

WHAT'S ON

Ekushey Book Fair

Organiser: Bangla Academy
Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan
Date: February 1-28
Time: 3-8pm

Bengal Sangskriti Utshab

Organiser: Bengal Foundation
Venue: AMA Mubith Sports Complex, Sylhet
Date: Feb 22-Mar 3
Time: 4pm onwards

Solo Painting Exhibition

Title: Poetry of Darkness
Artist: Rashedul Huda
Venue: La Galerie, Alliance Française de Dhaka
Date: Feb 24- Mar 7
Time: 3pm-9pm

Solo Photography Exhibition

Title: Here, For Now
Photographer: Hadi Uddin
Venue: Kala Kendra, Mohammadpur
Date: Feb 25- Mar 22
Time: 5pm-8pm

Theatre Festival

3rd Ekushey Natyotshab
Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan
Date: Feb 1-28
Time: 4pm



A SHOWCASE OF GUITAR MASTERY

Guthrie Govan rocks Dhaka audience

FAHMIM FERDOUS

It is not too often that a proper international rock musician gets to perform in Dhaka, and when news broke out that Guthrie Govan, considered one of the most skilled guitar players in the world today, was performing here, fans of the genre were not going to miss out.



Guthrie (top) and X-Factor perform at the concert.

PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

The concert, organised by The Rock Project and held at the city's KIB auditorium on Sunday, also featured Bangladeshi guitarists spanning three 'generations'. Wasiun Khan and Samir Hafiz, two of the most recognizable representatives of Bangladesh's underground music scene of the 2000s, shared the opening slot with the band Quanta. They both started off with their original guitar pieces, "Dancing Force" and "Becoming Rain" respectively. Wasiun then picked an Yngwie Malmsteen piece, "Far Beyond the Sun", to showcase his incredible speed on the fretboard. Samir, not to be left out, followed it up with another rock instrumental classic, Micheal Angelo Batio's "No Boundaries". The technical dexterity of the duo, and their affinity to neoclassical heavy metal are well-known to fans of Bangladesh's rock scene, and the duo did full justice to their repete.

Up next was X-Factor, the rock instrumental project of Miles' Iqbal Asif Jewel. Along with seasoned campaigners -- Manam Ahmed on keys, Aldnane Alam on bass and Rafa on the kit, Jewel displayed his maturity as a guitarist and composer. In "Flight of the Sparrow", he touched down on various genres of rock, in "Spiritual High" he went into a mystic, heightened state of mind, and after a superb drums solo by Rafa, closed his set with a track called "Circle of the Sixth", in his musical interpretation of the six

seasons of Bangladesh. The years of experience showed in Jewel's playing -- in terms of progression and dynamics of his compositions, and the feel and technical mastery.

Ershad Zaman, the man behind the guitar solos of Bangladeshi rock giants Artcell, took the stage next, and took the audience on a nostalgic journey. He opened with a composition titled "Megalodon", but then switched up to a medley of the most recognizable solos of Artcell hits -- "Bhul Jonmo", "Onno Shomoy", "Chile Kothar Shepai" and "Odekha Sworgo" -- guitar pieces etched into the minds of the audience note for note. He then played a new composition, a bit of the band's ballad anthem "Pothchola", and closed with a piece called "Welcome to Dhaka" that he created especially for Guthrie, who he termed an inspiration.

Rasheeq Rayhan, CEO of The Rock Project Dhaka then gave a brief presentation, elaborating the project's targets to provide an avenue for an internationally-accepted graded certification for musicians, as well as teaching diplomas. The ambitious music education project seemed ambitious, but at the same time in capable hands.

Guthrie Govan took the stage with two supremely talented musicians -- drummer Gino Banks and bassist Mohini Dey, and left a lasting impression -- among fans and first-time listeners alike.

Opening with "Bad Asteroid" from his rock supergroup The Aristocrats, and moved on to solo work "Sevens" which he termed a 'charming little ditty.' Despite issues with the monitor sound, Guthrie kept the spirits up with his witty exchange with the audience. "Wonderful Slippery Thing", his next piece, was a masterclass in funk guitar, with slaps and slick grooves galore. "Furtive Jack", the next track, is written about a guy likes to steal things, Guthrie said before launching into it. In "Slidey Boy", he showed his prowess of muted and harmonic notes, in a jazz-like groove. His set included "Fives", "Erotic Cakes", the title track of his first solo album, "Ner Ner", and finally as the closing number, the one he says he is most requested at gigs, "Waves". While

Guthrie's mastery of the guitar -- and ability to play various styles but still have his own touch was quite remarkable, credit must be given to Gino Banks and Mohini, two big-stage rockers from India who, in a display of their own incredible playing, elevated the performance. The audience was not massive in numbers by any means, but avid, discerning followers of rock music in the country, and they left with more than their money's worth.

As part of his tour, Guthrie also held a guitar clinic at Gulshan Shooting Club yesterday.

Closeup was the brand partner of the event, while ABC Radio and Radio Dhol were radio partners. Limitless, Analyzen, Gaan, Platinum Suites and Core also assisted in the initiative.

Prachyanat to celebrate 20th anniversary

"Koinya" and "Kinu Kaharer Thetar" to be staged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prachyanat, one of the leading theatre troupes of the country, completed its 20th year of founding on February 21, and are all set to celebrate the occasion by staging two of their most popular plays at the National Theatre Hall of the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

"Koinya", written by Murad Khan and directed by Abul Kalam Azad, will be staged today (February 28) at 7pm. Its star-studded cast includes Azad Abul Kalam, Reetu Sattar, Shatabdi Wadud, Shahed

Ali, Qazi Toufique Islam Emon, Sahana Rahman Sumi and others. Saiful Islam has designed stage and lights, with musical arrangement by Rahul Ananda.

