

WHAT'S ON

**Zainul Quamrul Exhibition**  
Venue: Nalini Kanta Bhattacharya Gallery, National Museum  
Date: Dec 22-Jan 18  
Time: 10am-8pm



**Theatre**  
Play: The Trial of Mallam Ilyas  
Troupe: BotTala  
Venue: Studio Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy  
Date: Jan 10  
Time: 6:30pm



**Group Art Exhibition**  
Title: Shilpacharya and his Outer World of Art  
Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, H-42, R-16, Dhanmondi  
Date: Dec 28-Jan 8  
Time: 12pm-8pm



**Concert**  
Band: Shironamin  
Venue: Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre, H-35, Rd-24, Gulshan-1  
Date: Jan 10  
Time: 6:30pm



**Theatre**  
Play: Peigi  
Troupe: Shwattik  
Venue: National Theatre Hall, Shilpakala Academy  
Date: Jan 8  
Time: 6:30pm



## NEWS bytes

### Philip Seymour stars in "Most Wanted Man" trailer



The first trailer has arrived online for "A Most Wanted Man", Anton Corbijn's adaptation of the novel by author John le Carré. The new film follows the smuggling of a half-starved Russian man into Hamburg, who claims to be a devout Muslim, but just happens to be carrying vast amounts of cash about his person. Rachel McAdams plays a civil rights lawyer determined to protect his rights, but Philip Seymour Hoffman and his German counter-terrorist organisation are also on the case, with less black and white motives in mind. Hoffman looks to be on fine form here, while the German accents on show seem to be pretty solid all across the board. Directed by Corbijn and co-starring Willem Dafoe, Daniel Brühl and Robin Wright, "A Most Wanted Man" will premiere at the Sundance festival later this month.

SOURCE: COLLIDER



Oscar-winning US actor-producer George Clooney is involved with "Not On Our Watch Project", an organization that focuses global attention and resources to stop and prevent mass atrocities, along with Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Don Cheadle, David Pressman, and Jerry Weintraub. In February 2009, he visited Goz Beida, Chad, with NY Times columnist Nicholas D. Kristof. In January 2010, he organised the Telethon Hope for Haiti Now, which collected donations for the 2010 Haiti earthquake victims. He has also advocated a resolution of the Darfur conflict. He spoke at a 2006 Save Darfur rally in Washington DC. In September 2008, he spoke to the UN Security Council with Nobel Prize-winner Elie Wiesel to ask the UN to find a solution to the conflict and to help the people of Darfur.



Written and directed by Raju Alim, a romantic tele-film "Projapoti Shukh Dukkho" will go on air on Maasranga Television at 8pm on the first week of February. The cast of the tele-film includes Raju Alim and Shanarei Devi Shanu.

# A bud yet to bloom

## Ragas created by Nazrul

### In conversation with Yakub Ali Khan

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Kazi Nazrul Islam enriched almost all genres of Bengali songs. His compositions are based on the solid foundation of Indian classical music.

Nazrul developed 14 distinct ragas; composed Khayal, Thumri and Tappa-styled Bangla songs; Kabyageeti, Bhajan, Kirtan, Ghazal, Shyama Sangeet, Islamic songs and more. Nazrul is, in a word, an institution.

"The subtle game of raga-ragini used in Nazrul Sangeet appears to be an amusing flow of a musical river. Ragas created by Nazrul are exceptionally brilliant. Some are very melodic. But are we giving appropriate attention to his ragas?" questioned artiste Yakub Ali Khan.

Nazrul used Bengali terms while naming his ragas and these names were inserted in the songs he composed, based on them. The songs -- "Rumjhum Rumajhuma Ke Bajaye" and "Hashey Akashey Shuktara", respectively set on raga Nirjhorini and Arunranjoni, are simply remarkable. The trend of Adhunik song is also indebted to Nazrul.

"The ragas developed by Nazrul are now confined to his books only. Very few artists occasionally render those. The conventional approach of several ustadhs towards the genre is a bar to attain acceptability among the classical music performers. If classical and Nazrul



Sangeet gurus, exponents, researchers and, of course, the performers sit together and add bandish (words) to those, the ragas will get a new lease of life. Aside from promoting Khayal, we might create Thumri based on ragas Nazrul developed," said Khan.

"In reality the bud is yet to bloom. The trend of making use of Bengali bandish in Hindustani classical music has not yet been established as a standard," explained Khan.

The poet composed the number "Benuka O Ke Bajaye Mohua Bon-e", based on Raga Benuka. He also com-

posed several complex songs like "Dolonchapa Boney Doley" and "Shono O Shondhya Maloti" set on Raga Dolonchapa and Shondhya Maloti respectively.

