged the play *Chora* written by MAB Shujon. The play was directed by Achhmotullah Sagor.

A closing ceremony followed. Media personality Aly Zaker was the chief guest of the session.

Golam Kuddus, general secretary, Swammito Shangkritik Jote (SSJ); Mizanur Rahman, general secretary, BPNP; Mahbulul Rahman, representative, RAK ceramics (the sponsor of Bangladesh Pothonatok Utshob '08) and Mofizur Rahman, trainer, BPNP also spoke at the occasion. Mannan Hira, president, BPNP, presided over the discussion.

After the ceremony, six plays -- *Khekh Shial* (Aronok Natyadal), *Mago Ora Boley* (Theatre Circle, Munshiganj), *Bou* (Onirbaan Shangkritik Shangshad), *Bishpachali* (Prachyonat) and *Barricade Charidik* (Manosh Natya Shanggho) were staged at the venue.

Theatre
"Amputation": A conflict between individual and despotism

A scene from the play

PHOTO: STAR

ERSHAD KAMOL

What is the level of freedom an individual enjoys in a state run under dictatorship? Norwegian painter-dramatist-essayist-novelist Jens Bjørneboe's play *Amputation* addresses this question.

'Brainwash' in a reformatory conducted by a military-controlled state has been portrayed in a wild, almost surrealistic play -- partly sinister, partly comic.

Centre for Asian Theatre (CAT) staged the premiere show of their latest production *Amputation*, translated by Raihan Akhtar, on March 7, at the National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

The actors in black uniforms and boots are shown exercising on the stage (the troupe also utilised the surrounding areas of the stage as part of the set), which later transforms to body movements portraying erotic gestures.

The sequence symbolically represents the 'deplorable' psyche of the force that runs the state. Kamaluddin Nilu's directorial compositions seem effective in this post modern production.

When a character is narrating a sequence, the portraying of the same scene through body movements appears repetitive.

However, a few of the scenes in the play, such as the 'coital

scene', could have been avoided, considering the Bangladeshi cultural context. Erotic themes can also be portrayed through narratives, music and symbolic light effects.

The visual aspects of this production however, is innovative, especially Norwegian light designer Kurt Harmsen's compositions deserve plaudits.

The young and spirited actors of CAT performed well throughout the play. They incorporated well with the required aesthetic sentiments of the actions.

The premiere show was inaugurated by Ingrid T. Haug, the first secretary of Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangladesh.

Eight artistes honoured by Bangladesh Performing Media Centre

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Eight noted artistes were awarded by Bangladesh Performing Media Centre (BPMC) at a ceremony held at the main auditorium of the National Museum on March 7. The organisation also arranged its 70th monthly programme. Renowned poet and playwright Syed Shamsul Haq inaugurated the event.

The recipients of the awards are-- Sabina Yasmin (Lifetime Achievement Award), Ali Imam (Children Literature), Bubul Mahalanabish (Nazrul Song), Fakir Alamgir (Gana Sangeet), Abida Sultana (Modern Song), Indra Mohan Rajbangshi (Folk Song), Mita Haque (Tagore Song) and Popy (Modelling).

A. S. M. Ali Kabir, Chairman of BIWTC, was chief guest at the function presided over by former secretary Syed Margub Morshed. Noted Nazrul singer Fatema-tuz-Zohra was present as special guest. Among others, Mahfuza Rahman Babil and Dilip Kumar Gomosta, Director of BPMC, spoke on the occasion.

Following the award handover ceremony, the monthly cultural programme was held. The cultural programme featured popular songs of yesteryears, dance, recitation and more.

Ataur Rahman rendered Manna Dey classic *Shey amar chhoto bon* and *Tir hara ei dheuer sagor. Ami eto je tomay, Nital paye, Kichhukhan na hoy* and more songs also featured at the programme.

Child artistes performed a number of group dances.



(L-R) Fatema-tuz-Zohra, Abida Sultana, Syed Margub Morshed, Syed Shamsul Haq and A. S. M. Ali Kabir