



Partha Majumder and Bappa Mazumder spoke at the programme.



With Ustad Mehdi Hassan.



Pandit Barin Mojumder performing at Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, accompanied by Ustad Madan Gopal Das on table and Shahidul Haque, student of Pandit Barin Mojumder, on tanpura.



Pandit Barin Mojumder's family, along with eminent personalities, attended the centenary celebration at BSA.

# Celebrating 100 years of Pandit Barin Mojumder

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The birth centenary celebration of late eminent classical music exponent Pandit Barin Mojumder was observed at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy on February 15.

Eminent personalities, family members and well-wishers, paid a rich tribute to the country's pioneering classical musician and educationist on his birthday.

Pandit Barin Mojumder's sons – National Award winning singer and composer Bappa Mazumder and noted music director Partha Majumder spoke at the event.

Barin Mojumder was born to a zamindar family at Pabna's Radhanagar in 1921. His father Nishindra Nath Mojumder was an artist and dramatist. Displaying musical aptitude from a young age, he was taken to Kolkata for lessons from Vishmadev Chatterjee. After taking lessons at home from Ustad Raghurangan Goswami, he went to Lucknow to study further in Maurice Music School.

The legendary music guru was the first to initiate a proper music college in the country – Songeet Moha Biddyalay – in 1963, with a fee of only 75 taka. His associates in the endeavour were AKM Golam Mustoba, engineer Abdul Hai and Haymaet Ali. The institution later became the Govt. Music College.

Several luminaries were associated with the college – Kazi Motahar Hossain, Kamruzzaman Moni, Sawkat Ali, Lutfar Rahaman, Abdul Ahad, Ustad Khadem Hossain Khan, Ustad Mir Kashem Khan, Layla Arjumand Banu, Ila Mojumder, Indra Mohon Rajvongshi, Hena Islam, Yeakub Ali Khan, Abu Bakar Siddiqui, Narayan Chandra Boshak, among many others.



Pandit Barin Mojumder

The celebrations in Shilpakala started in a picturesque manner – offering flowers and lighting hundreds of lamps at the Jatiya Chitrasahala Bhaban's auditorium of BSA. The event was organised by Barin Mojumder Shoto Borscho Udjapan Parishad.

State Minister for Cultural Affairs, K M Khalid was present at the programme. "He



Pandit Barin Mojumder with his son, Bappa Mazumder in the 90s.

was a pioneer – receiving both the Ekushey Padak and Swadhinata Padak. But more importantly, he made a place in the people's hearts with his contributions," he said.

Bappa Mazumder thanked all who organized and participated in the event celebrating his legendary father.

Eminent musician Partha Majumder said



With Pandit V.G. Jog.

that his father taught them to distinguish between good and bad. "He always taught us to stay on the path of melody, and to never stray from it," he recalled his father's advice.

Cultural personality Ramendu Majumdar said that a musical university should be founded after the name of Barin Mojumder, to pay proper honour to his legacy. "He

[Barin] never wanted to be economically benefitted; he just wanted to serve classical music in this country. We can organise an international music conference on his life and works in future," Ramendu said.

Among the guests, cultural icon Shankor Shaojal, who also organised the event, was present. Filmmaker Pradip Ghosh was also present.

After the discussion, Singer Avipriyo Chakraborty, along with his team dedicated Raag Bhopali to the late Pandit. The Government Music College authorities carried out a virtual discussion programme and musical shows to recall the musician on his birthday. Further programmes will be announced later, according to the organisers.

During our Liberation War, the famed Pandit and his wife, Ila Mojumder, lost their daughter Modhumita Mojumder. The music college – his life's work, was taken hostage by the Pakistani Army and the newly constructed musical instrument museum was turned into a torture cell. Even after the war, he was falsely arrested due to cases by vested quarters. Even after so much suffering, he strived on for the betterment of music in the country.

For his contribution to classical music and development of music education, Pandit Barin Mazumder was honoured with Tamgha-e-Imtiaz (1970), Ekushey Padak (1983), Rabindra Award (1993), Independence Award (2001), among other accolades. He passed away on October 3, 2001.



Tanzim Wahab.

PHOTO: STAR

RASHEEK TABASSUM MONDIRA

"Chobi Mela Shunno", held from February 12 to 21 in DrikPath Bhubon at Panthapath, introduces a fresh perspective on different art forms to spectators and art lovers.

Tanzim Wahab, the Chief Curator at Bengal Foundation and lecturer at Pathshala South Asian Media Institute, is the Festival Director of this year's "Chobi Mela". He was previously a curator of the festival at the 2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019 editions. In a conversation with *The Daily Star*, he reflects on different aspects of this year's "Chobi Mela", and more.

How did you come up with the concepts for this year's 'Chobi Mela', and what do you hope audiences take away from this edition?

We chose a special number for this edition, as we are living through quite unprecedented times. The intention behind 'Shunno' (zero) is to focus on a new beginning, as we start anew in a post-pandemic world. Diversity and inclusivity are the most important factors in this year's "Chobi Mela". In that sense, we ensured the participation of foreign artistes online.

Most of our content this year is digital. We included podcasts, radio projects, live streams and virtual exhibitions to connect with people, who cannot be here physically.

We reformed our structure to a more



From 'The Rebel with a Smile', a retrospective of Sayeeda Khanum, co-curated by Tanzim Wahab.

PHOTO: STAR

experimental and self-reflective one. We are starting anew from our home, and we are focusing on our neighbouring countries from South Asia. This year, we emphasised more on collaboration and partnership to revive our strengths and collective spirit.

