Tower Hamlets Council presents

A Season of

Bangla Drama

1-29 November 2015

From tragedy to triumph; discover a festival of stunning theatre

For more information call 020 7364 7900
www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/arts @thevents #BanglaDrama15
Message from the Mayor of Tower Hamlets

I am delighted to welcome you to the 2015 Season of Bangla Drama which, in its 13th year, goes from strength to strength with a busy programme throughout November on stages across Tower Hamlets. It is a testament to the skills of the participating writers, actors and directors, many of whom are local, as well as a reminder of the power of theatre to engage, inform and move audiences. There are old and new tales told in both innovative and traditional ways which celebrate Anglo-Bengali culture and performance, but reach out to everyone. There is also a fringe programme of talks, walks and exhibitions and I hope residents will take advantage of this diverse, high quality and unique theatre festival.

John Biggs
Mayor of Tower Hamlets

Message from Head of Community Affairs, Canary Wharf Group Plc

Once again A Season of Bangla Drama comes to Tower Hamlets. Now in its 13th year, this vibrant festival of drama continues to deliver a great range of discussions and performances that challenge, stimulate and entertain audiences. Last year’s festival had a great selection of drama, music and seminars that incorporated a range of topical themes and I hope this year’s season continues to entertain and explore the Bengali culture and heritage. I am particularly enthused to know that this festival strives in creating platform for emerging writers, directors and performers from the local community to showcase their hidden talent. I will conclude by congratulating everyone involved with this year’s festival, in particular, all the writers, directors and performers for once again sharing their wonderful thoughts and aspirations with us. I hope Tower Hamlets community will take the advantage of this wonderful and unique theatrical festival. Canary Wharf Group Plc is once again pleased to be associated. Best of luck.

Zakir Khan
Head of Community Affairs, Canary Wharf Group Plc
Swadhinata Trust presents

**The Altab Ali Story**

**Sunday 1 November**  
**Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm**  
**Brady Arts Centre**  
(English)

**Credits**

*Writer:* Julie Begum  
*Director:* Mukul Ahmed  
*Dramaturg:* Patricia Cumper  
*Producer:* Pauline Walker  
*Cast:* tba

**Synopsis**

This heart-breaking story about the death of Altab Ali oscillates between a village in Sylhet, Bangladesh and a flat in East London and dramatizes the historic moment in 1978 when his mother is given the devastating news. The airmail letters to his family back home with descriptions of life in a foreign land are keenly anticipated but everything changes with the arrival of an ominous envelope from one of Ali's friends. This senseless murder is the catalyst for a mass anti-racist movement from the Bengali community; the first ever seen in Britain, culminating in a demonstration of 10,000 people marching to Downing Street via Hyde Park with his coffin. Though airmail letters are no longer a primary means of communication, the anger conveyed ‘par avion’, and the impact of this senseless murder live on, both for his family and the community at large.

**About the company**

The Swadhinata Trust promotes Bengali history and heritage amongst young people. Collaborators on this production include community theatre activist and director Mukul Ahmed (Mukul and Ghetto Tigers), dramaturge, award-winning playwright and co-Artistic Director of StrongBack Productions Patricia Cumper and freelance event producer and writer Pauline Walker (StrongBack Productions).

www.swadhinata.org.uk  
www.mukulandghettotigers.com  
www.strongbackproductions.com  
www.patriciacumper.com  
www.pdwalker.co.uk

The opening night is a double bill consisting of The Altab Ali Story, preceded by a short performance of ‘Say What’ by ‘Arts Without Borders’. Please see p20 for full details.
The Rokeya Project presents

Missing Girls

Friday 6 - Saturday 7 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Rich Mix
(English)

Credits

Written and directed by: Showmi Das
Sound Design and Operation: Kadir Hussain
Lighting Design and Operation: Salvatore Scollo

Synopsis

This production tells the heart-wrenching story of ‘Missing Girls’; those who go missing in various stages of their lives, sometimes even before they are given birth to. Missing Girls are those girls who are aborted because of their sex, unwanted from birth and deemed a burden to their families, girls who are married off yet maltreated or abandoned for not being able to conceive a male child. The consequences of being born as, or giving birth to, a girl has led to a life of shame and shelter for many. Extracts of true stories from around the world will be expressed through a variety of theatre, and contemporary South Asian Dance. These stories are linked to the crucial messages around gender equality and the need for women to have a voice, as espoused by key activist Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, after whom the company is named.