"Nazrul mingled the essences of several ragas and developed his own that are often very difficult to render. Compositions based on several ragas, including Debjani, Minakkhi, Banokuntola, Boro Hongsho Sharong and Rakto Hongsho Sharong are such examples," the artiste went on to add.

"Through his exclusive compositions, Kazi Nazrul Islam gave birth to and revitalised many obsolete ragas that were on the verge of extinction. The compositions -- 'Nilambori Shari Pori' (Nilambori), 'Gunjamala Goley Kunjey Esho Hey Kala' (Malgunja), 'Bashonto Mukhor Aaji' (Basant Mukhari), 'Phool-er Jalshaye Nirob Keno Kobi' (Hijaj), 'Jhoro Jhoro Jhorey Shaon Dhara' (Ramdashi Malhar) are apt examples," he said.

Today is the poet's 37th death anniversary. True, death has taken away his physical presence from us. But the legacy that Nazrul has left behind is immense. The poet will stay alive in the hearts of Bengalis for eternity.

"With the creation of Raga Asha Bhairabi, Nazrul declared the end of death in his composition 'Mrityu nai, nai dukkho, achhey shudhu pran, ononto anando hashi ophuran, achhey shudhu pran,'" Yakub Ali Khan said.

# "Music is music; it doesn't belong to any region" ... AR Rahman

Maverick composer A R Rahman, the repository of raga renown, turned 48 yesterday.

In a conversation, Rahman said he relived his childhood through his son Ameen. "So far I've just been busy living life. From my childhood I was surrounded by grownups, I never got a chance to enjoy being a child. It took me a while to realise how young I was. By the time I realised I was missing out on youthful activities I was no longer young.

And what sense has he made of his life! "My life has always been a journey. When I was in my 20s, I went through the most turbulent and hectic time of my life. Now I spend as much time as possible with my children Khatija, Rahima and Ameen."

When asked what lessons Rahman had learnt from his life, the reticent genius pondered then said, "In my life, I've always found dreams do come true, though often they true come long after you've forgotten them. Just preserve your dream at the bottom of your heart and wait for it to fructify. My ultimate dream was to create an orchestra that would be capable of performing the world's best musical

pieces and thereby building a cultural bridge across western and Indian music. We finally launched our music conservatory."

Rahman earnestly desires new generations of musicians to find their bearings. "I want to teach young musicians how to play within an orchestra. As things stand if I want to record orchestral music I've



to go to Prague. If Ilaiyaraaja wants to record an epic score he goes to Budapest. Why can't we do it right here in our own country? I want to give a certain legitimacy to western classical music in our country. Indian classical music has room for unlimited improvisation and spontaneity. A classical recital requires

far more formal discipline. And the whole orchestra brings one emotion into play throughout a recital. We don't have that discipline in our country. It used to be there. I want to inculcate that sense of discipline required for western classical music. Today a keyboard player gets tons of money whereas a violinist gets a pittance. I want the

orchestra player to be proud of what he does."

Rahman feels India's art and culture stands a terrific chance in the West. "I think the time for India in the western world is now. The respect for all things Indian has gone up in recent times.

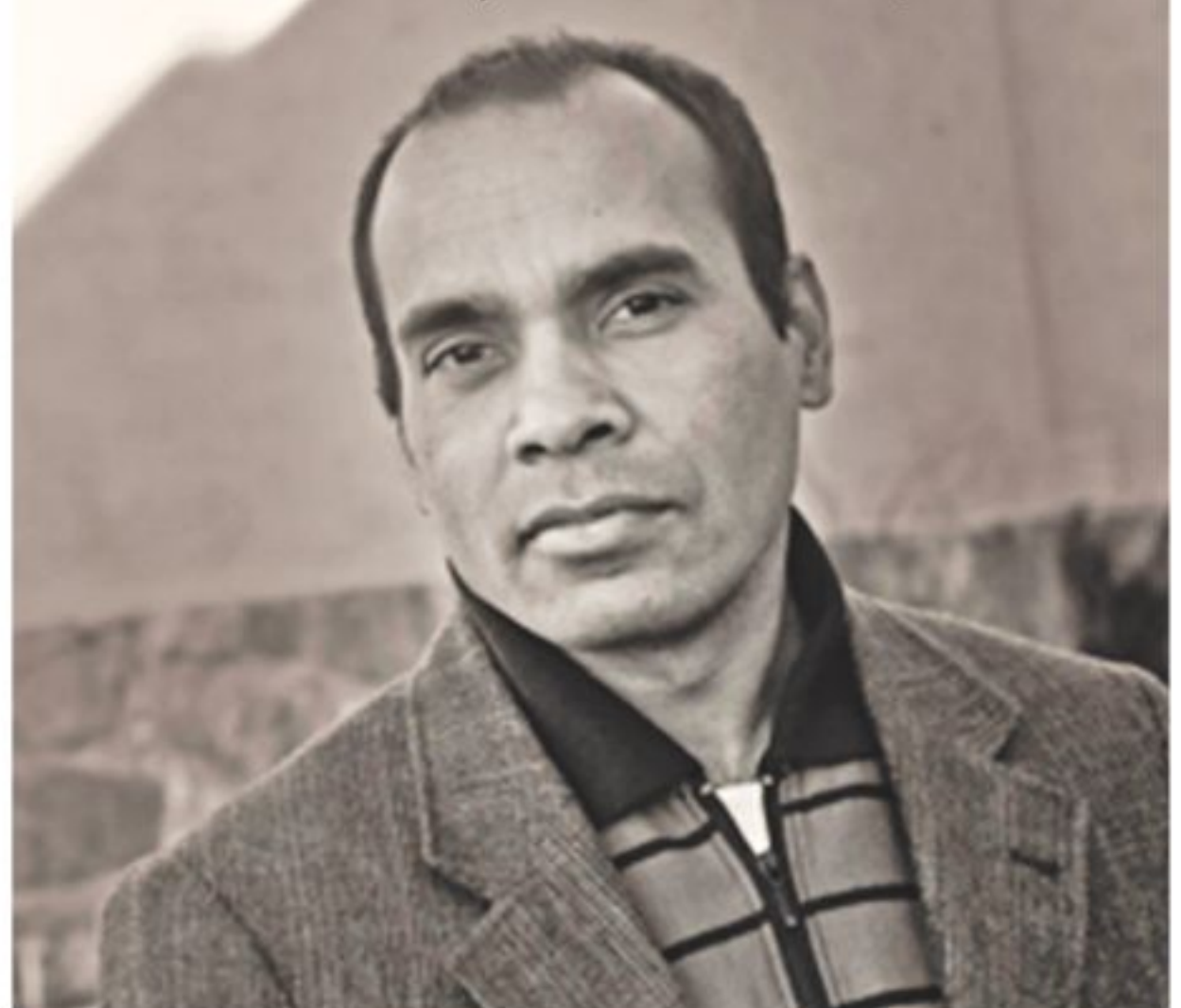
On the deteriorating standards of film music Rahman

said, "If you have durable melodies and good poetry people do respond to it, even if not immediately. When I see the so-called difficult songs being sung effortlessly by children on television's talent-scouting contests I realise the most hummable songs are those that touch on life. Composers take the easy way out. They make tunes that hit the charts for a month and then exit, therefore nothing memorable happens.

When told he's considered the saviour of film music in India, Rahman said, "I guess different people like different things in my music. For me, music is music; it doesn't belong to any region. My theme for Mani Ratnam's 'Bombay' was done in Tamil, then it went into Hindi and soon it was playing all over Europe and Australia. If a tune comes to me it takes wings. The problem is with the shrinking film market in India. My creative vision has to be tailored to suit the altered financial state. This is the first time I'm facing this situation in the last ten years, and I don't relish it," said Rahman.

SOURCE: INDIAN EXPRESS

## Poet Anisur Rahman gets Prince Wilhelm Literary Scholarship



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anisur Rahman, a poet and playwright from Bangladesh, recently received the Prince Wilhelm Scholarship 2013 from the Swedish PEN. The prize money of this scholarship is 10,000 Swedish Kronor (Taka 1,20,000).

The scholarship has been introduced in memory of Swedish prince Wilhelm (1884-1965) who was also an author and member of the Swedish PEN.

Rahman writes both in Bengali and English, and debuted in 2003 with the poetry collection "Empty Glass". He currently lives in Uppsala, Sweden, where he was also a guest writer (2009-2011). He works with creative writing literary programmes through Study Promotion Association in Sweden.

Sex Årstider [Six Seasons] is Rahman's first collection of poems in Swedish. Apart from a few poems from his earlier books, the book contains newly written poems from the past few years. As a playwright, Anisur has done work for theatres in Bangladesh, Norway and Sweden, Swedish Radio and NRK Norwegian Radio. Smockadoll and Dracopis Press are his international publishers. In Bangladesh he has authored a number of books in both prose and poetry. He has translated the works of a number of classic writers like Franz Kafka, Henrik Ibsen and Tomas Tranströmer into Bengali.

