

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Art & Photography Exhibition

on Bangladesh Street Culture
Artists: Rokaya, Kuhu, Smita, Ujjwala and Anil
Date: November 8-23
Time: 7pm
Venue: Bay's Galleria, 6th floor, 57, Gulshan Avenue



Dance Drama

Hey Ananta Punya
Organiser: Shadhona
Venue: National Music and Dance Centre, BSA
Date: November 9
Time: 6:30pm



13th Asian Art Biennale '08

Organiser: Bangladesh Shipakala Academy
Venue: Bangladesh Shipakala Academy, Osmani Memorial Hall and National Museum
Date: October 21-November 19
Time: 11am-7pm (Fridays 3pm-8pm)



Dhaka Nritya Utsab

Organiser: Bangladesh Nrityashilpi Shangstha
Venue: National Music and Dance Centre, BSA
Date: November 7-9
Time: 6:30pm onwards everyday



Saaz-e-Sarod

Ustad Amjad Ali Khan performs at Dhaka Club

KARIM WAHEED

At 10 past 9 pm, the audience was starting to get a tad twitchy. The ustad had taken the stage. Tuning the four 'jawari', four melody strings, two 'chikari' and fifteen sympathetic pegs do take a while. "A raaga can be played for hours," the maestro said prior to his performance. "I recall playing from 9 pm to 7 in the next morning in Calcutta (now Kolkata) once." Connoisseurs seemed delighted at the possibility. "But tonight I'll play an array of compositions," he said.

As artiste Nashid Kamal greeted the scion of the legendary Bangash gharana on behalf of the Dhaka audience, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan acknowledged the admiration with humility and reciprocated by promising a brand new composition -- "a tribute to Bangladesh," as he called it.

The ustad was invited by Dhaka Club and the concert was held at the club premises on November 6.

Sadat Hossain Salim, president of Dhaka Club Ltd, recalled how he met the ustad at a performance in Bombay (now Mumbai) 27 years back. "I'm not a classical music buff, but his performance made an indelible impression on me," Salim said. "In the ustad's own words, 'Sangeet mehsos karne ki cheez hain,'" he added.

And that seems to be the USP of the instrument. Ustad Amjad Ali Khan's ances-



Immersed in music: Ustad Amjad Ali Khan performing at Dhaka Club.

tors had developed and shaped sarod over several hundred years -- the result, an instrument that can foray into new spectrums with less effort.

The instrument speaks eloquently of the close connections between India and Afghanistan and the Persian world. The sound of the sarod as one knows it today is distinctly Indian in character, but it links to the sinewy, raw style of the Afghan rabab -- a wooden Central Asian lute, covered with skin.

For Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, it's the tone quality that's the attraction. One of the principal modifications of the sarod from the Afghan rabab is its long metal fingerboard, which allows swooping melismatic slides between the melody notes.

"I am singing through my instrument," the ustad said at the concert.

According to him, there are two ways of

sarod playing -- one in which the strings are stopped by the fingertips and the other employs fingernails of the left hand (the ustad follows the latter technique). As he was filing his nails, the ustad jocularly said, "I'm not beautifying my nails." "It's essential maintenance. They get little grooves cut into them from the strings," he added.

Tanmoy Bose and Fateh Singh -- on tabla and pakhawaj -- were accompanying the ustad.

"Raaga Ganesh Kalyan" was the first composition performed at the concert. It was composed on the occasion of Ganesh pooja in Maharashtra. According to the ustad, "Everyone thought I'd composed it but to me these are familiar 'dhun'. They originate from some cosmic source; I'm just the medium."

The next composition titled "Raaga

Subhalakshmi" was the ustad's gift for his wife Subhalakshmi Khan, a renowned Bharatnatyam exponent. The composition strolled from subtle, graceful, effeminate notes to a fiery, fast 'sawal-jawaab' between the sarod and tabla. It was like a cat and mouse play and if the sarod was the mouse, the cat missed on a number of occasions.

That's not all. Unfortunately for the organisers, the performance was marred at times by uncomplimentary sound system. Many among the audience that included seasoned music connoisseurs and classical musicians complained that accompanying musicians with the ustad were not on top of their game. A programme of this magnitude deserved utmost attention and precision.

