

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




U Rajesh and Pt. Ronu Majumdar perform an enthralling jugalbandi; Priyanka Gope sings her heart out at the festival.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Into the paradise of pristine melodies

Bengal Classical Music Fest in crescendo

ALOKE KUMAR SEN & ZAHANGIR ALOM

The second day's proceedings of Bengal Classical Music Festival 2016 reached its crescendo as the nightlong soiree offered plethora of pristine melodies. The display of graceful visual poetry (Odissi recital) by Vidushi Madhavi Mudgal and Arushi Mudgal; melodic portrayal of romantic melancholia of Raga Bageshree by Priyanka Gope; symphony of Rahul Sharma's santoor; the magic of mute tehai on sitar by Purbayan Chatterjee; the pristine vocal music performance by Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar and the evoking of the transcendental music, rhythms and a rare jugalbandi performance by Pt. Ronu Majumdar (flute) and U Rajesh (mandolin) kept Dhaka music lovers rapt into the paradise of pristine melodies.

Through presenting an immaculate dance recital eulogising Nataraj, Vidushi Madhavi Mudgal set off the event. A performance of tabla lahara by the young artistes of Bengal Parmpara Sangeetaly kept the audience intact in the realm of rhythms.

Prominent Bangladeshi vocalist Priyanka Gope was euphoric in her rendition of Raga Bageshree. Gripping the precise ragdari, the artiste expressed the emotional contents in the alap and vilambit bandish "Kaun Gata Bhaili", and exerted the lyrical expression of the bandish. Her sargam combination, lovely taan performance, meend, murki and a fondness of bolbistar were praiseworthy.

With the bandish "Rasiya Mohe Bulaye", Priyanka also performed a chhoto khayal set on Raga Kaushik Dhwani.

Rahul Sharma healed the audience in a regal performance of Raga Gauti on santoor. He delved into the alap, jod, jod alap, gaut, jhala and tehai parts of the recital as Satyajit Talwalkar, a disciple of Ustad Zakir Hussain, fantastically produced torrents of beats based on rupak taal (seven beats). He showcased the symphony with several variations of gaut performance with different technicalities, reminiscent of his father and guru, Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma.

Vocal music presentation by Mohammad Shoeb and others came next. The singer rendered Raga Darbari Kanada with a fusion of beats of Pakhawaj and tabla.

Purbayan Chatterjee dramatised his sitar recital incorporating the magic of mute (atit) tehai that criss-crossed the entire recital. The

artist started off his recital with playing Raga "Hemlalit" (intermingling of Raga Hemant -- created by Baba Ustad Allauddin Khan, and Raga Lalit) depicting an aura of dewy night together with a wait for dawn. Hemanta is also the Bengali season of golden harvest while Lalit means art.

Purbayan, a sitar prodigy of Senia Maihar Gharana, portrayed the art of gold in his recital fabulously accompanied by tabla artiste Anubrata Chatterjee. With a great command over all the three octaves of sitar coupled with an outstanding ragdari and speedy recital, Purbayan showcased the gravity of the raga while a smiling Anubrata displayed the fineness of layakari on matta-taal in vilambit composition and on teentaal in drut composition. The sitarist later played

a folk dhun with an elaboration of raagmala.

Eminent Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar performed Raga Basant Bahar. The artiste, with a distinctive rendition style and a refined vocal prowess, performed vilambit bandish on ek taal. The pandit's emotive performance of pukar, bolbut was followed in the drut bandish "Gundh Laori Malaniya" on teentaal. The vocal maestro later performed a chhoto khayal on Raga Sohini and Rupak taal. Pt. Suresh Talwalkar's riveting rhythms on tabla embellished the performance.

Flute maestro Pt. Ronu Majumdar paired with mandolin artiste U Rajesh was the final performance of the night. The maestro duo styled a transcendental melody of Raga Natbhairav (Sarasangi in Carnatic Classical Music) with powerful rhythms of pakhawaj

by SV Ramani and tabla by Pt. Abhijit Banerjee. Music lovers thoroughly enjoyed the recital where Ronu Majumdar played mesmerising flutes of varied shapes and U Rajesh played heart-rending melodies on mandolin. Prior to that, Pt. Ronu Majumdar offered his musical prayer through reciting Raga Mangal Bhairav and U Rajesh mesmerised all with the presentation of a sweet Raga Amrit Varshini. A blitzkrieg between pakhawaj artiste and tabla artiste followed, where the duo encountered artistically. It was Pt. Ronu Majumdar who wrapped the nightlong soiree with performing a Bhatiali dhun that received the audience so fondly thanks to the consent of Abul Khair, Chairman of Bengal Foundation.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

PERFORMING TONIGHT

AT BENGAL CLASSICAL MUSIC FEST

Kathak by Munmun Ahmed and troupe "Rewaz"
Tabla by Nilesh Ranadive
Khayal vocals by Jayateerth Mevundi
Tabla jugalbandi by Pt. Yogesh Shamsi & Pt. Subhankar Banerjee
Carnatic vocal jugalbandi by Ranjani & Gayatri
Sarod by Pt. Tejendra Narayan Majumdar
Khayal vocals by Pt. Ajoy Chakrabarty



"Music is about being in the moment"

... Purbayan Chatterjee

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Purbayan Chatterjee is considered one of the finest sitar players of his generation. One of the last disciples of Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, he was the recipient of the President of India Award for best instrumentalist of the country at age 15.

Purbayan has gone on to transcend the Indian classical audience and performed in world music festivals and created a fan base among the younger generation. On his return to the Bengal Classical Music Festival after a three-year hiatus, he spoke to The Daily Star about his musical ideology, the sitar as an instrument, and more.

You have collaborated with musicians of various genres and styles from around the world. Through that, is there something you have found about your musicality that you think maybe those who exclusively perform classical may not have found?

How beautiful is this moment and how can I make it more special? Forget what happened in the previous moment, and don't think about the upcoming. And for that you need an open mind. If you have the habit of interacting with other musicians, you form a connection instantly. Someone is playing a chord, and you know what phrase will sound good with it. You hear a rhythm and you think what you can play on that. And at this age of the internet, you can't help it.

captured the imagination of the people. But nowadays the flute, santoor are becoming more popular; people are playing the slide guitar. Sitar is also a very versatile instrument. It has a certain Indian-ness to it ... it gives that ethnic flavor and vibe.

You have also innovated with your instrument and sound at times. You designed something called a Dwo. Tell us about that.

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Purbayan: I do that sometimes. I made the Dwo a while back; it was essentially putting the neck of a sitar on an electric guitar. I recently made a new one. I was thinking of adding a visual element; so I designed a transparent sitar that has lights inside. Sometimes in live shows, say at a dramatic moment, all the lights will go out with only the sitar illuminated with the light. It adds a theatrical element. All this is for fun.

Many people don't know this, but you are also a gifted vocalist. Do you miss singing?

I have often felt that in the West, sitar is probably more closely associated with Indian Classical music than other instruments. You have performed at music festivals all over the world; do you think there's something to it?

Purbayan: Sitar is kind of iconic. Whenever people think of Indian classical music, they picture a sitar and tabla. Maybe it's because of the efforts of Pandit Ravi Shankar. Somehow, sitar

(Tabla player Anubrata Chatterjee, sitting next to Purbayan, quips "If he starts singing, other vocalists' shows will decline).

Purbayan: I do it only sporadically. Maybe at a classical show I'd sing two lines of a bandish; I like to indulge myself. But many great vocalists are out there; that's their art. Sometimes in my fusion projects I sing a little.

Madhavi's Magic, Arushi's Ardour

NAZIBA BASHER

The very air had a mysterious excitement about it on the second evening of the Bengal Classical Music Festival 2016. Vidushi Madhavi Mudgal's first performance at the grand festival has been anticipated for long.

After the formal introductions, the tunes of Manikuntala Bhowmick and Kshiptprakash Mohapatra (on vocal), Jitendrakumar Swain (pakhawaj), Yar Mohammad (sitar) and Srinivas Satapathe (flute) began swirling through the crisp, cold air. And then upon entrance, Madhavi's grace warmed up from the inside out.

Beginning with a solo piece Shloka in praise of Nataraj, she embodied the softness of Odissi, combining it with elaborate expressions.

After the audience was left awestruck by her elegance, the stage was then graced by her niece Arushi Mudgal. Madhavi's niece and prime disciple took control of the audience as she hypnotised with precise and intricate moves and sensual expressions. Arushi showed the importance of pursuing the art form with dedication and passion, as she performed her piece "Alhat".

The third piece was another solo by Madhavi, an Ashtapadi, which focused mostly on 'abhinaya'. Madhavi chose to tell the story of

Radha and Krishna, where a 'sakhii' (friend) of Radha's reunites the lovers. Even though Sakhii, Radha and Krishna were all played by her alone, her expressions were distinguished in one character from the other. The storytelling prowess of Odissi was evident in this piece, and Madhavi's abilities made the complexities of the story comprehensible for the Bengali audience.

Arushi then returned to the stage where she charmed with her sweet yet sultry moves to a Rabintra Sangeet. Clad in the colours of Spring, Arushi performed an Odissi piece to the song "Hemonte Kon Boshonteri Bani".

The final piece was a Bhairavi Pallavi, in the form of a jugalbandi between Guru and Shishya. The contrast and blend between Madhavi's experienced footwork and Arushi's young, bold expressiveness gave the audience a new kind of thrill. While they complimented each other in every way, their differences and similarities were both celebrated in this piece.

Throughout the entire performance consisting five pieces, Madhavi and Arushi achieved one thing: they allowed the audience to experience how it feels to dance just through the mere act of watching. The passion, the strength, the grace and the love for the art were evident in both faces and that was enough to leave the audience in a high.



Arushi (L) and Vidushi Madhavi Mudgal create a captivating moment.