Tomorrow at the same venue and time, the troupe will stage "kinu Kaharer Thetar", written by Manoj Mitra and directed by Qazi Toufique Islam Emon. Emon also acts in the play, alongside Sanjida Preeti, Monirul Islam Rubel, Shahriar Ferdous Sajib, Hira Chowdhury and others.

Since its inception, Prachyanat has been an active theatre troupe, and over the years has become a force to be reckoned with. Their notable productions include "Circus Circus", "Raja Ebong Onnanyo", "Gondar", "Bonmanush" and "Tragedy Polashbari".



A scene from "Kinu Kaharer Thetar".



(L-R) Emma Stone, the "Moonlight" team and Mahershala Ali receive their awards.

OSCARS 2017

"Moonlight" wins Best Picture in politically-charged show

"Moonlight," a drama about a gay man in the inner city, scored best picture at the 89th Academy Awards, beating out the heavily favored "La La Land". The low-budget film's victory was made even more shocking after presenters Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway mistakenly read out "La La Land" as the victor. Chaos reigned, as the "La La Land" producers took the stage to thank family and colleagues, before Beatty acknowledged that he had been given the wrong envelope and "Moonlight" was crowned the winner.

"La La Land," a celebration of all things Los Angeles, had seemed like both a hometown favorite and an insurmountable front-runner. It had previously picked up top prizes at the Golden Globes, the Producers Guild and the Directors Guild, and entered the evening with 14 nominations, tying a record set by "Titanic" and "All About Eve".

This year's award wasn't just about an Oscar flub for the ages. It was also one of the most politically-charged telecasts in history, unfolding as much of Hollywood remains opposed to President Donald Trump. Winners and presenters used their time at the

podium to vocalise their dissent, decrying the administration and its support of the Muslim ban, the border wall with Mexico, and other right-wing policies. Many A-listers sported pins for organisations like Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union that have been on the frontlines of the culture wars currently roiling the country.

But the telecast wasn't all about tearing down Trump and his ideologies. It was also a celebration of diversity and inclusion, both in the selection of "Moonlight", a tender coming-of-age story, and in the record-shattering number of black winners who took the stage. "Moonlight" star Tarell Alvin McCraney spoke to the desire to hear from under-represented voices while accepting a best adapted screenplay Oscar, one of three statues that the film won.

"La La Land" didn't go home empty-handed. It still picked up a leading six statues, including one for director Damien Chazelle. The 32-year old became the youngest-ever best director winner in history, and was honoured for helping to revive the musical, a film genre that has fallen out of favor in a movie

business obsessed with superheroes and franchises. Best actress winner Emma Stone beat out the likes of Isabelle Huppert ("Elle") and Meryl Streep ("Florence Foster Jenkins") to earn her first Oscar for her singing and dancing turn in the film.

Casey Affleck picked up a best actor statue for his role as an emotionally damaged janitor in "Manchester by the Sea", ahead of Denzel Washington -- who had been favored to win for his work as an abusive patriarch in "Fences". Affleck's award was one of two for the film, the first Oscars won by Amazon Studios.

Mahershala Ali and Viola Davis nabbed supporting acting honours. Ali was recognised for his work as a sympathetic drug dealer in "Moonlight", while Davis picked up her first statue for playing a long-suffering wife in "Fences".

Davis is now the first African-American to win acting prizes at the Oscars, Tonys, and Emmys. Ali broke ground as well, becoming the first Muslim actor win an Oscar.

Host Jimmy Kimmel wasted no time poking fun at the current White House occupant. "This broadcast is being watched live by mil-

lions of Americans and around the world in more than 225 countries that now hate us," he said during his opening monologue. "I want to say thank you to President Trump -- remember last year when it seemed like the Oscars were racist?", he added. "That's gone, thanks to him."

At times the broadcast played like voices of the opposition, as winners praised the immigrant experience, spoke out about the carnage in Syria, and hailed religious tolerance. The antipathy toward Trump was also evident in the selection of winners. Iranian director Asghar Farhadi picked up an Academy Award for best foreign-language movie for "The Salesman", but was not present at the ceremony in protest for the president's visa ban for citizens from Iran other Muslim countries. In a statement, Farhadi slammed the policy as inhumane and argued that "dividing the world into the US and our enemies' categories creates fear."

Ezra Edelman, the director of best feature documentary winner "O.J.: Made in America", waded into other hot-button issues, using his time at the microphone to

dedicate his statue to "... the victims of police violence, police brutality, racially motivated violence and criminal justice."

In addition to Affleck's win, "Manchester by the Sea" picked up an original screenplay Oscar for Kenneth Lonergan, its writer and director.

Beatty and Dunaway's appearance will be remembered for the best picture do-over, but it had a deeper resonance. The two reunited on stage some fifty years after they helped usher in a new era of cinema with "Bonnie and Clyde" -- a kind of filmmaking that was iconoclastic and that brought a new vitality to a form of entertainment that had seemed to be teetering.

Blockbusters like "The Jungle Book" and "Star Wars: Rogue One" were consigned to technical categories. "Zootopia," was one of the few popular smashes to get awards love on Sunday. The animated allegory about animal cops and small-time crooks battling inter-species prejudices nabbed a best animated feature honor.