

WHAT'S ON



Solo Art Exhibit
Title: Fata Morgana
Artist: Rukya Sultana
Venue: Bengal Art Lounge,
Gulshan-1
Date: May 17-June 11



Celebrating International Museum Day
Organiser: Bangladesh National Museum
Venue: National Museum, Shahbagh



An Evening of Nazrul Sangeet
Artist: Ferdous Ara
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, H-35, Rd-24, Gulshan-1



Solo Painting Exhibition
Title: Impression of Surroundings-3
Artist: Mohiuddin Ahmed Mohim
Venue: Gallery Cosmos-2, H-115, R-6, New 2005, Mohakhali
Date: May 10-20



An Evening of Nazrul Sangeet
Artist: Sahabuddin Ahmed
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, H-35, Rd-24, Gulshan-1



Swapno O Droher Jatiyo
Artist: Natya Uthab
Organiser: Shikshaka Academy
Venue: National Theatre Hall, Experimental Theatre Hall, Music and Dance Centre & Studio Theatre Hall



Solo Art Exhibition
Title: Abhoman Bangla
Artist: Nikhil Chandra Das
Venue: Gallery Johnny, H-134, R-3, Block-A, Niketan, Gulshan
Date: May 4-19



Group Art Exhibition
Participants: 80 Noted Artists
Venue: Saju Art Gallery, F/40-41, DCC North Super Market, 2nd Circle Gulshan
Date: April 19-May 20

Lata Mangeskar sings a duet with Shaon



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

For the first time, eminent singer of the sub-continent, Lata Mangeskar has recorded a duet with Bangladeshi singer Shaon Chowdhury. The song "Keno Omon Kore" has been featured for a mixed audio album titled "Mone Rekho Prithibi". With lyrics by Beershevar Sarkar; Shantanu (India) and Mostak Ahmed (Bangladeshi) have composed music for the track. Under the label of Impress Audio Vision Limited, the album is now available in the market.

The album contains several other duets, where Shaon Chowdhury has sung with noted Indian singers Asha Bhonsle and Haimanti Shukla, and Bangladeshi diva Sabina Yasmin and Mitali Mukherjee. Shaon Chowdhury also recorded two solos for the album.

Eminent musicians Alauddin Ali and Ahmed Imtiaz Bulbul have composed two songs for the album.

With a musical career spanning four decades, the artist -- a disciple of Ustad Niaz Mohammad Chowdhury, has so far bagged several international awards including World Master Award (Seoul), ZEE-TV Guniyan Award (India), India-Bangladesh Friendship Award, South Asian Cultural Award (Nepal), and Bangladesh Television Artists Association Performance Award. Besides being deep into music, Shaon Chowdhury is currently the Deputy Commissioner of Taxes.



Immersion in pure abstraction

Samiran Chowdhury's quest for symbolic expressions

TAKIR HOSSAIN

Contemplative artist Samiran Chowdhury feels that abstract art, a different way of looking at the world, enables him and the viewer to establish a connection. "In abstract art, the artist uses a visual language of shapes, forms, lines and colours to interpret a subject," he said.

Chowdhury searches for novel themes and seeks to clarify his views in a different way. His distinctive lines, tones, smooth textures and varying mild and bright colours are hallmarks of his works and have evolved in a pure abstract style. He is now recognised as an accomplished abstract artist and has a penchant for high-lighting nature, human relationships, depression, isolation, ecstasy, nightmares, physiological journeys, the divine world and emotions. He allows all these ingredients to frequent his canvases in various symbolic configurations.

The artist says that iconic painters Barnett Newman and Hans Hofmann give him a taste of

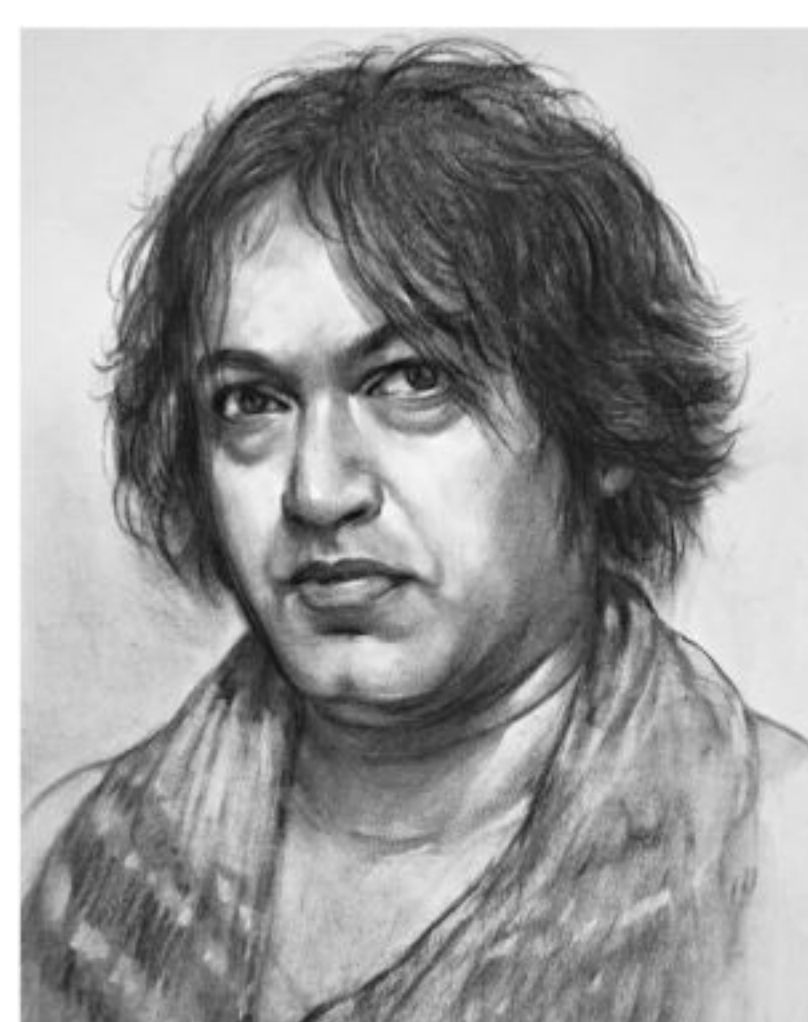
liberty and inspire his individuality.

Samiran's abstractions are composition and form-oriented. Some of his paintings also denote his fascination with minimal geometric compositions. Most of his compositions and forms are

marked by delicate brush strokes, subdued colours, light and shade. His application of paint is quite distinctive. The colours frequently used are pale yellow, azure, crimson, black, white and emerald green -- representing torrential shades and alluring shapes. Adjoining columns, wrecked and abandoned walls, subtle images, soft and glowing colours also create a panoramic impact in his recent paintings.

Over the years, Samiran has produced many paintings, where he has primarily depicted realistic images. In recent times, he feels comfortable in adopting the style of pure abstraction.

Samiran's paintings are aesthetically rich, powerful and thought provoking. The paintings are an excellent demonstration of his artistic aptitude and his personal philosophy.



Self-portrait by Samiran.
(Top, Right) Samiran's abstractions are composition and form-oriented.



Shawkat Osman remembered

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

On the occasion of the 15th death anniversary of noted author Shawkat Osman, a memorial meeting was organised by Shawkat Osman Smriti Parishad at the Sufia Kamal Auditorium, Bangladesh National Museum, Dhaka on Tuesday.

Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu was chief guest at the memorial meeting. Cultural

Affairs Secretary, Dr Ranjit Kumar Biswas, was present as special guest. Professor Bulbon Osman, elder son of Shawkat Osman; Professor Rafiqullah Khan, Bangla Department, Dhaka University; State Minister for Science, Information and Technology, Yeafesh Osman, son of Shawkat Osman, took part in a discussion. Rakibul Islam, secretary general of Shawkat Osman Smriti Parishad, delivered the welcome speech. Language Movement

veteran and essayist Ahmed Rafiq presided over the programme.

The discussants briefly focused on the author's life and contributions. His writings highlight the disadvantaged and downtrodden people in our society. Their miseries and social issues are recurring subjects in his works, they added.

Ahmed Rafiq said, "Osman fought against communalism and anti-Liberation War forces. His writings carry strong messages against fundamentalism and

religious bigotry."

Ranjit Kumar Biswas said, "Osman was a politically and socially aware author."

Bulbon Osman said, "Osman was an avid reader and had a great sense of humour. He had intense interest in music, art, geography, science and anthropology."

He received many awards and accolades, including the Independence Day Award in 1997.



FILE PHOTO

Monalisa First taste of modelling

A CORRESPONDENT

As a child, whenever I watched television, I dreamt of performing in front of a camera one day. Whenever I watched a commercial, I could almost see myself on the screen. But I didn't when or how that dream would come true.

When I was in high school, my wishes unexpectedly came true. I was offered a role in a Fair and Lovely commercial. The commercial, directed by Tarik Anam Khan, was shot at BFDC. I was tied up in knots in worries the day before the shoot. I had fixed feelings of nervousness and excitement all night, and I remember of waking up very early that morn-

ing to get ready.

Entering BFDC and seeing celebrities on the way in was exciting in itself, but the butterflies in my stomach really started to flutter as soon as I saw the camera. The unit crew, however, was very supportive and encouraging.

My mother has helped me a lot through the experience, and it was her inspiration which gave me the strength to face the camera for the first time. The director shouted "Action", and I mentally took a dive, ignoring the fear that had welled up in me. As soon as the shooting was complete, the entire unit cheered as one. Of the many firsts in my life, this is one that remains brighter than others.

THE SENSATIONAL SIX FINALISTS of POWER VOICE

SHAH ALAM SHAZU

The first edition of Channel 9's "Power Voice" competition saw 40,000 contestants showing up to prove their singing skills. Following rounds of elimination, the top six singers remained in the competition, directed by Tanvir Khan. The team of six recently came to The Daily Star office to share their stories.

Zakia Sultana Cornia was born in Magura and raised in Dhaka. Learning the ABCs of music from her mother, she is now taking extensive lessons from Ustad Sanjib Dey. Cornia, whose favourite singer is Runa Laila, wishes to see herself one day as a leading singer of the country. "I want to entertain the crowds through stage performances," she said. Asked about her favourite memory from the campaign, she said the group going to Old Dhaka late at night to try out the special delicacies was a special day for her.

Ismat Ara Eva is another contestant who has been singing since childhood. Originally from Khulna, she is now taking lessons from Ashok Chakrabarty. Eva dreams of singing memorable songs. Sharing her experiences in the competition, Eva said, "For a performance in the competition, I once sang a Runa Laila song, which was tuned by Satya Saha. Runa Laila com-

plimented me by saying that Satya Saha would've chosen me as a singer, if I were there at the time of the original recording. Coming from an internationally recognised artist like Runa Laila, the compliment is one of the biggest achievements of my life."

Also from the southwest region of Bagerhaat, Shamim Hasan Shamim is a skilled singer, with 13 years of training -- from the local Ankur Academy. For him, a lot of hard work and dedication was needed to reach the top six. Shamim also had stories to share from his experiences in the competition: "Runa Laila was very pleased with my performances, when I rendered a song in the 'Folk Round'. Asked about his aspirations, Shamim replied that he wishes to reach out to the rural people with his songs.

