

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

Theatre Festival
To celebrate Palli Kobi Jasimuddin's birth anniversary
Organiser: Padatic Natya Sangsad
Venue: National Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy
Date: January 1-3
Time: 7pm



Book Launch

Title: Ballads and Painting
Artist: Abdus Shakoor Shah
Venue: Garden Gallery, R-4, H-23, Baridhara
Date: January 11
Time: 6pm



Classical Musical Soiree

Artist: Tushar Dutta (India)
Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, H 275/F, Rd 27 (old), Dhanmondi
Date: January 4
Time: 7pm



Painting Exhibition

Painter: Biren Shome
Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H 26, Rd 3, Dhanmondi
Date: January 4-20
Time: 10am-8pm



Theatre galore at Shilpakala

A boon for theatre lovers

JAMIL MAHMUD

The new year began on a high note for theatre lovers, as many theatre troupes staged plays at different venues of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) on January 1.

A three-day festival by Padatic Natya Sangsad to mark the 107th birth anniversary of Palli Kobi Jasimuddin ends today at the National Theatre Hall. Nagarik Natyangan's two-day 15th anniversary celebration programme ended yesterday at the Experimental Theatre Hall. Both the festivals began on January 1.

Among the numerous characters created by Jasimuddin, perhaps 'Asmani' is the most popular. To everyone's surprise, Asmani, now an aged woman, was invited to inaugurate the festival by lighting candles. State Minister for Women and Children Affairs Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury was the special guest at the inauguration.

Liakat Ali Lucky, chairman, Bangladesh Group Theatre Federation was among the speakers at the programme.

On the first day, dance drama "Shojon Badiar Ghat"



was staged. Based on Jasimuddin's eponymous ballad, the drama was directed by Kazi Rafique.

Two other plays, based on Jasimuddin's works, "Nakshi Kanthar Math" and "Beder Meye" were staged at the festival.

Nagarik Natyangan's 15th anniversary celebration began with dance and a mini procession by the members of the troupe. The procession



Members of Padatic Natya Sangsad in scenes from the dance drama "Shojon Badiar Ghat" (top and left).

"Sheishob Dinguli" by Nagarik Natyangan features turmoil of the Liberation War (right).

PHOTO: NELOY HOSSAIN



circled around the BSA premises. Members of the troupe also sang several songs including Rabindra Sangeet at the lobby of Experimental Theatre Hall.

Former advisor to the caretaker government, Rasheda K Chowdhury was the chief guest at the inaugural programme. Among the speakers at the programme were poet Asad Chowdhury, theatre personalities Lucky

Enam and Dr. Enamul Huq, president of the troupe.

The troupe awarded crests to 11 of its talented and dedicated members. Rasheda K Chowdhury handed over the crests to the young theatre activists.

Lucky Enam, who is also the general secretary of Nagarik thanked everyone on the occasion and expressed the hope that the troupe will continue to create awareness among the masses through theatre.

Two plays were staged throughout the two days of Nagarik festival. On the first day (January 1), Liberation War based play "Sheishob Dinguli" was presented. Written by Dr. Enamul Huq, the play has been directed by Lucky Enam.

On the second day, Nagarik's acclaimed production "Pragoitihashik" was staged. "Pragoitihashik" is an adaptation by Mahmudul Islam Selim of a short story by Manik Bandyopadhyay. The play is directed by Lucky Enam.

Apart from the two festivals, theatre troupe Battal staged its production "Dhamail" at the Studio Theatre Hall on January 1.



PHOTO: STAR

Gowsai Modan Mohan (C) sings to a receptive crowd.

Mela with a message

Baul music needs impetus

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

A Baul mela to inspire 'Sufi and Baishnab Shadhaks' was held at the auditorium of Zila Shilpakala Academy recently. The mela included a discussion and rendering of songs composed by Gowsai Modan Mohan, a composer of spiritual songs. A reception was accorded to Gowsai by his disciples, mainly the Bauls of Mymensingh region. The garland-clad composer was received warmly by the audience.

Naksha Multi Media, a local cultural group organised the programme.

Chief guest Shah Saiful Alam Pannu addressed the discussion, while Shafiqul Islam Sabuj, the founder of Baul Jalal Smriti Parishad was in the chair.

Baul Abdul Mannan Fakir; Mahtab Uddin Sarker; Abdul Jabbar; vice-president of Sattyer Sandhan Sangskritik Sangstha and Abu Sayeed Ahmed; headmaster of Mozaffar Ali Fakir High School, among others were the speakers.

The speakers said that Mymensingh region was once famous in the subcontinent for various traditional cultural performances like *Kabi gaan*, *Baul songs*, *jaari*, *saari* and *ghetu gaan*. However, over a passage of time such cultural activities had lost their appeal due to inadequate patronage by the authorities.

The artistes involved with these performing arts, the speakers added, are hamstrung to survive and many have distanced themselves from their traditional professions, while "the new generation is reluctant to involve itself in such professions."

The speakers said that Gowsai's writings are a great asset for spiritual performers and devotees. They also urged the Baul community to spread his songs within and outside the country.

Baul artistes Sree Sunil Karmakar, Dulal Sarker, Md. Golam Rabbi, Monir Hossain, Manik Miah, Mahtab Uddin, Chand Miah, Mohammad Alamgir, Rezia Alam, Jesmin Sarker and Farzana Akhtar attended the mela.

The Bauls began their session with a choral rendering of spiritual songs written by Gowsai. They also entertained the huge audience with their rendering of different popular Baul songs of this region. Rajkumar and Habib made waves with their perfect rhythmic playing on the dhols while Farhad played on the harmonium.

ARM Modasser Tapu conducted the programme.

"Experience the Movement" on the move

A CORRESPONDENT

Dance has a rhythmic approach of articulation with the aid of graceful movements and eloquent expressions. This movement is to be experienced in full life in 'Experience the Movement', a joint venture of Nrityadhara and US Embassy. It will be held on January 3, at Shilpakala Academy at 7.00pm.

In a press meet yesterday, Nrityadhara students staged a performance. A demo by Dakshina and Nrityadhara followed on its heels.

"Nrityadhara is a dance organisation that promotes dances in many ways," said eminent dancer Minu Haque. "We try to promote dance

by teaching underprivileged children, or specially-abled children. We also go to the remote areas to teach dance free so that more people can get access to this free medium of expression and art."

"Experience the Movement" will be led by a Dakshina, a 12-member dance company based in Washington DC. It is led by Daniel Phoenix Singh and choreographed by Anna Sokolow, the late modern dance pioneer. The troupe will perform contemporary dances that will have modern, fusion, et al. This performance would be for only one evening. Dakshina is the first company to present Anna Sokolow's dance in South Asia. Tickets will be available at the venue.

New Year celebrations in Khagrachhari

JASIM MAJUMDER, Khagrachhari

The indigenous people of Khagrachhari ushered in 2010 with traditional festivities, cultural functions and the exchange of greetings. The function was organised by Marma Socio Cultural Organisation Digital Samity.

The organisation also held a Pradeep Puja in the Buddha Bihar by lighting candles, which symbolised the removal of all sins, diseases, and disasters from indigenous society and other communities.

They also organised a cultural programme at Pankhhiyapara area under Sadar upazila in

Khagrachhari district in the early hours of Friday.

Indigenous singers presented songs and dances, while distributing cakes to the gathering, wishing them a joyous year.

They also organised a traditional sports competition, art competition and the release of fanush (balloons) in a day long programme on Friday.

Marma Unnayan Sangsad and Digital Samiti Advisor Mongkyaching Chowdhury, Kajori Marma, Kongchairi Master, Sanumong Marma and hundreds of people from all walks of life attended the function.

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