Seminar on censorship of digital films

JAMIL MAHMUD

In recent years, digital filmmaking, which has become popular around the world, is catching on among our filmmakers. This format, comparatively inexpensive to the 35 and 16 mm format, is becoming the preferred medium to work with for many.

But to work in this format they have to face several obstacles. The most important being Bangladesh Film Censor Board not yet including digital films under its regulation.

On November 5, a seminar and open discussion on the topic "Digital Chalachchitra: Shamashya O Shambhabana," was held at the Projection Hall of Bangladesh Film Archive (BFA), Shahbagh. The programme was arranged by BFA. Noted filmmaker Morshedul Islam read out the keynote paper while several

film related personalities participated in the open discussion. Jamil Osman, secretary, Ministry of Information, was the chief guest at the programme.

In his keynote paper Morshedul Islam compiled history and information as well as scope of digital filmmaking in the Bangladeshi context. He highlighted on the pragmatic aspects as well as obstacles in digital filmmaking. According to the paper, "The main obstacle in the field of digital filmmaking is censorship. It is surprising that the Bangladesh Film Censor Board has not yet recognised digital filmmaking."

Islam also went over other issues, including screening of digital films. Theatres across the country are not yet technically equipped for screening digital films, as they need a different projection system.

The projection system is quite expensive, which Islam pointed out in his paper, but high quality multimedia projection system could be used as an alternative to screen these films.

Director General of BFA, Dr. Muhammad Jahangir was the moderator of the discussion. Filmmakers Badal Rahman, Sohanur Rahman Sohan, Azizur Rahman, Animesh Aich, Maruf Hossain; media personalities Faridur Reza Sagar, Mahiuddin Faruque and film activist Belayet Hossain Mamun, among others, took part in the open discussion.

Earlier a film-hand over session was held, where Impress Telefilm Ltd, turned in 22 films to BFA. Faridur Reza Sagar, managing director, Impress Telefilm, handed over couple of film cans as a symbolic gesture to Jamil Osman.



A scene from Animesh Aich's digital film (produced by Impress Telefilm Ltd) "Garam Bhat Othoba Nichhak Bhuter Golpo."

Dhaka University Theatre Festival '08

Jatrapala "Shajahan" to be staged today

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Centrally organised by the University of Dhaka and under the management of the Department of Theatre and Music, DU the 3rd Dhaka

University Annual Theatre Festival '08' begins today. The festival will take place at the TSC auditorium till November 18. Vice Chancellor of DU, Professor SMA Fayeaz will inaugurate the festival. Professor

Sirajul Islam Chowdhury will be the chief guest at today's inaugural programme. Dr. Israfil Shahin, chairman of the department, will preside over the programme.

