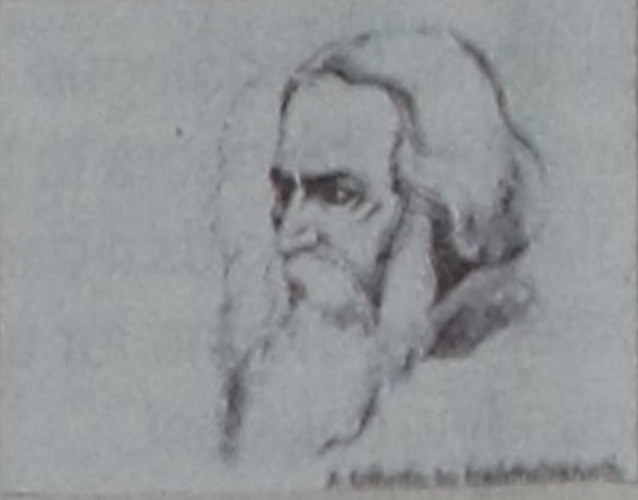


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

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



CD Launch
Title: Tomar Khola
Hawa
Artist: Samina Chowdhury
Venue: Bengal Foundation, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi
Date: July 31
Time: 7:30pm



Dance Recital
Title: Nitro Dharar
Taley Taley (directed by Arpita Shome)
Organiser: Shadhona
Venue: Chhayanaut, Dhanmondi
Date: July 31
Time: 7pm



Art Exhibition
Title: Shishu Chitro Prodorshoni 2009
Organiser: Zainul Abedin Art School
Venue: National Museum, Shahbag
Date: July 24-August 4
Time: 12-8pm



A re-imagining of a Tagore comedy

Opera premieres Shesh Rakkha



The premiere of "Shesh Rakkha" by Opera was held at BSA on July 29.

JAMIL MAHMUD

Mirpur-based theatre troupe Opera staged its latest production, "Shesh Rakkha," an adaptation of a Rabindranath Tagore comedy. The premiere was held at the Experimental Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on July 29. Directed by Ripon Haque and performed by a group of young actors, the play presents a different interpretation of the Tagore creation through contemporary style.

"Shesh Rakkha" is not a widely staged play. Prior to Opera, Theatre (Baily Road) staged the play.

Opera's production broke the familiar proscenium format. The style related more to indigenous performing arts of the country. The stage was at the centre and the audience sat around it. The interaction between the performers and audience was noticeable throughout the play.

Though it was not a full house due to the incessant rain, the audience seemed to enjoy the presentation.

The play highlights Tagore's progressive ideas. Beneath the conventional romantic plot, Tagore panned social prejudice. His protagonist is bold enough to choose a life-partner in a time when match-

making was the only preferred method of getting married.

Godai, the protagonist, usually hangs out with his friends Chandro and Binod. Elderly Shishcharan decides to fortify his friendship with Nibaran by having his son Godai marry Nibaran's daughter Indumati. Komol, an orphan, lives with Nibaran's family and both she and Indumati are quite close with Chandro's wife.

One day Binod hears Komol singing at Chandro's home. Without even seeing her, Binod decides to marry Komol and the marriage takes place eventually. Meanwhile Godai meets Indumati.

Though she is attracted to Godai, Indumati decides to have a little fun and hides her identity. Confusions emerge and affect the budding relationship between the two. Godai knows he is supposed to marry the daughter of his father's friend, but does not realise it is in fact Indumati. However, all confusions are resolved in the end.

The cast of the play included Shahnaz Parvin Shikha, Aranya Palash, Elin, Barkatullah Bappi, Nahid Parvin Smriti, Reza-e-Rabbi, Tahmina Tanzib Ahona, Iqbal Ahmed Jewel and Fatema Khilji Fardina. Some of the performers seemed spontaneous.

Arzad Shikdar Arju was the music director. The music featured several Tagore songs with guitar and some unconventional use of instruments. Sometimes the music director incorporated *kolshi* (earthen pitcher) claps.

Parveen Sultana did the choreography. The choreography featured improvised dance with Tagore songs. Prachyanat employed this style in its production "Raja Eboong Ohayanno." Abdul Hasnat Bhuiyan was the light designer of the play.

"Shesh Rakkha" is the fifth production by Opera. The second show of the play will be held this evening at the Studio Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Documentary on Shah Abdul Karim premiered

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

A documentary on the life and works of 'Baul Samrat' Shah Abdul Karim was premiered at Press Club in the city on July 29. Faruk Mehedy is the director of the documentary, titled "Shikor" (The Root). Finance Minister AMA Muhith formally inaugurated the event.

