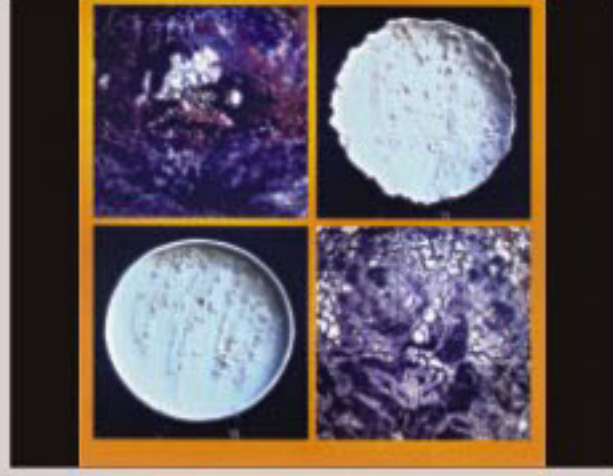


WHAT'S ON THIS WEEK

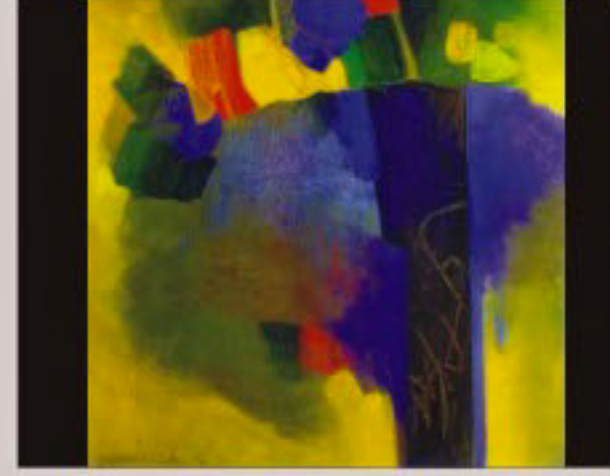
Ceramics Exhibition
 Title: Aesthetic Studio Ceramics
 Artist: Syed Shahadat Hussain
 Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka, 26, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi
 Date: December 18-30
 Time: 3-9pm (Monday-Thursday) 9am-12pm & 5-8pm (Friday & Saturday)



Solo Art Exhibition
 Artist: Swapan Chowdhury
 Venue: Dhaka Art Centre, R-7 A, H-60, Dhanmondi
 Date: December 15-31
 Time: 11am-8pm



Solo Art Exhibition
 Artist: Hashem Khan
 Venue: Nalinikanta Bhattacharya Gallery, National Museum
 Date: December 18-January 2
 Time: 12pm-8pm



Theatre
 Play: Tringsha Shatabdi
 Troupe: Swapnadal
 Venue: Studio Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy
 Date: December 25
 Time: 6:30pm



Alor Pithey A(n)dhar

Krishnakali talks about her upcoming album



AKRAM HOSEN MAMUN

Quazi Krishnakali Islam, better known as Krishnakali, is recognised as a gifted lyricist, a deft composer and an emotive singer. An ardent feminist and social activist, she is deeply involved with Biplabi Nari Shanghati, a socio-political organisation working -- among other pressing issues -- for women's rights.

At the recent concert on Universal Human Rights Day 2010, she said, "At Dhaka University, I've mostly performed during student protests." (Source: The Daily Star).

When asked about the extent to which her political views or social awareness influence her songwriting and music, she said, "I believe, it's impossible for anyone to do or say something that can go beyond the reach of history and politics. Therefore, it's not right to evaluate a work of art, independent of its historical context. I want my songs to be viewed as an expression of my thoughts on the society."

One can indeed find articulations of our social crises -- both tangible and intangible -- in her songs. Recalling the saying, "You can't be neutral on a moving train," the artiste said, "History is constantly moving into some direction. It is crucial for us, artistes, to always keep that in mind."

