

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Sensation Within
Artist: KMA Quayyum
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi
Date: July 24-August 4
Time: 12-8pm



Photography Exhibition
Title: Survivors
Artist: GMB Akash
Organiser: Alliance Francaise of Dhaka
Venue: Alliance Francaise of Dhaka, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi
Date: August 14-27



Photography Exhibition
To mark the 84th birth anniversary of Tajuddin Ahmed
Organiser: Liberation War Museum (LWM)
Venue: LWM, 5, Shegunbagicha
Date: July 23-29



Solo Art Exhibition
Artist: Poet Nirmalendu Goon
Venue: Central Public Library, Shahbagh
Date: July 25-30
Time: 10-8pm



Bongo Sammelon: Essence of Bangladesh across the sea



Shamim Ara Nipa



Shibli Mohammad

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Nrityanchal, the Bangladeshi dance troupe headed by Shibli Mohammad and Shamim Ara Nipa, recently travelled to San Francisco to attend the 'Bongo Sammelon', a grand cultural festival, at the invitation of expatriate Bengalis. The 12-member troupe (including Shibli and Nipa) staged a 45-minute performance at the festival. The two-day festival concluded on July 4 at San Jose.

Shibli said, "I've wanted to attend this festival for a long time as it gives Nrityanchal an opportunity to take our dance to the expatriate community. We danced on the concluding day of the festival, in between the performances of noted artistes from West Bengal -- Shrikanta Acharya, Lopamudra Mitra and Shaan. Other highlights included a performance by renowned classical dancer Tanushree Shankar. We were quite nervous at the beginning. But as we started, we were heartened by the

response.

"Our performance had four parts, the longest being a folk-based composition. During the 45-minute performance, we received resounding applause from the audience."

Nipa said, "The audience enjoyed the innovative elements of our recital. The audiences were largely Indian, and to them Indian dance and classical dance are synonymous. However, our performance brought a breath of fresh air from our land: The magic of changing seasons, the shimmering sun, the heavy rain, and the unadorned folk tunes, all of which touched the hearts of the audience. Somehow, our performance made the audience nostalgic about their native land."

"We consider ourselves fortunate to be able to represent our country at the festival. As for Nrityanchal, it was a challenge and we got a tremendous feedback."

The Bangladeshi troupe also included eminent singers Runa Laila, Rezwana

Chowdhury Bannya and Khairul Anam Shakil.

Singer Runa Laila performed at the festival on July 3. About the festival, the diva said, "This is a laudable initiative which brings together artistes from both Bangladesh and West Bengal on the same stage. The festival gives expatriates from West Bengal and Bangladesh to share and exchange ideas."

Artist Khairul Anam Shakil said, "The festival was held on July 2, 3 and 4. My performance opened the programme on July 3. I rendered Nazrul Sangeet, Rezwan Chowdhury Bannya sang Rabindra Sangeet and Rathindranath Roy performed Bangladeshi folk songs. Performances by Bangladeshi artistes were highly appreciated. Around 7,000 expatriate Bengalis -- from US, Canada and even UK -- registered for the festival. There was a fair at the venue offering everything Bengali -- food, handicrafts and what not. This was truly a joyous occasion."

Nirmalendu Goon turns painter

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Poet Nirmalendu Goon's solo painting exhibition opened on July 25 at the Seminar Hall, Central Public Library, Shahbagh in the city. The exhibition was inaugurated by National Professor Kabir Chowdhury. Seasoned painter Monirul Islam was special guest. Noted art critic Moinuddin Khaled was present as a discussant. Renowned photographer Nasir Ali Mamun was the MC.

Nirmalendu Goon is considered one of the most eminent contemporary Bangladeshi poets. The exhibition presents him in a new light -- a new horizon where colours, canvas and brush come together to create expressions. Goon began painting recently and wants to be a true artist. As an amateur painter, colours are the most dominant aspect of his works. His colours are expressive and his images bear a contemplative and poetic mood.

Goon has worked on a range of themes -- some are contemporary, some induce



As an amateur painter, colours are the most dominant aspect of Goon's works.

nostalgia, while some are close to his heart. Sidr and the Pilkhana Tragedy also feature in his works symbolically. His works are closely linked to his inner views, personal agony, experiences, admiration, notions and beliefs. Goon's paintings are mainly figurative and objective.

However, objects and lines at times seem indistinct. Like any budding artist, he should acquaint himself more with lines, forms, textures and compositions. Goon's expressions are not quite clear and he has a tentative approach to art. Moreover, without captions, it

is tough to identify the themes. He has tried to express himself through stiff compositions and vivid colours. His works on canvas disclose the celebration of triumph, enjoyment and experiences.

The exhibition continues till July 30.

Niaz Mohammad critically ill



CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Renowned artiste Niaz Mohammad Chowdhury is in critical condition now, as both his kidneys are failing. Chowdhury was hospitalised on July 9 and placed under the care of Dr. Amanur Rasul Babla, of Dhaka Medical College.