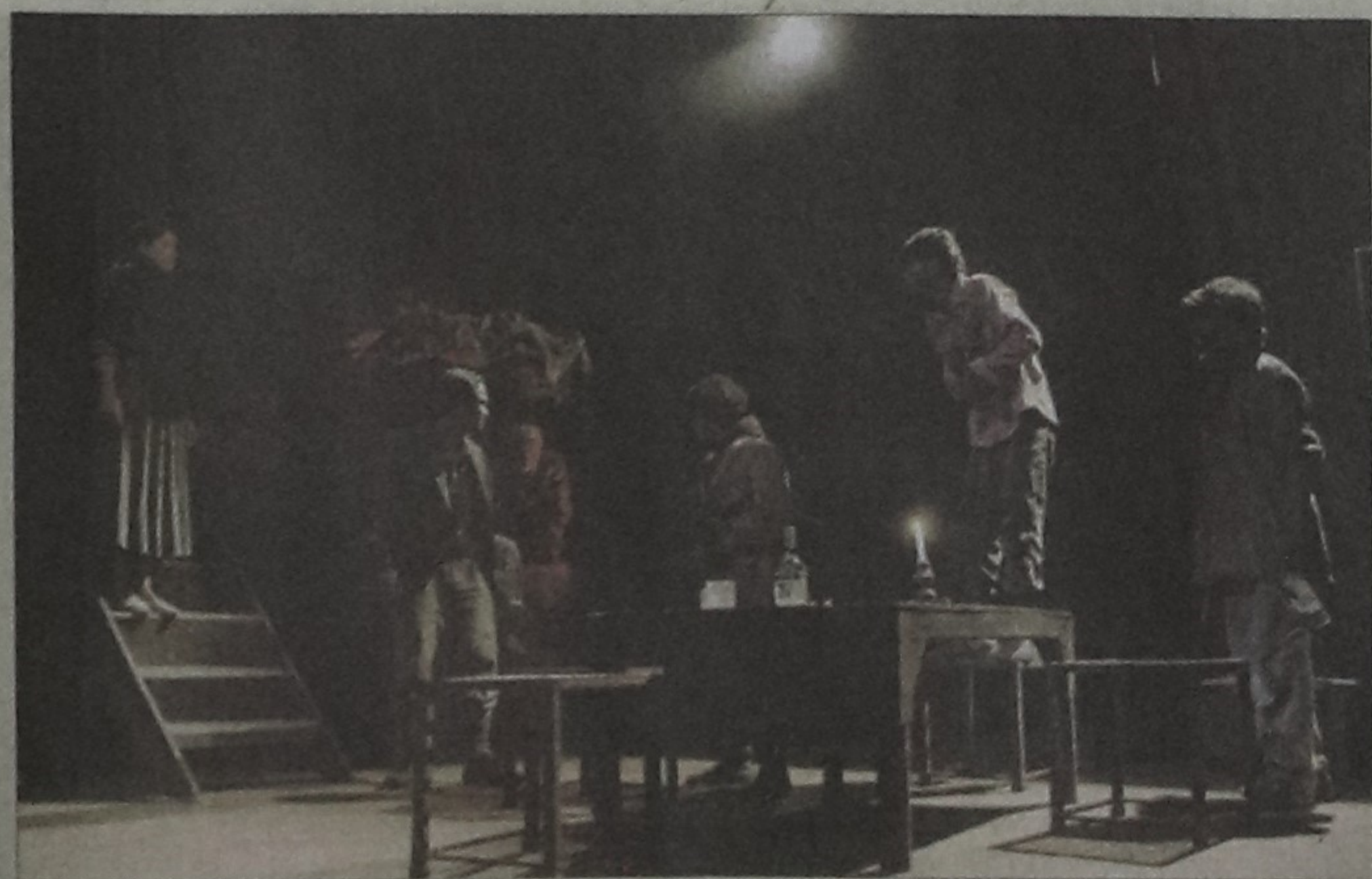
A total of 17 productions of

the Theatre and Music Department will be staged throughout the festival. Students of honours, final years, are directing the productions and the rest of the students are performing in the plays.

A 'jatrapala' adaptation of Dwijendra Lal Roy's "Shajahan" will be staged today by the third year students. Recently, the department has included 'jatrapala' in its curriculum and "Shajahan" is a part of this initiative.

Apart from renowned Bengali productions, some world-renowned works will be staged at the festival. The productions are -- Rabindranath Tagore's "Raktokarobi," Syed Shamsul Haque's "Irsha," Ramnarayan Tarkaratna's "Chakkhudan," Maxim Gorky's "The Lower Depths," Edward Albee's "The Zoo Story," Franz Kafka's "Metamorphosis," Harold Pinter's "The Room," Jean Paul Sartre's "Man Without Shadows," Anton Chekhov's "The Bear" and George Bernard Shaw's "How He Lied to Her Husband."

The performance starts at 6:30pm everyday.



DU Students perform "The Lower Depths" on May 26 this year at Natmandal.

PHOTO: MUMIT

Sneak Peek

"Angels & Demons"



Tom Hanks returns as Robert Langdon -- a role he played in "The Da Vinci Code" -- in "Angels & Demons," an upcoming film adaptation of Dan Brown's novel of the same name. Directed by Ron Howard, the film is due for release on May 15, 2009.

Storyline: Robert Langdon is summoned by CERN to investigate a murder victim, branded with the "Illuminati ambigram," leading him to discover the secret society's scheme to murder four cardinals and

destroy St. Peter's Basilica during a papal conclave using antimatter.

The film also stars Ewan McGregor as Camerlengo Carlo Ventresca and Ayelet Zurer as Vittoria Vetra, a CERN scientist whose antimatter experiment has been stolen by the 'Illuminati' to be used as a bomb.

Filming took place in Rome and the Sony Pictures Studios in Los Angeles.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent

