

CELEBRATING LIFE 2013 GALA

Of grace, grandeur and melody



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON



ZAHANGIR ALOM

It was a day for raindrops pitter-pattering upon a thousand leaves. The melody of nature consented to the celebration of life as the gala event of "Celebrating Life 2013" was held at Shaheed Suhrawardy National Indoor Stadium in Mirpur on October 4.

"Celebrating Life" is a Standard Chartered Bank-The Daily Star tie-up -- to award talents in the sphere of photography, lyrics and film. This year's theme was "Empowerment of Women."

The gala programme began with a choral rendition of the song "Nari", written by Rayhana Parvin who won the first prize in the lyrics contest. Labik Kamal Gaurob composed the song, which was performed on stage by nine singers, including the composer.

Cultural Affairs Minister Abul Kalam Azad graced the occasion as chief guest. Jim McCabe, CEO of Standard Chartered Bank, and Dr. Salehuddin Ahmed, managing editor of The Daily Star, spoke at the event.

This year's lifetime achievement awards went to three eminent personalities -- actor Anwar Hossain, photographer Anwar Hossain and musician Gazi Mazharul Anwar -- for their outstanding contributions to the respective fields. A visual presentation showcasing the life and work of the three were screened at the event.

Award winners in photography category were Shabbir Ferdous (first), Mahfuzul Hasan Bhuiyan (second) and Ismail Ferdous (third); while in lyrics category, the winners were Rayhana Parvin (first), Hasan Najmul (second) and Tapan Bagchi (third).

Violinist Dr. Sheuli Bhattacharjee led her troupe "Sporsho Classical Orchestra" in presenting a vibrant classical fusion that set off the celebration of cultural segment. With a high-pitched hymn, vocalist Mohammed Shoyeb fashioned a musical high while several violinists

superbly synchronized the melody of raga "Yaman". Vocalist Priyanka Gope rendered an evening timed raga "Jog" at the programme. Priyanka, a gifted singer and a Dhaka University teacher, immersed in a melodic bliss performed a speedy sargam taan. Mahmudul Hasan on Harmonium and Iftekhar Alam Pradhan on tabla accompanied the singer.

A Chhayanaut Guru Dr. Rezwan Ali Lablu's pristine performance of an uncommon raga "Shahana Kanada" moved the audience. The artiste's presentation of ragdari all through his performance was refined. The artiste's performance of vilambit and drut bandish was based on jhaptaal and teentaal respectively. Rezwan Ali also captivated the audience with performing another bandish set on raga "Kirwani."

Talented sitarist Nishit Dey engrossed his musical soul in the ecstatic sea of melody. The artiste presented raga "Charukeshi" at the event. His gamaki alap, gaut, jhala and tehai compositions were evocative of sweet memories.

Artistes of Shadhona stood out in performing a series of riveting dance recital at the event. Blending the styles of Indian classical and various western dance forms, the dancers presented a cycle of seven creative and contemporary pieces -- Neutrality, Sufism, Passion, Romance, Greed, Destruction and again Neutrality at the gala. The production, titled "Ultraviolet" has been directed by Abu Naim. The dancers' half face-paints carried abstract connotations while their expressive grace, aesthetic corporeal gesture and mudra, especially the stunning footwork, translated the human emotions into the language of dance. The dancers' costumes were well-designed and the musical arrangement with artistic narrations was superb.

Ifat Ara Nawaz and Tropa Majumdar jointly emceed the event. The event, displayed in a vast stage of grandeur, was coordinated by Star Showbiz Editor Rafi Hossain. Channel i was the media partner of the event.



(Clockwise from top left): Emcees Ifat Ara Nawaz and Tropa Majumdar; artistes of Shadhona present "Ultraviolet"; Gazi Mazharul Anwar receives Lifetime Achievement Award; Sheuli Bhattacharjee leads her troupe to a recital; choral rendition of the song from the winning lyrics; Nishit Dey plays the sitar; Priyanka Gope and Rezwan Ali Lablu sing at the event.

Taking Shilpacharya to the World

Bengal Foundation set to launch book on Zainul Abedin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Zainul Abedin, fondly titled Shilpacharya, is considered the foremost pioneer of the arts movement in Bangladesh, and an artist ahead of his time. At a very young age, he was considered one of the most noted artists of undivided India. After partition, he came to Dhaka and founded the Art College (now the Faculty of Fine Arts, Dhaka University -- known better as Charukala Institute).

Just a couple of months ahead of his birth centenary, Bengal Foundation, in association with renowned European publishers Skira, are releasing a comprehensive book on the life and works of Zainul, titled "Great Masters of Bangladesh: Zainul Abedin". The book will be launched today at the Radisson Blu Water Garden Hotel -- along with the inauguration of yearlong programmes to celebrate Zainul's



Guests at the press conference.

birth centenary. A press conference in this regard was held at the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts yesterday.

Present there, director of Bengal Foundation, Luva Nahid Choudhury said a

comprehensive book on Zainul was long overdue, and Bengal Foundation felt that the book should be done through a publisher who can distribute it to the biggest museums in the world. Italy-based Skira is a world-

renowned publisher, and the joint effort would enable for art connoisseurs worldwide to get a glimpse of the genius artist, she said.

One of the lead authors of the book, Professor Abul Monsur said that among others, the book dwells on Zainul's impact on South Asian art has remained uncharted territory; he was the first artist of the region to really get out of the mold of romanticism and create artwork that was vividly real. It also sheds light on what the master could have achieved, had he not passed away at 62.

Begum Jahanara Abedin, wife of Shilpacharya, reminisced about the artist, adding that she had always been concerned about many of the master artworks that were in possession of private collectors abroad, especially in Pakistan, and how art aficionados would never even know of them. She also thanked Bengal Foundation for their efforts in publishing such a rich book on the artist.

Eminent painter Quayyum Chowdhury, also present, also hailed the publication, saying there are images of paintings that he himself -- despite being a direct student of Zainul -- had never seen before. Stressing on Zainul's endeavours in spreading out his love for folk motifs, literature and music, he also proposed of making a Zainul museum where future generations can go and visit the great works.

Also speaking there, Director of the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, Subir Chowdhury outlined the tentative programmes of the year-long celebrations to be inaugurated today. It will begin with launching of two books -- one being "Great Masters of Bangladesh: Zainul Abedin" and the other a Bangla version of it, and will also feature seminars, countrywide exhibitions, children's art competitions, and bestowing of special honours to eminent artists.

Awareness through short films

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

After viewing short films on social evils, particularly child marriage, over 1,000 villagers took an oath against such practices at Doikhawa village of Hatibandha upazila in Lalmonirhat on Tuesday. Dhaka-based NGO Gono Prochar Kalyan Sangstha (GPKS) screened the short films to mobilise the masses against social evils. The project was funded by PLAN Bangladesh. The short films were also screened at 15 other villages and educational institutes at Hatibandha and Patgram upazila in the district. Many villagers at the event said the films were an eye-opener, since they weren't aware of the harmful after-effects of child marriage.

GPKS has been screening short films on child marriage, malnutrition, dropouts, lack of sanitation, dowry, stalking, substance use, fatwa, gambling and many other key issues.

Executive director of GPKS, Sahidul Islam said his organisation has screened the films at many villages in the country over the last few years, and the screenings would continue, in order to build mass awareness against deleterious social practices.

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