

WHAT'S ON

Art Exhibition

Reality Versus Imagination and Illusion

Artist: Samiran Chowdhury

Venue: Gallery Cosmos

Date: August 30-Sep 11

Time: 11am-7pm

Solo Classical Music Recital

Artist: Pandit Tushar Dutta

Organisers: Bengal Foundation & The Daily Star

Venue: Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct

Solo Art Exhibition

Artist: Murtaja Baseer

Venue: Galleri Kaya, H-20, Rd-16, Sec-4, Uttara

Date: Sep 13-25

Time: 11am-8pm

Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Montage

Artist: Samarjit Roy Chowdhury

Venue: Bengal Shilpalaya, Dhanmondi

Date: Sep 6-22

Time: 12-8pm

Theatre Festival

Organiser: Bot Tala

Venue: Natmandal, Dhaka University

Date: Sep 10-13

Time: 7:15pm

## NEWS bytes

### U2 gives away new album for free

The first album in five years by veteran Irish rock band U2 has been offered for free to the 500 million users of Apple's iTunes service. The surprise announcement was made at a California event where Apple CEO Tim Cook unveiled the firm's latest iPhone and a new smartwatch.

The band also performed live at the event. U2 lead singer Bono described the release of the 11-track album, "Songs of Innocence", as "kind of mindblowing".

"The most personal album we've written could be shared with half a billion people - by hitting send," Bono said. "If only songwriting was that easy." The Irish band is famed for producing some of the landmark albums of the 1980s and early 1990s,



including "The Joshua Tree" and "Achtung Baby". There had been some speculation this year that the band were planning a new album. However, the free release at the Apple event had not been anticipated.

SOURCE: BBC

## IT'S TRUE!

Apart from being one of the top heavy metal vocalists of all time, Bruce Dickinson's interests include literature, writing, fencing (at which he has competed internationally, placing 7th in Great Britain, and has founded a fencing equipment company), railway technology and aviation. Due to the wide variety of Dickinson's pursuits, Intelligent Life Magazine in 2009 named him as a living



example of a polymath. He also hosted "Bruce Dickinson's Friday Rock Show" on BBC radio station 6 Music from 2002-2010, and hosted a 5-part historical TV series about aviation, "Flying Heavy Metal", which was shown on the Discovery Channel. Dickinson holds an airline transport pilot's license, and regularly flew Boeing 757s in his role as captain for the now-defunct UK charter airline Astraesus.



PHOTO: STAR

# Feroza Begum and her Nazrul

## Legendary links to the end

SADYA AFREEN MALlick

Since early morning, the young girl had a twinkle in her eyes. Restlessly she would rush to the window to look up and down the road at the slightest sound of an approaching vehicle. Late afternoon, her long desired package finally arrived - a harmonium especially ordered from Kolkata. For the next few months, her mother had difficulty keeping her busy inside their house at Gopalganj. The young singer would rush off to the quiet cabin overlooking the pond and play her harmonium to her heart's content. Like gentle ripples, her melodious voice would carry over the still courtyard from dawn to dusk.

Some even said the birds that flocked to the pond side seemed unhurried to fly back; such was the sweetness in her voice.

If some people doubted this story as a myth, what was indisputable was the meteoric rise to fame of that little girl to the legend that was Feroza Begum: A legend who dominated the world stage of Nazrul Sangeet for the six decades to come.

By the time she was 12, when all her friends were busy in playgrounds, Feroza Begum was being invited to perform at leading auditoriums. It was around this time that Columbia released her first album that included the Islamic song 'Morur Bukey Jibon Dhara' and 'Nabiji Esho Go', composed by Chitta Roy.

"To me, singing was as natural as breathing. At first, when I had no tutor, I simply tried to follow and pick up the tunes from the gramophone records strewn all over our storeroom," said Feroza. "But I had little knowledge about the nuances that created the mood of a song. Thankfully, at that time, I was fortunate to come across stalwarts such as Chitta Roy (personal assistant of Kazi Nazrul Islam) and later the incomparable composer Kamol Dasgupta, who nurtured my enthusiasm to a more mature level."

"As I trained under Chitta Babu for almost two years I was fascinated by the exquisite Nazrul compositions 'Chirotorey Durey Choley Jabo', 'Tumi Shundor Tai', 'Tumi Shunitey Cheyo Na', 'Ekadoshir Chand' and more."

It was however, under composer Kamol Dasgupta, her husband that she blossomed in semi-classical music. Gupta was under the tutelage of the legendary Ustad Zamiruddin Khan, as was Kazi Nazrul Islam. Belonging to the same gharaana, Kamol Das and Nazrul Islam, had a similar mindset, and the music they composed together seemed to find its natural voice in Feroza Begum.

