



Sujit Mustafa (L) performs alongside Munmun Ahmed and Aporajita Mustafa (R).



The elegance of Kathak with musical soiree at Chhayanaut

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Kathak, one of the major forms of Indian classical dance, traces its origins to the nomadic bards of ancient northern India, known as Kathakars or storytellers. Its form today contains traces of temple and ritual dances and the influence of the bhakti movement. From the 16th century onwards, it absorbed certain features of Persian dance and central Asian dance which were imported by the royal courts of the Mughal era. Now it has become a popular and an established stage performing art form.

To relay various aesthetic elements of Kathak, noted Bangladeshi exponent Munmun Ahmed paired with her talented daughter Aporajita Mustafa, and performed in a programme titled "Ekoi Brintey Pushpatroyi". Rewaz Performers' School arranged the elegant Kathak recital event,

held at the main auditorium of Chhayanaut on January 31. The second half of the event featured a solo musical soiree by renowned singer Sujit Mustafa. Three artistes from the same family truly mesmerised the packed audience with their arts.

Noted Indian instrumentalists Subir Thakur (tabla) and Sandip Niyogi (sitar) embellished the dance performances while accomplished Bangladeshi instrumentalists Apurba Deb (tabla), Nasir Uddin (guitar) and Binod Roy (keyboard) accompanied Sujit Mustafa's fantastic treat for music lovers.

The event started off with a sitar recital while Munmun Ahmed and Aporajita Mustafa took the stage to perform laikari with tehai. Later, the dancer duo displayed sparks of beauty while performing their solos and duets by turns.

Employing their grace and following live melodies and rhythms, they artistically pre-

sented various technical pieces of Kathak including – thata, uthaan, amad, padan-amad, tej-amad, tehai, tukra, ladi, parmilu, thumri, dadra chhanda, gat nikas and more at the event.

The graceful Aporajita earned the hearts of many through her performance of a thumri "Chhedo Na Nand Ke". Munmun Ahmed too was riveting in her presentation of a thumri "Tore Bina Mujhe Chyan Nahi".

Munmun Ahmed and her daughter enthralled the audience performing several experimental tehai and gat nikas in the form of interpretive dance depicting daily motion, such as throwing a cricket ball, riding a train, embodying styles of various animals, flowers, boat, flute and arrow. Solo tabla lahora and duet recital of tabla and sitar followed in between the dance performances.

Sujit Mustafa melodically performed an array of Nazrul Sangeet together with

adhunik songs penned by his father, the eminent litterateur Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal, and several other songs originally recorded by Manna Dey and Manabendra Mukherjee. The singer swayed the audience with his rendition of a Hori "Brojogopi Kheley Hori". The audience thoroughly enjoyed Sujit's offering of timeless songs -- "Tomar Kajol Kesh" and "Ami Sagorer Neel" that his father had written. He had to fulfill many requests from the audience. "Jodi Kagoje Lekho Naam" and "Bon-e Noy Mon-e Mor" were the songs he performed on request. He wrapped up the soiree with presenting a Manna Dey number "Shudhu Ekdin Bhalobasha". Doubling the joy for the audience, an outspoken Sujit Mustafa also shared banter, skits and memories amid the performances.

Noted music and dance connoisseurs -- Dr. Shahidul Islam and Professor Afroza Begum -- assisted in the arrangement of the event.



JIBONMUKHI GAAN

A challenge to the music tradition

MD. ROKANUZZAMAN

A genre called "Jibonmukhi Gaan" became popular in the early '90s in Bangladesh and West Bengal, India, followed by a controversy over the word "jibonmukhi" meaning life-oriented, because the other genres then would mean "moranmukhi" (death oriented) or "jibonbimukh" (anti-life).

Whatever the antithesis, the term "jibonmukhi" was really popular and continues to be so. Bored with love songs or other traditional genres, music lovers naturally grabbed the new style. The name arose from its different wording, selection of subject matter and new style of singing.

Kabir Sumon pioneered this genre in Bangla with the release of his debut album "Tomake Chai" in 1992. He gave us a mixture of singing and recitation, enriched with poetic lyrics. Influenced by American Folk music, Kabir Sumon blended western and Indian tradition. He sang on the same stage as Pete Seeger, wrote the lyrics of "O Gaanwala" inspired by Bob Dylan's famous number "Mr. Tambourine Man". There are many other influences in his masterpieces. Monologue, nature, nylon-string accompaniments, dramatic twists -- all resemble the nature of western folk that we find in Sumon. Also Bangla folk is present in his songs like "Bashoria Bajao Bashi" and many ones. Satire is in the center of Sumon's lyrics.

Nachiketa Chakraborty, the second mover entered the frame with "Ei Besh Bhalo Achhi", a depiction of nuisance in and around the society. A ghazal singer in his early life, Nachiketa added classical spices in singing. His "Nilanjona series", "Jokhon Shomoy Thomke Daraye", "Anirban", "Bridhdhasrom" and lot more numbers ascertain the name "jibonmukhi".

The path of Sumon or Nachiketa in the '90s was traversed by Lalon centuries ago. Lalon sang in defiance of religious taboos.



Dehototto is a popular section in the folk genre that differentiates his numbers from his contemporaries. In fact Lalon pioneered what we are naming "jibonmukhi" today.