Atikul Islam Raju, a Dhaka resident who is also part of the top six, was trained at Bulbul Lalitakala Academy, and considers Ustad Sanjib Dey as his guru. The ambitious singer wants to reach out to Bengali-speaking audiences all across the globe, and carve out a niche for himself. Raju has mixed memories from the competition so far. He was elated after receiving rounds of applause for the performance of a Sonu Nigam song in the "International Round". But there were also

moments when another contestant, Masum, was eliminated from the competition.

Raju's Dhaka neighbour is Mehedi Hasan Sajal, whose singing guru is his grandfather, Baul Sadhok Deen Islam Shah Chishti. His childhood dreams of singing are taking wings ever since Sajal reached Power Voice's top six. He said, "I aspire to establish Bengali songs in the international arena. I also plan on forming a band and staying involved with music till my last breath." He also thanked the Creator for keeping him alive in the competition so far. "There are constant fun moments during the competition. The simple adda and fights between ourselves are part of the fun times," Sajal said.

Afroza Belly, from Chittagong, is last but not the least of the top six of the competition. She has been a member of the Port City's Blue Birds band since 2008, playing the drums and singing on stage. Asked about cherished memories from the competition, she said, "The top 11 in the competition did a play on the stage for fun. I played the role of Runa Laila and enjoyed every moment of the performance." Like all other established artists, Belly's wish is to contribute to music on a national level.



Camaraderie between competitors: The top six of Power Voice.

PHOTO: ATL AAKASH

COUCH POTATO

Family Guy: Heartless and humorous

OSAMA RAHMAN

"Begin at the beginning and go on till you come to the end: then stop." The King said to Alice, in Lewis Carroll's timeless classic, "Alice in Wonderland". Lewis Carroll's vivid imagination was psychedelic before the word came into being but taking the King's advice was the only way one could make head or tail of the book. After you peel off the absurdity, a deeper meaning is revealed. That's what made the book so special. And that's exactly what makes Seth MacFarlane's "Family Guy" special.

The animation revolves around a dysfunctional family comprising of the mom and dad -- Lois and Peter respectively, their sons Stewie and Chris, their daughter Meg, and their dog Brian. Together they make up the Griffins, a family who give even the Simpsons a run for their money. "Family Guy" doesn't just stir the hornet's nest every episode, but rather makes a

