

WHAT'S ON

Group Exhibition
 Title: Terracotta Plaque
 Venue: Zainul Gallery -1, FFA, DU
 Date: Nov 28-Dec 3
 Time: 11am-8pm daily



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: Shilpakala Gallery, Dhamondi
 Date: Nov 18-Dec 3
 Time: 12Noon-8pm




Pt. Ajoy Chakraborty weaves a garland of melodies; (below) Pt. Tejendra Narayan Majumdar in lost in his own world of the sonorous sarod.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

A MUSICAL HIGH

Bengal Classical Music Fest in all its colours

ALOKE KUMAR SEN & ZAHANGIR ALOM

The penultimate night's melodic proceedings of the fifth Bengal Classical Music Festival 2016 was evocative of many fascinating performances of vocals, instrumental recitals and dance.

Pandit Ajoy Chakraborty made music lovers delve deep into the heart of soothing melodies. The Pandit started off with a poetic vilambit ektal bandish "Niki Bani Banha", based on Raga Bilashkhani Todi. The performance was characteristic of Pandit Chakraborty's exquisite pukur with a long meend, unparallel gamaki alap in mandra saptak, dramatic presentation of sargam, aakar, bokro, jamjama, sapat and bol taan, effortless swar vistar in three octaves, murki and sargam taan tehai. Through his soulful rendition of drut teentaal bandish "Bansiya Bajee Mohan Shyam Ki", the maestro created a mellifluous aura, aiming to connect the enamoured earthly soul with the eternal. The maestro paid his homage to legendary guru and recently-deceased Carnatic vocalist Dr. M. Balamuralikrishna, performing a riveting Tillana based on Raga Kuntal Baradi. The artiste wrapped up nightlong soiree with a Bhairavi Bhajan "Bhaj Rey Guru Rey" on kaharba.

Pt. Tejendra Narayan Majumdar, an eminent sarod maestro of Maihar Gharana, diffused the serenity of peaceful melodies performing Raga Gunji Kanada on the late-autumnal night. Pt. Majumdar's aesthetic elaboration of melody in alap, jod and jhala part together with Pt. Yogesh Samsi's heart-rending tabla rhythms in the gaut, jhala and tehai part captivated the crowd. The recital contained long passionate meend, gamak, murki and short tehai. Tejendra Majumdar later played Raga Jogiya Kalindi on teentaal to hail a new dawn.

Carnatic vocalist duo Ranjani and Gayatri,

along with violinist Charumathi Raghuraman and the midandam and the ghatam artistes set off a musical flight that was like the sparks of the spontaneous melodic rhythms set on a dynamic balance. Gripping the apt mood and melody of several Carnatic Ragams -- Bibhash, Khamas, Abhogi, Kedar, Bhairavi, Saraswati and Kalavati -- they poured melodic rains on the Army Stadium. The Dhaka music lovers tasted the performance of a full-fledged Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi set on Raga Khamas. They closed with a Marathi abhang set on Maru Bihag.

It was rhythmic torrents of beats coupled with sweet melodies of a jugalbandi tabla recital by Pt. Yogesh Samsi and Pt. Subhankar Banerjee. The duo presented several kayda, tukra, rela and chakradar of some famous gharana like Farrukhabad, Banaras and

Ajrara. Both of them played Ustad Amir Hussain Khan's compositions with finesse. Yogesh Samsi's recital of farmayeshi chakradar and Subhankar Banerjee's tisra jati short composition were beautiful. Their jugalbandi performance with a nine-guna tehai was followed by a performance rela, composed by Ustad Keramatullah Khan.

Earlier in the evening, renowned Bangladeshi dance diva Munmun Ahmed set off the performance for the night with a graceful and riveting Kathak recital with her group. It was followed by solo tabla recital by talented artiste Nilesh Ranadive, who performed peshkar, chakradar and kayda on teentaal. Vocalist Jayateerth Mevundi, the third festival debutant of the night on a row, performed khyal on Raga Shudh Kalyan and a bhajan, "Baaje Muraliya Baaje".



"The journey of the soul is a continuous one"

In conversation with Ranjani-Gayatri

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Ranjani and Gayatri, the supremely gifted Carnatic vocalist duo gave their first performance on Bangladeshi soil on the fourth night of the Bengal Classical Music Fest, and became instant sweethearts of the Dhaka audience with their melodious performance. This correspondent sneaked into the backstage for a conversation with the sisters after the performance.