Bhupen Hazarika sang about tea garden labourers' miseries in his "Ekti Pata Dutu Kuri". He voiced the hardships of life and many more off-track subjects. He sang "Manush Manusher Jonno". What can be more jibonmukhi?

Anjan Dutt followed Sumon and was quick to admit that. In 1994 he arrived with his "Shunte Ki Chao". His blues-type composition with unique style of singing gave him a new identity as a "jibonmukhi" singer, though he is a widely recognised actor.

It is not just about singing; rather it is about relating something to someone, says Pratul Mukhopadhyaya. "Jibonmukhi" means picking the subject matter from around us rather than going into esoteric domains. Pratul does not sing, he conveys a message while singing. At times devoid of bits, sometimes off tune, Pratul renders a speech in a wise, old man's voice. That is, may be, the best of jibonmukhi.

The author is a freelance contributor to The Daily Star.

National Poetry Festival concludes

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

February 1 is a special date for many, who assemble on this day each year at the Dhaka University Library premises to celebrate their love for poetry. For 32 years, the Jatiya Kabita Utshab has been the focal point of poets around the world. This year's festival highlighted the plight of ostracised refugees, or as noted in their theme- "Deshhara Manusher Shongrame Kobita".

Following tradition, the two-day festival commenced yesterday (February 1) at 10 am with paying tributes to the final resting places of the National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, and painters Zainal Abedin and Qamrul Hassan. Members then made their way to the national emblem of Language martyrs, the Shaheed Minar, where they paid tribute, before singing the national anthem and hoisting the flag.

This was followed by a riveting musical performance by Fakir Alamgir and his troupe, who rendered songs from poems composed by Mahadev Saha. Members of the Jatiya Kobita Parishad (JKP) including the President, General Secretary and executive council were invited onto the stage to deliver welcome addresses. Aminur Rahman Sultan's speech was in remembrance of key literary figures whose souls departed the world last year. Festival convener Robiul Hossain highlighted the enduring strength of poets in his speech,



Members of the JKP, national and international poets pay tribute at the final resting place of the National Poet.

saying, "No one expresses the truth better than a poet. Our nation's history is eloquently written in the words of our poets."

"The struggle of the oppressed, and refugees have always been highlighted in the works of poets, shedding great insight and awareness on their sufferings," stated General Secretary of JKP Poet Tariq Shujat.

Poet Mohammad Samad, President of the JKP presided over the festival that is concluding today. "Poets have the strength to emerge as victors, using love as their weapon." The

inaugural address was delivered by the Poet Asad Chowdhury, who gratefully noted that the festival has taken place this time during dark times in society, which can be alleviated with the power and presence of poetry.

Crests and flower garlands were presented to international poets attending the festival. Throughout the day until 8pm, national and international poets presented their original works on stage. This was followed by a recitation session till 9, which was presided over by Ramendu Majumdar.

Celebrating month of language with "Bornomalar Michhil"



DWOHA CHOWDHURY, SYLHET

'Bornomalar Michhil' or 'Procession for Alphabets' is a programme that the people of Sylhet has been organising for the last five years to ceremoniously observe the month of February with colourful processions carrying placards and banners replicating the years 1952 and 1971. February is hailed as the Language Month in Bangladesh.

Sammilito Natya Parishad Sylhet organised the Bornomalar Michhil which started from Sylhet Zila Parishad and concluded at Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar. Language Movement veterans and Emeritus Professor Md. Abdul Aziz led the rally.

At the end of the event at Sylhet Central Shaheed Minar's open stage, Chhanda Nrityalaya presented dance with inspirational songs of the language movement. President of Sammilito Natya Parishad

Sylhet Mishfaq Ahmed Mishu presided over the closing rally, which was also attended by Rajat Kanti Gupta.

Mishfaq Ahmed Mishu, president of Sammilito Natya Parishad Sylhet said, "The Parishad has arranged the fifth edition of the procession in Sylhet to pay tributes to the great martyrs of language movement of February 1952 and to illuminate the next generation with the light of Language movement and Liberation War of 1971."

WHAT'S ON

Amor Ekushey Book Fair
 Organiser: Bangla Academy
 Venue: Suhrawardy Udyan & Bangla Academy Premises
 Date: Feb 1-28
 Time: 3-9pm (Sun-Thurs), 11am-9pm (Fri-Sat)

Dhaka Art Summit 2018
 Organiser: Samdani Art Foundation
 Venue: National Art Gallery, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
 Date: Feb 2-10
 Time: 10am-8pm

Solo Art Exhibition
 By Artist Rashid Chowdhury
 Venue: Gallery Chittrak, Dhanmondi
 Date: Jan 28- Feb 10
 Time: 10am-8pm

11th International Children's Film Festival
 Organiser: Children's Film Society Bangladesh
 Venue: National Public Library
 Date: Jan 27- Feb 2
 Time: 4pm-8pm

Group Art Exhibition
 Title: Collector's Show
 Venue: Shilpangan Gallery, H-7, Rd-13 (New), Dhanmondi
 Date: Jan 23-Feb 2
 Time: 3-8pm

Dance Festival 1424
 Venue: Chhayanaut
 Date: Feb 2;
 Time: 6:30 pm