About the company

The Rokeya Project is named after Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, a revolutionary figure in Indian and Bengali history; an ecologist, a human rights activist and a campaigner for education across India and Bangladesh. The Rokeya Project uses her ideologies to build cross-continental links between UK and the world. We address these injustices through arts, education and discussion in order to explore why these issues happen; how we feel about it; and how together we can work to resolve the issues.

www.rokeya.co.uk
Tringsha Shatabdee (30th Century)

Friday 6 - Saturday 7 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
plus Saturday matinee at 2pm
Brady Arts Centre
(Bangla)

Credits

Written by: Badal Sircar
Adapted and directed by: Zahid Repon
Assistant Directors: Ali Hasan and Fazle Rabbee Sukarnoo
Stage, Costume, Light and Props Design: Zahid Repon and Juana Sobnom
Song and Music Design: Zahid Repon
Backstage: Nisharga Sobnom and Aninda Antorikkha

Synopsis

70 years after the end of World War Two, this Laboratory Theatre production is mainly based on the atom-bomb tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and portrays historical characters from the military and scientific communities who were in some way responsible. It also references the atrocities, brutalities and legacies of a number of subsequent conflicts in order to examine the ongoing ethical questions around war. The harrowing themes of the production are both contrasted with and complemented by the highly experimental medium of the performance. This contemporises Bangla Folk Theatre by exploring simple, stripped down and versatile ways of communicating to an audience and uses space, rhythm, gesture and props (such as traditional textiles) to create a low budget but high impact adaptation of the script by the influential Indian dramatist and playwright Badal Sircar (1925–2011).

About the company

SWAPNADAL (Dreamteam) was established in 2001 and has developed into one of the most active, creative and promising young theatre organisations in Bangladesh. The slogan of the troupe is ‘Aitijyo Anneshone Shoilpik Suddhota’ (In Search of Tradition with Artistic Serenity).
Bangla Drama School presents

Khun (The Murder)

Sunday 8 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Brady Arts Centre
(Bangla)

Credits

Writer: Proshenjit Dutta
Director: Fazlul Bari Babu
Producer: Jamalur Rahman
Production Manager: Gulam Akber Mukta
Music: Shahinur Hirok
Stage: G A Mukta
Set up and costume: Ms Nishi, J Rahman and Dalia
Cast: Mina, Dalia, Kamalesh, Sufian, Proshenjit, Juber Ali, Nishi, Shimul, Prince, Bashudev, Mukta, Rima, Moushumi, Ripan, Shumel, J Rahman and F B Babu

Synopsis

This dark tale surrounds the rape and subsequent death of a 14 year old girl Fatema, at the hands of a wealthy young man who acts with impunity due to his privileged position in society. Her brother is furious and seeks justice for her plight, but to no avail. He receives only taunts and insults and even the police are unwilling to file a case despite Fatema’s deteriorating physical and mental health. This leads to vigilantism and revenge, and to even harsher punishment for the family who continue to suffer through a lack of social justice. Guilt by deed but not of conscience, power, corruption, poverty and human rights are fundamental themes which are all touched on in the telling of this moving and moral story.

About the company

Bangla Drama School (BDS) is part of the Children Education Group (CEG) based in Whitechapel which has, since 1992, been working with elderly people, children and youth as a Registered Charity. BDS was established in 2007 to help the Bangladeshi community to celebrate and practice their own culture through artforms such as dance, song, drama and recitation as well as promoting it to a wider audience. It uses drama to explore current affairs in Bangladesh as well as highlighting issues which are specific to the Bangladeshi community in the UK.
Essex Indians presents

Dampati (The Couple)

Sunday 8 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Rich Mix
(Bangla with English subtitles)

Credits

Written by: Manoj Mitra
Direction: Dr Arpita Ray
Stage: Adhip, Badri, Kneel Kaushik (Kolkata), Arpita and Saikat
Music: Sudipto Ghose (Kolkata) and Pranesh Chatterjee
Make up: Soma Das
Subtitle: Soumi Mandal and Arpita Ray
Light: Nandini Biswas
Props: Sayantini Mukhopadhyay
Cast: Arpita, Dipankar, Anirban, Suman, Ranjana, Pallabi, Sumana, Saikat, Sourav, Bikash, Gargi, Adhip and Manan

Synopsis

In a materialistic era, this comic tale revolves around the notions of expectation, responsibility, and trust between couples across two generations. It dissects marital behaviour into layers of meaning and questions motives and actions. This contemporary Bengali drama observes an old couple living in their ancestral home in Kolkata who are very set in their ‘love and hate’ led ways. They have a young couple as their tenants but get bogged down in misunderstanding, jealousy and suspicion. Conflict among the old couple and their children questions the bond between generations, and true meanings of human relationships are questioned through the values and context of modern society. Emotions such as love, unfulfilled desire and friendship are all brought to the fore and though it is satirical, it is also poignant. Universal truths are revealed.

About the company

Essex Indians is a community group established in 2010. Their vision is to share values of life between second generation Asian children through cultural activities. They have performed in several prestigious venues across London. Their recent programme was in Kolkata, India in collaboration with leading cultural activists of Bengal. Essex Indians are committed to raising funds through their cultural events for charities both local and global.
The Post Office - Daakghar

Friday 13 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
plus matinee at 2pm
Rich Mix
(English)

Credits

Written by: Rabindranath Tagore
Translated by: William Radice
Direction: Dr Arpita Ray
Assistant Direction: Arya and Teerna
Stage: Shreya, Anushka and Teerna
Music: Arya Mandal
Sound Control: Anirban
Cyclorama: Nandini Bisws
Light: Dipankar Mukhopadhyay and Suman Bhattacharya
Props: Sayantini Mukhopadhyay
Lapel Mic Control: Chitra Jadav
Cast: Arya, Shrey, Shreya, Tista Teerna, Manan, Sanjana, Kaustav, Kimi, Rajat, Sunny and Vaibhabi

Synopsis

Daakghar is an immortal creation by Bengali polymath Rabindranath Tagore and this music and light-filled cyclorama is a child-led production which focuses on the message of the play; namely the importance of an active mind and fertile imagination to sustain and nurture the spirit when the mortal body is weak. This was written almost 100 years ago and tells the joyful yet heart-breaking story of the boy at the window who is able to fulfil his dreams by leading a vicarious life. Amal is 9 years old, terminally ill and homebound. He is keenly interested in all sorts of things but cannot go into the outside world. Hence he invites others in, making new friends and experiencing life through their eyes. This play teaches us that death is not the end of existence - it is a lesson which teaches us how to celebrate life.

About the company

Kids for Kids is the cultural wing of Essex Indians and it is led by the children for the children. Their vision is to share values of life between second-generation Asian children through cultural activities. They have performed in several prestigious venues across London. Their recent programme was in Kolkata, India in collaboration with leading cultural activists of Bengal.
Soulfire Theatre presents

Impulse

Friday 13 - Saturday 14 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Brady Arts Centre (English)

Credits

Written and directed by:
Hussain Ismail
Cast: tba

Synopsis

IMPULSE centres on the preparation of a female martial artist for her championship fight. She focuses every last drop of remaining energy to train. But as the first fight draws closer another battle begins, even before she has entered the ring. This is a tale of a fighter’s passion to conquer everything that holds her back. It’s more than just winning – it is the need find out what she’s made of, and, ultimately, who she really is. Dreams and visions become reality and this riveting and inspiring one woman show uses dance and physical theatre to tell a story of blood, pain, self-reliance and triumph.

About the company

Soulfire Theatre was founded in East London by Hussain Ismail to give voice to unheard stories from all around the world - through theatre, film and participatory arts projects. Hussain Ismail is a playwright, theatre director and filmmaker from Whitechapel, East London. He is working on three international projects at the moment – a film in Bangladesh, dance drama in Cuba, and a play in Spanish in Mexico. He also writes a blog for his website: hussain-m-ismail.com.

A Season of Bangla Drama 1-29 November 2015
Synopsis

The story takes place 150 years ago during British colonial era in lowland ‘Jalshuka’ in Habibganj and revolves around “Ghetus”, a silent and oppressed subculture of young boys who sang and danced in female clothing to entertain the colonial landowners. Hired to entertain, and often sexually desired, this production focuses on a unique and damaging cultural practice and how it shaped the lives of many inhabitants of this remote community. However, though a particular mindset is portrayed through the hierarchical relationship between a teenage boy and a colonial era landlord, it paints a multifaceted picture of the protagonists and of society. The landlord is lustful, arrogant and cruel but maintains a benevolent streak and this production uses a range of emotions to provide a reflection of the wider and more fluid life and times of this place. It draws on the natural human tendency to seek out the positives in any situation and find reasons to celebrate, in keeping with a distinct strand of Bengali folk theatre heritage.

