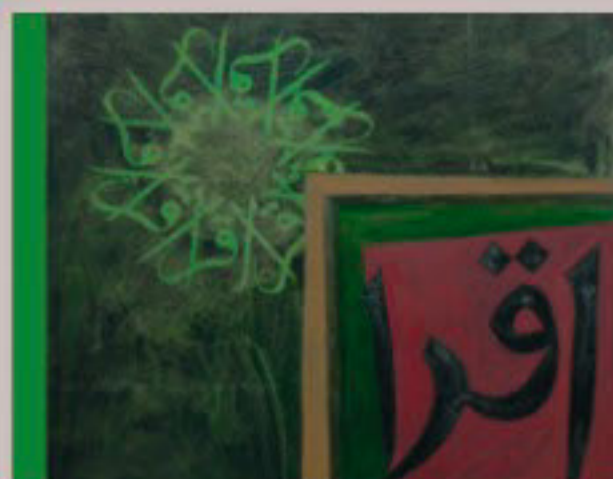


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

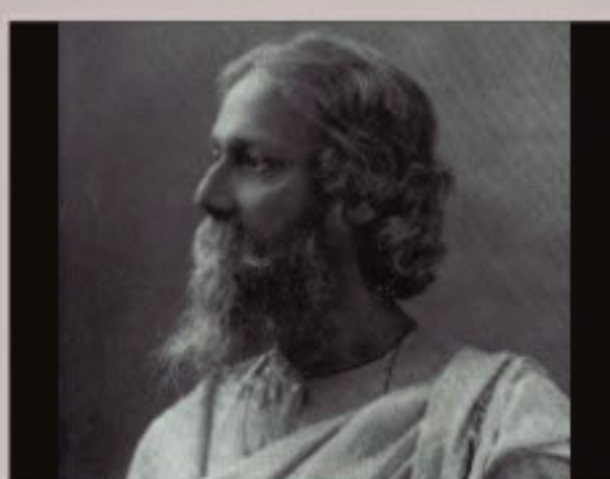
Calligraphy Exhibition

Calligrapher: Najib Tareque
Venue: Impressions Gallery, 67, Gulshan Avenue
Date: August 19-September 19
Time: 9:30am-2:30pm and 4-5pm (Sunday-Thursday) and 10am-1pm (Saturday)



Cultural Programme

Organiser: Russian Centre of Science and Culture and Bangladesh-Russia Friendship Society
Venue: Auditorium, RCSC, H 510, Rd 7, Dhanmondi
Date: September 16
Time: 6pm



Theatre

Play: Punarjanmo
Troupe: Prachyanat
Venue: Experimental Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy
Date: September 19
Time: 7pm



Photo Exhibition

To mark Int'l Day of Tourism
Title: Tourist Sights of Moscow and Moscow Region
Venue: Modern Language Institute, DU
Date: September 2-28



A lifelong tryst with folk songs

In conversation with Chandona Majumdar

DITHI HASNAT

Chandona Majumdar is regarded as one of the foremost contemporary folk singers of Bangladesh. Born in Kumarkhali in Kushtia, she took lessons in folk songs from her father Nirmal Chandra Majumdar, a veteran folk singer. Nirmal Chandra wanted his daughter to become an exponent of Nazrul songs so she also did a five-year course on Nazrul Sangeet and took lessons from noted Nazrul singer Yakub Ali Khan. A nostalgic Chandona still recalls fond memories of the river Gorai.

Though she practiced and rendered Nazrul Sangeet for 16 years, her devotion to Lalon Shah ultimately framed her career as a Lalon singer. She remembers how she was inspired by the lyrics and tunes of Lalon, "At our home we used to have regular gatherings of Baul (Sufi bards) who would sing Lalon songs all night long. Renowned Lalon singer Moksed Ali Shai used to visit our home frequently as he was a close friend of my father. As a child I used to attend these musical soirees as a curious listener. Those ashor (musical gatherings) and the Bauls awakened in me an unquenchable thirst for the songs of Lalon. At that tender age it was hard for me to fully grasp the inherent meanings of the songs -- the exquisite rhythm and melody -- but I was greatly moved by them. Whenever I listened to the tunes, I used to feel that I was not within me anymore. Famed Lalon singer Farida Parvin was a great inspiration for me.

"The first song I learned from Moksed Ali Shai was 'Ami Porechhi Okul Patharey'. When I took music lessons from Shai, I used to choose the songs from his music book. Most of the times I almost forced him to teach me the songs that I preferred. These days I travel a lot to collect Lalon songs that are still to see the light of day.

"I was enlisted as a Lalon singer with Bangladesh Television in 1979 and with Bangladesh Betar (radio) in 1980. Moksed Ali's death in the mid



"These days I travel a lot to collect Lalon songs that are still to see the light of day."

'80s saddened me to a great extent. At that time I got the chance to attend a five-year diploma course conducted by Khoda Bakhsh Shai. The course was arranged by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

"Khoda Bakhsh Shai did not have any place to stay in Dhaka. So I told him to stay at my father's place at Rampura. It was another great opportunity for me to learn music directly from him. Those days spent in proximity with Khoda Bakhsh turned out to be very important me because Lalon songs generally do not have

formal and original notations and were handed down through generations of Bauls.

"I got married to Kiran Chandra Roy, a reputed folk singer of our country, in 1979. My marriage was immensely helpful for me to pursue my musical career and aspirations. My husband has always been wonderfully supportive."

Chandona Majumdar wants her daughter to become a musician too. She believes that our musical heritage is deeply rooted in the folk songs. She suggests that the aspiring folk singers

delve deep into these songs before working on them.

Talking about doing playback for the blockbuster "Monpura" (2009), the artiste says, "It was a superb opportunity for me to sing the song 'Jao Pakhi Bolo Tarey' with Krishnokoli. I also thank Selim Bhai (Giasuddin Selim) for giving me that opportunity. He asked me to sing for 'Monpura' after listening to my album 'Bhober Ghatay'. I had no idea that 'Jao Pakhi...' would become such a big hit. I almost forgot the song after recording it. Recently I playbacked for a tele-film 'Bini Shutar Mala'. I also playbacked for a couple of feature films that are yet to be released -- 'Raja Shurjo Kha' and 'Gulbahar'.

"Meeting Pandit Ravi Shankar at a very young age was a wonderful experience for me. I went to Kolkata once to visit my Dadu (grandfather). He asked me to sing at a programme. I was pretty nervous because I was just a student. I sang the Lalon song 'Jao Gelo Jaat Gelo Boley'. Pandit Ravi Shankar was present at the programme. He bestowed his blessings upon me after listening to my song. Those experiences inspired me to become what I am today and I'm sure they'll continue to inspire me."

Chandona took Lalon songs into the international arena. She performed in India, Switzerland and Singapore. Besides Lalon, she also loves to perform songs of *Kabial* (bard) Bijoy Sarkar, Radharaman Dutta, Rajab Ali Dewan and Shah Abdul Karim.

Chandona Majumdar's next album on *Kabial* Bijoy Sarkar's songs is set for release under the banner of Bengal Foundation soon after Eid.

"We have few master folk artistes left who can provide proper training to aspiring Lalon singers. Currently very few can receive lessons from them, which may not be enough to carry on the legacy of the genre," said Chandona. She believes that initiatives in this direction should be taken immediately.

Bharatnatyam performance by Nivedita Parthasarthy

Indira Gandhi Culture Centre, High Commission of India in Dhaka is organising Bharatnatyam dance performances by a five-member Indian troupe led by Nivedita Parthasarthy, says a press release.

Parthasarthy, a leading exponent of the classical Bharatnatyam dance in India, started her career under Guru Smt Padma Ramanathan and Kum. R. Padma and completed her *Nattuvangam* (the art of conducting a classical Indian dance recital) course under Guru Seetharama Sharma. She participated in several dance ballets choreographed by the famed dancer, Vijayanthimala Bali. Parthasarthy started her dance school 'Nivedanam -- A Cultural Centre for Performing Arts' in 1988 and has been training students in Bharatnatyam at Chennai, Bangalore and Bali, Indonesia. She has performed in Maldives, Europe, North America, Mauritius and Indonesia. She is also a versatile Choreographer.

Parthasarthy and her troupe will perform in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. The group will perform at the main auditorium of Bangladesh National Museum on September 17. On September 18, the danseuse will hold a lecture-demonstration at Nat Mandal, Dhaka University at 10 am and a performance at National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh



Shilpakala Academy at 7:30 pm.

On September 21, Parthasarthy and her troupe will perform at Theatre Institute Chattagram Hall in Chittagong at 7:30 pm. The performance in Sylhet will be held on September 23 at Sylhet Auditorium.

Complimentary Passes for each show may be collected from Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, house 24, road 2, Dhanmondi, Dhaka and Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (library and auditorium), house 35, road 24, Gulshan 1, Dhaka.

Akshay Kumar goes back to cooking

FROM PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

From a cook in an obscure hotel in Thailand to one of Bollywood's sought-after stars -- actor Akshay Kumar has travelled a long way but he can't forget his past.

