



EVENT

The five-day Bengal Classical Music Festival took place in Dhaka from November 27 till December 1, 2015, when the pre dawn azaan beckoned the indigo sky. My nights of such bliss concluded with tears pouring down my eyes with the tune of the bandish "Allah mere man me sath, Tu Karim Tu Rahim, Tu Sattar Tu Gaffar," when the heart soared while the mind settled in serene peace.

Participated by the grand musicians maestro of Indian classical music this was the fourth time Dhaka had the opportunity to listen to top Indian classical artistes, vocalists, instrumental pieces and dance. The mega event saw a turnout out of audiences of varied age and lineage, from veteran connoisseurs to first time budding enthused youth. The occasion was garlanded not only by our legendary musicians or classical music connoisseurs, who have pursued their love for noble art amidst the narrow ally of local culture but also by people who were encouraged by the novel and brilliant idea to host this free of cost, with online ticket availability.

The success of this labour of love was phenomenal: imagine 25,000 people of Dhaka mesmerised in the foggy chilly night devouring the ecstasy that pure music brings! How I was pleasantly surprised to see many of my junior friends like Sajib, 31 of Wari known as a goon of Rock n Roll spending five nights mesmerised by listening to classical music who embarked on this journey with the hand of Bengal four years back for the first time and never stopped coming back! His excited call at 2.30 at night was unbelievable, you never said classical music is

BENGAL CLASSICAL MUSIC FESTIVAL

MELODY AS COMMUNION

SHARMINI ABBASI

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

like this? Needless to say the impeccable renderings of legendary artistes like Ustad Rashid Khan, Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty, Pandi Hariprasad Chaurasia, Ustad Zakir Hussain and many more revealed the quintessential beauty of Shastriya Sangeet which was unknown to many for a very long time. Just as the Almighty has made our senses so complete that beauty never requires explanation...so did the

musical renderings which did not require grammatical understanding of Shastriyousong+geet(!) to unfold its beauty and brilliance to even the entry level audience.

We are Dhakaites: living in a city of million comrades struggling against all odds with least empathy for each other and unforgiving heedlessness of political good will. The everyday aversion to face news of innocent loss of life on accidents, fire, crime, the sheer chill to reckon the absence of any rule of law; it is as if our sorrow, despair and hopeless struggle is etched as "obhiman" (a word that does not have a English synonym) over the all time smoky sky of the city! But as tomorrow is always another day and good things too happen and in this life there is mercy. So Dhaka had an unforgettable experience to be cherished for a long time.

Who can thank enough Bengal Foundation and the sponsors for opening a door for our youngsters – a step way to heavenly music which was kept locked for so many years. As I write this I can hear my 15-year-old daughter in the next room playing *pehli baar dekha tune* kinda Hindi song and reckon impeccable talent in tapping each Bollywood dance! But today I am hopeful that maybe one day she may be blessed enough to know what music is, what noble culture is.

Music, such music, is a sufficient gift. It is enough to be blessed to have ears to listen to beautiful music and sing along within heart or soul, as music is a place where there is no divide but one equal possession, equal communion and identity; no end or beginning, but one equal eternity.

STRIKING A CHORD

A BUSINESS VENTURE – AND WATCHING IT GROW!

ELITA KARIM

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

Starting something new, especially in the beginning of the New Year is always very exciting. We get ourselves a shiny new notebook and write down everything that we want to do in the new year. With 'losing weight' and 'saving more money' topping the lists, many young professionals also make vows to start a new venture, stepping into the world of business, taking the title 'entrepreneur' seriously for the very first time.

While one group signs up for classes and workshops on business assistance and training programmes, makes an excel sheet for anything and everything on their laptops, another bunch just jumps into the sea and prepares for a first time, long-term session of deep sea diving. Next, choosing a location, thinking of interior designing, financing the business, registering the name and so much more.

Even half a century ago, educated Bengalis would prefer to be identified as government officials, foreign affairs personnels and of course, doctors, engineers and professors to add to the 'respectable' list. Of course their ancestors had spent their lives ruling over regions and villages as Zamindars, reaping profit from lands left to them by their elders, through agriculture and tenancy. It is only in the last decade or more that

entrepreneurship has become an integral part of the youth's modern-day life in Bangladesh.

17-year-old Morshed Alam is a student of class 12 at the Ispahani School in Chittagong and is busy preparing for his Higher Secondary examinations to be

evening, he and his friends would design and supervise the creating of the 'cool' and 'rad' tee-shirts that all youngsters seem to be in love with in Chittagong. "I am not sure if I would like to spend tee-shirts for the rest of my life," says the teenager. "My mother wants to be a

STARTING A BUSINESS VENTURE AND SPENDING AT LEAST 6-7 MONTHS DEVELOPING THE BUSINESS IS A LESSON THAT ONE SELDOM LEARNS AT EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

held this year. A cricket enthusiast, Morshed however spends extra time after school working on his new Tee-shirt business. "I made around 56,000 takas last year, with a 35,000 taka profit – and too by selling tee-shirts," says a jubilant Morshed. Along with class friends, Morshed rented a small space inside a workshop near his school, where every

professor at a university or work at a corporate company like my older cousin in Dhaka. But I think I will pursue with business. I will continue creating designs for young people – be it tee-shirts or watches or caps."

Starting a business venture and spending at least 6-7 months developing the business is a lesson that one seldom

learns at educational institutions. You learn all about sourcing items, generate writing skills and marketing skills, become a better public speaker and also become more sensitive to people around you, especially those working for you.

"I started this restaurant just 15 days ago and already I feel that I have had a crash course on how the world of food business actually runs," says Nayeem Salaam, owner of a small kichuri shop in Mohammadpur. "Every day I sit with my team twice; once early in the morning to discuss about hygiene issues, not wasting food, kitchen and service etc. We sit at the end of the day once again to discuss any kind of changes we need to make the next day, shopping list and other inputs. These daily routines have made me realise that my team will be calm and happy only if I can create a suitable environment for them. Also, I now know all the vegetable and meat shopping spots in Dhaka where I make my own purchases, plus I spend some time in the kitchen taking care of hygiene and learning to cook a few dishes myself!"

In nutshell, if you have an idea that you have been twiddling with for some time, maybe you should go for it and give it a try. You never know, that just might be your calling!



ABOUT TOWN



1ST CAMERA FEST - 2016

January 14-16, at 8pm
Drik Gallery, Dhanmondi

Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/Camerafest/?fref=ts>



EMK MOVES- DANCE, MOVEMENT, EXPRESSION

January 3-13, 6-10pm

EMK Center, Midas Centre, Dhanmondi

Organized by: Srishti Cultural Center (SCC) and EMK Center

Visit: <https://www.facebook.com/events/164131603946263/>



SHAKRAIN FESTIVAL

January 14, 6-9pm

Shakhari Bazar, Dhaka

Organised by: Jagannath University Family

Visit:

<http://www.wherevent.com/search/Bangladesh/Dhaka/Dhaka/2016-01-14>