Krishnakali is currently working on her second album, "Alor Pithey A(n)dhar", which she hopes to release by the end of January, 2011. With the music direction of Arko, the eight tracks have been written and composed by her. Eastern and western musical instruments and genres have been infused into the compositions. The album includes some rock, a reggae, and kirtan numbers.

"We have also incorporated ethnic tunes (from the hill tracts)," she said. The theme of the album, she added, is "our eternal struggle to move from darkness to light."

"I want the listeners to form their individual interpretations. Besides, there won't be any surprise if I tell you everything in advance," she said, smilingly.

Myth, folklore and dance from the highlands

Bhutanese performers enthral Chittagong audience

A CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Doegar Phunsum Troupe, a cultural group from Bhutan, performed for the audiences here in the port city last Wednesday evening.

Royal Bhutanese Embassy, Bhutan Exporters Association and University of Science and Technology Chittagong (USTC) jointly arranged the cultural programme at Maulana Bhasani auditorium of USTC.

The acts by performers wearing exotic masks highlighted Bhutanese folklore and mythology, and left the Chittagong cultural enthusiasts spellbound.

The first performance of the evening was a group dance with vocals, flutes and traditional Bhutanese musical instruments.

A dance to the beats of Bhutanese drums narrating the unique magnificence of Himalayan nature was remarkable.

Bhutanese folk songs also went well with the audience. Bhutanese students of USTC also performed solo and in groups at the event.

Vice-Chancellor of the university, Dr. Nurul Islam, presided over the programme while the Bhutanese Ambassador Dasho Bap Kesang was present as chief guest.

On the occasion Kesang said that there are many Bhutanese students studying in Bangladesh and this would play a vital role in strengthening the friendship between the two countries.

Recalling the role of Bhutan during the Liberation War, Dr. Nurul Islam said that Bhutan was the first country to recognise Bangladesh as an independent country.



An electrifying performance by the troupe.

Bringing to light up and coming singers

Five albums featuring Bengal Bikash artistes



Nahid Sultana sings at the programme.

PHOTO: MUMIT M.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bengal Foundation's endeavour to recognise and provide a platform to talented, young singers across the country began in 2006. The talent hunt, known as 'Bengal Bikash Pratibha Anneshan', stood out for its focus on traditional genres. A group of renowned artistes, led by the late Waheedul Haque, helped Bengal to discover the talents.

Through the talent hunt, Bengal recognised 30 individuals as talented singers. Featuring the top contestants, Bengal Foundation released a series of five audio albums on December 22. Titled "Bajuk Pranay Bangla Gaan", the albums includes songs of Rabindranath Tagore; Kazi Nazrul Islam; Rajanikant, DL Roy and Atul Prasad Sen; traditional folk and *adhunik*.

The album launch, also featuring live performances by the Bengal Bikash contestants, was held at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. Five well-known artistes representing the featured genres -- Ram Kanai Das, Rezwana Chowdhury Bonna, Subir Nandi, Mita Haq and Shahin Samad -- unveiled the covers of the CDs.

Luva Nahid Chowdhury, director general, Bengal Foundation gave the welcome address.

Her speech focused on Bengal's initiatives regarding music and explained why the organisation launched the talent hunt four years ago.

"Though we have a musical tradition that goes back over a thousand years, we feel that a void is apparent in our musical arena in recent times. We believe proper guidance and initiatives can minimise this void," said Luva.

The seasoned artistes at the programme praised Bengal's efforts to preserve and promote traditional music and expressed their gratitude.

"I will request young singers to go to the villages of Bangladesh and collect songs that represent our roots," said veteran folk singer and song collector Ram Kanai Das.

The musical programme featured renditions of songs from the five albums. The soiree started with a rendition of the Nazrul Sangeet "Arunkanti Ke Go" by Champa Banik. Shuma Rani Roy sang "Ami Alokey Poritey". Nahid Sultana's rendition of the *adhunik* song "Kon Dur Swapnolokey" (composed by Md. Zakaria) was praiseworthy.

Among the artistes, Adrita Anwar and Farhin Nusrat rendered Rabindra Sangeet; Shahid Kabir, Anindita Chowdhury and Debashree Antara Das rendered Nazrul Sangeet. Shafiqul Alam Raja, Arifur Rahman and Shila Das sang folk songs.

Album Review

AASHOR A Rock Compilation

TOWHIDUL ISLAM KHAN

Five years in the pipeline, "Aashor", a rock compilation, hit the market on November 12 under the banner of Gaanchil. From big names like LRB to young, emerging bands from Dhaka and Chittagong, rock fans will get a taste of 14 fresh tracks -- all likely to make it to playlists for years to come. Moktadir Dewan Shanto coordinated the album.

LRB sets the tone of the album in the first track with a bang. The old school riffs, drum rolls and the evergreen rock prowess of Ayub Bachchu's vocals make "Megh Rong Nilima-e" stand apart from the rest. The mighty "AB" lives up to the hype that surrounds him, silencing those who cast doubts on his musical abilities. Surely one of the best, if not "the" best, songs of the album. Young rock musicians have a lot to learn from this song.

Shrapnel Method presents the second track "Mukti Shobtukui". This band has been making strides in recent times, and their efforts take a mature shape in the song. With a killer chorus, clever harmonising and superb guitar solos, Shrapnel Method announces their intent to climb

the rock ladder with full force.

If "Mukti Shobtukui" did not whet your appetite, The Joint Family's "Bhaar" will surely do the trick. The band brings a dark ambience with the song, highlighting unorthodox guitar effects and the vocal skills of Rafa. The ending hymn has the potential to be an audience favourite and a concert anthem for years to come.

Absent Element's "Pichhutaan" features some brilliant falsetto, something our contemporary music still seems to lack. The music makes for easy listening.

Blunderware's "Afim Chash" is worthy of getting a podium spot in the album. The simple guitar strums and chords do justice to the lyrics, which convey a message about the addiction for life and music.

"Cryptool" by Alternation is the track that kicks in next, and grabs your attention with a grim intro, before blasting through with an aggressive riff, thumping drums-work and rip-through vocals. Probably the heaviest track of the album, "Cryptool" puts a check mark on every box of the list of elements present in a great rock song.

After a heavy track, '71 balances the

album again -- with their easygoing track "Protiti Kona". The most notable part of the song has to be its bass works. Although the song starts off slowly, the build-up towards the end is a team effort, with instruments and vocals chipping in their own contributions.

If the album was lacking some groove till this point, GrooveTrap fills the void in "Nikhoj". The keys can make the listener nostalgic about '60s rock, while the funky groove remains constant in the guitar strums and humming. Overall, "Nikhoj" is a standout among all the tracks of the album.

The next two songs are tributes to two great souls, who passed away recently -- leaving a large void in the bands' lives. Through "Sahim's Song", Effigy expresses their love to a vibrant teen named Sahim, whose laughter and music used to fill the streets of Chittagong. The only English number of the album is a great ballad to listen to.

My 31st Demerit comes next with "ShesherAushomapte...Midhat", which is about Midhat, another port city youth who was brutally murdered a month back. Emotions pour out from the lyrics and tunes, while the chorus deserves

much praise.

Alter Messiah presents their debut track "Ghour" with an interesting beginning of guitars and bass. The song invokes darker feelings, making it a good night-time tune.

"Abaro" by Owned is a pure alter-rock track with brilliant instrument work. Owned proved that apart from being just an entertaining stage act, they have the potential to deliver great music. Watch out for the chorus, it will stick in your head.

Circus Police's "Porjobekkhok" is another standout from the crowd, with interesting experiment with vocal scales. Instrumentally, the track is top notch.

Last but not the least is Igneeous with "Biborno Katatar". Many may argue that their number is a shadow of a larger band of the country, but even so, they manage to pull off a great track with an awesome guitar solo in the middle.

"Aashor" was many years in the making, but all the hard work have seemingly paid off, as the music hungry crowd got what they were promised -- a gathering of rock talents delivering their best.

