

## WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

### Concert

Title: Shadhinotar Shurey Gaibo Mora  
Line up: Warfaze, Black, Artcell, Aurthohin, Mechanix, Shironamin and others  
Venue: Kalabagan Krira Chakra Club, Dhanmondi  
Date: March 26  
Time: 2pm onwards



### Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Not Here  
Artist: Ali Akbar  
Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi  
Date: March 13-27  
Time: 3-9pm (except Fridays and Saturdays)



### Solo Photography Exhibition

Title: Hridaye Bangladesh  
Photographer: Chanchal Mahmud  
Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, H 275/F, R-27 (old), Dhanmondi  
Date: March 19-30  
Time: 12pm-8pm



### Boats Exhibition

Title: Traditional Boats of Bangladesh  
Venue: Nalinikanta Bhattachali Gallery, Bangladesh National Museum  
Date: March 23-April 19  
Time: 10am -5pm



## Mime behind the mask

Swiss troupe Mummenschanz in town



(From left) Pietro Montandon, Raffaella Mattioli, Floriana Frassetto, Bernie Schürch and Jan Maria Lukas.



Using props, costumes and changeable masks, Mummenschanz tries to connect with the audience.

### KARIM WAHEED

It's difficult to define Mummenschanz. There are noticeable elements of mime -- no music or words. But the group's performances are so much more than a man in an invisible box. As Floriana Frassetto (one of the founder members) puts it: "We try to turn inanimate objects into animate beings. The idea is to go beyond the limitations of our faces."

The Swiss group is in Dhaka to perform at the International Theatre Festival (organised by Dhaka Padatik). The two-hour performance, titled "Mummenschanz-3X11", will be staged at National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy this evening (starting at 7 pm).

In the '70s, when pantomime was becoming popular, Bernie Schürch and Andres Bossard, both from Switzerland, with Italian-American Floriana Frassetto formed this visual theatre group. They gave themselves an original name, 'Mummenschanz'. "Mummen" refers to the German word for imi-

tating or miming and the rest of the name refers to 'le chance', French for 'stroke of luck'. Roughly, it means 'game of chance', says Frassetto.

"It's an invention, we try to connect with the audience, using props, costumes and changeable masks," she adds.

About themes, Schürch says, "We consider the stage to be a playground. As the audience watches, they can invent the story. Our performances are not like plays in the traditional sense. We don't try to explain too much. It's all about interaction between the performers and the audience. We're not bound by a script. The aim is to bring out the inner child."

Both Frassetto and Schürch say that their acts employ elements of mime, dance, acting and more.

The group now consists of five members -- four actors and one tech designer. Apart from Frassetto and Schürch, other performers of the group are: Raffaella Mattioli (from Italy) with a background in classical dance, and Pietro Montandon, an actor. Jan Maria Lukas is the lighting designer and

technician.

Mummenschanz has performed in Western and Eastern Europe, North and South America, Middle East, Africa, Asia and Australia. They performed for three years (1977-80) at the Bijou Theatre on Broadway. Never before a show without words or music had successfully run on Broadway for such an extended period.

"Initially it was difficult. The turnout was not good," says Frassetto about the Broadway experience, "but during Easter a miracle happened. Our shows became popular. I suppose word of mouth helped."

Why is their current show called "Mummenschanz-3X11"? According to Schürch: "So far we've had three productions, each lasting for eleven years. This current one is a retrospective on 33 years of Mummenschanz."

Inspiration? Frassetto: "Inspiration comes from accumulated experiences." Schürch: "Underneath everything there is a desire to provoke everyone."

How did the Dhaka show happen? Frassetto: "After Sidr, we staged a show to raise money and

the Bangladeshi Ambassador to Switzerland was so moved that he requested us to perform here. It took us a while, but we're glad to perform for the Bangladeshi audience."

Challenges? Raffaella Mattioli: "It took me almost ten years to get used to this unique performing art form. Sometimes I can't see [because of the masks] and have to feel my way around the stage. It's certainly special."

Schürch: "But the set-up of the stage is always pretty much the same. So, it's not an issue. The audience help with their responses. I guess we've developed invisible antennae."

Pietro Montandon: "When my vision is restricted, I feel like I have another set of eyes with which I can see myself. This happens when I know I'm reaching out to the audience."

Frassetto: "To me, the only challenge is about how quickly the audience responds or if they want to play or not."

After watching video clips of Mummenschanz's performances, it's apparent that the Dhaka theatre enthusiasts are in for something unique and never seen before.

## Mosharraf Karim just wants a break

### A CORRESPONDENT

"I am tired of working everyday. Every working individual gets at least a day off every week; I get none."

This is how Mosharraf Karim, one of the busiest actors of small screen, described his work schedule. He said that he is very fond of

spending time with friends and family. But due to the pressure of work he cannot spend much time with them.

To make time, the actor has decided to reduce his workload. But he expressed with sorrow that he could not say no to anyone. He could not ignore anyone's request.

"Tor shongeyshokal dupur Tor shongeyshondha Tor shongeyshara rattir Tor shongeybandha."

These are some lines from a song written by Karim, which will be used in an upcoming film, he informed. "This is my first song," said Karim.

Karim loves to listen to music in between shooting. He is especially fond of instrumental music. One of his favorite instrumentals is a duet of sarangi and sitar -- "Raaga Mand", that originated in Rajasthan.

The actor also said he might appear as a director if everything remains favorable. Previously he had scripted a TV play, "Hello", which was aired last Eid.

After the major success of the film "Third Person Singular Number", he has decided to act in two films -- directed by Mohammad Mustafa Kamal Raj and Iftekhar Ahmed Fahmi.



## Chris Evans to suit up as Captain America

America has its very own superhero, as Chris Evans is officially the star of "The First Avenger: Captain America."

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Evans has accepted an offer from Marvel Studios to star as Steve Rogers in "Captain America" and nine other Marvel features, including potential sequels, "The Avengers" and other unannounced projects. Evans' casting rounds out Marvel's so-called holy trinity of heroes, with Robert Downey Jr. long filling the metallic armour of Tony Stark in Jon Favreau's "Iron Man" films and Chris Hemsworth currently shooting the title role in Kenneth Branagh's "Thor."

Last week, news broke that Marvel had offered Evans the role of Steve Rogers, a scrawny hero that takes a super-soldier serum and consequently becomes the iconic Captain

America. Evans considered the deal over the weekend but quickly moved into the negotiations phase.

Evans had a few obstacles to overcome before deciding whether to wield the star-spangled shield. For one, the actor is scheduled to appear opposite Anna Faris in "What's Your Number?", a romantic comedy slated to shoot around the same time as "Captain America." Additionally, Evans has already played a Marvel superhero before: the Human Torch in Fox's "Fantastic Four" franchise.

By securing "Captain America," Evans has officially put his name to four comic book properties. In addition to "Fantastic Four," the actor has filmed roles in the forthcoming adaptations of "The Losers" and "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World."

Source: Internet

## Reader's Column

### The many tones of Surbahar

#### REENAT FAUZIA

Surbahar is a string instrument with deep, melodic and long lasting sound. It is classified as a chordophone in the lute family, and is related to the veena. Surbahar appeared in the musical scene of the subcontinent in the early 19th century, around 1830 to be precise. Although its basic structure resembles that of the sitar, it is much bigger in size and the instrument is tuned to a lower pitch.

The surbahar has seven strings including two chikari (drone) and 11 or 12 sympathetic strings. The strings are thicker than those of a sitar. Because of these distinctive features, the instrument comes close to sounding like a north Indian veena. It is said that the musicians of Seniya Gharana (descendants of Mia Tansen) were not supposed to teach the veena or rabab to any outsider. Thus the students, who were talented but did not belong to the bloodline, were given lessons with surbahar. But gradually as the tonality and capacity of the instrument developed and was fully exploited, the musicians of the Seniya lineage also started playing it and acquired proficiency.

Because of the size and thick neck, the surbahar has a very deep and sustained sound, which is very suitable for alaap anga. Alaap is a form of classical music, which has myriad facets. In fact it expresses the multi-angular dimensions of the raga in a slow, systematic and gradual fashion. The surbahar therefore is a relatively specialised instrument, and it never gained a wide amateur popularity. However it attracted the attention of



An artiste plays Surbahar.

PHOTO: INTERNET

the highly talented professional instrumental artists of the subcontinent.

Ustad Ayet Ali Khan was one of the most prominent surbahar players. He was a disciple of Ustad Wazir Khan, a descendant of Mia Tansen. He spent most of his life practicing this unique instrument. Nowadays this instrument is rarely in practice. Mobarak Hossain

Khan, son of Ustad Ayet Ali Khan is the only person in Bangladesh who is still continuing the legacy.

The surbahar, though fading with the growing popularity of other instruments, is truly unparalleled.

The writer is a talented sitarist.

## Zhang Yimou feted at Asian Film Awards

Chinese film director Zhang Yimou has been recognised for his outstanding contribution to Asian cinema at the Asian Film Awards in Hong Kong.

Zhang, best known for "Raise the Red Lantern" and "Not One Less", also devised the opening and closing ceremonies of the 2008 Olympic games in Beijing.

South Korean thriller "Mother" was named best film at Monday's event, where its star Kim Hye-ja also won best actress.

China's Lu Chuan won the best director award for "City of Life and Death".

His epic film - released in the UK next month - tells of the Nanjing Massacre in 1937, in which many thousands of Chinese civilians were killed by Japanese soldiers.

Wang Xueqi, also from China, was named best actor for his role in historical drama "Bodyguards and Assassins", which also won co-star Nicholas Tse a supporting actor gong.

Zhang Yimou urged Asian filmmaker's to think on a global scale.

"Asian movies and Asian culture should play a bigger role in the world, affect more people and make more people from different countries interested in and pay attention to Asian culture," he said.

John Woo was recognised for directing the year's top-grossing film "Red Cliff", while Bollywood star Amitabh Bachchan received a lifetime achievement award.

He said he had no plans to retire. "So long there are people who wish to work with me, and so long I remain healthy, I would like to continue working," he said.

Inaugurated in 2007, the Asian Film



Zhang Yimou's other films include "Red Sorghum" and "House of Flying Daggers".

Awards honours filmmakers with outstanding achievements in the field of Asian cinema.

A total of 37 films vied for the 14 prizes, Source: BBC

bestowed this year at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre.