

Nazrul Utshab 1421
Organiser: Chhayanaut
Venue: Main Auditorium,
Chhayanaut, Dhamondi
Date: May 24-25
Time: 6:30pm



Discussion and Cultural Programme
on Alauddin Khan & Kamal Dasgupta
Venue: Music & Dance Centre,
Shilpakala Academy



Group Art Exhibition
Title: Trailing the Root: One Step Ahead
Venue: Dhaka Art Center, H-60,
Rd-7a, Dhamondi
Date: May 16-22
Time: 3-8pm



Theatre
Title: Dog, Woman, Man
Director: Reetu Sattar
Venue: Goethe-Institut,
Dhamondi Rd. 9
Date: May 20-31
Time: 7pm



Solo Painting Exhibition
Title: Bornil Pandulipi
Venue: Shilpakala Gallery,
H-7, Rd-13,
New Dhamondi
Date: May 17-30
Time: 12pm-8pm



Tribute to music legends at Shilpakala

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Music and Dance Department of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) has arranged a three-day (May 19-21) memorial programme to pay tributes to music legends Baba Ustad Allauddin Khan, Kamal Dasgupta, Abdul Alim and Abdul Latif. The event, featuring a discussion and musical programme, is being held at the music and dance auditorium of BSA.

On the opening day BSA held a discussion with a musical programme in memory of legendary singer, composer Abdul Alim and Abdul Latif. Nazrul exponent Sudhin Dasgupta graced the occasion as chief guest while noted folk artistes Indra Mohan Rajbongshi and Nadira Begum spoke on the legends.

Later, folk singers--Abu Bakor Siddique, Dil Afroz Reba, Sheikh Hemayet, Anima Mukti Gomes, Abdul Karim Khan, Asgar Alim, Biman Chandra Biswas and Rafi rendered folk songs originally recorded and composed by the legendary duo.

In memory of Sur Samrat Baba Ustad Allauddin, BSA held a discussion and classical music performance. R A M Ubaidul Moktadir Chowdhury, MP, attended as chief guest while Faizur Rahman Badal, MP, was present as special guest. Cultural personality Mobarak Hossain Khan held a discussion.

Later, Classical music artistes, Shahadat Hossain Khan (sarod), Reenat Fauzia (sitar), Firoy Khan (sitar), Yusuf Khan (sarod) Priyanka Gope (vocal) and Nishit Dey (sitar) performed at the event.

Paying homage to legendary composer Kamal Dasgupta, the memorial programme comes to an end today. Cultural Affairs Secretary Dr. Ranjit Kumar Biswas, NDC, will attend as chief guest while cultural personality ABM Nurul Anwar and music researcher Dr. Sayem Rana will be special guests. BSA director general Liaquat Ali Lucky will preside over. Director of Music and Dance Department of BSA Sohrabuddin will deliver the welcome address.

Noted artistes Subir Nandi, Khairul Anam Shakil, Shakila Zafar, Yasmin Mushtari, Sujit Mustafa, Iffat Ara Dewan, Timir Nandi, Rumi Ajnabi, Dinat Jahan Munni and Sushmita Anis

SUDHIN DAS

Preserving Nazrul's treasure troves

SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

Sudhin Das, renowned exponent of Nazrul songs for over half a century, turned 84 on April 30. Looking back, he has almost single-handedly worked painstakingly to authenticate the original notation of Nazrul Sangeet, the 'swaralipi'. For his untiring commitment, he has achieved a revered status at home and abroad. He has been awarded the Ekushey Padak, Nazrul Gold Medal, Nasiruddin Gold Medal, Zebunnessa-Mahbubullah Trust Gold Medal and the Altaf Mahmood Gold Medal and felicitations from Shilpakala Academy and Bangla Academy amongst others. Nearly four decades after Nazrul's death, Sudhin Das is still as committed to his task as he was when he first started. Excerpts from his insightful interview...

It was a sweltering day, when I entered the Nazrul Institute. Sudhin Das was as usual, sitting deeply engrossed behind stacks of old gramophone records and busily instructing a group of young students. There was gleam in his eyes as he noticed my surprise, listening to the popular lyrics of the song, albeit a slightly different tune. "I never tire from teaching the original tunes..." he said. As we settled down, he explained the nature of his work.

"The discs, as you know, are collected through different sources. Most often, they are in such a dilapidated condition, that, it is a painstaking job to even grasp the words, let alone decipher the delicate filigree works of the different musical forms of Nazrul songs. The songs range from classical to the folk. Ghazal to modern and one has to understand the exact technical nuances to carry on with the task," he added.

"After Nazrul was incapacitated by neurological illness in 1942, his works fell into the hands of the so-called intellectuals and well-wishers who took advantage of the situation. From then on these were tampered beyond imagination," says Das.

