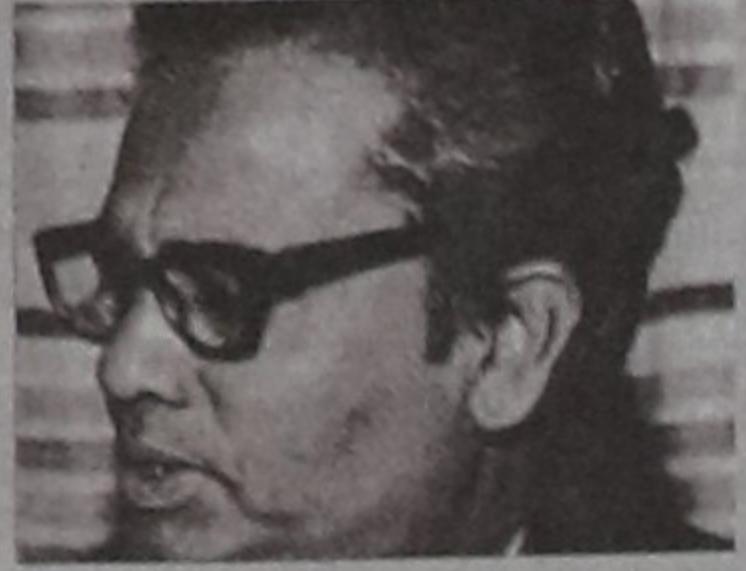


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Discussion and Theatre
On Shaheed Munir Chowdhury
Organiser: Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, BSA
Play: Kabor Troupe: Bangaranga Natyadal Date: April 24 Time: 8pm



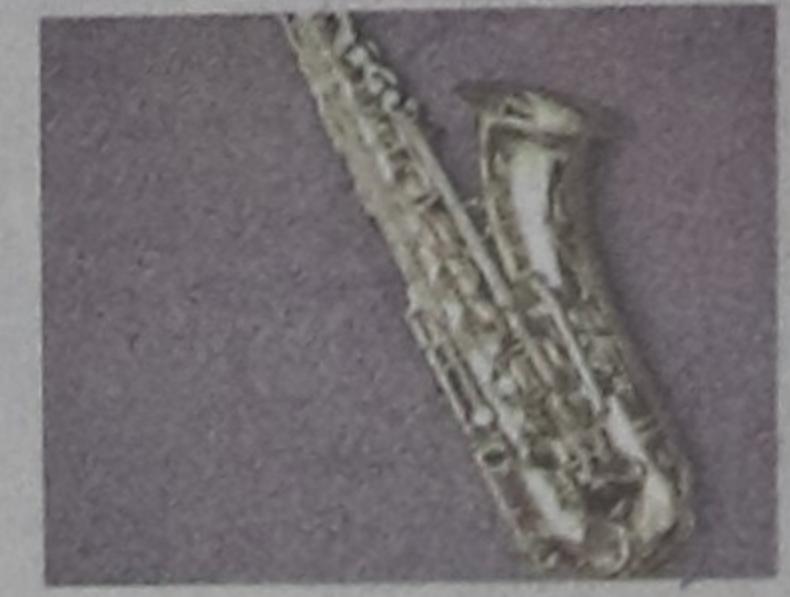
Satyajit Ray Retrospective
Organiser: Indian Cultural Centre
Venue: Indian Cultural Centre, H 25, R 96, Gulshan 2 April 24 Goopi Galin Bagha Bain April 25 Hirak Rajar Deshe Time: 6 pm everyday



Art Exhibition
Title: Return to the roots
Artists: 7 Bengali artists from India
Venue: Bengal Galery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, R 27 (Old), Dhammandi Date: April 25-May 9 Time: 12pm-8pm



Asian Flip Flop Jazz Concert
Troupe: Jazzy Chopsticks
Venue: Auditorium, Goethe-Institut Bangladesh, H 10, R 9, Dhammandi Date: April 24 Time: 7:30pm Tickets available at the Café Tin Drum, GI



Int'l Dance Day celebration

Young dancers of Dhaka division perform at Shilpkala Academy



Competitors perform (clockwise) Bharatanatyam, Manipuri, Kaththak and Odissi dance

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy (BSA) and Bangladesh Nrityashilpi Sanghshtha are jointly celebrating the International Dance Day this year. A nationwide month-long dance competition has been arranged on the occasion, which will end with a three-day festival starting from April 27. As part of

the competition, the artistes of Dhaka division performed at BSA yesterday.