About the company

The company aims to provide a high quality visual and performing arts platform to help cross cultural arts development through partnership work across Tower Hamlets. The organisation also provides a forum for discussion about arts projects in order to help widen audiences.
Alpana Academy presents

Shyama

Friday 20 - Saturday 21 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Brady Arts Centre
(Bangla with English narration)

Credits

**Director and Choreographer:** Alpana Roy Barman

**Production Manager:** Suparna Roy Barman

**Co-ordinator:** Prosenjit Choudhary

**Advisor:** Luqueman Hussain and Andrew Shaw

**Costume Design:** Aparna Roy Barman, Rupali Roy Barman and Alpana Roy Barman

**Set Design:** Gulam Akbar Mukta and Kayes Muktadir

**Cast:** Alpana Roy Barman, Suparna Roy Barman, Fahmida Sultana Tofa, Mohammed Rafi, Jordan Leany, Stefano Cerri, Sanchila Bagchi, Sanchoya Bagchi and Maheru

Synopsis

Wherefore art thou Shyama? A court dancer falls in love with a foreign merchant who is falsely imprisoned and faces execution ... unless Shyama accepts her admirer’s offer to take the merchant’s place. As the tale unfolds, two entwined love stories emerge which serve to question the nature and value of true love as well as exploring justice, innocence and retribution. It is a bittersweet tale of love and sacrifice; the former being an idealised notion, grasped in dreams alone, more precious and elusive than then the rarest of emeralds. Theft, treachery and desire all feature in this classic romantic tragedy presented with all the colour and energy that traditional dance dramas bring to the stage.

About the company

Alpana Academy’s fundamental purpose is to preserve, elevate, celebrate and promote the richness and beauty of Indian and Bangladeshi culture, art and heritage. This is done via classes, workshops, lectures and concerts and spans the multi-arts genres of music, dance, drama and languages. Their objective is to provide a centre of learning and understanding of Indian and Bangladeshi art and culture in the United Kingdom.
Nripati (The Emperor)

Sunday 22 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Brady Arts Centre
(Bangla)

Credits

Writer: Humayun Ahmed
Director: Apu Chowdhury
Advisory Directors: Mohammed Tasadduk Hussain Bahar, Nazma Yeasmeen, P Dash Babu, Shahed Junaed, Tahera Khanom, Naheed Nawazesh Roni and Ehsan Ahmed
Cast: Apu Chowdhury, Maznu: Al-Khurshid Himu, Mohammed Tasadduk Hussain Bahar, Sabreena Zareen Laboni, Ahmad Ahsan Sujan, M Moin Uddin, Zoha Habibullah, Jesmin Chowdhury, Aziza, Masud Quader /Murad Chowdhury, Jawed Iqbal Mazumder, Mohammed Abu Azad, Abu Sayed Chowdhury Sadi, Dhola Miah and Abu Hasan Syed Fazlerabbi

Synopsis

A winter of discontent under a corrupt and selfish king results in the latter getting his just deserts when his subjects rise up against him. Many are forced at act like puppets or won over if they attempt to question the regime. Farce and comedy are used to represent his clever and guileful ways with visual motifs such as the gaining of a hunched back to represent those who have succumbed to bribery. The old and wise court singer remains steadfast and his eyes are plucked out, with the ironical outcome that only the blind man sees the truth.

Eventually, the tables are turned; this satirical play depicts the ultimate victory of the people over a dictator and his evil ways, whilst driving home the importance of resisting the impulse of greed and acquiescing to tyranny.

