

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Japan Cultural Festival '09

Organiser: Embassy of Japan and BSA

Venue: National Theatre Hall, BSA

Date: March 4-7

Time: 10am-1.30pm, 2.30pm-7pm

Solo Painting Exhibition

Artist: Liudmila Gurar

Organiser: Russian Centre of Science and Culture

Venue: Exhibition Hall, RCSC, H 510, Rd 7, Dhanmondi

Inauguration: March 5 at 5pm

Photography Exhibition

By Julien Pannetier and Bruno Valentin

Title: Dhaka, a City and its People

Venue: AFD, 26, Mirpur Rd, Dhanmondi

Date: February 19-March 5

Time: 9am-12pm, 5-8pm (Saturdays 5-8pm)

Award

Title: Shilu Abed Master

Craftsperson Award '09

Organiser: National Crafts Council of Bangladesh

Venue: BRAC Inn Centre Auditorium, 75, Mohakhali

Date: March 5

Time: 6pm

Dhaka

A city and its people

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Over the years Richi Solaiman has become a familiar face on TV and has won many accolades for her moving performances in several serials. Another identity of Richi that might be unfamiliar to the audience is that she is a trained Kathak dancer.

Richi shared her likes and dislikes during an informal conversation with The Daily Star.

What is the best compliment you have received so far?

Someone came up to my mother and asked her whether she was Richi Solaiman's mother. When my mother said "yes," the gentleman commented, "There is a lot of verve in Richi's performance and I really respect her as an artiste."

What embarrasses you the most?

When I send an SMS to the wrong person. For example, when you send a joke meant for a friend and by some fluke it goes to a senior person, it's quite embarrassing. This has happened a few times with me.

Do you have any unusual streak in you?

I don't mean to do this but my near and dear ones have told me time and again to drop this habit of jumping on the bed when I am angry.

Which fictional character from a novel/book would you like to play?

I would love to play the lead character in Shomoreshe Majumdar's "Cinemawala".

The worst comment you have heard so far...

A woman came up to me once and said, "Girls in the media are rarely good," knowing very well that I am a part of it.

Do you have any obsessive habit?

I am absolutely crazy, obsessed and fanatic about shopping. If I'm depressed for some reason or other I will go and shop, if I'm in a happy mood I will celebrate by splurging. I always look for an excuse to shop.

Any word you keep repeating?

Definitely I have it. Though others would be able to say it better but I guess definitely it will be 'definitely'.

Name three things people don't know about you.

I can keep secrets locked deep down inside, I buy very nice gifts. Not sure about the third one.

Many lovers say they would die for their other half or do all kinds of crazy things; what would you do?

I see no point in dying though I would try and do things that make him happy. I am a level-headed person.

The lighter side of Richi Solaiman

Pratibha Anneshan

BSA's talent hunt comes to an end

JAMIL MAHMUD

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) initiated a talent hunt programme titled "Pratibha Anneshan 2008-'09" across the country a few months back. The finale and prize giving ceremony of the programme was held at the National Theatre Hall, BSA on March 2.

Winners received prizes in seven categories -- Rabindra Sangeet, Nazrul Sangeet, Adhunik songs, recitation, dance, folk dance and folk songs. Cabinet Secretary M. Abdul Aziz *ndc*, chief guest at the event, handed over prizes among the winners. A cultural programme featuring performances by the winners was later held at the venue.

BSA initiated the programme to encourage budding talents across the country. Contestants, aged between 14 and 30, took part in the competition.

Initially, contestants took part at the district level; winners went on to participate at the division level. Winners of the division level moved up to the national level competition.

Mannan Hawladar, director, Training Department of BSA gave the welcome speech. Abedur Rahman Sikder, head of Corporate Affairs, BRAC Bank Ltd. was the special guest. Bhuiyan Shafiqul Islam, director general, BSA presided over the programme.

Dwip Narayan, Haimanti Dutta Hema and Ershadul Haque received the first, second and third prizes respectively in the dance category. Bipasha Mallick, Dwip Narayan and Lata Roy gained the first, second and third

A cultural programme at the BSA talent hunt finale featured music, dance and recitation performed by the winners.

PHOTO: MUMIT M

prizes in folk dance.

Shubho Rakkhit bagged the first prize in recitation, while Afsana Islam and Zinat Rokhsana jointly earned the second prize. Kaisar Rizvi became third in the category.

Fatema-Tuz-Zohra, Tanzir Ahmed and Mohammad Sujon Rahman were awarded the first, second and third prizes in Nazrul Sangeet, while Sanchita Das Trisha and Yu Hi Sing, Marma received the first and second

prizes in Rabindra Sangeet. Mehbuba Kamal and Farzana Farha Barsha jointly secured the third position.

In the Adhunik songs category, Sujon Rahman, Fatema-Tuz-Zohra and Sanchita Das Trisha received the first, second and third prizes respectively. In the folk song category, Madan Mohon Roy, Aranika Dutta and Debashish Chakrabarti secured the top positions.

