

WHAT'S ON
Bengal Classical Music Festival
 Organiser: Bengal Foundation
 Venue: Army Stadium
 Date: November 24-28
 Time: 7pm-5am everyday

Int'l Group Art Exhibit
 Venue: Gallery Cosmos, New DOHS, Mohakhali
 Date: Nov 27-Dec 26
 Time: 12noon-8pm

Solo Art Exhibition
 Impression of Time
 Artist: Abdul Gaffer Babu
 Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka
 Date: November 19-29
 Time: 3pm-9pm

Solo Art Exhibition
 Soul to Soul
 Artist: Tarshito
 Venue: Bangladesh National Museum
 Date: November 19-30
 Time: 9:30am-4:30pm

Solo Art Exhibition
 Title: Urban Sight
 Artist: Kazi Salahuddin Ahmed
 Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, Dhanmondi
 Date: Nov 18-Dec 3
 Time: 12Noon-8pm



Waves of melody crash onto Army Stadium shores

Curtain rises on Bengal Classical Music Fest

ALOK KUMAR SEN & ZAHANGIR ALOM
 The first night of the 5th Bengal Classical Music Festival brought the music-loving audience of Dhaka at the Army Stadium on Thursday night, as the world's biggest festival of classical music set sail under a pristine crescent moon.
 Vidushi Girija Devi, one of the senior-most Hindustani classical singers at age 87, is respectfully and adorably addressed as "Ammajaan" by many music maestros. The artist started off her musical voyage with Raga Jogkauns (intermingling of Raga Jog and Raga Chandrakauans). The pristine melody of vilambit bandish "Jhanjhariya Jhanake Kaise Kaar Aayoon Tore Paas" coupled with adorable taan, mesmerising bolbut and emotive pukar styled by Devi mingled with Murad Ali Khan's sarangi recital. The maestro gave a profound rendition of drut bandish "Bohuta Dina Bittiyen Aaj Hoon Na Aaye Mori Laal", incorporating melodious a-kar taan, murki, meend and tehai. Pt. Gopal Mishra produced restless rhythms on tabla.

The prima donna of the Benaras and Senia traditions, later performed a Banaras Gharana khas thumri set on the sweetness of Raga Mishra Khamaj. The vocalist depicted a feminine plea through her melodic rendition of the excerpts "Itni Araj Mori Maan", and moved on to performing a Panjabi tappa "Miyana Nazre Nehi Adawe" and wrapped up her part with presenting a dadra "Diwana Ki Shyam Kya Jadu Dara". Sunanda Sharma on vocal support also got a chance to showcase her skills.
 Ustad Aashish Khan came next to take the stage and began his sarod recital with a grave melancholic raga Darbari Kanada. Pt. Bickram Ghosh on tabla accompanied the Ustad. Khan was born in a small yet influential princely state of British India, where his legendary grandfather Ustad Allauddin Khan hailing from Brahmanbaria in present-day Bangladesh, founded the Senia Maihar Gharana. His training later continued under the guidance of his father Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and aunt Annapurna Devi.
 Aashish Khan later performed



(Top) Sanjay Abhyankar and Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande sing Jasrangi; Aashish Khan performs the sarod; (below) Sharmila Banerjee's troupe performs dance at the festival.

Raga Chandranandan where he showcased various combination and permutation of musical notes and wrapped up his recital with a Mishra Bhairavi dhun set on dadra and teentaal.
 Dhaka music lovers experienced Jasrangi, a unique offering of classical music initiated by Pandit Jasraj, for the first time. In a Jasrangi, two artistes perform two distinct ragas simultaneously, set on the same bandish and taal. Dr Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande and Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar were the featured vocalists, who performed Jasrangi set on two ragas -- Shudh Dhaibat Lalit and Puria Dhaneshree respectively. The