## NOSTALGIA DIPA recalls carefree days



SHAH ALAM SHAZU

On this edition of star nostalgia, Dipa Khondhokar fondly remembers her days from school and all the fun she had.

"My first school was Rayer Bazaar High School, where I studied till KG-1. My brother Ratan and sister Rupa also studied at the same school. When my classes ended, I went over to my brother's class and sat there. I had a lot of fun during those days. "We would wait for our mother to pick us up from school everyday, and on the journey back home -- we had loads of fun and created a lot of hubbub. But I didn't make many lasting friends, as I only studied there for a year.

"I was then admitted to class two in Savar Primary School. I also studied there for a year. Later, I joined the Narayananj Girls High School -- from where I completed my SSC exams. I started to make good friends from class five. Farzana, Liza, Jinia, Sheuly, Lopa, Papia are some of my friends from those times -- with whom I still keep in touch.

"I have many happy memories with my friends from the school days. When I was in class nine, we used to have non stop adda sessions at one of our friend's house. Sometimes my friends and I also roamed around. All these were done without my mothers consent though.

"I remember getting punished by our religious studies teacher for my unruliness -- by making me hold my ears or by making me stand up on the bench. I also remember a regular occurrence during school days. A group of boys used to follow me on cycles, when I returned home on a rickshaw. I always found that amusing."

## RASA OF A RAGA

# The majesty, mystery and melancholy of Raga Malkauns

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Malkauns, the popular and ancient raga, is the expression of paths through melody. Like every raga has a time or Prahaz, it is a raga of night -- when the rarest and the most precious flowers blossom. It is thought to be the best time for any artistic persistence too. People sit for prayers to God and the nature gets leisure to continue her internal dialogues and to share her utmost feelings at that time. A person's solemnest prayer comes out as their heart opens with Malkauns, and they offer it to the ultimate or to the beloved.

The picturesque melody of Malkauns consents to the songs of nature. Its similar ragas are Kaunshi Kanada (Intermingling of Malkauns and Darbari Kanada) and Chandrakaus. Pandit Bhimsen Joshi and Ustad Amir Khan's rendition of Malkauns is pristine. The best rendition of Raga Malkauns I



have so far heard was by Ustad Rashid Khan who performed the piece at The Daily Star-Standard Chartered Celebrating Life 2011 Gala and in the recently past Bengal Classical Music Festival 2013. A Mahol (ambience) was created through his styling several exclusive musical phrases at the two venues.

Among instruments, the sarod can best express the majestic style of the raga. Ustad Vilayat Khan and Ustad Amjad Ali Khan have embellished the recital of Malkauns to such heights that those have become their personal hallmarks. With his unparalleled recital of Malkauns on flute, Pandit Hariprasad

Chaurasia embarks on a celebration of melancholy.

Tagore composed a timeless song "Anondo Dhara Bohichhey Bhuboney" set on the raga while Kazi Nazrul Islam tamed the melody of Malkauns through his composition, "Shonlo Bashite Dahey Amare Shyam". Thumri's are not commonly set on Malkauns. Several ghazals -- "Tuihe Keya Khabar Mere Hum Safar" (Ghulam Ali) and "Bhul Shayed Bohot Bari Karli" (recorded by Chandan Das) are set on Malkauns. Legendary singer Manna Dey recorded the song "Radha Choliche Mukhti Ghuraye Kande Shyam-ero Bashori" on the raga.

The raga is said to have evolved when Lord Shiva performed the Tandava dance. The raga thus evokes a feeling of vigour or we can say this grave natured Raga generates Veer Rasa. This raga is also said to have supernatural powers and can conjure spirits if rendered appropriately. Though a simple

pentatonic raga in structure, it requires great skills to convey and evoke the mood of Malkauns.

A very famous composition based on this raga is the song "Maan Tarpat Hari Darshan Ko Aaj" from the film Baiju Baawra.

The name Malkauns (often pronounced Malkaunsh) is derived from the combination of Mal and Kaushik, which means he who wears serpents like garlands -- the god Shiva. The raga is believed to have been created by goddess Parvati (the wife of Shiva) to calm Shiva, when the lord Shiva was outraged and was not calming down after Tandava in rage of Sati's sacrifice.

Malkauns is a serious, meditative raga, and is developed mostly in the lower octave (mandra saptak) and in a slow tempo (vilambit laya). Profound ornamentations such as meend, gamak and andolan are used rather than lighter ornaments like murki and khatka.