He says his new TV show "Master Chef India" reminds him of his days when he had worked as a cook in Thailand before tasting success in cinema. Akshay will be seen hosting and judging the culinary show on Star Plus beginning from October 16.

"Before I became an actor, I was working as a chef in Thailand. This was the only job that I managed to get there and I loved cooking. This show takes me to back to my roots...reminds me of my past," Akshay said.

The machoman of Bollywood was learning martial arts in Thailand while working as a chef before he took to acting and his love for cooking is well known.

"Cooking has fascinated me since I was 14. I like cooking. I cook whenever I am at home...May be, once a week or once a month," said the actor.

Even though Akshay Kumar believes that

life begins at 40, he wants to cut down on his work. This is the star's birthday resolution as he turned 43 on September 9.

Talking to reporters at the first look unveiling of his latest film "Action Replayy" opposite Aishwarya Rai releasing in November, Akshay said he wanted to enjoy what he had worked for all these years.

"I want to work less and give more time to my family, especially my son," he said. Akshay recalled that he spent his birthdays during childhood by making trips to different places in Mumbai like Hanging Garden, Borivali National Park and Zoo.

Asked what period from the 1970s he would like to witness, which he had not done in real life, Akshay said he wanted to see his father-in-law's (Rajesh Khanna) super stardom. Speaking about his experience of working with Aishwarya, the actor said, "Ash is a beautiful person and a thorough professional. We shared a great rapport since our 'Khakee' days."

Apart from "Action Replayy", Akshay will be seen in "Patiala House" and "Tees Maar Khan" in the coming months.

Freida Pinto to star opposite Antonio Banderas



"Slumdog Millionaire" star Freida Pinto is set to star opposite Spanish actor Antonio Banderas in a Hollywood period film.

The film, titled "Black Thirst", is being directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, reports the News.

It is the story of how America, in pursuit of oil, started targeting the Gulf as early as 1920.

Pinto plays the role of an Arabian princess.

The film is based on Hans R Ruesch's globally acclaimed work "South of the Heart: A Novel of Modern Arabia" published in 1957.

The film is Pinto's sixth international film after "Rise of the Apes", "Immortals", "Miral", "You Will Meet a Tall, Dark Stranger" and "Slumdog Millionaire".

Source: Internet

Springsteen documentary premieres at Toronto Film Festival



Musician Bruce Springsteen and his wife Patti Scialfa (R) pose at the gala presentation for the film "The Promise: The Making Of Darkness On The Edge Of Town" at the 35th Toronto International Film Festival.

Make no mistake, this film from Bruce Springsteen and his personal archivist, director Thom Zimny, is a true documentary and no concert film.

"The Promise: The Making of Darkness on the Edge of Town" takes a meticulous journey back to the 1978 recording studio to document all the mental and physical effort that went into making a follow-up album to his breakout hit, "Born to Run."

This is a real inside movie, fascinated by everything from the rock star's notebooks filled with up to 70 songs to the difficult choices and final mix that went into a seminal LP. Fans and music aficionados will love every minute, while others may want less detail. Either way, this is one of the best documentaries about creativity in a long while.

Using Barry Rebo's black-and-white footage shot in recording studios in 1976 ("Born to Run") and 1978 ("Darkness"), Zimny has a gold mine of never-before-seen material plus interviews with Springsteen and members of the E Street Band, all of whom possess amazing recollections of those tough months. (They may also be the rock band that has aged the best, but that's another story.)

The success of "Born to Run" freaked out Springsteen, who felt celebrityhood might remove him from his small-town New Jersey roots. The other "cloud" hanging over the band was a two-year recording hiatus caused by a lawsuit between Springsteen and his former

manager. With no follow-up LP, the band was in danger of becoming part of those whatever-happened-to-conversations.

Springsteen was determined to go off in a new musical direction after "Born." He wrote, and he, the band and its new producer, Jon Landau, recorded between 50 and 60 songs, often with different lyrics and approaches. The viewer can witness his persistent struggle to find the emotional threads in songs that in his mind had to link thematically.

It is stated that few can write popular songs better than Springsteen, but that's almost beside the point. He threw out potential hits if those weren't the songs he wanted to represent him. He even donated a half-written tune for "The Promise" to Patti Smith, which became her only major hit, "Because the Night."

He says he strove in the album for "sound pictures." He wanted music that evoked images in a listener's mind. And he wanted these images to connect to his sense of family and appreciation for his parents' struggles.

In those two years outside the studio, music had changed. He was now listening to punk and getting into country (where, he says, the lyrics deal with adult problems).

If you want to understand the blood and sweat that went into Springsteen's songs, this is your movie.

Source: Internet

