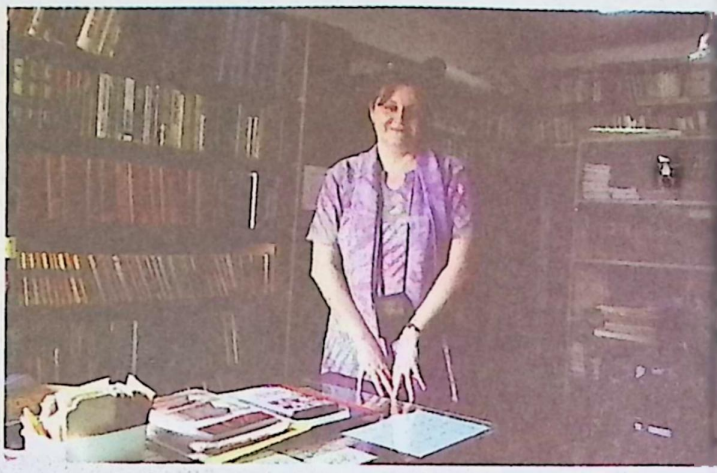


Sampling the Quintessence of Russian Culture

FAYZA HAQ

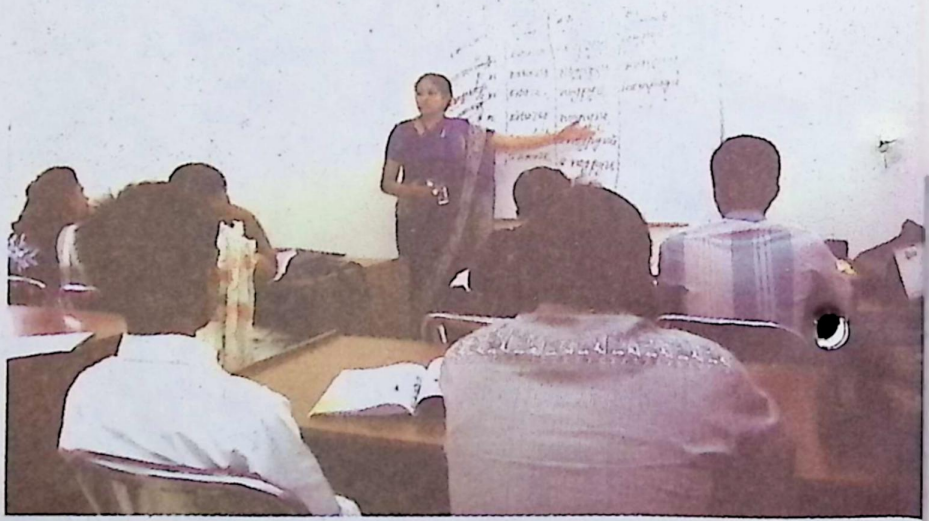
For many in Bangladesh names such as Joseph Stalin, the Romanovs and the diabolic Rasputin are familiar because of books on them. Modern Russian films have taught local art film makers a lesson or two. The Russian Centre for Science and Culture, situated along the Dhanmondi Lake has been a unique respite for many enthusiasts of Russian culture. It is here that thousands have enjoyed the unique singing of Olga Ikonnina and the passionate piano notes of Natalia Gubina. It's here too that one has sampled the vision of superb Russian painters, like Valdimir Polyakov, Konstantin Persitsky , Liudmila Yakoviena, and more recently, Liudmila Gurar.

Yuri Makarov, the Centre's energetic and well-read director, along with the jovial Zaved Zafor, with his joie de vivre -- have made sure that these aspects of Russian culture reach out to the eager intelligentsia. Proshanto Kumar Barman, the ever-vigilant Programme Officer, helps in the smooth flow of the cultural activities. This includes programmes that involve students, teachers and culture enthusiasts, from various strata of Dhaka society. This comprises the culturally oriented -- from Uttara to Old Dhaka.

What this place has to offer is in no way second to the French or German counterparts in the metropolis. This is obvious from the regular crowds and the long-winding queues at its doors at all seasons of the year.

Having taught at the British School, she moved on to the Russian Centre for Science and Culture. Here she has a limited number of students, ranging from early, tender years to school leavers. She teaches on weekends, in the afternoon. The piano on which the students practice at home is most often hired from the Notre Dame College, which is fairly expensive for her students, she says. Being in Bangladesh for about a decade, Mangoush has grown to love Bangladeshi music -- both classical and modern.

There have been unforgettable experiences such as readings from "Poems of an October evening" -- where one held one's breathe with ecstasy and admiration over the esoteric verses of Khiebnikov , the lyrical rhythm of Utkin and the poignant soul pitch of Yevtushenko . The magic and mystery of the stage with its incredible power to move the audience, was seen in the numerous performances of the thespians of the Chekhov group theatre. The vicissitudes -- highpoints of agonies and ecstasies of



Class in Russian Language Section of RCSC in Dhaka.