He went on to add, "I was myself a victim of circumstances. I taught the students the songs which I could easily gather from West Bengal. These works had gained immense popularity by then. But as time went on, we realised that a group with a shallow understanding of Nazrul were adapting the songs, and commercialising it for profit. This group was at the heart of distorting the poet's heritage. It was then that we started our

campaign for authenticating Nazrul Sangeet notations."

During 1976-77, a noted publication house of India, had printed a third edition of 900 songs of Nazrul. However, a careful scrutiny revealed that most of the songs in the book were not authentic. It was then that Sudhin Das visited Kolkata and challenged the works by Abdul Aziz Al Aman, the author of the notation book.

Do you think one would ever be allowed to add a few brush strokes here and there to the original works of Rembrandt, Picasso or Michelangelo? Or change the lyrics or tunes of Tagore, according to his taste? That would be a clear distortion of the creativity; in short, it would be a crime," he said.



"Nazrul was very liberal with his songs and allowed eminent artistes to make variations keeping the original form intact. But, he hardly imagined that the immortal songs that he composed in Bhairabi Raga would be tuned in Bagesree, or some of his classic songs would be sung according to whim. Singers preferred the classical genres where one could implement their own style. In contrast to Tagore songs which were structured; the singers had no option to change the style or even breathe in between words," says Das. He adds: "As an ardent fan of the five main poets of Bengal (the Pancha Kabi) I took it as my prime responsibility to work on Nazrul's creative works which was at a risk of extinction."

"Tagore's creations were guarded against distortion under the copyright of Biswa Bharati. However, the same was not applicable for Nazrul's literary pursuits. Nazrul's legendary popularity, his immense stock of songs and the lack of copyrights was certainly at the core of the problem."

Three authentic notation books titled "Nazrul Swaralipi", "Sur Mukur" (by Nazrul) and "Surlipi" (by Jagat Ghotokl) were printed before Nazrul's illness. A low spot in his life was in 1927, when he faced grave financial crisis. He was deceived by the publishers. He found it difficult to make ends meet and often sold his songs for a meagre amount.

"With such differences of opinion amongst experts, how difficult was it to start this initiative?" I asked.

"Talim Hossain, the founder GS of Nazrul Academy inspired me to work on the authentic notations of Nazrul. I then took the initiative to work on this challenging job. But this project failed to continue after five publications, due to a difference of opinion," says Das.

In 1982, the then-Executive Director of Nazrul Institute Md. Mahfuzullah took over and requested Das to work for a project in the Authentication Board of the Nazrul Institute. Stalwarts like Laila Arjumand Banu headed the board for 10 years. Other experts on the field such as Sheikh Luthfar Rahman, Sohrab Hossain, Bedaruddin Ahmed and later on Ferdousi Rahman joined in as members in the Board. Much later, eminent singer Feroza Begum took over as the President of the Board.

"Out of a total 34 swaralipi (notations) books published from Nazrul Institute, I have worked on 24 notation books. Each song takes several days to decipher," adds Sudhin Das. Eminent composer and singer Sheikh Luthfar Rahman, his students SM Ahsan Murshed, Rafiqunnabi and Salauddin Ahmed have followed Das in making authentic notations from the original disks recorded before Nazrul fell grievously ill.

"In terms of preserving Nazrul's work, TV and Radio should have a cell from where Nazrul's original songs should be scrutinised. If strict measures are taken for a year the authentic tunes will once again be practised by all," he says.

The National Poet's songs are timeless gems. One can only hope that future artistes and exponents of Nazrul Sangeet would continue to adhere to the original tune, and appreciate the true genius that was Nazrul.

CANNES DIARY

Spanish despair on a rainy Cannes



RAFI HOSSAIN and ZIA NAZMUL ISLAM, write from Cannes

As we mentioned before, the movies competing for the Golden Palm are screened at Grand Theatre Lumiere. Every day, the very first screening is at 8:30 am, which is called "press screening". A mere press accreditation doesn't make for easy access -- it is all on a first-come-first-served basis. So, journalists queue up for hours to get access to the screening. Later, around at 11 am, another competition film is screened, which is by invite.

Today, there were two competition films: "Foxcatcher", an American production by "Capote"--famed director Bennett Miller and "Maps to the stars" by David Cronenberg (who made "Eastern Promises" and "A History of Violence"). Rafi Hossain who viewed both the films came away with mixed emotions.

On one hand, I was trying my best with the camera. But it was raining in Cannes. So I just grabbed an invitation card to see what it looked like. The rain made me stay indoors and catch the stars after the press conferences. One of the funniest men of tinsel town, Steve Carell was caught on my video camera. So was one of the most handsome Hollywood hunks Channing Tatum and shy guy Mark Ruffalo.

