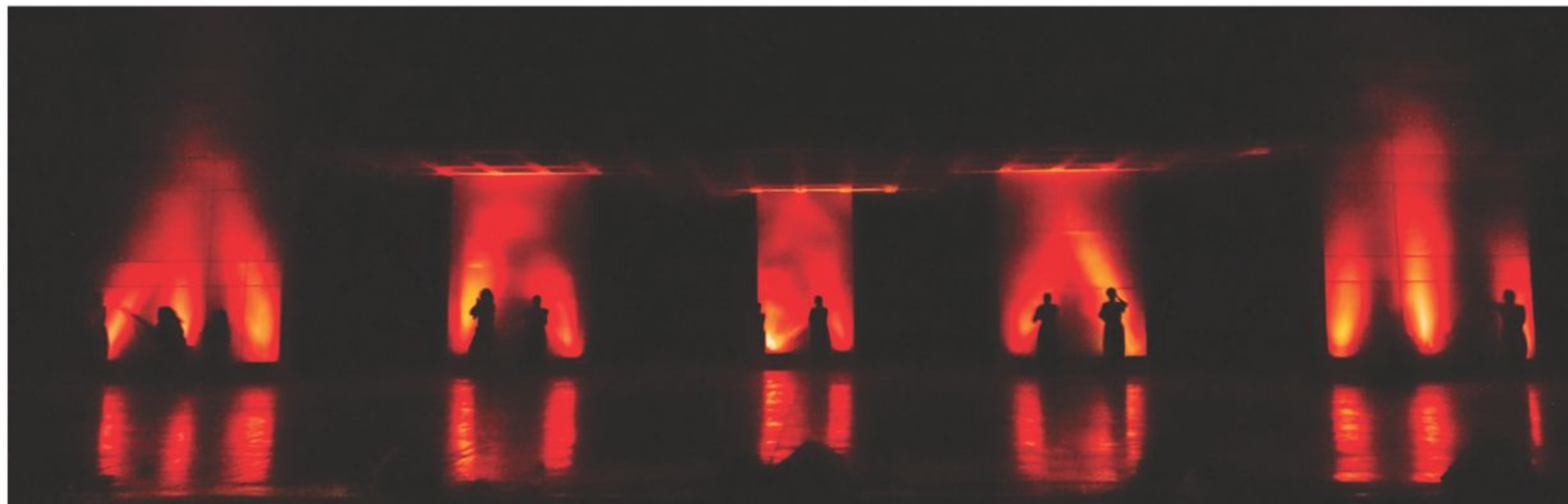


Target Platoon: Musical on Liberation War with spectacular visuals



In the play, the actors roam around, entering the stage from different corners to implement the idea of space.

JAMIL MAHMUD

A musical play combined with spectacular stage design holds great promise for theatre lovers. If it incorporates the theme of the Liberation War the play will have a touch of emotion and empathy as well.

"Target Platoon", a combination of creative ideas of two theatre giants, Mamunur Rashid and Professor Syed Jamil Ahmed, articulates these qualities to perfection. The play, produced by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy Repertory, premiered at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, on July 27.

Professor Syed Jamil Ahmed, reputed as a theatre scholar at home and abroad, has designed the play. When someone of his stature takes on an assignment, theatre buffs cannot but be curious about the project. Mamunur Rashid has a rich repertoire of directing and writing hugely successful plays, such as "Shankranti" and "Raraang" (both for Aranyak).

Rashid said that hitherto there were no stage musicals on a grand scale on the Liberation War and this tempted him to pen the play. The play is set in early April, 1971 when the Pakistani army tries to enter villages and a group of freedom fighters -- including

doctors, teachers, engineers and farmers-- plan to ambush them. The events of these times lead to a denouement.

From the very beginning till the end, what is charming about the play is a lot of visuals. On entering the hall, the spectator will be fascinated by a large white cloth on which a dimmed bluish light reflects, creating wavy illusions. When the play starts, one is amazed to see the maximum utilisation of space from the last few inches of the backdrop towards the deep ends at the two wings.

The director asserts that he has a fascination for a maximum utilisation of space. In the play, the actors roam around, entering the stage from different corners to implement his idea of space.

Proportion was found in sequences as in the face to face battle between the freedom fighters and the Pakistani army on the frontier, where the heroes were facing the enemies from the audience part and the enemies are coming from the far end of the backdrop. Instant flashes of red lights along with smoke seem to transform the stage into a real battlefield.

The satirical use of costumes sees the Pakistani army dressed as the colonial rulers. Rashid's creative aspect is visible in the manner in which the antagonists are mocked in his plays [as in case of "Raraang"

or "Shankranti" as well].

It's a musical play on the war and each single dialogue follows a mini-orchestra led by Parimal Majumdar. Constant singing and dancing by the performers are an example of youthfulness.

Young actors from different troupes, including Aranyak, Theatre, Theatre Art Unit and Prachyanat, form the cast and they are responsible for some incoherence as well. They move, roam around, dance and sing together throughout the play but sometimes they are not as euphoric as the situation demands. In some cases the lyrical verses sound like common words and lacked tunes.

A couple of cast members are very good singers, at least, they often sing for their respective troupes. Yet, when the musical demand more high-octave vocals [something natural to opera performers] they fail to produce them and their voices buzz abruptly in the ear.

If a successful theatre means a good combination of spontaneity in acting and boldness in diction, then it could be stated that the play lacks some depth. Dissecting it, a hypothetical assumption should be made. "Target Platoon" is a spectacular, energetic and engaging play but, in some cases, incoherent. We hope as time goes by it will become a more polished work.

Admirers aplenty

Memorial meeting on Humayun Ahmed held

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

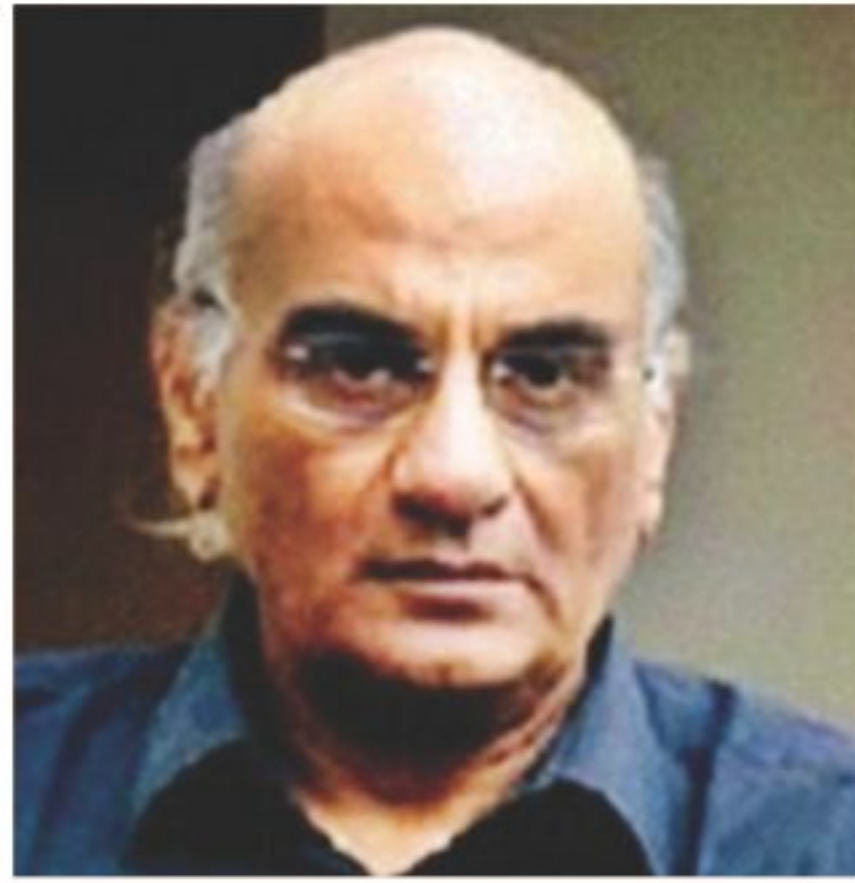
A memorial meeting on popular writer Humayun Ahmed was held at the premises of central Shaheed Minar in Lalmonirhat town on Saturday. A cross section of people, including poets, writers, theatre artists, singers, educationists, litterateurs, journalists, teachers, and students were present at the meeting. The participants prayed for the salvation of the departed soul of Ahmed and held a discussion on his life and creative talent.

The speakers at the meeting were poet Ferdousi Rahman; professor of literature, Nazrul Islam; Habibur

Rahman; Abdul Majid Mandal; Mujibor Rahman; Adv. Badal Ashraf; Shamim Ahmed and poet Mahbubur Rahman Monu, among others.

Ferdousi Rahman said, "Our favorite writer Humayun Ahmed may have departed from this world but he will always remain in our hearts. His creativity is a model for all of us and we continue to ponder on his writing."

General secretary of Lalmonirhat Sahitto Parishad, Professor Abdul Majid Mandal said, "Our respected and favourite writer Humayun Ahmed enriched Bengali literature with his great creativity. All of his writings help to build a harmonious society. We the Bangla speaking people are proud of him."



A CORRESPONDENT

To pay homage to the major voice of alternative cinema in India, filmmaker and theoretician Mani Kaul, Dhaka Art Center and Bangladesh Short Film Forum jointly organised Mani Kaul Film Session 2 at Dhaka Art Centre (DAC) in Dhanmondi. The two day film screening was inaugurated on July 27. Mani Kaul's Duvudha, Uski Roti and Nazar were screened at the Seminar Room of the DAC.

On the last day of the film screening, an open discussion on the works and thoughts of Mani Kaul was held. Trustees of the DAC, filmmakers, social activists and others took part at the discussion.

Homage to filmmaker Mani Kaul

Mani Kaul (1944 - 2011) graduated from the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) where he was a student of Ritwik Ghatak and later became a teacher. Started his career with Uski Roti, which won him the Filmfare Critics Award for Best Movie, he went on to win four of them in all. He won the National Film Award for Best Direction in 1974 for Duvudha and later the National Film Award for his documentary film, Siddheshwari in 1989. He was a member of the jury at the 21st Berlin International Film Festival. He was a visiting lecturer at Harvard University for the 2000-2001 school years. He was the Creative Director of the Film House at Osian's Connoisseurs of Art, Mumbai.

Arannya Anwar: A committed director

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

Arannya Anwar carved a name in the media by writing and directing TV plays like "Jonok", "Jonmo", "Shopner Haat-e Hyena", "Jubok Khun Hobar Por", "Raaf Pohabar Onek Deri" and "Darao". However, his biggest success stories were the plays, "Nurul Huda Ekoda Bhalobeshchhilo" and "Otopor Nurul Nuda". BTV aired both the plays directed by Anwar, where Mahfuz Ahmed played the title role. The trilogy of the drama, an unprecedented phenomenon in our country, was later completed with "Amader Nurul Huda", which featured a host of stars like Afzal Hossain, Humayun Faridee, Mousumi, Riaz and Zahid Hasan. "Amader Nurul Huda", written by Arannya Anwar himself, was aired on ATN Bangla.

The unstoppable talented director reveals that another sequel is on the books, and is likely to start the work by next year under the production house of Mahfuz Ahmed, Mahfuz Ahmed will once again play the eponymous role.

The director adds that the success of "Amader Nurul Huda" has encouraged him greatly and promises viewers that the next edition will have more surprises in store.

Arannya Anwar began his directorial journey with the TV play "Ekhan Aor Paowa Jae" and gradually paved a path to success with dramas like "Kanon Kushum Koli", "Keboli Raaf Hoya Jae", "Ghorar Dim", "Hoi Hoi Roi Roi", "Parapar" and "Chobish Ghonta".

His "Rupkotha", aired on ntv, features Eshita in the lead role. The director says that the TV play focuses on the struggles of a girl named Rupkotha, who hails from a small town and is an active theatre artist in her town. The story rolls forward when she arrives in Dhaka and seeks work on stage. The successful production is nearing its end, says Anwar.

Anwar has also shot a new serial, "Korta Kahini" recently in Cox's Bazar. In the play, Zahid Hasan plays three different roles. The director says the serial has proved a brilliant success and the audience can expect a lot from it.

The talent of the popular director has been recognised with awards from BACHASAS, CJFB and TRAB. However, Anwar considers the admiration of the audience as his biggest reward, as it is for them he directs his plays.



PHOTO: MUMIT M.

The ambitious director now aspires to go behind the camera for a movie. Although initial plans for a movie called "Geneva Camp" had to be scrapped, his aspiration to make a mark on the silver screen remains undimmed. Anwar says, the biggest obstacle to making a good movie is the lack of sufficient funds and the film will only be shot when adequate funds are available.

The director says the new breed of directors, minus a few exceptions are doing a great job behind the camera. However, he goes on to say that in this age of tough competition, only the fittest will survive.

A former journalist, Anwar has used his skills with the pen to script most of his directorial ventures. Asked how he switched careers, Anwar says that it was his long cherished dream to become a director. He adds, "Once, after approaching Impress Telefilm chief Faridur Reza Sagar with the intention of producing a play, he advised me to direct the play myself. So I took his advice and made the leap of faith. Since then direction has been my career and my addiction."

Sumaiya Shimu is on the go

A CORRESPONDENT

Actor Sumaiya Shimu is constantly on the go, shooting for many Eid special TV plays. Currently, she is based in Kishoreganj for a single episode play titled "Fantasy Opera", directed by Mahmud Didar. Shatabdi Wadud stars opposite her.

"The story of 'Fantasy Opera' is quite interesting. Spectators will be thoroughly entertained by the play during Eid-ul-Fitr," says Sumaiya.

Sumaiya hopes to be back in Dhaka soon after the three days shoot is over. In Dhaka, the busy actress will work for a host of single episode TV plays, scheduled for the upcoming Eid. Sumaiya has completed shooting for another Eid special TV play "Teen Jonaki", directed by Ferdous Hasan Rana. Apurba is her co-actor in the TV play. She was also featured in two Eid special TV plays, directed by Tuhin Abanto and Fazlur Rahman. "I still have to figure out in how many Eid special TV plays I am acting, as shooting is still on," says Sumaiya.

Sumaiya is also immersed in three TV serials "Dokkhinayoner Din", "Chhayanari" and "Radio Chocolate", currently aired on ntv, ATN Bangla and Desh TV respectively.

Sumaiya appears as the head of news of radio in "Radio Chocolate"; a village woman in "Chhayanari" and a realistic and complex character in "Dokkhinayoner Din".

"I play three radically different characters in the serials. It was fun acting as director news in 'Radio Chocolate' as it was quite an unusual character for me," says Sumaiya.

Asked what Eid means to her today, Sumaiya says, "I need to relax and I plan to stay in Dhaka with my family during Eid. Eid days during my childhood were enjoyable. On Eid mornings, I would experience a special sort of delight.

"What I enjoyed most was receiving Salami and gifts. I still receive gifts and in return have to give gifts too. But it makes me happy."



PHOTO: MUMIT M.

Klaus Staeck's poster exhibition at Goethe-Institut



STAFF

CORRESPONDENT

Goethe-Institut has organised a poster exhibition titled 'Nothing is Done' featuring the works of German poster artist Klaus Staeck at its premises in Dhanmondi.

The posters depict environmental issues in a satirical and entertaining way, which simultaneously express vital messages on how to save our environment and surrounding atmosphere. He has made over 300 posters in the past 40 years of which 40 selected posters are on display. Through his posters, he has been fighting against social ills such as ignorance, superstition and bigotry. Most of his posters centre on climate change, air and water pollution, nuclear waste and pollution of oceans and surrounding atmosphere. Texts attached along with the images are also interesting

and significant. For the understanding of local visitors, the German texts have been translated into Bangla.

One of his posters depicts some vertical thin lines in a large uncultivated land. The lines have a lyrical touch. Another poster reveals dry trees in a symbolic way. Water pollution has been featured mockingly in an image which demonstrates a dead fish in a jar.

Klaus Staeck, born in 1938 in Pulsnitz, Germany, is the president of the Academy of Arts in Berlin.

The exhibition will continue till August 23.