About the company

ADDA (Arts & Drama Development Association) works hard to develop a broadly based arts organisation which produces high quality visual arts events as well as plays, music and films, which are both innovative and traditional. The group draws its members mostly from the Bangladeshi community but is open to all, irrespective of age, sex, religion, ability or disability. It endeavours to tackle issues of identity, culture, heritage, integration and well-being and to nurture interpersonal skills such as confidence, social interaction, responsibility sharing, planning, decision making, team work and problem solving in order to help increase empowerment and self-expression.
Always Unfinished

Tuesday 24 - Saturday 28 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
The Space
(English)

Credits

Written and directed by: Kayser A. Foyz
Producer: Kobir A. Forid
Production Manager: Shahed Miah
Lighting and Sound: Tracey Hammill
Make up Artist: HANA Make Up (Farhana)
Photographer: Azad Yasin
Production Assistants: Bhavika Patel, Yasmin Chowdhury and Mouri Jaman
Cast: Taj Kandula, Noor Dillan-Night, Pearce Sampson and Dmitry Ser

Synopsis

An unbreakable bond ties together three men and one woman as they navigate the uncertainties of love, life and making different but profound choices. It tells the story of a woman who abandons accountancy to become a writer and brothers whose lives have taken wildly different paths. With romance, comedy and identity politics, Always Unfinished explores expectation versus ambition in British Asian culture through an unorthodox family and a successful outcast. It examines how creative careers are largely discouraged in favour of the perceived safety of more lucrative and higher status vocations such as law, medicine, finance and business. This study on the condition of relationships, both real and ideal, is told with a lightness of touch and with characters the audience can relate but asks the fundamental questions; what does it take to follow your heart and is it ever right to forfeit ones dreams?

About the company

The Filim Company are a mix media production company that specialise in creating engaging and thought provoking productions that have mainstream commercial value entertainment with strong social narrative. Established back in 2002 by two brothers Kayser A. Foyz and Kobir A. Forid have continued to create works in film, stage, documentary and animation and have recently set up their first international branch in Bangladesh. The organisation’s long term objective is to create interesting and engaging pieces of stage, film, drama, and documentaries and to attract both mainstream audiences and niche groups with complex subject matters which are relevant to the fast-paced age we live in.
Dakshinayan UK presents

The Trilogy – Tagore & the Supernatural

Friday 27 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Brady Arts Centre
(Bangla with English narration)

Credits

Written by: Rabindranath Tagore
Concept, Adaptation and Direction: Dr Ananda Gupta
Co-director: Indrani Datta
Monihara Director: Dr Arpita Ray
Cast: Indrani Datta, Cid Shaha, Showmi Das, Payel Das, Ishita Bhattacharya, Dr Arpita Ray, Dr Anirban Mandal, Sourav Sengupta, Suman Bhattacharya, Dr Ananda Gupta, Chandrani Chatterjee, Soma Das and Subrata Babu Mukherjee

Synopsis

Dance and drama are used to convey 3 gripping and eerie paranormal stories from the diverse literary treasure chest of Rabindranath Tagore. Truths are told from beyond the grave by a skeleton to a medical student. A man is the victim of his wife’s unhealthy obsession with jewellery and finally a confrontation between rationalism and theosophy is played out.

Tagore was always drawn towards the mystery shrouded world of the supernatural and the paranormal. This reflects widely in his short stories and novels. His hidden treatment of this complex topic comes in a compelling manner in the piece Tagore and the Supernatural. We know Tagore as a poet of all seasons but little do we know of this aspect of his works.

About the company

Dakshinayan UK was established in London in 2003 its main aims of propagating South Asian art forms and the works of Rabindranath Tagore. Dakshinayan runs weekly classes when it teaches the curriculum of Dakshinee Kolkata, with whom it is affiliated. The members of Dakshinayan are all professionally trained singers, musicians and dancers and the group has performed at venues throughout the UK and internationally.
Monday Shodh
Saturday 28 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Brady Arts Centre
(Bangla and English)

Credits

Written by: Rabindranath Tagore
Director and Choreographer: Ziaur Rahman Saklen
Production Manager: Rajib Das
Co-production Manager: Farhana Alam Sony
Light Design: Humayuan Kabir
Costume Design: TheatreX, Dhaka
Music: Moinul Hossain Mukul and Fazlul Bari Babu
Vocals: Sarwar E Alam
Set Design: Ziaur Rahman Saklen and Sudip Chakroborthy (TheatreX, Dhaka)
Make up: Ruhul Amin Rajib Das

Synopsis

Nature over culture, simplicity over pomp and an emphasis on genuine and meaningful interaction are the resounding themes of this narrative. It reveals how a king rejects his material surroundings and the regal role imposed upon him by undertaking a journey of discovery in a far more pious and humble guise. King Bijoyaditto was not a natural leader and disliked having the mantle of monarchy thrust upon him. Uncomfortable with the obsequious nature of the court he goes out into the world as an ordinary, if somewhat saintly, citizen and meets a variety of people who provide him with a greater understanding of relative motives and values. He learns that God’s debt can only be replayed with love and affection and revels in the strength of humanity as well as the beauty of the natural world.