After the prize giving ceremony, a cultural programme by the winners was held at the venue, which featured recitation, group dance and song as well as solo performances. Zinat Rokhsana recited poet Subho Das Gupta's "Aami Shei Meye." Shubho Rakkhit recited a poem of Nirmalendu Goon. Group rendition of "Aguner parashmoni" and a group dance were also part of the performance.

Opera greats

Opera is a popular genre of music, particularly for the older generation. Here we profile some of the opera greats who have left a mark in their chosen sphere:

Luciano Pavarotti

Known for the magical clarity of his voice and the ability to hit high Cs effortlessly, the late Pavarotti made his entry into the world of opera when he won a competition in 1961. Later he went on to perform across Europe before crossing the Atlantic in 1965 for a production of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor in Miami which co-starred famed soprano Joan Sutherland in the eponymous role.

Other successes later, Pavarotti took a global audience by storm when he performed the aria Nessun Dorma from Puccini's Turandot, which was chosen as the theme music for football's 1990 World Cup finals, held in his native Italy. He sung Nessun Dorma once again at the opening of the Olympics in Turin in February 2006.

In recent years he performed along with two other leading singers: Jose Carreras and Placido Domingo, known as the 'Three Tenors' and the annual Pavarotti and Friends concerts in Modena.

Maria Callas

Another captivating opera singer was Maria Callas, an American-born Greek soprano. This charismatic singer combined an impressive bel canto (often used nostalgically in its application to a lost singing tradition) with great dramatic skills. Callas' repertoire ranged from classical opera seria to the bel canto

Luciano Pavarotti

Maria Callas

Placido Domingo

Jose Carreras

operas of Donizetti, Bellini and Rossini and further on to the works of Verdi and Puccini. Early in her career she was known for the music dramas of Wagner. Her immense talent garnered her the sobriquet of La Divina.

Another compliment came from Leonard Bernstein, American composer and conductor, who called her "The Bible of opera".

Along the way, Callas had to endure much mudslinging from the media, which publicised her temperamental behaviour, her supposed rivalry with Italian soprano Renata Tebaldi and her love affair with Greek tycoon Aristotle Onassis. However Callas had the last word: In 2006 Opera News wrote, "Nearly 30 years after her death, she's still the definition of the diva as artist and till one of classical music's best-selling vocalists."

Placido Domingo

Since the age of 16, Domingo has been an artiste on the go. His operatic debut was at Monterrey as Alfredo in La Traviata. Later he spent two and a half years with the Israel National Opera in Tel Aviv, singing in 280 performances of 12 different roles. His other successes were the title role in the US premiere of Ginastera's Don Rodrigo at the New York City Opera. His Metropolitan Opera debut came in 1968 as Maurizio in Adriana Lecouvreur. He has subsequently taken centre stage there in more than 600 performances of 42 different roles.

And Domingo continues to enthral audiences as he regularly appears at all the big opera houses of the world, including the Vienna State Opera, London's Covent Garden, Paris' Bastille Opera, the Washington National Opera.

His singing career has also taken him to opera houses in Milan, San Francisco, Chicago, Los Angeles, Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Madrid as well as the Bayreuth and Salzburg Festivals.

Jose Carreras

The Spanish Catalan tenor is one of the most prominent opera singers of his generation. Eminent in the operas of Verdi and Puccini, he has played over 60 roles on the stage as well as the recording studio. He gained fame as one of The Three Tenors in a series of concerts that began in 1990 and continued until 2003.

A lesser known facet of Carreras is his humanitarian work as the president of the Jose Carreras International Leukemia Foundation, which he founded after his own recovery from the disease in 1988.

Drama serial "Ak-e Shunyo Dosh" on Ekushey TV

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Drama serial "Ak-e Shunyo Dosh" will be aired tonight on Ekushey TV at 8:30pm. Written by Ishak Khan and directed by Kaisar Ahmed, the serial is centred on an eccentric village youth named Lebu.

One day, Lebu's unemployed nephew Rahim visits his uncle. Lebu is furious with Rahim because he cannot get a job even after his graduation. In disgust, Lebu chases his nephew out. However, the slippery Rahim takes shelter in the village. The serial moves forward with amusing happenings between the uncle-nephew duo.

Anisur Rahman Milon and Tauquir Ahmed in a scene from the serial.

Actor-director Tauquir Ahmed plays Lebu in the serial. The cast also includes Amirul Islam Chowdhury, Dolly Zahur, Anisur Rahman

Milon, Shams Sumon, Ishita, Richi Solaiman, Farzana Chhobi and others. The serial is aired every Monday and Tuesday.

PHOTO: MUMIT M
Ustad Mohammad Shamsul Haque (centre) played shehnai at a programme held at the Studio Theatre of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on February 2. Cultural organisation Nibedan arranged the programme. Ustad Shamsul Haque, who once took lessons from shehnai maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan, played several raagas at the programme. Hasan Ali (right) and Debabrata Chowdhury accompanied him on flute and tabla respectively. Among others, renowned lyricist Mohammad Rafiquzzaman was present at the programme.