Ranjani: Gayatri was born that way. There are certain things you can't explain: why at the age of two when a girl cannot properly speak, she can identify hundreds of ragas? We were brought up in an environment where we were constantly listening to classical music doyens of those times. We started doing complex ragam tanam pallavis, different rhythmic practices...

Gayatri: When Ranjani was 6-7 years, we used to go to concerts, and the musician would sing a complex pallavi; my father would draw her aside then and there and ask her to handle it in all its variations. She used to do it, and people used to cluster around us after the concert. Two things are very important in classical music. One is that -- this is a gift. It's what we call a "Purnajanmavasana" (desire from a previous life). The journey of the soul is a continuous one; you may shed your body, but the experiences stay with you. And I feel the gift of music, and not just performing music -- even for appreciating music you must have Saraswati inside you. Second thing is environment. Music cannot be taught inside a classroom; you parents and family have to have that knack.

There's a famous story of Pt. Ravi Shankar once arranging a concert for you. How was that experience for you?

Ranjani: He had heard us recently on Youtube, a performance we did at a music festival. He was so impressed that he called us and said, "I want to listen to you live, again." There's this festival he conducted at his auditorium at his foundation in Delhi. We were very fortunate that he was there.

Gayatri: He was in fact very unwell, but he sat through the entire performance...

Ranjani: ... and at the end he gave us a standing ovation for 10 minutes, which is something we will never forget. It's a blessing.

singing, and people started loving our vocals more than the violin, and it so happened ...

Gayatri: ... that the violin took a back seat. Violin is our first love. It was the door through which we entered the field of music. So we can never forget it. Once in a while we give violin concerts, and we enjoy the experience.

I've read about your prodigious understanding of music at a young age. Did it come very naturally? Do you remember how it was when you were very young?

You both started off performing on violin duo, and you were an acclaimed violin duo. How and why did you switch to vocal music, and why do you still perform the violin on stage?

Ranjani: We started performing at a very young age, when I was 13 and Gayatri was 10 -- at an age when we had no fear of the stage. We just went and played, and our first concert was incidentally very well covered on Times of India. We have performed internationally also

MUNMUN AND REWAAZ

own the limelight

NAZIBA BASHER

On the fourth evening of the Bengal Classical Music Festival, prominent Kathak dancer of our country Munmun Ahmed and students from her dance institution Rewaaz gave a remarkable performance. Kathak in purest and most honest form was put forth for the audience.

The troupe began with a Guru Vandana -- the giving of thanks from the students to their teacher, expressing their gratitude and devotion. The piece provided a platform for the students of Rewaaz to honour Munmun Ahmed. The vandana was set to Raga Bhinna Shadaj.

As they started off with a soft, swaying performance, Munmun Ahmed took over the stage with a vilambit teentaal solo. The solo included Thaata, Uthaan, Amad and Paran. The teentaal solo escalated to Madhya Laya, to which Munmun performed to Tehais.

After Munmun Ahmed showed the audience the essentials of Kathak, her students then performed Tejamed, Tehai and two Parans. The precise



synchronisation by the youngsters was a hallmark of the performance.

Munmun Ahmed, using her wit, charm and dance -- then engaged the audience with a solo including Parmelu -- the bols that contain sounds from nature, two tehai that depicted a hunter whilst hunting, and game of 'catch the ball' with the audience, and lastly, a Paran that she helped the audience relate to the sound of a moving train.

As the troupe came back and presented two Tehais and one Tukda that involved 11 spins, Masum Hossain dazzled the audience with a quiet solo of 30 spins. Munmun Ahmed then came back in action with a Ladi, and ended in a Tehai -- with her troupe.

To show the storytelling abilities of Kathak, Munmun then performed an emotive piece on a Thumri -- "Mori Gagariya Kahe Ko Phodi Re Shyam" in Raga Gaud Malhar, a beautiful story of Radha and Krishna unravel before them.

Munmun and troupe returned with a Drut Paran, right after which she and her daughter Aporajita Mustafa presented a short, enticing jugalbandi. After another Drut Paran by everyone on stage, their set ended with a spectacular jugalbandi between Guru and all 20 Shishyas.

Indian musicians Subir Thakur (table) and Sunando Mukherjee (sarod), along with Md. Moniruzzaman (flute), Asit Biswas (esraj) and Tanjina Karim Sharalipi (vocal) assisted the performance.



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