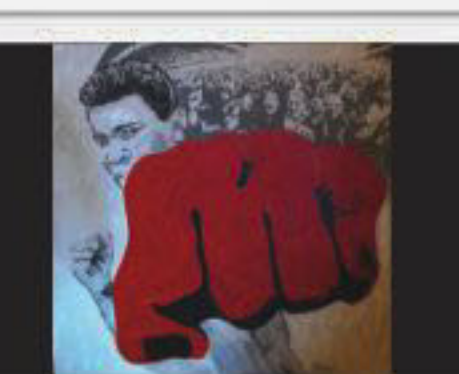


WHAT'S ON

Bengal Classical Music Fest 2014
Organiser: Bengal Foundation
Venue: Army Stadium, Dhaka
Date: Nov 27-Dec 1
Time: 5pm - 5am



Solo Art Exhibition
Artist: Proshanta Karmakar
Buddha
Venue: Café Mango Gallery,
H-3/A, Rd-72, Gulshan
Date: Nov 14-Jan 14
Time: 10am-10pm



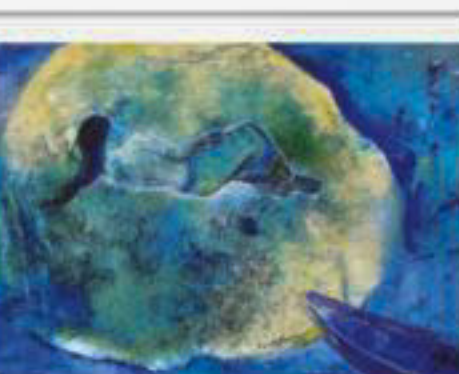
Group Art Exhibition
Artworks by 40 Eminent Artists
Venue: Bishwo Shahitto Kendro
Art Gallery, Dhaka
Date: Nov 14-28
Time: 3pm-8:30pm



Korean Film Festival
Organiser: The Korean Embassy Dhaka
Venue: Bangladesh National Museum
Date: Nov 28-29
Time: 3pm-8pm



Solo Painting Exhibition
Title: Life is Here
Artist: Kanak Champa Chakma
Venue: Bengal Art Lounge, 60,
Gulshan Avenue, Circle 1
Date: Nov 15-Dec 6
Time: 12pm-8pm



THE WORLD'S BIGGEST CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL RETURNS

“Waves of this festival are reaching worldwide”

-- Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Of all the maestros to have graced the stage in the last two years of the Bengal Classical Music Festival, Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty, a living legend of Indian Classical Music, has a special connection to this land. Born in Bangladesh, he still considers this country very much his own, and his popularity among connoisseurs of classical music in Bangladesh also stands unparalleled. The virtuoso vocalist will be on stage on the very first day of the festival, and will present something classical music listeners have rarely experienced: a jugalbandi of Classical vocals and the slide guitar, by Debashish Chakrabarty.

Talking to The Daily Star, Pandit Chakrabarty said he was looking eagerly forward to this collaboration. “Debashish has beautifully represented Classical Music with an instrument not associated commonly with it, and he is a great musician in his own rights. He was very adept in classical music, and after his tutelage under Brij Bhushan Kabra, the first musician who played Classical Music on the slide guitar, he has taken Indian Classical Music to new listeners. He has truly reinvented the slide/Hawaiian guitar, designing his own

instruments for a unique sound. He has played with the most prolific musicians in the world – including Ustad Zakir Hussein's super-group Shakti – and has numerous accolades to his name, including a Grammy nomination. He is organising an international conference of classical guitar in India early next year, and hopefully there can be classical guitarists from Bangladesh there as well. I sincerely hope the audience will find something truly mesmerising through our performance this year.”

The maestro also heartily thanked and congratulated Bengal Foundation for holding the Festival. “It really is the biggest festival of classical music, and Bengal Foundation deserves all the appreciation for it. It is a colossal opportunity for music and arts lovers of Bangladesh, and I can tell that the waves of this festival are now reaching all over the world. They have also started a fantastic institution for classical music, and I hope and pray that it reaches to all parts of the country and the talented artistes of Bangladesh can reap its full benefits.”

Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty and Debashish Bhattacharya's jugalbandi will be the closing performance of the first night (tonight) of the festival.



PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

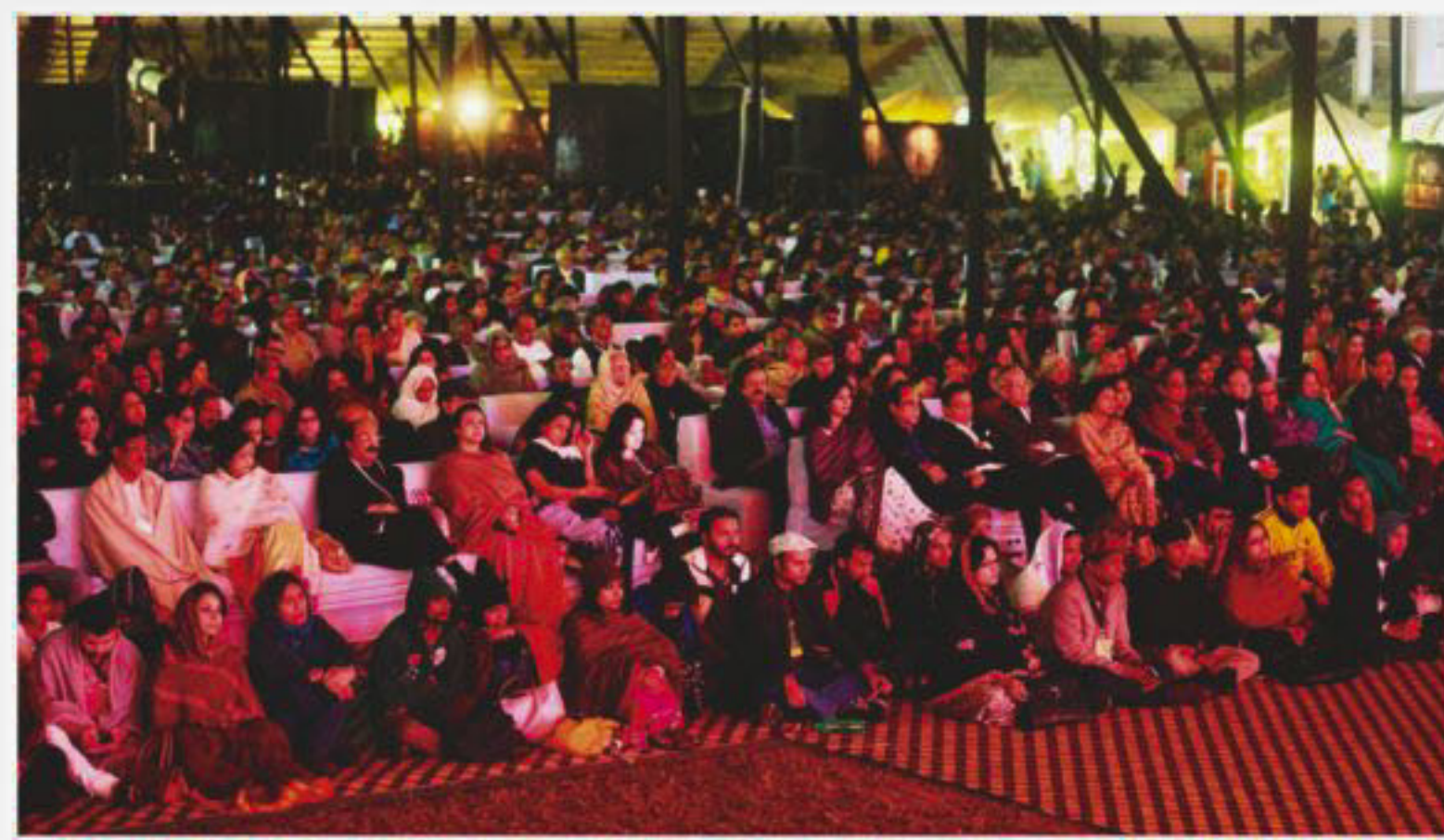
The maestros' palette

SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

At times when the sun is shining and it is raining nearby, you often witness a rainbow appearing on the horizon. The light from the sun, broken up by water droplets in the atmosphere, creates the seven colours. This is akin to the seven *sudhh* notes of music (in addition to five *komol* and *kari*) which performed in different combinations can create different emotions to suit one's mood.

Early man sought to harness the melodies of nature -- the vibration of the hunter's bow, the chirping of the birds, the sounds of pouring rain or a flowing stream -- to catch a prey or at times to seek a soulmate among the valleys, the *mohua* fields in full bloom. Those who have captured that essence in their music have been recognised as true maestros or *shadhaks*.

The story goes that the late sitar maestro Nikhil Bandhopadhyay, during his stay with Acharya Baba Allauddin Khan, the great virtuoso and musical thinker, awoke one night to the sound of the Acharya's *riwaz* and was astounded to find the courtyard filled with venomous serpents seemingly hypnotised to



stillness by the power of the music. Along came other animals drawn to the alluring serenity of the music, and Bandhopadhyay thought: “If Hindustani classical music can tame the wildest of animals, it can definitely tame our minds.”

Much like Acharya Baba's open invitation to the denizens of the forest, the Bengal Classical Music Festival's launch is a call to all music lovers to gather and enjoy the open-for-all raga master pieces of the virtuosos.

Ragas, like the different melodies of nature, have an incredible range of compositions to appeal to all of one's emotions expressed through

vocals or instruments. The ragas attuned to nature are often seen as a medium of prayer, which sought to treat people by helping them attain inner peace. Take for example the flute which is a symbol not only of love and grief but a full spectrum of emotion in between. So is the Rudra Veena, the sitar, sarod or the other string, wind, bow or percussion instruments.

Different ragas are also reflective of the time of day they are played. On a lazy afternoon, try listening to ragas associated with that time of day, like *Sarang*. Raga *Multani* presenting the grandeur of the raga would be more appropriate

between afternoon and evening. The raga is a *sandhi-prakash* raag or evening raga; a smooth transition from afternoon to an evening raga. Imagine listening to the flute played by a stranger beside a river as evening descends to beckon the dark and quiet night. Here the raga epitomizes an emotional tune by the grief struck lover.

In a bid to popularise the heritage of classical music, Bengal Foundation has joined hands with ITC-SRA to organise the festival for the next 15 years. In realising the aspirations of Abul Khair, Chairman Bengal Foundation, the Bengal Parampara music school commenced its journey on November 15 to train the young aspirants under the guidance of reputed and world class classical musicians.

So come one and come all. Set your mind free, listen to the *Khayals*, the *Thumri*, *Kajri*, *Chaiti*, broad *gamaks*, *meend*, the lightening *taan-s*, *alap*, *gor* and *jhala*. Watch the stalwarts spin gold in air. Feel the glistening dew drops, the moonlight brushing against the clouds, watch the stars hanging low over the sky and set your heart's tune to the melody of true brilliance.



The maestro has mesmerised audiences in both the previous editions of the festival.

PHOTO: STAR

PERFORMING TONIGHT at BCMF '14

The performances of the Bengal Classical Music Festival 2014 – Bangladesh will open at 6:30pm today, with some 40 eminent Bangladeshi artistes rendering Bangla songs in chorus. The featured artistes of the night will perform solos next, in the following order:



Vidushi Malavika Sarrukai – Bharatanatyam



Ajinkya Joshi – Tabla



Rajrupa Chowdhury – Sarod



Ruchira Kedar – Vocal



Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan – Sitar



Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty and Debashish Bhattacharya – Vocal and Slide Guitar



Getting to the festival

Bengal Foundation has arranged for a number of buses to transport music-lovers to the Bengal Classical Music Festival from various parts of Dhaka, and return services as well.

The buses will be carrying passengers to the Army Stadium on six routes: Abdullahpur-Uttara-Khilkhet-Bishho Road-Sheora (starting time 5pm); Golapbag-Maniknagar-Mugda-Basabo-Khilgaon Flyover-Malibag-Badda-Notun Bazar-Bashundhara-Bishho Road (4pm); Shahbag-Banglamotor-Farmgate-Banani-Mohakhali-Banani (4pm); Jigatola-Shankar-Dhanmondi 27-Manik Miya-Mohakhali (4pm); Mirpur 12-Pallabi-Mirpur 11-Mirpur 10-Kazipara-Shewrapara-Taltola-Agargaon Mohakhali (4pm); Pallabi-Mirpur 11-Mirpur 10-Mirpur 02-Mirpur 01-Bangla College-Technical-Shyamoli-Asad Gate-College Gate-Manik Miya-Farmgate (4:30pm). All buses will return through the same route at the close of every day's performance.

Anyone willing to avail the bus service must show the print-out of their registration form.

However, the transport schedule may change due to arising circumstances.

All systems go for the Festival of the Year

In conversation with Blues Comm CEO Farhadul Islam



Last-minute touches are being put on the arena; (right) a golf-cart to take the maestros for a tour of the stadium.

PHOTO: RIDWAN ADID RUPON

SAURAV DEY

Blues Communications, the event management organisation of Bengal Classical Music Fest 2014, has completed the final touches in the run up to the biggest classical music festival of the world. A team of energetic, efficient and enthusiastic individuals have been working hard to present an impeccable event to a whopping number of music lovers. The CEO of Blues Communications, Farhadul Islam spoke to The Daily Star. strategic partners of the festival, on last-minute preparations, on the eve of the curtain raiser of the mega event.

How are last minute preparations going?
Farhad: We are giving the finishing touches. This year's festival is bigger than that of last year, and we have introduced a good number of changes so that audience can enjoy an uninterrupted programme. We are working on the auditorium and touching up the venue. It took us five days to install the auditorium.



What are the improvements audiences should expect over the last edition?

Farhad: We have brought the world's best, D&B sound system from Germany. And to give the audience a state-of-the-art sitting experience, we have also brought an entire auditorium from China. The massive structure does not need any bamboo or other support. Moreover, we have brought chairs from abroad for VIP seating and improved

other facilities, including a larger food court and better sitting accommodation.

What are the major challenges you faced in organising the event?

Farhad: We are arranging it for the third time and things are almost sorted. But decorating the venue was the biggest task. Thankfully, we received support from the Bangladesh Army; they opened the venue for us seven days prior. Moreover, maintaining protocol, event schedule and ensuring accommodation of distinguished guests and artistes is always a challenge. It is also a big task to prepare the venue every day after the performances end at night, only to resume at dusk. Some 300 individuals have been physically working for 15 days to ensure a smooth event. The event is powered by 26 generators and switching the generators after a certain period is another challenge. Around 60,000 people have registered for this year's event and we are expecting the biggest turnout yet, and we are well prepared for it.