About the company

Monchosoilee is a drama wings of Bishwo Shahitto Kendro, UK a creative art, literature and education based organisation whose programmes promote harmonious cross community relationships. Our main mission is to produce pure theatre and to develop childrens theatre through literature and education. Monchosoilee is committed to protecting cultural heritage and celebrating the power of human achievement through activism and performance.
**A Season of Bangla**

Tickets cost: £8/£5 concession (unless otherwise stated)
Doors open: 7pm, show starts 7.30pm
More information: 020 7364 7900
E: festivalsandevents@towerhamlets.gov.uk, www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/arts
To book tickets, go to: http://aseasonofbanglادrama2015.eventbrite.com
Booking fees apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Rising Silence’— A Fundraising Panel Discussion Donations welcome Kobi Nazrul Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bengali Identity: Problems and Prospects Free Kobi Nazrul Centre</td>
<td>Exhibition: Brick Lane Monotypes by Alice Sielle Until 26 November Kobi Nazrul Centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diversity in the Arts £5 Kobi Nazrul Centre</td>
<td>An Overview of Traditional Bengali Theatre in Bangladesh Free Pinter Studio</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Always Unfinished £10/£8 The Space</td>
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## Calendar

1-29 November 2015

### FRIDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6    | Missing Girls  
*Rich Mix*
Tringsha  
*Shatabdee*  
£10/£5  
*Brady Arts Centre* |
| 13   | The Post Office  
£10/£8  
*Rich Mix*
Impulse  
*Brady Arts Centre* |
| 20   | Shyama  
*Brady Arts Centre*
Cultural Evening  
Free  
*Kobi Nazrul Centre* |

### SATURDAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| 7    | Missing Girls  
*Rich Mix*
Tringsha  
*Shatabdee*  
£10/£5  
*Brady Arts Centre* |
| 14   | Say What?  
Free, 2pm  
*Crossrail Performance Space*  
*Impulse*  
*Brady Arts Centre* |
| 21   | Bengali History Walk  
11am  
*Altab Ali Park*  
*Scratch*  
Free  
*Pinter Studio*
Shyama  
*Brady Arts Centre* |

### SUNDAY

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| 1    | Exhibition:  
*Her Kinfolk*  
– until 29 Nov  
*Double Bill - The Altab Ali Story + Say What*  
*Brady Arts Centre* |
| 8    | Khun  
(The Murder)  
*Brady Arts Centre*
Dampati  
£10/£8  
*Rich Mix* |
| 15   | Jolër Bhētotor Jolër  
*Bishorjon*  
*Brady Arts Centre* |
| 22   | Long table  
Free, 5pm  
*Pinter Studio*
Nripati  
*Brady Arts Centre* |

### VENUES

- **Brady Arts Centre**: 192-196 Hanbury Street, E1 5HU
- **Rich Mix**: 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, E1 6LA  
*Tel*: 020 7613 7498
- **Pinter Studio**: Queen Mary University of London, Mile End Road, E1 4NS
- **Kobi Nazrul Centre (KNC)**: 30 Hanbury Street, E1 6QR
- **The Space**: 269 Westferry Road, E14 3RS  
*Tel*: 020 7515 7799
- **Crossrail Performance Space**: (Roof Gardens)  
Canary Wharf, E14 5AR  
*Tel*: 020 7515 7799

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*A Season of Bangla Drama 1-29 November 2015*
Sunday 29 November
Doors 7pm, Show 7.30pm
Brady Arts Centre
(Bangla)

Credits

Written by: Mannan Hira
Directed by: Ujjal Das
Stage Design: Ujjal Das, Sahabuddin Ahmed Bacchu and Tawhid Chowdhury
Costume Design: Shagufta Sharmeen Tania and Selina Shafi
Sound Direction: Ashim Chakraborty and Amit Dey
Light Direction: Ujjal Das and Ashim Chakraborty
Props Design: Jalal Uddin, Monjurin Rashid and Eva Ahmed
Publication: Ujjal Das and Aminur Rahman Khan

Synopsis

Set in 1947, during the time of great religious and geo-political conflict, a young man was living in a village split into 2 highly segregated Hindu and Muslim communities but found it difficult to get work without revealing his faith-based affiliations, regardless of his skill. He contrived to withhold that information but was subsequently tormented by the pressure to reveal the religion of his newborn baby. When an infant with no obvious identity is discovered hidden in the water well of the village, the plot thickens and tensions mount in the community. Warring factions cause innocent lives to be lost and remind us of the overriding importance of harmony and acceptance.

About the company

Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Gosthi UK Sangsad is a branch of Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Gosthi in UK; a non-communal and progressive organisation which believes in using arts and culture to celebrate diversity. It is also believes in the implementation of equal opportunities for all artists and actively supports policies aiming to eliminate discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, age, religion or disability.
Her Kinfolk by Rahima Begum

1-29 November
Brady Arts Centre
Open House, 31 October, 6-8pm

About the exhibition

Women from across the world who are attempting to preserve and express their values/culture/folk customs and relationship with nature and craft. Women both in urban and rural settings all sharing a story in their aesthetic choices. Be it the female tribe leader of the Dhongra community in India who weaves mountains and streams in her shawls to express her tribe’s affinity to mother earth, to the young woman working as a city trader in London but by night she joins the women of her family to sing the songs from their grandfather’s village in Ireland. These are the carriers of stories and histories.

About the artist

Rahima Begum is a self-taught London based artist, creative consultant, activist and director of a British charity. She works across a number of mediums but illustration is at the heart of her practice which is largely influenced by humanitarian work with marginalised communities across the world. Folk culture, women and nature are often strong presences and reflect an interest in the preservation of thousand year old cultural/tribal practices and symbols as well as the creation of a new global folk aesthetic. Begum often refers to this as ‘urban folk’ - a nod to everything that we knew and the things we are creating now because of that knowledge in the way we choose to display ourselves and live our lives.
Arts Without Borders presents

‘Say What?’

Sunday 1 November
Double Bill with The Altab Ali Story
Brady Arts Centre
Saturday 14 November, 2pm
Crossrail Performance Space
Devised by: Cast
Directed by: Dr. Canan Salih

‘What is Bangla?’ Good question. The themes that are explored throughout a Season of Bangla Drama 2015 are as relevant to the younger generation as they are to those who will be articulating narratives through performance. We are therefore launching the festival programme with young performers, who will be presenting a devised piece based on this question. Using movement and masks and spoken word the young artists will present their own views on marginalisation, identity and language.

This performance will also be shown at the Crossrail Performance Space on 14th November, and will include a 30 minute workshop with the director and cast.

Komola Collective presents

‘Rising Silence’ -
A Fundraising Panel Discussion

Thursday 5 November, 7.30pm
Kobi Nazrul Centre

‘Rising Silence’ – A panel discussion by Komola Collective in partnership with Nari Diganta to raise funds for the creation of a crucial film of the same name, which will bring to light the experiences of the Birangona women of Bangladesh. Birangona means ‘Brave Woman’ and this was the honorific granted to the hundreds of thousands of survivors of the campaign of rape carried out by the Pakistani Army and their Bengali collaborators in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971. The making of the documentary which this event will facilitate, celebrates their strength in the face of brutal abuse. The panellists include Masuda Bhatti, Rumana Hashem, Ansar Ahmed Ullah, Dr Shaheda Islam, Onjali Rouf, Filiz Ozcan, Leesa Gazi and moderated by Urmee Mazhar.

www.komola.co.uk
Charan presents

**Bengali Identity: Problems and Prospects**

**Wednesday 11 November, 7.30pm**
**Kobi Nazrul Centre**

The talk will discuss the idea of Bengali identity that ties together approximately 320 million people, the second largest ethno-linguistic group in the world. It will then focus on the history of its formation, explore its current state in a global context, and present some interesting thoughts on what the future holds for the people in Bangladesh, UK and beyond. Hosted by Arif Rahman with guest speaker Masud Rana.

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**Exhibition:**

**Brick Lane**

**Monotypes by Alice Sielle**

**Thursday 12 - 26 November**
**Short talk by Alice Sielle on Saturday, 21 November, 12.15pm**
**Kobi Nazrul Centre**

These monotypes, depicting successive waves of immigration, were made for the film Cable Street to Brick Lane by Phil Maxwell and Hazuan Hashim which marks the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Cable Street. Monotypes are original works and are not reproducible like prints. A flat surface is evenly covered with printing ink using a roller. The paper is placed face down on the ink and any marks made on the back of the paper form the image on the front. These monotypes were made on Japanese paper.