What does it mean to be a curator today, and how has Bangladesh developed in this aspect?

"Chobi Mela" brought about a curatorial revolution in Bangladesh and introduced the

## TANZIM WAHAB TALKS CHOBI MELA SHUNNO



Tanzim Wahab (R) during a talk at 'Chobi Mela Shunno'.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CHOBI MELA

multidimensional role of curators.

Curators not only focus on how to present the artworks, but also on connecting with the audience, social implications, time, and impact of a project.

They play a significant role in exhibition research and preserving archival materials. They help build a bridge between the audience and the artiste by presenting their biographical narrative and art process as a whole.

Curators are also continuously learning from the artiste. Their exchange creates a new language for each exhibition. Artistes and curators need to build a powerful relationship and a bridge between their works. Without doing so, curators cannot explore their full potential.

In Bangladesh, we are still lagging in art research, gathering curators, and art writing. The curatorial practice must be included in the curriculum module of national art institutions across the country. These barriers must be broken and we should be focusing on more multidimensional and multidisciplinary aspects of art.

What were the freedoms and challenges involved in organising this year's 'Chobi Mela'?

We welcome any challenges in "Chobi

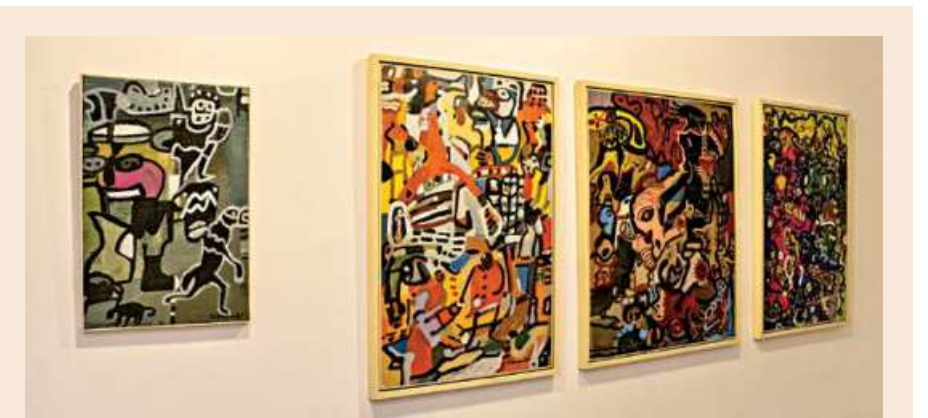
Mela", as they present new opportunities to learn and grow. This time, we could connect with people from across borders without travelling. It is a ten-day festival, but this year, anyone can access our programmes for a long time after they are over, online. Apart from the challenges of arranging the event during a pandemic, we were presented with these new ideas.

Tell us about your overall experience at this year's 'Chobi Mela'.

We mainly worked with multidisciplinary, young artistes in this edition and their energy added to the spirit of the festival. I liked how we went out of our usual format and experimented with different artistes. Curating Sayeeda Khanum and Bashirul Huq's exhibitions and presenting them to the young generation was an amazing experience as well.

"Chobi Mela" is a festival that requires consistency, no matter what happens, globally or locally. We are focusing more on physical distancing, rather than social distancing. We need to be more close to each other socially, during these troubling times.

Our aim for this year's festival is to get connected, mitigate social distance, and to revive our own community, which we nurtured over the years.



## Dwip Gallery reopened with Shamset Tabrejee's 'Random Vignettes'

SUMAIYA KABIR

In spite of a pandemic looming over us, noted poet and painter Shamset Tabrejee was inspired to create a series of new paintings, which are currently being exhibited at Dwip Gallery in Lalmatia, Dhaka.

"Random Vignettes" is the artist's second solo exhibition, showcasing his signature vibrant acrylic strokes and multitudes of abstract forms, created with the intention of understanding time and the reality of what we have all been living through lately. In its own language, his art expresses thoughts and realisations derived from the chaos.

So dynamic are his expressions that the exhibition's curator, Mustafa Zaman, distinguished artist, author and art critic, brings into comparison with Tabrejee the likes of Rabindranath Tagore and Jibanananda Das. Amidst Tabrejee's drawings of Dhaka's modern and mechanical lifestyle as well as society's varying conflicts, what the curator praises most about his work is the authenticity of it all. Be it geometry or architecture, his paintings have a certain spontaneity, and tend to always represent the natural truth.

The exhibition was inaugurated on February 12, in the presence of noted artist Wakilur Rahman, whom Tabrejee

mentioned as one of his inspirations, alongside artist Shishir Bhattacharjee, among others.

After studying Literature from University of Dhaka, Tabrejee gained popularity when his poems were getting published in various magazines during the eighties. His own book came out for the first time in 1992, and many others that followed, including "Udbastu Chirkut" and "Muhurtama" became fan favorites. "Muhurtama" (Momentum) was also the title of his first solo art exhibition.

Dwip Gallery has many new workshops, exhibitions and other events scheduled for 2021. "Random Vignettes" is the first event taking place at the gallery after their hiatus brought on by the pandemic. Tabrejee's paintings will be exhibited at their premises till February 26.

Besides exhibiting artworks of established artists, Dwip Gallery has always aimed at promoting underappreciated or overlooked artists since the beginning of their journey in 2018. The gallery is open from 3 pm to 9 pm all days of the week, except for Mondays.

The author finds power in her pen and microphone. kabir.sumaiya@gmail.com.



PHOTOS: MONON MUNTAKA