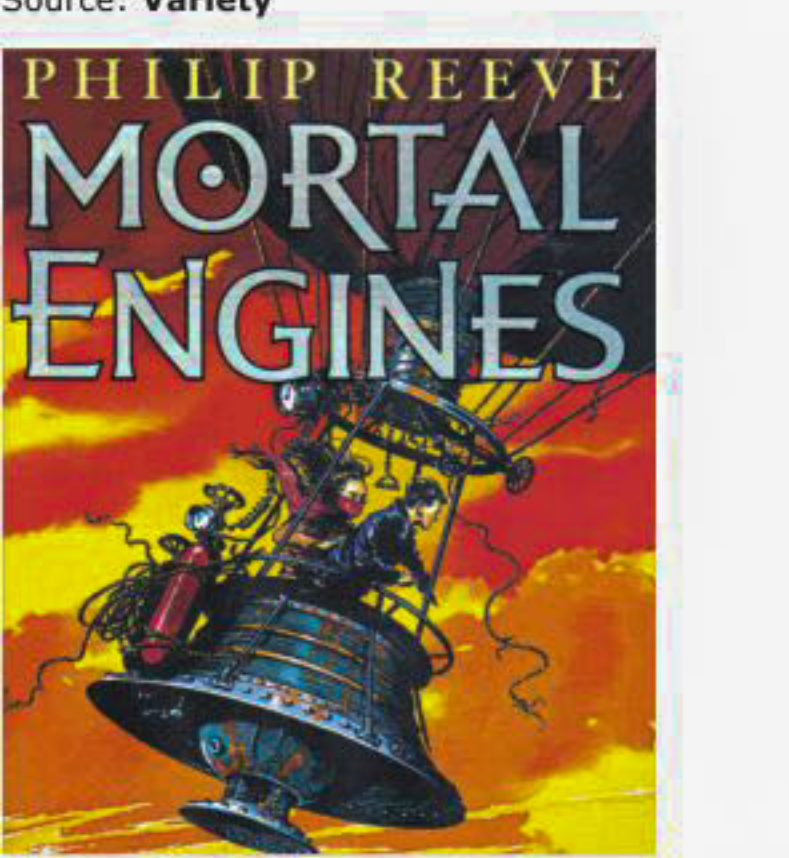
pancham (Pa) of Puria Dhaneshree was the Shadaj (Sa) of Shudh Dhaibat Lalit, a raga pertaining to Thaata Marwa. The most significant aspect of the performance was the application in the rendition of the artiste duo's coming on to shom on Gandhar (Ga) of Puria Dhaneshree and Madhyam (Ma) of Shudh Dhaibat Lalit. The duo's exquisite performances of vilambit bandish "Dhundhana Jaon Kitahoon Chhip Gaye" and drut bandish "Mairi Shaane Shaam" coupled with a rare variation of taan presentation was fantastic with a mellifluous harmonium sangat and riveting tabla rhythms. The singer duo later performed another Jasrangi bandish "Mora Re Manwa Tumhi San Laga", based on two ragas Bhoopali and Durga.
 Legendary Carnatic violinist Dr L Subramaniam was the ultimate performer of the night. He first performed the Carnatic Raga Mohanam (corresponding to Hindustani Raga Bhoopali) elaborating improvisations on five, seven and 11 notes per beat,

followed by a kriti. The maestro later recited a melancholic Raga Chandrapriya where he showcased ragam alapana, tanam, improvisational recital (pallavi) and a short kriti. Incredibly fast fingers playing notes in three octaves almost at once, and presentation of polyphonic harmonic resonance was a hallmark of his playing, much to the fascination of the audience.
 Earlier, the fifth edition of the Bengal Classical Music Festival was set off with a vivacious dance presentation by noted Bangladeshi dancer-choreographer Sharmila Banerjee and her troupe "Nriya Nandan", presenting dance pieces demonstrating various classical dance forms in a set titled "Robi Karokajjol Nriyomalika".
 A flute and violin jugalbandi performance followed, by two festival debutants -- accomplished flautist Pravin Godkhindi and violinist Ratish Tagde. Their performance of Raga Maru Bihag and the melodious, uplifting Raga Hansadhvani set the mood for the audience.

NEWS bytes

'Mortal Engines' to open in December 2018

Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh — the filmmaking pair behind the "Lord of the Rings" and "Hobbit" trilogies — return to the big screen with Universal and MRC's "Mortal Engines", based on the award-winning sci-fi book series by Philip Reeve.
 The film will open on December 14, 2018, according to Universal. December 2018 is shaping up to be a competitive month, with what is suspected to be James Cameron's "Avatar" sequel slated for release on December 21 by Fox. The first "Avatar" opened on the same week in December 2009.
 Set in a dystopian future where Earth's cities roam the globe on huge wheels, battling each other in a struggle for ever diminishing resources, "Mortal Engines" is the story of how two unlikely heroes come together and change the course of the future.
 Jackson and Walsh co-wrote the screenplay with their "LOTR" and "Hobbit" collaborator, Philippa Boyens, who serves as co-producer.
 That week of December has brought good fortune to Jackson: All six "Hobbit" and "Lord of the Rings" movies stacked out the same pre-Christmas week date.