Around 50 young dancers rendered classical (Kaththak, Bharatanatyam, Manipuri and Odissi), folk and creative dance performances. The competition was held at two venues -- the auditorium and rehearsal room of Music and Dance Centre, BSA.

Director General of BSA, Bhuiyan

Shafiqul Islam; Ashraful Mosaddek, secretary and Sunil Chandra Das, director of National Music and Dance Centre spoke on the occasion. Veteran dance artistes Shoma Mumtaz and Rahiza Khanam Jhunu also spoke at the programme.

The panel of judges includes eminent dancers of the country including Shamim Ara Nipa, Shibli Mohammad, Munmun Ahmed, Hasan Imam, Shukla Sarkar, Minu Haque, Anisul Islam Hiru, Tamanna Rahman and Sohel Rahman.

The final will be held on April 27.

The director general of BSA had a meeting with a representative of UNESCO, as UNESCO has expressed interest in funding BSA's International Dance Day celebration.

Dick Cook, chairman of the Walt Disney Studios, said the label's goal was "to offer event films that will appeal to everyone who is captivated by the grandeur of nature".

Narrated by Star Wars actor James Earl Jones, Earth will be released in the US on April 22 next year.

The label, which will release one film each year, will be run by France-based executive Jean-François Camilleri.

"Nature invents the most beautiful stories," he said.

Source: Internet

Disney launches nature film label

The Disney Company has unveiled a new specialist film unit dedicated to producing wildlife and environmental documentaries for the big screen.

'DisneyNature' will launch next year with the US release of Earth, a film version of the BBC's Planet Earth TV series.

The label, which will release one film each year, will be run by France-based executive Jean-François Camilleri.

"Nature invents the most beautiful stories," he said.

"Our role will be to tell them with passion and enthusiasm."

Camilleri played a key role in the development of French nature film March of the Penguins, which went on to win an Academy Award for best documentary.

Narrated by Star Wars actor James Earl Jones, Earth will be released in the US on April 22 next year.

Alastair Fothergill, who produced Planet Earth for the BBC and The Discovery Chan-

nel, is working on new films about chimpanzees and "big cats" for the Disney nature label.

Other projects in development include documentaries about flamingoes, orangutans and the world's oceans.

Dick Cook, chairman of the Walt Disney Studios, said the label's goal was "to offer event films that will appeal to everyone who is captivated by the grandeur of nature".

Source: Internet

Musical rendezvous in Chittagong

Artistes perform songs of five poets

SHAHIDUL ISLAM, Chittagong

The amity between Bangladesh and India was strengthened with a new dimension through the much-hyped reintroduction of the train communication, aptly named as 'Moitree Express', on Pahela Baishakh this year.

The Moitree Express is not only a source of nostalgia but also a chance for the two neighbouring countries to build bridges, generate new hopes and aspirations.

Despite some tensions along the borders, the cultural tie has always been strong between West Bengal and Bangladesh. The fraternity of cultural activists, poets, singers, writers, actors and other artistes from both Bangladesh and West Bengal remain a powerful force.

Bindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Rajnikant, Atul Prasad and Dwijendra Lal Roy are the five great Bengali poets who are revered by people on both sides. Their songs and poetry have made a major impact on the mindset of Bengalis in every sphere of life, study and works.

The newly formed Chittagong chapter of Bangladesh-India Friendship Society organised a musical soiree at the auditorium of Theatre Institute, Chittagong (TIC) recently. In the spotlight were the selected songs of the great pentad in observance of Pahela Baishakh. Artistes Mita Haque, Khairel Anam Shakil, Ilora Ahmed Shukla, Aniruddha Sen Gupta, Srabani Barua and ATM Jahangir rendered the classic Bangla songs at the programme.

Mita Haque was full of praise for this initiative. She began her rendition with a Tagore song Jagatey anando jogey amara nimironton. Two beautiful and memorable songs of Atul Prasad -- Ami rakhtey jodi apon ghorey and Ami bandhinu tomor tarey -- came next. Mita's last rendition was Aji eshechhi eshechhi of D.L. Roy. The artiste left the stage, humbly declining an encore.

