

TELEVISION OF INNOVATION

TELEVISION OF A LIFETIME



FARIDUR REZA SAGAR

[Continued from Last Issue]

In this episode, the audiences first saw the appearance of Jewel Aich. At that time Jewel Aich had participated in this program as a magician and the headmaster of Pirojpur High School. The magic he showed in the program was some milk in a glass, getting increased and decreased by only waving his hands. After that, Jewel Aich got the popularity by performing at Abdullah Abu Sayeed's magazine program.

There are so many things in children's program in television to be proud of. But, from the beginning the producers used to focus on learning through playing and many other things. Especially, Mustafa Monwar used to teach children various interesting things through his programs "Katum Kutum" and "Rong Tuli". He used to present how amazing things can be made only by using papers. And through the name "Rong Tuli" it can be easily guessed what children used to learn from that program. Later Mustafa Monwar and Kazi Kayum made several educational programs for children through puppet shows. Mustafa Monwar is still teaching children moral stories using puppets whereas Kazi Kayum had portrayed Bangladesh's fairy tales for the children

through puppets. Especially he has presented many tales from "Thakurmar Jhuli" and "Bangalir Hashir Golpo" in television.

A children based program in television that bought recognition from abroad was called "Ko Ar Kho". Before the airing of this program there was also a program called "Okkhor Chokkor". Producer Zia



Ansari produced the program "Ko Ar Kho" on the basis of the theme of "Okkhor Chokkor". The host of the program was Nazma Chowdhury. The show had an interesting character which was a crow. The crow used to pronounce each and every word with a "Ro - fola". To be precise he used to call the word "Apa" to "Apra". This word became really famous

among children. And the one who used to voice the role of the crow was none other than the famous producer Saidul Anam Tutul.

Children back then not only watched the local programs but they also used to watch the education based programs from abroad on the television. Programs that can be mentioned here are: Sesame Street,

Electric Company, A to Zoo, Discovery etc. Through the means of puppetry, many education based programs were gifted to children at that time. David Attenborough at that time produced a science based program called "Life on Earth". For the show "Life on Earth," David Attenborough received UNESCO's Kalinga award and was also awarded with

many other national and international awards.

Famous astrologist Karl Sagan gathered information from Cornell University for 2 years on the evolution of the universe and the mysterious facts of nature to produce a thirteen episode series called "Cosmos". He did the shooting of the series in 40 locations around the world. Due to the help of television people in our country, we were able to see these shows.

When they received the small TV van for recording television outside, Abdullah Abu Sayeed said that he will not only use it for entertainment but he will also use it to give education based program to viewers.

The writer is Managing Director, Channel i

Translated by Imtiaz Salim

With that edition, comes the end of the weekly column based on Mr. Faridur Reza Sagar's book "Ek Jibon-e Television." The Showbiz team is truly grateful and would like to thank Mr. Sagar for being with us and we would like to wish him and his Channel i family all the best in their future endeavours.



ARTS GAZE

THE BODY SPEAKS ANEW

"To understand what I am saying, you have to believe that dance is something other than technique. We forget where the movements come from. They are born from life. When you create a new work, the point of departure must be contemporary life - not existing forms of dance." Pina Bausch, German choreographer, dance director par excellence

LUBNA MARIUM

The Goethe Institute in Dhaka must be congratulated for presenting the 'Young Choreographers Platform 2016'- an evening of Contemporary Dance, on April 17, 2016 at the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, by seven young choreographers, mentored by German dancer Tomas Buenger. This provided a much-needed space for young dancers to converse with and within themselves about their own practice of this kinesthetic art form that embodies both the body and the spirit.

Essentially, contemporary art practice is a space for critical reflection, based on the conviction that the arts, and the artists who practice them, do not exist in a vacuum, but are active participants in the process of shaping cultures. The interest is not in how they paint, and dance, but in what makes them do so!

In South Asian classical dances the language of the body has been meticulously and almost flawlessly conceived. But, with it comes the entire baggage of a certain codified culture of representation that a young dancer needs a lot of courage to break out of. The entire paraphernalia of glittering costumes; the repertoire of mythological stories; and pedagogy that discourages innovation and creativity; all of it sits heavy on the shoulder of young choreographers. Buenger needs to be

congratulated on his understated guidance of the dancers by just allowing their dance to be and letting their bodies speak a new, contemporary language.

There was much to appreciate in each presentation, keeping in mind that this is a fairly new experiment. My own organization, 'Shadhona', has conducted innumerable contemporary dance workshops, and has also awarded scholarships to young dancers to train to do so. But, this was the first time that an entire evening was dedicated to the contemporary work of the dancers themselves. In critiquing this first venture, we have to look at technique, content and presentation.

The genre of dance for all the presentations was a fusion of South Asian dances, physical theatre and western contemporary dance and the music followed suit.

The only refreshing deviation was Shammy Akter's 'MinE (Me in Myself)' danced first in silence and then with the konnakkol, or mnemonic syllables of Bharatanatyam, recited aloud by the dancer herself. Shammy's work with German theatre director Helena Waldmann was reflected in her presentation.

Tahnun Ahmedy incorporated the 'dhol' with exceptional use of Kathak; while Lamiya Saiyara Mela at one point even used the spoken English word. I was hoping, though, that any one of them had dared to utilize more of the vast repertoire of South Asian classical and folk music.

Parvin Sultana Kolly's piece, 'To See or not to See' came as a pleasant surprise, in terms of her stunning experiments with 'lifts' in duet compositions. As expected, Sudeshna Swayamprabha, one of the

most talented dancers in Dhaka, came up with a strong performance with her partner; while Snata Shahrin and her partners presented a compelling performance regarding abuse. Md. Farhad Ahmad's work veered more towards 'physical theatre' and came up with some remarkable moves.

Content wise most presentations were clichéd, the discourse being mostly personal explorations and a few on gender and abuse. The body too spoke in an expected language of attraction and repulsion. The audience and I were much taken by Sudeshna's incorporation of an additional box to symbolize 'sharing of power structures' in her presentation 'S-He'. In fact, Mela, too, used the box very intelligently, moving into it, sitting and standing on it. All in all, the dancers spoke in a body language just learnt. As times goes on, proficiency is sure to increase.

As for the technical presentation - the use of light and costume - it was evident that much, much more time needed to be put in conceiving the final image. I'm an optimist though, and believe that performance is a part of learning and will lead to ultimate maturity.

Kudos, once again, to the dancers, their mentor and the organizer.

The author is a Dancer, Cultural Activist and Researcher.