"Music is a journey"

— L Subramaniam

ZAHANGIR ALOM
Dr. Lakshminarayana Subramaniam (born 23 July 1947) is an acclaimed Indian violinist, composer and conductor, trained in the classical Carnatic music tradition and Western classical music, and renowned for his virtuoso playing techniques and compositions in orchestral fusion. One of the biggest figures of Indian Classical violin, Subramaniam spoke to The Daily Star, about his first performance in Dhaka and more.

How was your experience of performing here, in such an ambience and in front of our audience?
Subramaniam: The audience is fantastic, the ambience is great and to have a classical music festival of such magnitude is fabulous. It is easy to do everything else because of commercial support, if you do non-classical things. But taking a bold initiative of doing classical music is immensely appreciable; because this is our culture, this is our roots — the heritage of our classical music. This kind of initiatives gradually exposes people to branch out to different kinds of music and gives them an opportunity to listen to other forms of classical music — North Indian, South Indian and Western classical music. After getting into the realm of music, the whole state of their mind will begin to change. We will understand human beings and their nature, surfacing the idea that we are from the same roots. It is so great to see the happenings here.
Would like to come back to perform here?
Subramaniam: Of course! Abul Khair, Chairman of Bengal Foundation, has already asked me to come next year. I have definitely cleaned my schedule for next year's festival, and would love to come again.
The practice of Carnatic music is not very common here. For our readers, could you tell us the major characteristics of Carnatic music?
Subramaniam: If you look at the history of Indian Music, it all



started from Vedas. After twelfth century, during the Mughal era, it slowly developed and instruments were modified. It took lots of influences, beautiful influences. Now we are two systems — North Indian and South Indian Classical Music, but the roots are the same. Basically, the ornamentation, approach and compositional structures are different. We have Kriti, a very structured composition one has to follow and you are free to produce lots of polyrhythm. Some of the musicians of the South in the 18th centuries made 72 parent scales, and simultaneously they developed 22 shrutti, microtones, rhythmic cycles, 108-tala cycle, 175-tala cycle ... all these rhythmic cycle they developed and put these into the book form. So what happened... lots of composers started writing compositions on the parent scale.
What can we do to help our audience understand and appreciate Carnatic music, as they are more used to Hindustani Music?
Subramaniam: If one starts slowly listening to the music of South with an open mind, they will start getting into it. Music is music ultimately. You need patience to appreciate it. Artistic creation or expression of melodic emotion depends on the artistes. They bring life to each note. Somebody gets fascinated by the technique, someone gets captivated by the complicated raga and rhythmic cycle, while somebody delves into music having spiritual connotations. If you have an open mind, you will appreciate all the layers of music.
 Music has the mesmerising power to reach the ultimate and to delve into the spiritual state of mind. Music is a journey. You don't know when and how you will direct your voyage.

PERFORMING TONIGHT
AT BENGAL CLASSICAL MUSIC FEST
 Group sarod recital by Bengal Parampara Sangeetalay
 Carnatic flute by Shashank Subramanyam
 Khayal vocals by Dr. Prabha Atrre
 Tabla by Pt. Anindo Chatterjee
 Dhrupad vocals by Pt. Uday Bhawalkar
 Sitar by Pt. Sanjoy Bandopadhyay
 Khayal vocals by Ustad Rashid Khan

Badhon's first love letter

SHAH ALAM SHAZI
 Popular actor Azmeri Haque Badhon is also a noted model, but she is mostly busy with television plays these days. A celebrity has many admirers, but it is a curious wonder to know whom they had admired throughout their lives. She shared stories of her first love letter and her first crush, in a chat with The Daily Star.
"I have a cool story of my first love letter. I was a school student then, living in Rajbari. My father had a government job and was posted there. I was a huge fan of Shah Rukh Khan, having watched many of his movies, and that's when it began. I wrote a love letter addressed to

him. We used to subscribe to Anandlok Magazine, from Kolkata, and they had a list of Bollywood celebrity addresses. I never got a response from him, but I wrote to him many times for the next two or three years. I used to feel a rush of excitement and hope every time I saw the mailman, but there was nothing for me."
"I never wrote a love note to anyone after, but I did have a crush on someone at school. I was a good student, and was drawn to a fellow student who topped his class. But I never confessed my feelings to him. My father was transferred to another place after, and we had to move, and that was the last I saw of him."