Two Chittagong-based artistes,

Ilora Ahmed Shukla (top) and Mita Haque sing at the programme



Aniruddha Sen Gupta and Srabani Barua rendered songs of the pentad poets. The renditions -- Tumi nirmal koro mongal korey by Aniruddha and Aji natun rataney by Srabani -- left a lasting impression. Then came Ilora with Tumi daogo dao morey of Atul Prasad,

followed by two songs of Atul Prasad and D.L. Roy.

Jahangir in turn successfully

overcame the initial difficulty in

acoustics and presented five

superb songs. Of these, a rendition of D.L. Roy's Murali kande Radhe Radhe boley remained etched in

the memory.

The show concluded with a performance by Khairel Anam Shakil. Taking off with the Nazrul Sangeet Nohey nohey priyo e noi ankhi jal, Shakil went on to render three ghazals. Of them the audience was particularly responsive to Keu bhole na keu bhole. The curtains came down with Shakil's rendition of Padmar dherey.

Assistant High Commissioner of India, Subrata Bhattacharya lauded the organisers for the initiative, which would go a long way in fostering an enduring, bilateral relationship between Bangladesh and India.

"The introduction of Moitree Express is a significant development. Continued cultural exchange will further bolster the tie between the two neighbours," he added.

President of the Society and noted scientist Professor Jamal Nazrul Islam expressed his appreciation to the audience.

The writer is the Bureau Chief, The Daily Star Chittagong.

Satyajit Ray: Remembering the doyen

Talking about the great late Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray, his famous Japanese counterpart Akira Kurosawa said, "The quiet but deep observation, understanding and love of the human race, which are characteristic of all his films, have impressed me greatly... I feel that he is a 'giant' of the movie industry."

These words have an undeniable ring of truth as one looks back at Ray's life (May 2, 1921-April 23, 1992) and film career. Go back to 1955 and his first film Pather Panchali (Song of the road) the first of a trilogy, followed by Aparajito (The unvanquished) and Apur Sansar (The world of Apu). These films have a touch of his unique blend of intellect and emotion. Who can forget the stark lives of Apu and his family? The son of a poor Brahmin poet and priest, Apu witnesses the struggle for existence of his family against the milieu of a famine and his own growing up years.

Around the same time, Ray made two other landmark films: Devi (The goddess) and Jalsaghar (The music room).

Ray's later films touched more contemporary themes. In these ranks were Nayak in 1966,

Pratidwandi in 1970, Seemabaddha in 1971, Jana Aranya in 1975 and Shatranj Ke Khiladi (The chess players) in 1977. The last film was based on a short story by renowned Hindi writer Premchand and brought him to the notice of the mainstream Indian filmmaking audience.

Other films includedTeen Kanya (1961), Charulata (1964), Ashani Sanket (1973), Ghar-e Bair-e (1984) and Ganashatru (1989). His last film was Agantuk (1991).

As Ray went from strength to strength, he was feted overseas with awards at Venice, Cannes, Locarno and Berlin. In 1992 he received a Lifetime Achievement Award "in recognition of his rare mastery of the art of motion pictures and for his profound humanitarian outlook, which as had an indelible influence on filmmakers and audiences throughout the world." This is not an overstatement -- Ray's films were studied in film schools and avidly watched by upcoming filmmakers. Prominent Indian directors such as Kumar Shahani, Mani Kaul, Adoor Gopalakrishnan and Shyam Benegal drew inspiration from Ray.

Other honours that came Ray's way were Legion d'Honneur, France and Bharatratna.

Despite his considerable talent,

Photo: COURTESY: AMAR CHHOKER/SATYAJIT RAY BY SAYED A. KHAN



Ray in his studio (top), Sharmila Tagore in Devi

Ray was never far from controversy. In Bengal, particularly Kolkata (Calcutta), where Marxism was the order of the day, he was labelled as a representative of bourgeois culture. Even his friend Chidananda Dasgupta wrote that Ray did not accurately capture the political milieu of the turbulent 1960s and 1970s. In Dasgupta's words, the latter failed to show a greater concern for the "Calcutta of the burning trains, communal riots, refugees, unemployment, rising prices and food shortages..."

Today such criticisms seem far off

the mark. Says an internet article, "It is now easier to recognise Ray's films as politically nuanced and Ray never made the mistake of embracing unabashedly, the nationalistic interpretation of Indian history. Ray tackled the difficult subject of the Bengal famine of 1943, for instance, with great sensitivity."

The master director continues to remain the most talented Bengali filmmaker. His films captured rural as well as urban Bengali lifestyle in its truest form.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent

