

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Group Art Exhibition
by 19 artists from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka
Title: Off the Beaten Path
Organiser: Britto Art Trust
Venues: Drik Gallery, Dhanmondi; Gallen Kaya, Ujjara; Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Dhanmondi
Date: September 2-9
Time: DG: 3pm-8pm, GK: 11am-8pm, BGFA: 11am-8pm

**Jamdani Mela**

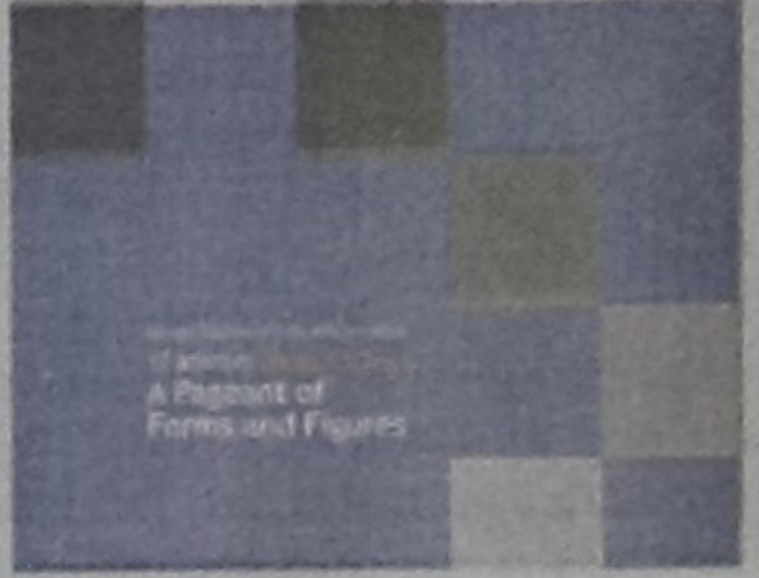
An exhibition of Jamdani Sarees
Venue: Drik Gallery, H 58, Rd 15A (new), Dhanmondi
Date: September 3-7
Time: 3pm-8pm

**Solo Exhibition**

Title: The Intimate World of Colour
Artist: Hamiduzzaman Khan
Venue: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh Gallery of Fine Art, Nimtoli, Ramna
Date: August 23-September 9
Time: 12pm-8pm

**Group Exhibition**

Title: A Pageant of Forms and Figures
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi
Date: August 22-31
Time: 12am-8pm



Songs of Radha Raman

Album launch and musical programme at National Museum

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Cultural organisation Nibedan arranged a CD launch and musical programme at the Main Auditorium of the National Museum on August 29.

An album featuring renditions of 11 songs of the bard Radha Raman Dutta (1833-1915) by Bishwajit Roy titled, *Radha Ramaner Gaan* was launched at the programme. Noted singer Arit Roy unveiled the album cover. Later Bishwajit rendered songs of Radha Raman at the programme.

Professor Anisuzzaman, noted theatre personality Ramendu Majumder, Dr. Syed Manzurul Islam, lyricist Mohammad Rafiquzzaman and Tagore singer Tapan Mahmud spoke at the programme. Tagore singer and president of Nibedan, Anup Bhattacharya, presided over the programme.

Artiste Bishwajit Roy was an active member of Udichi Shilpi Goshthi. Later he joined Nibedan. According to Bishwajit, Radha Raman wrote over 2,000 songs in his lifetime. The bard's songs can be categorised into different genres like *kirtan*, *dhamail*, *bichchedi* and *gurbhajan*.



(L-R) Tapan Mahmud, Arit Roy, Bishwajit Roy, Professor Anisuzzaman, Anup Bhattacharya, Mahmud Selim, Dr. Syed Manzurul Islam and Mohammad Rafiquzzaman at the programme.

At the programme, Bishwajit rendered 12 songs, five of which were from the album. He started with *Nagorkaliago*.

Orey o shujan naiyya, Pashan monrey bujhaiyo, Aami jar

karoney Brindaban-e, Jole jaiyona go Rai and Amar antorey tusher-i anol are the five songs from the album that the artiste rendered at the programme. Bishwajit also performed *Amar*

eki bipod hoilo and Shyam kalia shonabondhu.

Commitment Products is the producer of the CD and Laser Vision is the authorised distributor for the CD and Laser Vision.

Solo Sarod recital by Rajrupa Chowdhury

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A solo performance by promising sarod artiste Rajrupa Chowdhury was held at Bengal Shilpalaya in Dhanmondi on August 29. Rajrupa is a vibrant young musician who completed her M.A. in Music from Rabindra Bharati University in India with an outstanding result -- obtaining the first class first position. Born in Kolkata, the artiste is currently living in Dhaka. Another talented musician, Swarup Hossain, provided *sangat* (accompaniment) with *tabla* to Rajrupa's performance.

Luva Nahid Chowdhury, managing director of Bengal Foundation, welcomed the audience and introduced the artistes. Rajrupa started her sarod lessons at the age of five, under the tutelage of Pranab Naha, at the Ameer Khan School of Instrumental Music. She received intensive training from Siddharth Roy Chowdhury, Joydeep Ghosh and Pandit Ajay Sinha Roy. Rajrupa is now taking special guidance from Pandit Sanjay Bandyopadhyay. Her skills have already earned her a lot of expectations from the music enthusiasts.

Swarup Hossain is a gold medallist student of *tabla* from the University of Baroda, India.



Rajrupa Chowdhury during the performance.

Rajrupa started with a rendition of *Raga Emon*. The performance without any use of *tabla* seemed to move the hundred-plus audience who showed up despite the gloomy weather and rain. Next was a rendition of *Raga*

Bagheshri, initially in a *bilombito teen taal* and then in *madhya laya*. The *aalap* started slowly and gradually the pace picked up.

Towards the end, Rajrupa's fingers went violent on the strings of sarod. Swarup's *tabla* provided an apt *sangat*, leaving

the audience fixed in their positions. The performance was greeted with rounds of applause. Honouring the audiences' request, Rajrupa continued her performance with a rendition of *Divavati*. The evening ended with music enthusiasts longing for more.

IN FOCUS

"Gazir Gaan" still finds a keen audience in Faridpur

REZAUL KARIM, Faridpur

Gazir Gaan (Gazi's song) -- a traditional folk song genre -- still charms and stirs the rural heart in Faridpur.

It is mainly a *pala* (narrative songs) eulogising Gazi Pir, who is believed to be a saintly figure. According to legends, Gazi Pir abandoned his title (he belonged to a family of rulers) and became a *fakir*, concentrating on devotion and worshipping the Almighty as he had dreamt.

In the district, *Gazir Gaan* is performed in a distinct style, focusing on drawing the audience's interest. Around 8-10 artistes along with co-artists perform the *pala*, which features dancing, singing, jokes and storytelling.

In Faridpur, villagers occasionally arrange performances of *Gazir Gaan* as a form of *mannat* (vow to God), hoping to be relieved from diseases or any danger. The *pala* is familiar in the areas of Bishnupur, Shibrampur, Charnadhabdia, Khalipur and the villages on the banks of Padma. The *palakars* mostly live in these areas and are sometimes hired to perform at programmes.

A *chauki* (wooden platform) is set up adorned with candles and incense. A *trishul* is left erected on the podium, believing that the soul of Gazi resides in it. Different types of offerings are made that include rice, milk, bananas, *gamchha*, mustard oil and money.

Artists use a range of musical instruments including *dotara*, *hamonium*,



A traditional *Gazir Gaan* performance.

sharinda, *dhol*, *mridango*, *kashi*, *banshi* and *premjuri* during the *pala*.

The main singer, known as the "boyati", is attired in red and enacts the role of Gazi. Another singer performs as "Kalu" who carries a black bag.

Gazir Pala starts with a hymn to the

Almighty. The artistes then praise Gazi and greet the audience.

The boyati narrates the story that Barkhan Gazi, the second son of Sultan Sikandar Shah and Azufa Sundari of Gaur. Gazi's mother was the daughter of King Bali (a Hindu royalty). Giasuddin Julhas, the first

son of Azufa Sundari and Sikandar Shah was missing. The bereaved parents found a chest floating on a river. Opening the box they found an infant who was named "Kalu", as a written note in the chest mentioned the name. Kalu and Gazi were brought up as brothers.

Sultan Sikander Shah offered his throne to Gazi but the latter refused claiming that he has to lead the life of an ascetic. The Sultan was enraged.

Gazi's convictions were tested. An elephant tried to trample him; he was attacked with a sword, thrown in fire and more. But Gazi survived. He left the country accompanied by his brother Kalu and travelled many areas in the guise of a *fakir*. He reached Sundarbans and stayed there for seven years.

Here fairies and tigers became his disciples. From this belief locals of Sundarban still recall Gazi when in fear of tigers.

Gazi fell in love with the beautiful Champabati, daughter of King Mukut Roy of Brahman Nagar. After learning about this, the king was enraged and declared war against Gazi. Tigers and crocodiles fought on both sides and eventually Gazi won the fight. Mukut Roy surrendered and agreed to the marriage of Champabati and Gazi. Gazi is considered a "Zinda Pir" (immortal soul) by his followers.

The *pala* continues all nightlong till the *Fazr Azaan* (call for prayer just before dawn). Devotees narrate the supernatural tales of Gazi passionately and hope for the well being of all.

TV Watch

"Doll's House" celebrates 200 episodes



The cast of *Doll's House* includes celebrity actors of the country.

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

The 200th episode of the soap *Doll's House* will be aired tonight at 11:30 pm. Written by Azad Abul Kalam and Chanchal M Rahman, *Doll's House* is aired on Thursday through Sunday. The serial is directed jointly by Badrul Anam Saud and Afsana Mimi.

Doll's House is produced by Krishnachura Production Ltd.

According to the directors, the inspiration and help from the Chairman of ATN Bangla, Mahfuzur Rahman and others like the Programme Head, Nawazish Ali Khan; Marketing Head, Shamsul Huda; Chandra Sinha and Munni Saha, Krishnachura ventured to make this daily soap. The serial was first aired on August 16 in 2007 and crossed the milestone of 100th and 150th episode this year.

The serial features a number of

celebrity actors of the country such as Humayun Faridi, Subarna Mustafa, Shompa Reza, Mita Chowdhury, Fazlur Rahman Babu, Wahida Mallik Jolly, Azad Abul Kalam, Traupa Majumdar, Bijori Barakatullah, Tushar Khan, Chitralekha Guha, Farhana Mithu, Saberi Alam, Bannya Mirza, Intekhab Dinar, Sanjida Preeti and others. Shahidul Ala Sachchu and many others will also join the cast in future.

An evening of poetry and music by Swabhum



Poets Muztaba Ahmed Murshed (left) and Abu Bakar Siddique (centre) with members of 'Swabhum' during a recitation.

'Swabhum', an organisation of writers and artistes, arranged a cultural programme titled, "Praner Shurey Gaan-er Shondhya" on August 27 at the Poet Sufia Kamal Auditorium, National Museum. This was the second instalment of the programme, says a press release.

At the programme, members of the organisation paid tribute to the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and demanded the immediate trial of his killers.

Noted poet Abu Bakar Siddique was the chief guest while writer and journalist Mohsin Habib took part as a discussant. Founder and President of the organisation, noted poet and litterateur Muztaba Ahmed Murshed, chaired the

function.

Poet Siddique said, "Swabhum's positive efforts to uphold the core of our country's culture would provide additional support to the growth of people."

The cultural programme began with recitation by Poet Murshed. Murshed recited his poem *Botrishey Shoker Shakkhor* -- his homage to Bangabandhu. Other performances included Tagore and Nazrul songs rendered by singers of Swabhum -- Arif Rahman, Shamima Ara Munni, Lana Khan, Parveen Akhtar Bithi, Md. Tipu Chowdhury, Farzana Mitu and Safiya Afroz.

The programme was hosted by Marks Manos Saha.

Michael Phelps to present at Video Music Awards

AP, Los Angeles

He does comedy, writes books, mixes it up with the hottest stars in music and Hollywood. With all this, who needs swimming?

Certainly not Michael Phelps -- not anymore, at least. But as a presenter at the 2008 Video Music Awards, all that fresh Olympic bling will certainly help.

The swimmer who took home a record-breaking eight gold medals from the Beijing Games joins Miley Cyrus, Lindsay Lohan and Ciara as presenters at the September 7 VMAs telecast from Los Angeles. British comedian Russell Brand will host.

It's been a busy week for Phelps, who announced he will write a book about his road to Olympic history (to be released in

time for the holidays) and plans to host the season premiere of "Saturday Night Live."

Zac Efron, Vanessa Hudgens, Ashley Tisdale and Corbin Bleu of the "High School Musical" franchise will also present at the VMAs, as will "Twilight" actors Kristen Stewart, Robert Pattinson and Taylor Lautner, MTV said Thursday.

The network also announced performers Katy Perry, T-Pain, Lupe Fiasco and The Ting Tings.

Performers already announced include Rihanna, Pink, Paramore and T.I., who will be making his first appearance at a major awards show since his arrest right before an awards ceremony last year. The Jonas Brothers, Lil Wayne and Kid Rock are also scheduled to perform on stage.

