

A look into the history of Bangladeshi dance

Photo exhibition at Shilpkala



Bulbul Chowdhury (right) and Laxmi Roy.



Gawhar Jamil (right) with Alpana Mumtaz.



A national delegation of Bangladeshi dancers with Indira Gandhi (1st row - 2nd from left), the then Prime minister of India.

1947 Gawhar Jamil and his friend Rabi Shankar ('tabla' player) founded the first formal institution for dance -- called 'Shilpkala Bhaban.' The school started with three students -- Rawshan Jamil (who later went on to become an accomplished actress), Tapoti and Gawhar's sister Shipra Roy," says Mehedi. Rare black and white photos of the late Jamils (Gawhar and

Rawshan) trace that history.

In total there are 49 photographs at the exhibition; 30 of them feature legends and stars of the medium including the late Bulbul Chowdhury. A pioneering dancer born in this part of Bengal, Chowdhury mastered the art form with unbridled passion and determination, leaving behind a legacy. BAFA (Bulbul Academy of Fine

Arts) is named after the legendary dancer. Also featured are the maestro Uday Shankar, who popularised Indian classical dance in the west, and his disciple Amala, performing the "Shiva-Parvati" dance. Despite a 19 year age difference, Amala decided that she would get married to her 'guru' and eventually she did.

There's also a photograph featuring a scene from "Nakshi Ka(n)thar Math." First staged in 1961, "Nakshi Ka(n)thar Math" remains the dance-drama performed the most here.

Photos of season dancers and dance gurus from outside the capital have also been included. Mehedi pointed to photographs of the late Jogesh Chandra Das (from Mymensingh) and the late Rasheduddin Talukdar (from Khulna).

Other images highlight indigenous traditions, like Ora(n)o dancers performing at their 'Karam Utshab' and spirited Garo artistes at a 'Wanggala' celebration.

Handwritten notes and letters by renowned dancers are on display, and so are publications on dance, including "Prachya Nrityer Roop o Bikash," compiled and edited by Mehedi.

4th National Dance Festival observed in Chittagong

DWAIPAYAN BARUA, Chittagong

After a long lull, dance lovers of Chittagong were treated to a superb recital on April 27. The Chittagong chapter of Bangladesh Nritya Shilpi Sangstha (BNS) organised the programme at the Theatre Institute of Chittagong (TIC) as part of the weeklong countrywide 4th National Dance Festival as well as to mark International Dance Day 2009.

Eleven dance groups from Chittagong, Khulna and Dhaka performed at the festival, which was held in association with the Alliance Française, Chittagong.

The show began with traditional drum-beats as a group of dancers took the stage. Dance teachers from local schools -- Shubhra Sen Gupta, Prama Abonti, Gargi Majumder, Jahanara Faruque Moli and Swapan Barua -- performed a group dance that combined classical and folk forms.

Director general of Bangladesh Shilpkala Academy (BSA) and renowned cultural personality Kamal Lohani was the chief guest at the inaugural with President of BNS Chittagong, Sharmin Hossain, in the chair. Assistant Indian High Commissioner Subrata Bhattacharjee and director of Alliance Française, Chittagong, Samuel Berthe were special guests.

Calling for greater patronage of dance, BNS central general secretary, Saju Ahmed said that many promising dancers, who have completed their higher studies in classical dance abroad, cannot pursue dance as a profession for lack of support.

Kamal Lohani said that culture has not been given its due in our country as politicians failed to realise its potential for social development. Terming both politics and culture as inter-dependent phenomena,

Lohani pointed out that the struggle for independence began with the Bengalis of the then East Pakistan expressing their unique cultural identity. He assured all that the 64 Shilpkala Academies throughout the country would be run by committees formed by cultural activists within one year.

Subrata Bhattacharjee termed dance as a 'primordial medium of expression' and hoped that with more practice of the art form, the barriers formed on religious, political and linguistic lines would be removed.

The participating groups performed 14 compositions, presenting different classical forms such as Kathak, Odissi, Bharatnatyam as well as creative pieces accompanied with folk, Tagore and Nazrul songs.

Several Chittagong-based institutions -- the School of Oriental Dance, Odissi and Tagore Dance Movement Centre, Fame School of Dance Drama and Music, Gurukul Nrityakala Academy and Nataraj Nrityangan Academy -- presented various dance items. Shubhra Sen Gupta, Prama Abonti, Tilottama Sen Gupta, Gargi Majumder and Sanchita Dutta directed the dances respectively.

Other participating troupes at the event were Sanchari Nrityakala Academy, Prapan Academy and Surangama Nrityangan all from Chittagong, along with Kathak Nritya Sampradaaya and Mridanga from Dhaka and Abbas Uddin Academy of Khulna.

Five artistes of Odissi and Tagore Dance Movement Centre captivated the audience with a fusion of classical dance forms Bharatnatyam, Odissi, Kathak and Manipuri, as well as folk. Prama Abonti directed the dance.

The School of Oriental Dance performed 'tillana' of Bharatnatyam while Nataraj Nrityangan Academy staged 'tarana' of Kathak.



PHOTO: ZOBAER HOSSAIN SIKDER

Dancers of Abbas Uddin Academy, Khulna perform at the festival.

All programmes are in local time. The Daily Star will not be responsible for any change in the programme.

On Air

BTV

08:45 Selected Programme

09:05 Talk Show

09:30 Musical Programme: Shaswata Sur

10:05 Open University

10:30 Laukik Bangla

11:20 Desher Gaan

11:30 Drama Serial: Shomoy

Ashomoy

12:10 Ei Amar Bangladesh

12:30 Maa O Shishur Katha

01:00 Mati Basha

Hijol Tomai

02:15 Debate

03:05 Cartoon

03:30 Shukhi Poribaar

04:05 Arjaan

04:30 Dolon Chapa

05:05 Sisimpur

05:30 Computer

06:10 Nobo Anondey Jago

06:50 Maati O Manush

07:15 Band Show

07:45 Documentary Programme: Phirey Dekha

08:35 Drama Serial: Oronyey Adhar

09:05 Drama Serial: Shubarno Rekha

09:30 Dance Programme: Tarana

10:25 Special Programme on International Dance Day

10:50 Katha O Shur

ATN BANGLA

08:15 Ajker Shanbadpotro

08:30 Drama Serial: Bakhsho

09:15 Asian City Top Spin 2020

10:30 Hello Bangladesh

11:05 Drama: Mirza Shaheb-er Dui

Jibon

12:15 IT Zone

01:25 Band View

03:45 Children's Programme

04:20 Islamic Programme

05:10 Islamic Programme

05:35 Talk Show: Proshongo

06:15 Take Care

08:00 Drama Serial: Easy Marriage

CHANNEL 1

08:05 Tagore Song

08:30 Shokaal-er Gaan

09:30 Shangbadpotrey Bangladesh

09:45 Public Reaction

09:50 Grameenphone Triomatra

11:05 Sports Time

12:30 Citycell Taroka Kathan

01:05 Ebong Cinemaar Gaan

01:30 Musical Programme:

Sa Re Ga Ma

03:05 Channel 1 Abiti Chhondoy

Anondey

12:10 Talk Show: Ei Shomoy

04:30 Apnaader Shushathyo

05:30 Mukti Juddho Protidin

02:30 Drama Serial: Gkey Shunya

03:15 Ta Na Na Na

04:00 Drama Serial: Tomtom

04:30 Desh Jurey Shanglaap

05:30 Sports Plus

06:30 Campus-ey Campus-ey

07:45 Drama Serial: Ishkool

09:30 Drama Serial: Tomtom

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