The 26-minute documentary focuses on the life, struggles and unforgettable melodies of Karim. For the most part, the documentary features an ailing, nonagenarian Karim. It also features some footage from the past, observations by Karim's disciples and eminent personalities.

"It has been a cherished dream to make a film on Shah Abdul Karim," said Mehedy at the programme.

Among others, media personality M. Hamid; Shah Nur Jalal, son of Shah Abdul Karim and Mamun Rashid, managing director and country officer, Citibank Bangladesh, spoke at the programme. Muhith also handed a cheque worth US \$1000 to Shah Nur Jalal on behalf of Citibank NA, organiser of the event.

Torn between traditions and identity

Afsana Mimi talks about Eka Othoba Koyekjon



Sanjida Preeti plays the protagonist in "Eka Othoba Koyekjon."

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

Munia, a charming, beautiful young woman falls in love with Tuhin. After two years, they get married. Like some romantic, fairy tale they live together in a lush tea garden. If it seems like one of those "...and they lived happily ever after..." plots, think again, as this is not the denouement. In fact, that's where the story begins.

"Eka Othoba Koyekjon" -- starring Sanjida Preeti as Munia, and Intekhab Dinar as Tuhin -- is an intriguing play that questions tradition or identity. Artiste Jon (Black) will be seen in the play as Shams. The cast also includes seasoned actor Pijush Bandopadhyay and Tahrima. The play has been directed by Afsana Mimi, produced by HSBC and edited by Fazle Rabbi Rajib.

About HSBC's involve-

ment, Afsana Mimi said, "HSBC had a clear idea of how to incorporate itself into the concept. There is innovativeness in the approach and the organisation has been a significant proponent of bringing quality into the drama."

She also said, "We worked hard on every little details, so that we could get the full output. This play couldn't have been what it is without the coordination and support of the HSBC team." Mustanizur R Khan, head of Marketing and Communications, HSBC said, "Our values make us who we are. This story is all about values. It is not about right or wrong but about the decisions that make a powerful impact on the protagonist's lives."

Munia trudges along the greeneries of the tea garden. She feels the gentle touch of dewdrops. She explores her surrounding. But when she is

at it, she is alone. She is questioning her identity. Who is she really? Does she feel fortunate or caged?

Tuhin is a typical husband who is nonchalant, and overlooks various details that surround him. He relies heavily on his wife for every single domestic responsibility, especially those as trifling as locating his glasses. When he whizzes off to work after a few routine sentences to his wife, Munia is again left in that monotony of the unabsorbed moments.

Whether she chooses a life as a dormant, submissive, traditional housewife with no longings to explore beyond the hills, or the life of a rebel who is confident of her identity and her place in this world is for the audience to decide (through SMS votes).

The first episode was aired on July 24. Second episode of the play will be aired tonight on Ekushey TV at 9:30 pm.

Still enamoured of Rafi's melodies

NAZMA YEASMEEN HAQUE

Where did the motif of songs lie when the universe was created? Was it encapsulated in an uncharted pathway throbbing in the subliminal, waiting to burst forth in its full vibrancy to fill the universe? Did it need a human voice to epitomize fabulous hums, vibrations, rhythms and tunes inherent in nature in their vast, meticulously put in pattern of equilibrium by the Creator? To bring about such an accord was there a necessity of an elixir containing equipoise in the supreme way? Mohammad Rafi's voice is that amazing essence bridging the potential life of songs resting in nature's womb and its manifestations in the conscious life of human beings. A whole gamut of emotions in their various shades and intensities are embodied with mystification in his wonderfully rich and resonant voice.

I remember it was in Malaysia in 1980 when as a student of the University of the Philippines, I was very busy writing my thesis. The days would fly under pressure of work. Late in the morning of 1 August, pretty worn out by hard work that was speedy too, I felt I needed a break to invigorate myself before embarking on a new chapter of my thesis. Desiring to listen to some good Hindi songs that I always relished, I tuned in to my radio. Ironically, instead of songs, I heard news in Oriya (language of Orissa) that broadcast a report on the death of Mohammad Rafi, my most favourite singer who had passed away on the night of Thursday, 31 July 1980. It was overwhelming and I felt a kind of blackout of my senses for how long that I don't remember. I could not just take it that he was no more. While I planned to refresh myself, it was just the opposite. Now that twenty-six long years have elapsed since Rafi's demise, my feelings remain the same only to be exacerbated on 1 August because in my feelings, he lived a day more.

