

<p>WHAT'S ON</p> <p>Group Art Exhibition Marking 13th Anniversary of Galleri Kaya Venue: Galleri Kaya, Uttara Date: May 5-28 Time: 11am-8pm</p>		<p>Concert Richard Marx Live in Dhaka Organiser: Creinse Venue: BICC Date: May 16 Time: 7pm</p>		<p>Group Art Exhibition Title: Can the Divine Presence be Felt So Easily? Venue: Alliance Française de Dhaka Date: May 5-17; Time: 3pm-9pm</p>		<p>Solo Art Exhibition The Empire of Dream Artist: Ripon Saha Venue: Kala Kendra, Mohammadpur Date: May 6-30 Time: 5-8pm</p>		<p>Solo Art Exhibition Title: Golden Doors Artist: Proshanta Karmakar Buddha Venue: Radius Centre Art Gallery, 57 Gulshan Avenue-1 Date: May 6 - June 1 Time: 3-10pm</p>	
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RABINDRANATH TAGORE: Timeless echoes

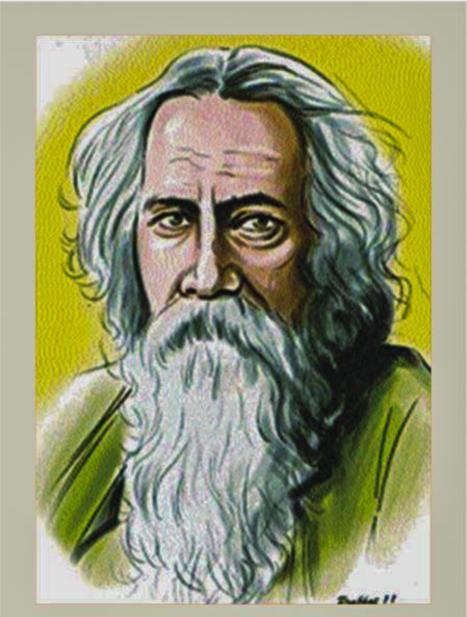
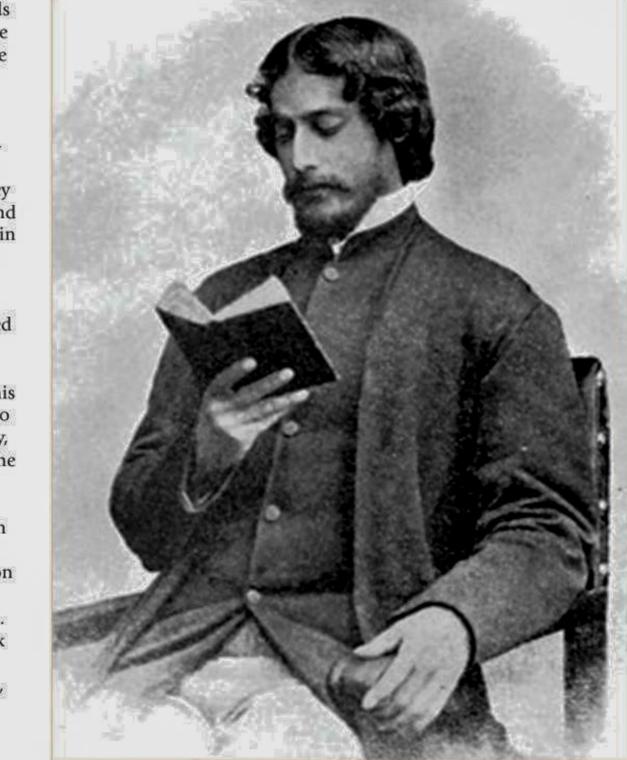
SADYA AFREEN MALLICK

Standing at the foot of the snow-capped mountains of the Himalayas, Rabi felt an overpowering sense of freedom. This was the first time in his young life that he had ventured outside the protected confines of his princely home and was amidst the natural surrounding he loved. He was only 11 then. Strangely enough this would also be one of those treasured periods of time he would get to spend with his father Maharshi Devendranath. Rabi, in his later life, would call his childhood a period of 'servocracy' since he had grown up more under the tutelage of family servants than his parents. This trip to Shantiniketan and the Himalayas with his father was, therefore, all the more special to him. Though Maharshi was a strict disciplinarian, Rabi grew up in luxury. His daily routine was filled with private lessons on drawing, reading, science, mathematics, exercises and school-work. Typically, Maharshi would wake up Rabi long before sunrise and practice Sanskrit with him. By the time the sun rose, they went off for the morning walk and on their return took a bath in icy-cold water. Maharshi also read to him select pieces from Bangla and English literature.

Rabi started to show his writing skills at the age of eight. His first poetry, *Di Barshik*, came out at the age of 13 in the *Amrito Bazaar* newspaper. However, with time, his parents were worried if he would be able to support a family through his literary pursuits. In 1878, Rabindranath along with his elder brother Satyendranath sailed for England for further studies. After 17 months, Rabindranath returned home empty-handed, with no academic degree or distinction. The only thing he brought with himself was the unfinished manuscript titled *Bhagna Hriday*, which he had begun in London. While Rabi continued to write in a prolific manner on social and political issues, his father wanted to harness his youngest son to the family chariot. An 11-year-old girl named Bhavatarini was chosen to be the bride of Rabi. She was the daughter of Benimadhav Raichaudhury, an employee in the Tagore estate. The name, so old fashioned, was changed after marriage by Rabindranath to something that was dearer to him - Mrinalini. Historians, who write about Rabindranath's life, say that his marriage was an irony. For, despite all her virtues, Rabi's heart lay elsewhere.

Mrinalini was not always able to fathom the depth of Rabindranath's poems as he recited to her quite often. For a poet of Rabindranath's stature, it was frustrating not to be able to share his philosophy and thoughts within his own home. Thus it came about that the most romantic of men felt confined in the most unromantic of marriages. In April 1884, Kadambari Devi, Rabi's sister-in-law, who showered deep affection on the young Rabi, committed suicide. She was only twenty-five then and the tragedy left a deep scar on Rabi's mind. Rabi immersed himself in work even more to overcome this grievous period in his life. In the 19th century, Bangla art songs reached unprecedented aesthetic heights through the works of Rabindranath. His composition of nearly 2300 songs was categorised into four main groups titled Worship, Motherland, Love, and Nature. The seasonal festivals introduced by Rabindranath and the dance sketches composed by him on seasons are regarded as his greatest contribution to our culture. These two aspects of his creativity, along with his paintings brought about a change in the cultural life of Bengal. In 1904, at the age of 40, he established Shantiniketan, an institution

blending Indian and Western methods of education. He had visited this place at a tender age with his father, and the solace he had found in the surroundings brought him back to Shantiniketan time and again. Shantiniketan did not flourish immediately in the hidebound culture of that time. The only way to earn money was from training troupes of actors and dancers who staged plays and ballets in different towns to raise funds other than the income derived from the landed property. Today, Shantiniketan has truly lived up to his long held dream as the cultural frontier for millions. Despite all the ups and downs in his life, Rabindranath remained prolific to his last days, composing songs, poetry, sonnets and novels. His work takes one along a whole spectrum of emotions. And almost as a vindication of his work's universal appeal, the collection of verses he translated into English named *Song Offerings* (Geetanjali) won accolades and he was bestowed with the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. Nearly a century onwards, his work continues to move the hearts and minds of millions. And like his name, Rabi--the sun--his work continues to shine like a timeless gem in the archives of world literature.



Special TV play "Sadharon Meye" on ntv

A CORRESPONDENT

Marking the 156th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, special single-episode TV play "Sadharon Meye" will air on ntv tonight at 9:05pm. Based on Tagore's poem of the same title, Nahid Ahmed Pial has written and directed the play. It casts Nusrat Imrose Tisha, Arman Parvez Murad, Shams Suman, Munmun Ahmed, Harunur Rashid and



Maznun Mizan.

The storyline: Maloti works as a theatre artiste in a small town, and gets a chance to work in a TV play based on a Rabindranath Tagore story. When Maloti tells Shyamol, the director, an incident that occurred in her life, Shyamol realises that it resonates with Tagore's poem "Sadharon Meye", and comes to the epiphany that the poem was true for many girls, even in different eras.

A lifetime's dedication to Rabindra Sangeet Mahadeb Ghose launches five albums

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Noted Tagore singer Mahadeb Ghose's five Rabindra Sangeet albums -- "Krishnokoli Ami Tarei Boli", "Amar Shokol Dukher Prodeep", "Amar Poran Jaha Chaye", "Hey Chiro Nuton" and "Amon Din-e Tarey Bola Jaye" -- was launched yesterday marking the 156th birth anniversary of Tagore.

Produced by Laser Vision Limited, the launching ceremony was held at Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium of Central Public Library, Shahbagh in Dhaka. While rendering Tagore song, Mahadeb Ghose emphasises on the purity of lyrics and melody. "The beauty, inner feelings and depth of Tagore songs attract me greatly. Understanding the lyrics while maintaining precise melody prior to performing a song is a must. I have recorded various songs from all parjaya -- prakriti, pooja, prem, swadesh and bichitra -- along with dhrupad, khyal, baul and kirtan-ang songs for the albums," said Mahadeb Ghose.



"Rabindranath Tagore composed his songs taking melodic essence from diverse musical genres and tunes from various regions of the world. He enriched our traditional folk music revisiting melodies of our roots. A blend of Eastern and Western melodies are merged into his compositions. If someone properly understands Tagore compositions, they can become a good composer of adhunik songs. It is evident and revealed by renowned singer-composer Hemanta Mukherjee," added the artiste.

About his distinctive rendition style, Ghose says that he first visualises the imageries depicted in Tagore songs, and then performs the numbers incorporating his own life experiences with the melody. Apart from recording popular and romantic songs, the artiste has lent his voices to lesser-known songs for the albums.

Two other Rabindra Sangeet albums -- "Amar Hiyar Majhey", produced by Sangeet, Bangladesh and "Amar Praner Manush Achhey Pran-e", produced by Gathani, India are to his credits. Mahadeb Ghose learnt music from legendary gurus including Abdul Ahad, one of the first Bengali Muslims to learn Tagore songs at Santiniketan during Rabindranath Tagore's lifetime and to become a Tagore-exponent; Kalim Sharafi, Sudhin Das, Ajit Roy, Neelima Sen and Subhas Choudhury. With institutional training from Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts (BAFA), he is now the vice principal and senior teacher at Rabindra Sangeet Department of BAFA. A special grade singer of Bangladesh Television (BTV) and Bangladesh Betar, he regularly performs on stage shows and satellite TV channels in Bangladesh and India. He has also performed in Kuwait and Australia. He founded Rabirashmi, a Rabindra Sangeet organisation, in 1998. He is the senior joint secretary of Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangstha; organising secretary of Bangladesh Sangeet Sangathan Samonnay Parishad and director of Rabirashmi.

Rabindra Mela at Channel i premises today

A CORRESPONDENT

As previous years, Channel i is holding a festive Rabindra Mela at its premises in Tejgaon in the capital today, marking the 156th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.

This year, the organisers will confer the lifetime achievement award on eminent Rabindra Sangeet singer Mita Haque. The fair will be inaugurated by noted artists, litterateurs, Tagore enthusiasts, cultural and media personalities with the Channel i family at 4:30pm. The event will feature performances of Rabindra Sangeet by prominent singers like Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya, Sadi Muhammad, Lily Islam, Shama Rahman and Anima Roy, along with upcoming singers. Dance-drama, children's dances, recitation of Tagore's poems, reading from Tagore's works and paintings on Tagore will also be a part of the fair. Channel i will telecast the fair live.

Keeping Tagore's legacy alive In conversation with Fahim Hossain Chowdhury



ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

Marking the 156th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore, exponents of his works spend the latter half of Baishakh celebrating his legacy. Fahim Hossain Chowdhury is a leading Tagore singer as well as the General Secretary of Bangladesh Rabindra Sangeet Shilpi Sangsad (BRSSS), who plays an active role in the promotion of Tagore's works in Bangladesh. On May 15, the singer will take part in a television programme titled "Aj Shokaler Amontrone" on Tara Muzik. When asked about his performance for the show, he stated: "During the first half I will perform songs that Tagore composed in Bangladesh -- in Shilaidaha, Patishar. After this I will perform popular songs by Tagore. Opportunities to present a wide variety of his compositions on television like this are quite rare, and usually we are limited to performing just a couple of songs."

On May 10, BRSSS will hold a musical evening celebrating Rabindra Jayanti at the National Music and Dance Auditorium of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. "This is our fourth year in hosting such programmes," said the artiste, "and this time we are inviting around 32 artistes to perform. The ensemble will include well known names, as well as emerging singers in this particular cultural scene."

The artiste also elucidated the various limitations such cultural organisations face, "Aside from funding, there is also a lack of interest from listeners. We face a lot of challenges when seeking to present Tagore's works outside of his popular compositions. People are also hesitant to attend musical programmes if well-known Tagore singers are not performing. This prevents up-and-coming artistes to gain footing, and talented singers who are not famous are not heard. Our organisation seeks to change all that."

PHOTO: SHEKH MEHEDI MORSHED