

WHAT'S
ON THIS
WEEKArt &
Photography
Exhibition

on Bangladesh Street Culture
Artists: Rokaya, Kuhu, Smita,
Ujjwala and Anil
Date: November 8-23
Time: 7pm
Venue: Bay's Galleria, 5th 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
Shilpakala Academy
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala
Academy, Osmani Memorial
Hall and National Museum
Date: October 21-November 19
Time: 11am-7pm (Fridays
3pm-8pm)

Dhaka Nritya
Utsab

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



Manipuri Theatre

Capturing vignettes from the life of Krishna



PHOTO: STAR

Members of Manipuri Theatre perform "Shree Krishna Kirtan".

JAMIL MAHMUD

Indigenous troupe Manipuri Theatre arranged a two-day programme at the Experimental Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy to celebrate its 12th anniversary. On the first day (November 7), the troupe staged its production "Shree Krishna Kirtan" and a traditional Manipuri art form "Natpala".

"Shree Krishna Kirtan" is the troupe's 13th production. When the play was first staged, it was over three hours long. However at the Experimental Hall, the troupe had to whittle down the play to one hour and five minutes. Shubhashish Shameer adapted

the play from a medieval piece written by Baruch Chandidas.

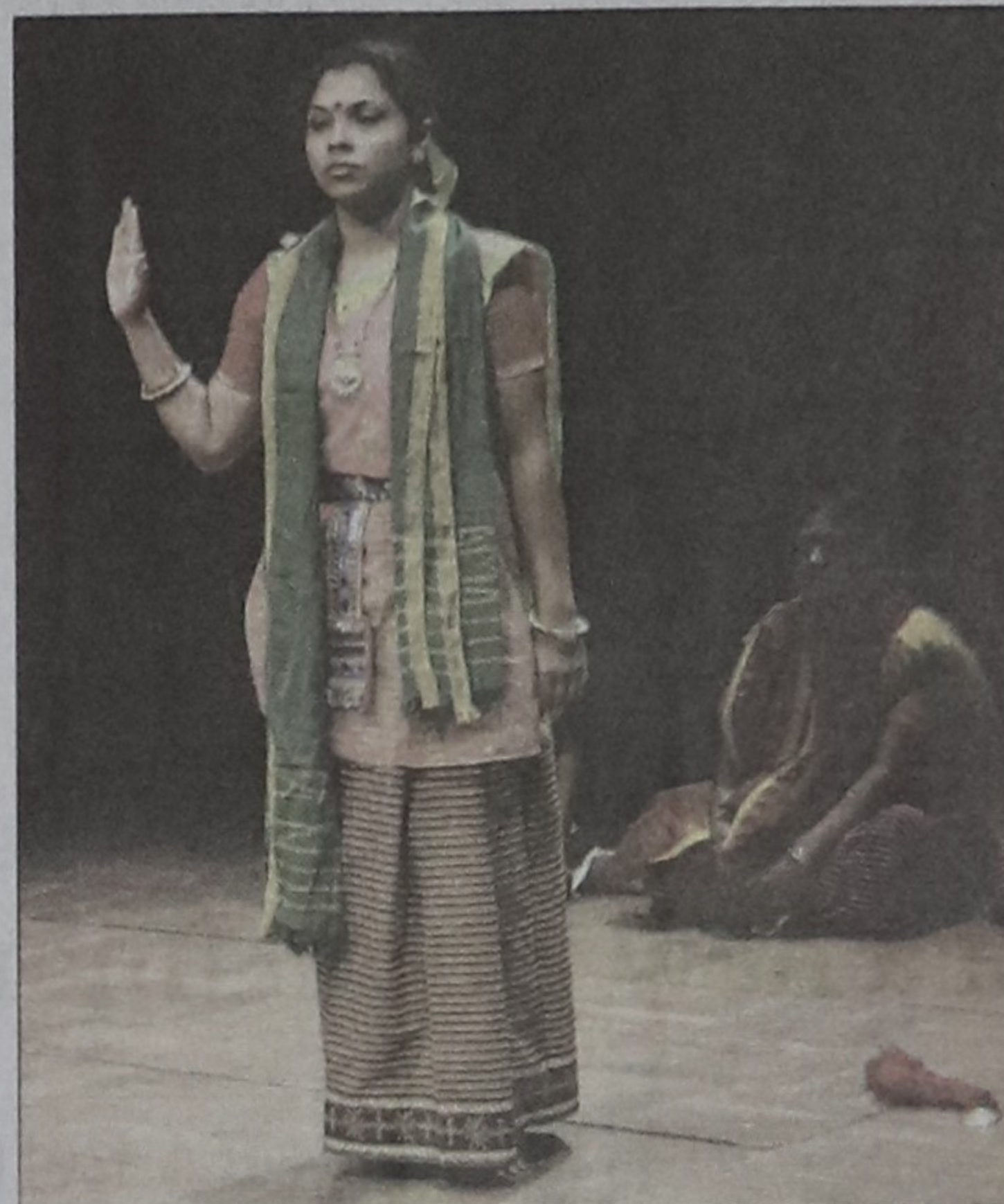
Chandidas wrote "Shree Krishna Kirtan" to highlight the anthropomorphic aspects of Lord Krishna. It was an arduous process as he had to pore over puran and religious books. In the play, Shameer worked on only seven episodes out of 13 from Chandidas' piece.

At the beginning of the play, we see the central figures of Krishna and Radha. Radha along with Barayi and her friends goes to Vrindavan, where Barayi loses her way and meets young Krishna. Barayi describes Radha's beauty to Krishna and asks him to direct her to her home. A besotted Krishna asks Barayi to play the mediator for

him so that he can get Radha to accept him as a suitor.

Barayi tells Radha about her encounter with Krishna in Vrindavan. However Radha turns down Krishna's proposal. At this, Krishna feels humiliated and vengeful. On the banks of Jamuna river, Krishna once again proposes to Radha but his efforts go in vain. A desperate Krishna finally seizes Radha through 'madan baan'.

Jyoti Sinha and Shukla Sinha were superb in the roles of Radha and Barayi. Aparna Sinha could have done better as Krishna. The costumes of the protagonists incorporated the traditional Manipuri attire. The dialogue of play was in Bishnupriya Manipuri



dialect. Shameer undertook the uphill task of translation.

A traditional "natpala" was staged after the "Shree Krishna Kirtan". Influenced by the Vaishnavism, Manipuri people depicted the tale of Radha-Krishna through the natpala. The performance was half an hour long. Accompanied by Manipuri traditional instruments like 'mridanga', 'dhol' and 'mandira', the play was quite enjoyable.

Earlier, an inauguration programme was held at the same venue. Veteran Manipuri

mridanga player Aja Kannu Sinha inaugurated the festival through a performance. Shubhashish Shameer gave the welcome speech. Chairman of Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation, M. Hamid was the chief guest. Noted theatre personality Mamunur Rashid, general secretary of Bangladesh Adibashi Forum, Sanjib Drono, president, Joom Aesthetic Council, Shishir Chakma, among others, spoke at the programme. Professor Ranajit Sinha, advisor, Manipuri Theatre, presided over the programme.



At a discussion between scholars, intellectuals and artistes at the Liberation War Museum, the participants paid homage to the talented and leading poet Mahbub-Ul Alam Chowdhury. Cultural organisation Kranti Shilpigoshti also organised recitation and musical performances to observe the 82nd birth anniversary of the poet. He died on December 23, 2007. The organisation honoured four personalities with the Poet Mahbub-Ul Alam Chowdhury Award. The recipients are Kabori Sarwar, Asaduzzaman Noor, Fahmida Khatun and Bhaswar Bandhopadhyay. A book was also launched, titled 'Tumi Robe Nirabe', at the programme. Professor Anisuzzaman, Professor Rafiqul Islam and Gholam Quddus, among others, spoke on his life and works. Professor Kabir Chowdhury presided over the discussion.

Drama Serial "Bhara Bari Bara Bari"
on ATN Bangla tonight

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

ATN Bangla will telecast the fifth episode of drama serial "Bhara Bari Bara Bari" tonight at 9:20 pm. Written by Nazrul Islam and directed by Humayun Faridee, the story revolves around a dispute over a flat. The landlord doesn't take bachelors as tenants since he has an unwed daughter. Mum Rahman, one of his long-term tenants, approaches the landlord with the request to lease a flat for his bachelor cousin. The landlord turns down his request. Eventually the landlord rents out the flat to Jafri and his family-- but there is a bachelor brother. When a vengeful Rahman finds out he takes this very personally and begins to hatch plots against Jafri and his brother. As the serial progresses, many hilarious events start to unfold.

The cast includes Humayun Faridee, Jitu Ahsan, Shubarna Mustafa, Zahid Hassan and Tania.



A scene from the play.

Popular Indian artiste Madhusudan Baul (M), Ashoke Baul and Jayanti Das (L) enthralled a huge audience singing about two-dozen Baul songs in Rajshahi on the weekend. Assistant High Commissioner of India in Rajshahi and Indian Council for Cultural Relations organised the Baul song night at Rajshahi District Council auditorium.



PHOTO: STAR

Groucho Marx

Humour and laughs

"Outside of a dog, a book is a man's best friend, inside of a dog it's too dark to read." -- Groucho Marx

This is one of the unforgettable witticisms of Julius "Groucho" Marx, an American comedian and film star. Well known for his 15 feature films with his siblings, the Marx Brothers, he had a successful solo career as the host of the radio and television game show You Bet Your Life. His popular image included a heavy greasypaint moustache and eyebrows and glasses.

Among his solo films were Yours for the Asking (1936), Mr Music (1950), Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter (1957), The Mikado (1960) and Skidoo (1968).

Groucho was born on October 2, 1890. The Marx family grew up in the Yorkville neighbourhood of the Upper East Side of New York City. His parents were Minnie Schoenberg Marx and Sam Marx (better known as "Frenchie"). Minnie did not have an entertainment industry career, but she nursed the ambition that her sons go on the stage like their uncle Al Schoenberg (Al Shean, who was part of a vaudeville act along with Gallagher). By 1909 she had managed to assemble her sons into a low-quality vaudeville singing group. Called "The Four Nightingales", Groucho, Milton (Gummo Marx), Adolph (Harpo Marx, later changed to Arthur) and another boy singer, Lou Levy travelled the US vaudevilles



circuit to little encouragement. Having exhausted their prospects in the East, the family moved to La Grange, Illinois to play the Midwest.

After a particularly dispiriting perfor-

mance in Nacogdoches, Texas, the three brothers tried to lift their spirits by cracking jokes on the stage. To their surprise, the audience liked them better as comedians than singers. They then modified the popular Gus Edwards comedy skit School Days and renamed it Fun In Hi Skul. For the next seven years, the Marx Brothers would perform variations on this routine.

The brothers then took on Broadway to a repeat success as audiences laughed along. By the time the Marxes were their first movie, they were superb stars.

Groucho made a total of 26 movies, of them 15 with his brothers Chico (Leonard) and Harpo. It was then that he took on the routine of a wise-cracking hustler with an exaggerated greasypaint moustache and eyebrows. As the Marx Brothers, his brothers and he starred in a series of very popular stage shows and movies.

The team made some of their vaudeville hits into films, including The Cocoanuts and Animal Crackers. Other successes were Horse Feathers, Duck Soup and A Night at the Opera.

Groucho also did stints as radio and show host: most notably the series Flywheel, Shyster and Flywheel, co starring Chico. In 1947 the former was chosen to host a radio quiz programme titled You Bet Your Life, broadcast by ABC and then later CBS, before

moving on to NBC television in 1950.

Marx's gift of repartee was evident through his career. One such quip from Groucho concerned his response to Sam Wood, the director of the classic film "A Night at the Opera" who was furious with the brothers' ad libs and antics on the set and yelled that he "cannot make actors out of clay." Pat came the response from Groucho: "Nor can you make a director out of Wood."

Groucho was married three times, all of which ended in divorce. Despite his lack of formal education, he wrote many books, such as his autobiography Groucho and Me (1959), and Memoirs of a Mangy Lover (1963). In his later years, Groucho's works became popular once again and were accompanied by new books of interviews and other transcribed conversations by Richard J Anobile and Charlotte Chandler. He also accepted an honorary Academy Award in 1974, his final major public appearance, at which he took a bow for all the Marx Brothers.

Groucho was hospitalised for pneumonia on June 22, 1977 and died on August 19, 1977 at Cedar Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles. His legacy lives on as exemplified by the still popular Groucho glasses, fake noses and moustaches.

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent.

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA,
New Delhi

Remember the cute boy child actor in the highly-adorable 1983 Hindi feature film Masoom starring Naseeruddin Shah and Shabana Azmi? Well, Jugal Hansraj has come a long way since then and is today set to make his directorial debut with an animation film "Roadside Romeo" that also marks leading Hollywood studio Walt Disney Pictures entry in the Indian movie market.

Depicting the story of pampered pet dog Romeo who is abandoned on the streets of Mumbai, the film, a joint venture between Walt Disney and Indian producer Yashraj Films, features the voice of popular Bollywood actors Saif Ali Khan, Javed Jaffri and Kareena Kapoor.

It seems there is a child in Hansraj who has never grown up. The debutant director said he has always loved animation films since his childhood and getting to work with Disney was a very good experience. He particularly points to Disney's earlier super hit animation film "The Jungle Book", based



Jugal Hansraj

on Rudyard Kipling's book.

"Roadside Romeo", which had been in the making for two years, has usual Bollywood song-and-dance sequences as the stray dog roams on the streets and interacts with other stray canine population.

Disney, already known for its animation films like "Finding Nemo" and "The Incredibles" is eyeing the nascent and yet potentially large market for animation films, providing decent family entertainment.

"Roadside Romeo" marks the first appearance of Disney into the movie market after the company had secured a foothold in cable TV mainly through channels for children.

Disney officials are confident that animation films will work in India as well as live action movies.

However, the Hollywood studio is also working on four live action films including those starring Kamal Hassan and Darshel Safari, the star of box-office hit "Taare Zameen Par", the directorial debut of Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan.