

WHAT'S ON

Animated Film Festival
Organiser: Dhaka Art Center
Venue: Dhaka Art Center, H-60, Rd-7/A, Dhamondi
Date: January 4-11
Time: 4pm-6pm

Album Launch & Musical Soiree
Title: Boranmahar Rauty Phagan
Venue: National Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy
Date: January 11-12
Time: 6:30pm

Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Life in Abstraction, Abstraction in Life
Artist: Biren Shome
Venue: Bengal Gallery, Dhamondi

Theatre
Play: Shesh Rokkha
Troupe: Natyjan
Venue: National Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy
Date: January 11-12
Time: 6:30pm

Noborsha Boi Utsab
Organiser: Adom Publication
Venue: Public Library, Shahbagh
Date: Dec 29-Jan 13
Time: 10am-5pm

Mastercraftpersons Award and Crafts Fair
Venue: Bangla Academy
Date: Jan 11-13
Award Giving on Jan 11 at 11am

Solo Art Exhibition
Artist: Rezwanul Haque
Venue: Auditorium Gallery, Dhaka Cantt Girls' Public School & College
Date: Jan 1-23

Solo Art Exhibition
Title: The Making of Kuhu Art-2
Artist: Kuhu
Venue: Radius Art Gallery, Gulshan
Date: Nov 30-Jan 15

Stories of rural lives take up the small screen

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

With the increasing number of TV channels, the number of TV plays is also on the increase. Although plays on urban and rural issues, comedy, mystery and more are all being aired, directors are getting more and more inclined towards rural backdrops for their stories.

"Rong-er Manush" was a milestone in Bangladeshi TV serials with rural background. At a time when people were rejecting the typical urban storylines, "Rong-er Manush" came like a breath of fresh village air, proving that the simple lives of rural folks can be very entertaining as well.

The director behind "Rong-er Manush", Salauddin Lavlu, said that he grew up in the villages and since he knows that life, that familiarity made the serial believable.

The success of "Rong-er Manush" motivated a lot of

other directors to move towards this genre of dramas, with Salauddin Lavlu carrying on with the theme in "Sakin Sharishuri", "Bhober Haat" and "Ghor Kutum". Apart from Lavlu made on the theme, notably "Goru Chor" and "Dhol-er Baddi", were also well received. One of Lavlu's current hits, "Harkipta", is being aired on Banglavision.

Meanwhile, Brindaban Das came to the limelight for writing the scripts of these rural themed serials and plays. Although he is one of the topmost scriptwriters at the moment, he has never written plays on urban life or issues. Brindaban said that he was raised in a village, and feels at home writing scripts in line with it. Masum Reza is another writer who drew quite a bit of attention with his village-based stories.

One much-talked about TV serial, "Choita Pagol", was directed by actor Mahfuz Ahmed. On the serial's popularity, Mahfuz said that the simplicity of the village life generated interest in the audience.



A scene from "Choita Pagol".

Another popular and successful TV drama set against a rural backdrop was "Nurul Huda Ekoda Bhalobeshechhilo" -- directed by Aronyo Anwar. He went on to make similar dramas like "Otophor Nurul Huda", "Amader Nurul Huda", "Kanon-e Kushum Koli", "Ghora'r Dim" and "Kobiraj Golap Shah", the last one of the list being aired currently. Aronyo said that if the stories of village dwellers can be presented well, the audience takes it well.

Belal Ahmed's drama serial "Tariq Ali Hadari", with eminent actor ATM Shamsuzzaman playing the lead character, was another TV show that gained huge popularity. Syed Shakil has been making dramas on rural lives for quite a few years now. One of his biggest recent hits on TV was "Rongila Bao", after which he directed "Hawaii Mithai". His drama "Bagha Sher" is being aired on Gazi TV right now. Serials depicting rural lives on Rtv are: "Oloshpur" directed

by Al-Hazen, and "Boyra Poribar". Maasranga TV is airing "Saat Sawdagor" currently, written by Masum Reza and directed by Syed Awlad. Writer Masum Reza usually sends the scripts in from England, where he resides at the moment.

Other channels are not far behind, with ATN Bangla broadcasting "Jhulonto Babura", directed by Kabir Babu and Boishakhi TV is airing "Batpar".

Some of the other top favourite TV serials set in villages are: Rulin Rahman's "Moyur Bahon", "Ushob"; Badrul Anad Saud's "Gohiney"; Afsana Mimi's "Poush Phaguner Pala"; Zahid Hasan's "Ghughu'r Basha'l Debashish Barua Dwip's "Byrasto Director Yip Man, who went on to train Bruce Lee, and features lengthy battles between rival kung fu masters. Wong is best known for his 2000 slow-burn drama "In the Mood for Love". His new film, packed with Chinese stars including Hong Kong actor Tony Leung and Beijing-born starlet Zhang Ziyi, appears well placed to capture the local audience.

Raju Alim honoured for TV show on Liberation War

Director, journalist and poet Raju Alim was recently honoured with the Bangladesh-India Friendship Council medal -- for his TV show "Muktijuddho Protidin" that was aired on Channel 1 and BTV simultaneously, according to a press release.

The programme, anchored by Nasiruddin Youssuf and highlighting the Liberation War, completed its 850th episode, a landmark for TV programmes in the country. Alim received the award at a programme at the Dhaka University's Senate building, where BMA Secretary General Iqbal Arslan, publisher Nurul Aktar; Bangladesh Bank general manager M Asaduzzaman; and Namita Ghosh, of Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, were also honoured.

Alim began his career as a journalist at the daily Ittefaq, and over the last two decades, has published a number of novels and collections of poems, and written and directed tele-films, TV plays and documentaries. He is currently working as a senior programme producer at Channel 1, and is also the publicity secretary of the directors' guild of the Bangladesh Film Journalists' Society.



Raju Alim (L) receives the award from Sandeep Chakravorty, Deputy High Commissioner of India in Dhaka.



A scene from "Jhulonto Babura".

Natyajan to premiere Tagore's comedy Shesh Rokkha



Actors during rehearsal.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Theatre troupe Natyajan will premiere its 9th production, Rabindranath Tagore's comedy "Shesh Rokkha" on January 11 at the National Theatre Hall, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in Dhaka. Mohsina Akhter is the director and designer of the play.

The humorous story of the play combines incidents in a domestic setting. Two friends -- Nibaran and Shibcharan -- want to fortify their friendship through having their respective offspring marrying each other. Godai, son of Shibcharan, and Indumati, daughter of Nibaran, are the ones who are supposed to get married.

Komol is an orphan who lives with Nibaran's family. Young lawyer Chandra is a close friend of Godai. Indumati and Komol are friends with Chandra's wife. Binod, another friend of Godai, hears Komol singing at Chandra's home. Without even seeing her, Binod decides to marry Komol and the marriage takes place eventually.

The coinciding romantic interests and marriages create situations meant to generate laughter.

The cast of the play will include TV actress Chitrakala Guha along with Shimu, Nolak, Shumona, Liton and Tabibul Islam. Uttam Guha is the art director of the play.

The premiere will be held at 6:30 pm on January 11. Another show will be held the following day at the same time. Natyajan started its journey in 1997.

Wong Kar Wai returns with new film

AFP, Beijing

Hong Kong director Wong Kar Wai's long-awaited martial arts film "The Grandmaster" was shown in public for the first time in Beijing on Sunday, after more than six years in production.

The film spans several decades of Chinese history to tell the story of legendary martial artist Yip Man, who went on to train Bruce Lee, and features lengthy battles between rival kung fu masters.

Wong is best known for his 2000 slow-burn drama "In the Mood for Love". His new film, packed with Chinese stars including Hong Kong actor Tony Leung and Beijing-born starlet Zhang Ziyi, appears well placed to capture the local audience.

In his first press appearance to promote the film, Wong was also confident that "The Grandmaster", which runs for over two hours in its current edit and is steeped in traditional martial arts culture, would be well received abroad.



Wong Kar-wai (R) smiles next to actor Tony Leung (C) and actress Zhang Ziyi (L).

Lashkar-e-qawwali Interesting experiment



KAVITA, New Delhi

The play traces the journey of the qawwali from ancient to present times through music and audio visuals.

South Asians are only too familiar with qawwali or Sufi devotional music. With its message of peace, love and brotherhood, the art form has deep rooted mystical roots that date back over many centuries. Yet the qawwali has evolved a long distance from the peaceful sanctum of Sufi shrines or dargahs to terrible distortions in Bollywood movies.

Tracing the journey of the qawwali from ancient to present times through music, audio visuals and drama, reputed theatre personality Danish Iqbal has conceived and directed "Lashkar-e-qawwali", a play which was staged recently. Iqbal spoke to The Daily Star about the play. Excerpts from the interview:

How was the production conceived? I have been involved in theatre since childhood and have done numerous plays as actor as well as director. Very few plots really made as great an impact on me as this one. The subject kept striking my mind whenever I came across qawwali especially at live performances in dargahs or concerts. Over a period of time, what was a form of worship, has become purely commercial. So I wanted to explore the evolution of qawwali.

After 10 months of research, it took six months to get the first draft of the script. This first draft went to many writers and subject scholars. I took their feedback and then sat again with my writer. While all this was going on there were many debates on

ALL TIME GREATS Harry Houdini: The master of escape

Erich Weisz was born to a Jewish rabbi on March 24, 1874 in Budapest, Hungary. He moved to Wisconsin, USA with his family at a very early age, and later moved to New York with his father at age 13, and soon took interest in trapeze arts.

In 1891 at the age of 17, he began a career as a magician, and renamed himself Harry Houdini -- deriving the first name from his childhood nickname "Ehrie" and the last name as homage to the great French magician Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin. While his magic act did not find great success, he drew substantial attention as an escape artist. His career took a shining turn in 1899 when he met vaudeville theatre owner Martin Beck, who advised him to concentrate on escape arts, after seeing his handcuff act. Houdini was soon performing across USA, and in 1900, Beck arranged a tour of Europe for him. While in London, he gave a demonstration of escape from handcuffs at Scotland Yard, and succeeded in baffling the police so effectively that he was booked at the Alhambra theatre for six months. Throughout his tour of Europe, Houdini challenged local police officers to restrain him in shackles and lock him in their prisons, from which he would escape. He won a big sum of money suing a police officer in Germany's Cologne, who had claimed that Houdini's escapes were made through bribery. He won the case by opening the presiding judge's safe, convincing the court of his skills.

In the years to come, Houdini performed with great success across USA, where he would free himself from jails, cuffs, chains and straitjackets, often in plain sight of street audiences while hanging from a rope. As other magicians began to imitate his acts, Houdini began a new act, of escaping from a sealed, water-filled milk-can, and even invited the public to devise contraptions to restrain him. In 1912 came his most famous act, the Chinese Water Torture Cell that would require him to hold his breath underwater for 3 minutes. His other most famous acts included the Mirror handcuff challenge, the buried alive challenge, and the overhead box escape.

Apart from being a celebrated illusionist, Houdini also took great interest in aviation, and was one of the first people to fly in Australia in 1910. He also launched a movie career, releasing his first film in 1901, and starred in several subsequent films, mostly portraying his escape acts -- and he started his own production company, Houdini Picture Corporation,



Harry Houdini performing the "Chinese Water Torture Cell" act.

and a film lab. However, neither of these ventures saw much success. In the later parts of his life, he also took a strong stand of debunking self-proclaimed psychics. However, the stance cost him the friendship of celebrated mystery writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who was a firm believer in spiritualism. Houdini died on October 31, 1926 -- from a ruptured appendix. It is said that it was caused by punches to his abdomen made by a visitor at his dressing room, who had asked if it was true that Houdini could sustain any blow to his abdomen, if prepared. Before the magician was ready, the student delivered four blows to his abdomen. Despite being in severe pain and fever for over a week, Houdini refused surgery for his appendicitis, and carried on performing his shows until he was bedridden.

Compiled by Correspondent

Indian Kobials work the audience

PONUEL S BOSE, Narail

A musical soiree, titled "Pagli Ma-er Prem", featuring Kobi Gaan was staged at Nimtola Bhoarani Chatter, Poradanga village of the district on Saturday night. Pagli Ma-er Mela Uddipon Committee arranged the event.

Famous Indian Kobial Asim Sarkar and Amol Sarkar kept the audience spellbound the entire night. In the courses of the 5/6 hour-long programme, the two performers engaged in a musical debate on different subjects. Thousands of music lovers from adjoining Jessore, Magura, Gopalganj and Faridpur districts and remote areas of Narail district thronged the venue to enjoy the performance as well as to have a glance of the noted singers.

About 20 stalls were set up beside the venue with different items. On Saturday evening the programme was inaugurated by SK Abu Baker, MR, Narail-2 as chief guest.

Beetle Baily by Mort Walker and Henry by Don Tranchte. Includes comic strips with dialogue like 'WHAT'S THE MATTER?' and 'I GOT HURT IN A FIGHT'.

Table of TV programmes including ATN BANGLA, CHANNEL 1, CHANNEL 24, ntv, and abx radio FM 89.2.

Table of radio programmes including abx radio FM 89.2, Morning Express, Dhaka Calling, and others.

Adda O Gaan Musical Programme Host: Joy Shahrar

Kung Fu Hustle On Fox Movies at 08:50pm Genre: Action/Comedy Cast: Stephen Chow, Wah Yuen & Qiu Yuen

Makrasha On Rtv at 08:15pm Drama Serial: Drama Serial: Cast: Shamill Ahmed, MS Rana

Table of TV programmes including Gtv, Fox Movies, Boishakhi TV, BANGLAVISION, Star World, and Discovery Channel.

Table of DRAMA SERIAL programmes including ATN BANGLA, CHANNEL 1, ntv, and BANGLAVISION.

Table of NEWS BULLETIN programmes including BTv, Boishakhi TV, BANGLAVISION, and ntv.

Table of TALK SHOW programmes including BTv, ntv, CHANNEL 1, and Boishakhi TV.