I decided to give a shot to Un Certain Regard sidebar film, "Beautiful Youth" (Hermosa Juventud in Spanish). Barcelona-based director Jaime Rosales' "Beautiful Youth" is a movie about love and despair. Although a slow paced movie, the powerful acting of Ingrid García Jonsson just blew me away. The theme of the movie was unusual. The poverty displayed and the lengths that García Jonsson had to traverse to keep love alive is expected only from Eastern European countries, but it was based in Madrid, a European country with a fair economy. I am sure, our readers understand what I mean -- I just don't want to spoil the story.

Un Certain Regard is a section of the Cannes Film Festival's official selection. It runs parallel to the competition for the Palme d'Or. This section was introduced in 1978. Each year, it presents a score of films with various types of visions and styles; "original and different" works which seek international recognition. In 1998, the Prize Un Certain Regard was introduced to the section to recognise young talent and encourage innovative and daring works by presenting one of the films with a grant to aid its distribution in France. Since 2005, the prize consists of €30,000. Other than the Hollywood stars like Channing Tatum, Steve Carell, Mark Ruffalo, Julianne Moore and Robert Pattinson, rain doused much of the enthusiasm of previous days.

Editor of Star Showbiz Rafi Hossain, and sub-editor Zia Nazmul Islam are in the French Riviera City of Cannes for the 67th Cannes Film Festival, and will keep readers updated on this page, on events at the festival.

Natunkuri Nursery School stages dance drama

AMINUL ISLAM, Mymensingh

Marking an annual cultural programme, the children of Natunkuri Nursery School in Mymensingh town staged a dance drama at the capacity packed Zila Shilpakala Academy auditorium on May 19.

The dance drama "Swadhinotar Natunkuri", based on the country's War of Liberation and hurdles and prospects of the country, has been written and directed by Mosharraf Masum. Sajjadul Islam, Anwar Hossain and Lutfur Rahman Khokon have directed the music.

Earlier at a discussion Deputy Commissioner of Mymensingh Mustakim Billah Faruqui was the chief guest. Principal Sultan Jahan Begum addressed the discussion among others. Ahona Devnath, chaired the event.



Melodious, mystical, mellifluous

Shadhona stages Mayar Khela



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

FAHMIM FERDOUS

One of the Rabindranath Tagore's biggest literary strengths was to bind emotions and images together. His first lyrical play, "Mayar Khela", is a prime example, where the wordsmith unfolds a layered narrative just through his songs. It's a boiling pot of youthful romance, excitement and on the other side of the coin, melancholy and yearning. Shadhona, one of the leading cultural centres of the country, staged the production -- one of their most-acclaimed works of recent times -- at the National Theatre Hall of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on Sunday.

The seven-scene play is the story of Amar, Shanta and Promoda, and a group of 'Mayakumar' and 'Mayakumari' -- illusionists who sort of drive the play forward. Amar and Shanta meet in a garden, and are love-struck, but do not connect. Promoda, on the other hand, is the most beautiful lady in the land, and is aloof to the calls of the heart. She rejects proposals from admirers. Amar, Kumar and Ashok meet in the next scene, and the three express and debate about their own feelings and meanings of love.



Promoda is then introduced to the scene by the 'Mayakumar-kumari', and she once again rejects the advances of Ashok and Kumar. Amar, although enchanted by Promoda's beauty, does not speak anything of it, rather returns home in the next scene, where he reconnects with Shanta. In the closing sequence, as everyone is in celebratory mood of Spring, Promoda appears and offers her love to Amar, who is now faced with a conflict of heart. Ultimately, it is Shanta that Amar chooses to be with, and a heartbroken Promoda exits the scene.

The first thing to notice about the production is that it's ambitious. The set and light design have a sense of gran-



deur, as are the dance sequences. The music by Nirjher Chowdhury and Rokon Emon, is mostly good, except for here and there where the arrangement seems a little jerky. The dance direction, by Amit Chowdhury and Sabbir Ahmed Khan Biju, is also commendable. The use of various styles, from shadow-dancing to aerial exercises (styled like rope-Mallakhamba) to Western genres, and even a UV-light sequence with dancers being invisible and only the white fabric moving on the stage, was done well. The aerial pieces were slightly cumbersome at times, but had some nice moments otherwise. The central cast of actors, three of who have sung the songs,



also demanded credit for effort, although it's not the tightest of performances. The dancers, on the other hand, pulled off a long, challenging set of routines rather well.

Overall, the production value of "Mayar Khela" lives up to the high standards set by Shadhona for itself, if not exceed it. Lubna Marium and Ali Ahmed Mukul's costume and set design is fantastic, and is further augmented by creative yet balanced light design by Reaz Mahmud. Although the storyline can be a tad difficult to follow for the casual audience and gets a little slow in the middle, it is nothing short of a treat for aficionados of Tagore.