HMV in their production of a disc record in memory of Mohammad Rafi paid its homage in these words: "A vacuum has suddenly been created. Music in Indian films will never sound the same again." Said the compere of the disc, "Two suns set on the same

day -- one for the day only, the other all of a sudden." A renowned and revered singer like Manna Dey described Rafi as the greatest male singer in India, adding humbly that he himself could not attain Rafi's qualities, whose uniqueness lay in dramatizing the characters that portrayed them. How correct is this when one hears his songs first and then watches the films only to discover a full reflection, rather a merging of the two. In a romantic and extremely sensuous voice when Mohammad Rafi sings:

Aaj ki raat ye kaesi raat; Baharon phul barsao; Chaudhvin ka chand ho; Ye mausam bara beiman



hai; Tere mere sapne; Pukarta chala hoon main; Ye mera prempatr; Ajare aa zara aa, who can resist imagining an indulgent lover?

Romantic and sung in a rather light mood tinged with a kind of wantonness are songs such as Aja aja pyar mera; Yun to humne lakh hasin dekhe hain tum sa nahin dekha; Mohabbat chume jinke haat; Dilke jharoke main; Chahe koi mujhe jungle kahe; Ye chand sa rawshan chehra; Sau saal pehle; Dil me chhupake pyar ka; Ae dil hae mushkil jina yahan; Sar jo tera chakrae; John Jani Janardan; Mere paaron me ghungroo bandhad, nain lahi gayi hain stand out. In the last two songs, he sounds real hill-billy.

One hears a wonderful lullaby in his voice when he sings *Main gaun tum so jao* as foster father to a group of children. Every bit of his song enriches the scene. An affectionate voice saturated with complex emotions is clearly pronounced when he sings *O nanne se farishte tujh se ye kaesa nata kaise ye dilke rishte*. Right at this moment one stumbles into recognising the same voice bantering with one's lover at the height of being amorous. In fact, Rafi excelled himself in singing songs live, interjecting sounds, words and tunes in a hilarious mood. While singing freely on stage, he exemplified his adroitness in classical music by adding his uniqueness to the famous song *O duniya kerakhwale*. Besides this one, other songs sung with deep reverence are *Man tarapta hari*; *Tere darpe aya hoon*; *Sukh ke sab sathi* and patriotic songs like *Apni azadi pe and Suno suno ae duniyawalo*. These songs testify to his talent in putting *shakti* and *bhakti* in a mystical union. While singing duets with famous male singers, Mohammad Rafi stands out as the brightest star in the constellation of artistes.

The amazingly rich and resonant voice of Mohammad Rafi touches the depths of one's heart when sad songs are rendered in pensive to sepulchral mood combined with the sheen of silk. The pathos is felt instantly as it pervades one's own inner world. Two very old sad songs still appeal to me as are others sung subsequently. Those two are *Meri kahani bhulnewale* and *Huey ham jin ke liye*. Among other songs of the same genre that are particularly picturesque are *Ye duniya ye mehfil*; *Aj puranee rahon se*; *Takra gaya tumse*; *Keya hua tera wada*; *Toote huey khabon ne*; *Ham tum se juda ho ke*; *Ap ke pehlo me*; *Jo baat tujhme hai*; *Teri zulfon se judai to nahin* and *Sau bar janam lenge*.

In the hearts of his legions of admirers Mohammad Rafi comes alive on July 31. As for myself, it is always on the following day, when an emotion transcends its normal threshold, that the remembrance becomes very much personal. And then I miss the heavenly voice more profoundly.

Dr. Nazma Yeasmeen Haque is an educationist and music enthusiast



"Nine" (scheduled to be released in November, 2009) is an American musical film directed by Rob Marshall. The screenplay, by the late Anthony Minghella and Michael Tolkin (although Minghella receives sole credit), is based on Arthur Kopit's book for the 1982 Tony Award-winning musical of the same name, which was derived from an Italian play by Mario Fratti inspired by Federico Fellini's autobiographical film "8½." Maury Yeston composed the music and wrote the lyrics for the songs.

The principal cast consists of Academy Award winners Daniel Day-Lewis, Nicole Kidman, Marion Cotillard, Penélope Cruz, Judi Dench, and Sophia Loren with Academy Award nominee Kate Hudson and Grammy Award nominee Fergie in supporting roles.

Plot: Having reached the age of forty, director Guido Contini (Daniel Day-Lewis) is facing a midlife crisis that is stifling his creativity and leading him into a variety of complicated romantic involvements. As he struggles to complete his latest film, he is forced to balance the numerous formative women in his life, including his wife Luisa (Marion Cotillard), his mistress Carla (Penélope Cruz), his muse and protégé Claudia (Nicole Kidman), his producer, confidant and costume designer Liliane (Judi Dench), an American fashion journalist (Kate Hudson), the prostitute from his youth (Stacy "Fergie" Ferguson) and his mother (Sophia Loren).

Compiled by Cultural Correspondent

HSBC

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