Feroza Begum had met Kazi Nazrul Islam

almost by fate. "It was during a training session at the radio station that I met Kazi Shaheb for the first time. As I looked into his inquisitive eyes, he asked me why I chose to sing songs that was so beyond my age..."

"Because my love for the songs defies reason," Feroza Begum replied, not knowing Kazi Shaheb's identity at that time. "I may have startled him with my answer, but he simply patted my head gently, and well... the die was cast, as the saying goes."

The famous picture of Feroza Begum on stage, sitting alongside Nazrul has become iconic; a reflection of the close relationship they developed and gifted to the world some of the most memorable music. When Nazrul started to fade away to his crippling disease, Nazrul's undying penmanship seemed to find its way to his adoring followers through Feroza Begum's voice.

In 1960, Gramophone Company of India approached Feroza to record songs for Puja. The Kamol-Feroza pair had established itself by now as a guaranteed success in adhunik songs. However, she took up the challenge to re-invigorate the popularity of Nazrul songs and recorded "Momero Putul" and "Dhur Dwipobashini". The unparalleled style added a new dimension to the genre and sold out for three months in advance. "Musafir Mochh Rey Ankhi Jol", her second recorded song, rekindled the popularity even more.

In those days it was difficult to attain popularity without singing playback. "I flatly refused to perform playback in movies such as 'Purbo Raag', 'Dukhhey Jader Jibon Gora', 'Mahesh and Mahua'," she said. She resisted the temptation of instant popularity and in so doing, defined herself as an uncompromising artiste who set the benchmark of success on her own terms; success that was to outlast generations.

"In 1979, I recorded 3 LP's of adhunik and Nazrul songs, which were record hits as well. Astounding though it may sound, I performed in a record number of 380 solo concerts."

Over the next few decades, her name became synonymous with Nazrul Sangeet. She travelled to Delhi, Paris, London, New York and other cultural capitals worldwide. Whenever she performed, admirers would travel miles to listen to her. Having the opportunity to know her from close as I did for the last three decades and more, I never failed to sense the deep love that she evoked from admirers. Touring twelve states in the US for no fewer than three months in 1990 was a further opportunity for me to delve into and understand the persona of this formidable artiste. It was a new insight into

the Feroza Begum personality that I came back home with.

In 1962 Feroza Begum organised a Nazrul Convention where artistes of all genres, litterateurs, poets assembled at the Netaji Bhavan, in Kolkata. Angur Bala, Radharani and others had retired from the music scene. It took quite an effort to convince them to step on to the stage once more. Renowned artistes Dharendra Chandra Mitra, Rai Chand Boral, Konika Bannerji, Suchitra Mitra, Sachin Dev Burman, Debobroto Biswas were among the notable singers who performed Nazrul songs.

The programme ran for two days and was based on different rhythms titled Chhandoshree and Bichitra on variety of Nazrul songs.

"My next venture was to release an LP titled 'Love Songs of Nazrul' in which I assembled several renowned artistes of West Bengal. Manebendra Mukherji presented 'Bou Kotha Kou' and 'Eto Jol O Kajol Chokhey' -- both magnum opus performances. Sandhya Mukherji sang 'Kemoney Rakhi Ankhi' and 'Bidaye Sandhya Ashilo' while I sang 'Mor Ghumo Ghurey' and 'Nohey Nohey Priyo'."

When Pandit Jawharlal Nehru passed away in 1964, his ashes were brought to Kolkata. At the 'Maidan' adjacent to Victoria memorial, a massive gathering was held to pay homage. Artistes of repute presented bhajans. Amidst pin drop silence in the sea of people, I performed two Nazrul songs -- 'Khelecho E Bishwo Loye' and 'Tomar Moha Bishwey'."

Since that day in the cabin, years ago, Feroza Begum's voice has held listeners in a spell. When she took on the stage even later in life, you could still see the twinkle in her eyes, the slight curve in her lips as her fingers caressed the harmonium. A hushed silence would fall over the audience, as they witnessed a legend gifted with a voice to enthrall.

In time, immortal though her songs were, she slowly became prone to the human frailties that afflict us all. Day before yesterday, on a day that will darken the memories of all who loved her voice, she gave in to a long-standing illness, and left her loving admirers deep in mourning.

If one were to challenge the myth of the birds, who knows what they would see on the quiet pond side today. Maybe there are no birds there anymore. Maybe word has reached them also that the voice that had beckoned them to the shores was no more. Or maybe the voice had become one with Nature to enjoy all around us, to enthrall us all for a long time to come...

## Tushar Dutta to perform at Arts Precinct today

### Solo classical recital by visiting maestro

STAR ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bengal Foundation and The Daily Star, in association with Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC), Dhaka are organising a solo classical music recital at The Daily Star-Bengal Arts Precinct at 6:30pm today. Pandit Tushar Dutta will perform Hindustani classical kheyal and other light classical genres at the soiree.

Dutta was born in Natore, Bangladesh, and is amongst the most celebrated and popular classical vocalists of Kolkata, India. Pandit Tushar Dutta is a top grade artiste of All India Radio. He is currently touring Bangladesh as part of the Indian Government's cultural exchange programme. Among his stops so far are programmes at Bengal Shilpalaya at Dhanmondi, Chhayanaut's annual classical music festival and Magura, Jhenidah and Natore.

Classical music enthusiasts interested to attend the programme can collect invitation cards in person from information desk (ground floor) of The Daily Star. The invitations will be handed on first-come, first-serve basis, as seats are limited.



STAR FILE PHOTO

## Baul music evening held at Haatkhola

PRANABESH CHAKRABORTY, Chittagong

Music enthusiasts of Chittagong experienced a different musical evening featuring baul and Lalon songs at the auditorium of Haatkhola in the port city recently.

Haatkhola, a cultural centre located at Surson Road in the city, organised the music evening, where baul artiste Hanif Baul presented over 30 baul and Lalon songs.

The programme started with the famous Lalon song "Dhonyo Dhonyo Boli Tarey". Later, the artiste, with the sweet sound of ektara, successively rendered "Chirodin Pushlam Ek Ochhin Pakhi", "Saner Lila Bujhbi", "Lmi Ke Ta Janle Sadhon" and "Pakhi Kokhan Jani Urey Jaye".

Later, on request from the audience, Hanif performed popular songs like "Milon Hobe Koto Diney", Barir Pashe Arshi Nogar", "Kobe Sadhur Dhuli" one after another. In



PHOTO: STAR

between the performances, the artiste also narrated the inner meanings and philosophy behind the songs.

Poet Yusuf Muhammad emceed the programme.

"Lalon and baul songs are the part of rich Banglaee culture and this kind of initiative would help the present generation to know their cultural roots", said poet Prof Shukla Iftekar at the programme.

Poet Akhtar Hossain said, he came to know many unknown aspects of Lalon songs by presentation of Hanif Baul.

The programme ended with handing over honourary crest to the artiste by Prof Hasina Zakaria Bela and fashion designer Rawshon Ara Chowdhury. Cultural activist Chowdhury Babul Barua, poets Zinna Chowdhury, Rizoan Mahmud, Ayub Syed, Tanuja Barua, artiste Sharier Khaled and eminent photographer Shueb Faruquee were present, among others, at the programme.



## Asha Nirashar Bhela on Maasranga

A CORRESPONDENT

Telefilm "Asha Nirashar Bhela" will air on Maasranga television today at 7:50pm. Written by Ali Sujon, the telefilm has been jointly directed by Abdullah Akand Manik and Ali Sujon.

Fisherman Malek Sardar lives at a small village on the bank of Padma along with his wife Saleha and daughter Asha. Malek's assistant Poran is in love with Asha but Asha's family doesn't support the relation. One day Malek's family falls in a crisis which leads Poran to adopt an illegal way to earn money so that he can marry Asha.

The telefilm casts Chanchal Chowdhury, Prosun Azad, Munira Mithu, Lutfar Rahman George, Ahsanul Haq Minu, Abid Rehan and others.



PHOTO: STAR

AHMED HUMAYUN KABIR TOPU, Pabna

A traditional boat race in Gaznar Beel, one of the largest water bodies of the district, began amidst festivity on Monday. Villagers of Shoilkura village of Hatkhali union in Sujanagar upazila of the district organised the competition in keeping with an old tradition of the area.

Sujanagar Upazila Nirbahi officer Md. Shakhawat Hossain inaugurated the event as the chief guest. A discussion was also held focusing on the early heritage of boat race. Headmaster of local primary school Md. Ataur Rahman chaired the programme.

Gaznar Beel, at its best in the monsoon, attracts a large number of people. Villagers on the bank of the lake come in large numbers for the boat race. The weeklong festivity has, however, dimmed in recent years somewhat by the absence of initiatives to make it a success, said the speakers.

Md. Ataur Rahman, one of the key organisers of the boat race, said hundred of boats from various areas of Pabna and Sirajganj districts participated in the competition.