"Allah is almighty, he is our protector; but I can never forget my doctor's sincere efforts," a frail Chowdhury said as he sought *dua* from everyone.

Even with a catheter attached, Chowdhury was seen strumming a tanpura, surrounded by students. Physical illness has not seemingly dampened his artistic soul.

Chowdhury's doctors have suggested a surgery within a week.

Director Tim Burton gets upstaged by Johnny Depp

Last Thursday at Comic-Con, legendary filmmaker Tim Burton took to the stage in front of 6,000 screaming fans to unveil dazzling new 3-D footage from his upcoming "Alice in Wonderland" re-imagining. As he told the crowd, it was his first time at the 40th annual event since he was in art school, when the tiny geek-meeting was a slide show held in a San Diego basement.

As it turned out, another Comic-Con newbie stole his thunder, but since that newbie was longtime collaborator Johnny Depp, Burton didn't mind.

"Oh, yeah," laughed the dark genius behind "Edward Scissorhands," "Sweeney Todd," "Batman" and other classics. "He really saved me there."

Burton was kidding, of course. The director's trippy, technicoloured take on "Alice" was so well received that Burton was afforded Comic-Con's greatest honour: The fans demanded to watch it again. But once the world's biggest star walked on stage and waved to the crowd, the fans knew they had

received the ultimate three-dimensional treat.

"I was struggling away, and he walks out," Burton said sarcastically of Depp, with whom he has collaborated seven times. "It was good; that was good. I much appreciate it."

Somehow, despite 25 years atop Hollywood since his "Nightmare on Elm Street" debut, Johnny Depp had somehow avoided the world's biggest pop-culture fan gathering until now.

"I think he came and went... I don't know," Burton said, before teasing the fans with another theory: Johnny may still be here in San Diego, walking amongst us in the year's most popular costume. "He probably could have dressed up as Captain Jack Sparrow and nobody would have noticed. He's just one of many, you know?"

"He could be," the director laughed. "There are people commenting, going, 'Look at him. He's a lousy Captain Jack, that guy.'"

Source: Internet



Johnny Depp and Tim Burton.

Not much unsettles Nicolas Cage these days

Academy Award winner Nicolas Cage has pretty much got this acting thing down. After all, he started acting at the age of 15 and, well, he's got that Oscar.

So he doesn't really need to deliver another gut-wrenching performance to demonstrate his chops. In fact, he can deviate from a traditional film and venture into animated territory.

He's voiced animated characters in the past, but in Disney's new 3-D tale "G-Force," Cage lends his voice to a mole.

Speckles the star-nosed mole comes to life thanks to the film's impressive digital animation and Cage's voice. At first it's unclear that Cage is the voice behind Speckles, because he changes his sound for the character.

Cage recently talked about playing a mole, animated films and inspiration:

What do you play in this film?

Nicolas Cage: I'm playing Speckles, the mole, and he's an outsider. He's an iconoclast -- he doesn't fit in. He doesn't get into the fray with the "G-Force," the other guinea pigs. But his IQ is off the charts, and he's a technological wizard.

So, you're an Academy Award-winning actor, and you decided to play (this role). How did this come about?

Cage: To me, nothing's more sacred than the magical world of children, and with everything that's going on in the world, it gets increasingly more challenging to keep our kids smiling -- people are losing their jobs, families are tense.

So anything I can do to give families something to look forward to and to put a smile back on children's faces -- I'm going to do.

Disney has a great tradition of enchanting children and giving them something to behold. I mean, you mention Academy Awards -- I mean, that's not as important as children and making them happy.



Nicolas Cage says that Academy Awards are "not as important as children and making them happy."

So you're clearly comfortable playing a mole?

Cage: I'm comfortable with the mole, yeah. I mean, yeah, he's different, he's got issues, you know? I don't want a perfect character, I want a character who has, as strange as it sounds, some humanity, some flaws, some needs. But to be fair, I'm not in a lot of this movie. This is Darwin's movie, Sam Rockwell and Penelope Cruz's movie -- they're the stars. I'm only in it at the beginning and the end. You seem to be a big fan of animated films.

Cage: I do enjoy animated movies. I really love anime and movies like "Spirited Away"

and "Howl's Moving Castle." I like movies where you feel like you're going into another world, and no matter how many times you watch it, you're going to see something new in that world. That level of detail really inspires me.

How do you think you've changed as an actor throughout your career?

Cage: I think I've become more relaxed. I don't feel the need to jump up and down and make a big noise to get people to pay attention to me. I don't need to um, you know, do punk rock gestures or eat a cockroach or do something weird to say I exist.

I feel like I'm hearing a different kind of sound now. It's a much more subtle sound, but it's still a truthful sound, that I can express myself in, in roles that are much more relaxed and seasoned as opposed to boisterous and rock and roll.

What's inspiring to you?

Cage: Well, I find children inspiring. The way they look at the world. The magical world they live in, to me, is inspiring. I like -- I mean, I'm afraid I'm going to sound like a complete nature addict here, but, I like nature. I enjoy going for walks, I like the ocean, I like the forest.