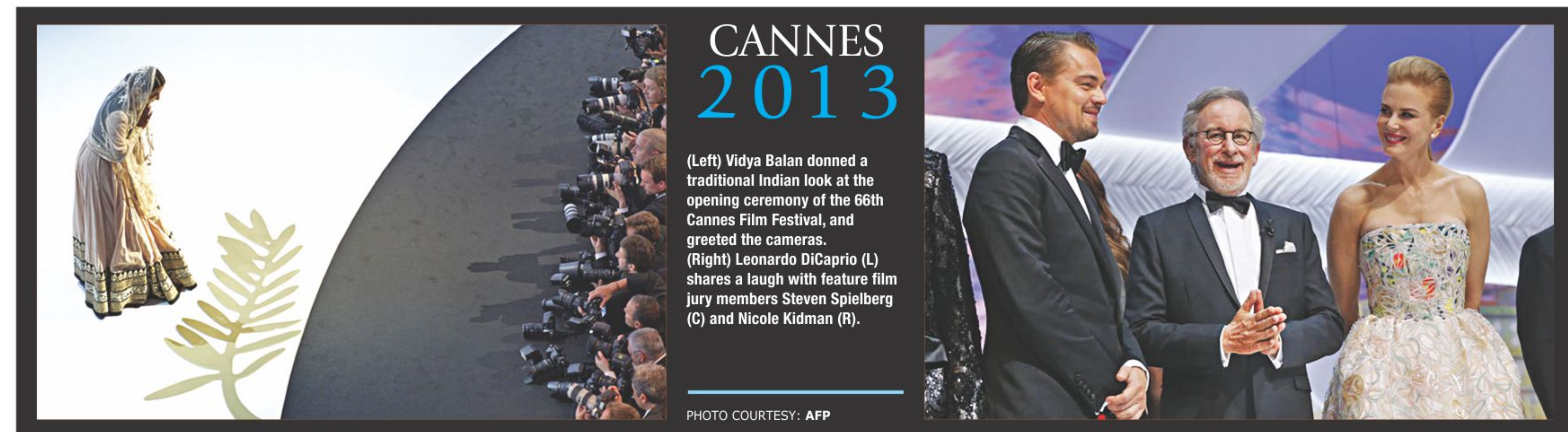
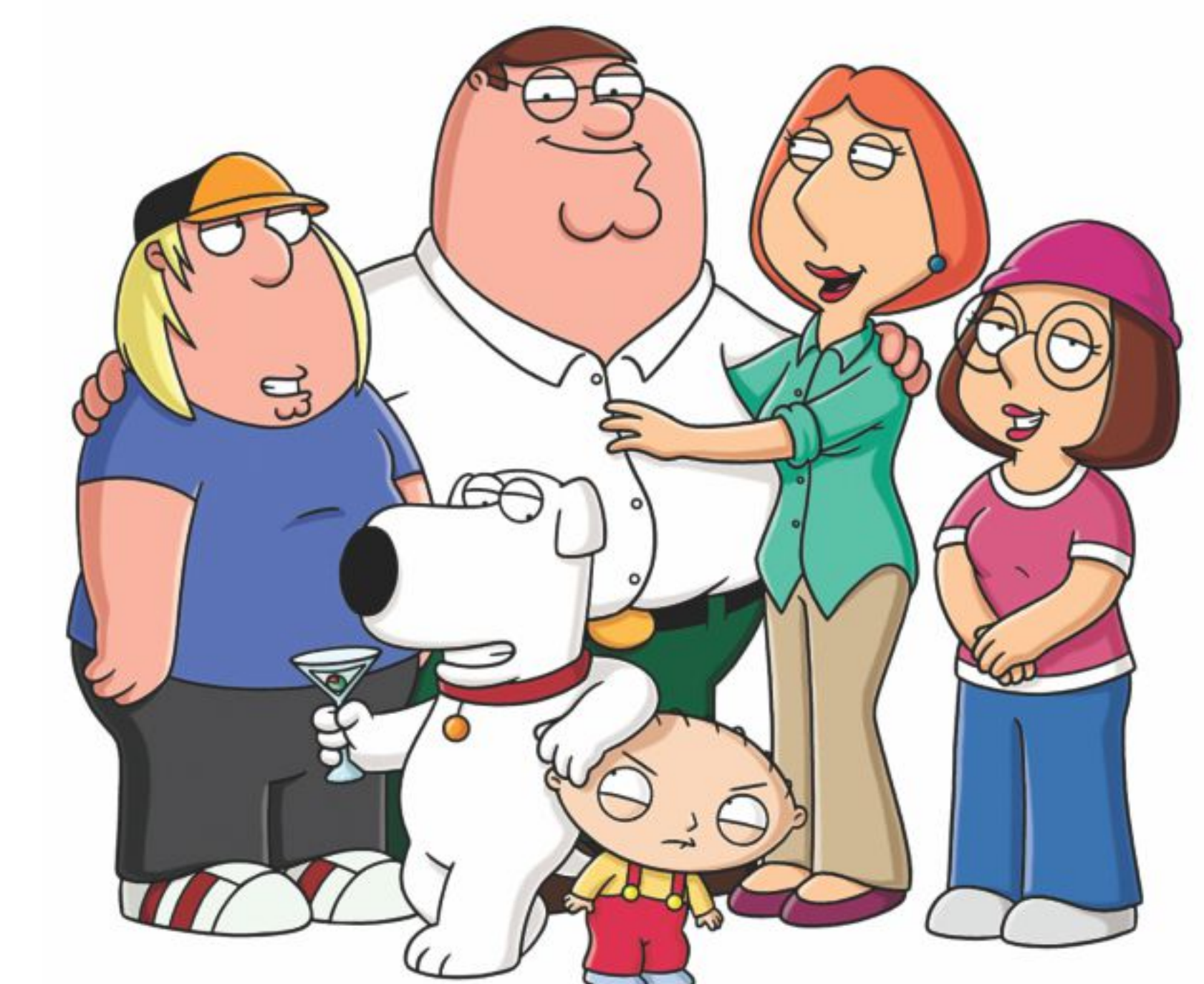
point to swing a hard kick at it. The show has found admirers and detractors in equal measure and the content does not make that surprising.

Each episode of "Family Guy" picks up from wherever it pleases and then blazes a trail that no one can make sense of. It is chaotic and seemingly directionless. Loose ends are handed out like candy during Easter and viewers are left confused, yet intrigued. Seth MacFarlane goes out of his way to find the line between offensive and tasteless and then blurs it. No issue is sensitive enough and no remark is insensitive enough. Peter Griffin's crop of friends -- which includes a handicapped police officer, a pervert and an African-American man -- are the who's who of "things you shouldn't joke about". Yet, "Family Guy" does just that.

Sometimes, the comedy stretches a bit too far. It goes from funny to tasteless to downright

cruel in a matter of minutes and then reverts right back one cutaway later. The transition is seamless and the ensuing laughter is a sign of forgiveness. Since the show goes out of its way to take a dig at absolutely everyone, there is no unfair treatment or downright racism, which is offensive. We are all targets and we all get a good laugh at ourselves. Self-deprecating humour is always the best kind.

So how does one make sense of a show, which is as disjointed and restless as "Family Guy"? Just follow the King's advice: start from the beginning, reach the end and then you stop. That's when you realise that you weren't served half an hour of dreamed up cruelty but rather were shown the beliefs society secretly nurtures. "Family Guy" washes and airs your dirty laundry and in the process of their absurdity, you get to absolve yourself of your misconceptions. So, sit back and have a guilt-free laugh; you know you want to.



CANNES 2013

(Left) Vidya Balan donned a traditional Indian look at the opening ceremony of the 66th Cannes Film Festival, and greeted the cameras. (Right) Leonardo DiCaprio (L) shares a laugh with feature film jury members Steven Spielberg (C) and Nicole Kidman (R).

PHOTO COURTESY: AFP

THE WEEKENDER

Elita Karim: Balancing work and play



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSSIN AGAZ APURBO

SAURAV DEY

Elita Karim is familiar name and face, especially to those who remain in touch with our music scene, television and newspapers. After a hectic day's work at her profession of journalism, the vivacious singer makes time to enthral audiences at her concerts. However, when the question is of finding time for herself, Elita does a pretty decent job.

What's usually on your weekend agenda?
Elita: When you're a journalist and a musician, a relaxed weekend doesn't really happen much. On weekends, I join jamming sessions with musicians; do shows in both Dhaka and outside the capital. However, I meet my friends every Thursday night; we usually get together at a restaurant, hang out and visit my friends' place and then play Uno (card game) until late at night.

Juggling music and journalism: How challenging is it?

Elita: Journalism is my profession, and music is my passion. I step0070ed into journalism when I was a university student, and gradually found that it's not confrontational with my music, so I took it up as a profession. In case of schedule overlap, I try to manage my office time; I'm fortunate that my office gives me that space, as I try to remain sincere about my work in return.

How do you manage your time, given that your schedule is always packed?

Elita: To me, the two things that help me be responsible are: time management and proper decision-making. I am always looking forward to relax and have fun, even if it means cancelling some shows.

Is there anything you especially do to take care of your voice?

Elita: Apart from a weekly practice session, I don't do much. I try to intonate at least one song a day and observe my voice and intoning style so that I can make corrections based upon it.

What are your favourite leisurely activities?
Elita: I enjoy watching movies, popular TV series on Star World, and musical shows on various channels.