Alice Sielle has lived in Bow for over 30 years. She attended Bath Academy of Art and has been a full-time painter since 1973, exhibiting regularly since then. She is a trustee of the Swadhinata Trust, and is learning Bengali.
Brit Bangla hosts panel discussion ‘Diversity in the Arts’

Wednesday 18 November, 7.30pm
Kobi Nazrul Centre

The event will comprise of networking reception followed by a lively debate exploring issues on diversity in the arts. Panels guests invited are Naz Choudhury, celebrity dance specialist Flex-FX, Enamul Hoque renowned photographer, Amina Khayyam, acclaimed choreographer/performer, Zoe Rahman (MOBO Award winner) and many more - to be confirmed.

Diversity in the arts: Is there an under representation from BME in the arts and creative sector in the mainstream? Is this due to the lack of creative talent? What about leadership for arts management from BME/ethnic groups? What creates the barriers for emerging talent? Does talent always shine through no matter skin colour, gender or class? Or is it impossible to break into an industry without the right background, financial support, and look? Join us to hear and participate in this interesting and relevant debate.

www.britbangla.net

Traditional Theatre and dramatic arts in Bangladesh: An Overview by Mohammed Mijarul Quayes

Thursday 19 November, 7.30pm
Arts One Pinter Studio, Queen Mary University London

This live linked video talk from Brazil, will focus on Bangladesh’s flourishing urban theatre practices and how contemporary theatre has developed over the centuries from a range of traditions. Proscenium-style drama theatre is not indigenous to Bengal or the subcontinent but was introduced by a Russian, Gerasim Lebedev in Calcutta in 1795, though the origin of theatre in Bangladesh can be traced to the 4th century Sanskrit drama. The talk will track pre-Lebedev trends, folk-theatre, puppet theatre, performance with Poto Chitro (scroll painting), supra-personae (masked) performances (precursors of Gombhira), song-and-dance forms, narrative forms (Puthipath) and of course Jatra.

Mijarul Quayes is currently the High Commissioner of Bangladesh in Brazil. A career diplomat, he has previously served as Bangladesh’s Foreign Secretary (2009-2012) and High Commissioner of Bangladesh, London (2012-14).
Shanghati presents

A cultural evening of poetry, music and dance

Friday 20 November
Doors: 7pm Show: 7.30pm
Kobi Nazrul Centre

This will be an intergenerational programme of diverse and diverting entertainment weaving together strands of enchanting music, and spoken word performances to emphasize the rich, powerful and meaningful mediums of poetry and song.

Shanghati Literary Society was established in 1989 with a small group of poets based in London. The aim was to promote Bengali literature amongst the community Shanghati are now renowned for their achievements and celebrated their 25th anniversary with a Silver Jubilee festival earlier this summer. Over the years Shanghati has worked with diverse communities and published monthly bi-lingual literary magazines and more. Shanghati continues to raise the profile of Bengali literature in the UK and Europe.

www.shanghati.com

Swadhinata Trust hosts Bengali History Walk

Saturday 21 November, 11am
Meeting point Altab Ali Park

This 50 minute Banglatown walk is aimed at anybody interested in Bengali migration and settlement in the East End of London. It will finish at the Kobi Nazrul Centre for the Brick Lane Monotypes talk with Alice Sielle where hot drinks will be provided. See p21 for details.

The experiences of Bengalis in the East End will provide a concrete example of the value of multiculturalism and the tensions it creates. The walk/talk will look at the British Empire and the how the population of Britain has become rich and diverse through the twentieth century as migration occurred from the colonies.

Ansar Ahmed Ullah is a community activist. He is currently involved with the Swadhinata Trust, set up in 2000 to engage and work with young people to promote secular Bengali heritage and arts.
Queen Mary Drama Department presents

**Scratch: an afternoon of experiments and experiences**

**Saturday 21 November, 2pm**  
**Arts One Pinter Studio, Queen Mary University London**

Queen Mary Drama has the reputation, the expertise and the resources to give a platform to new performance ideas by standing first drafts up in a supportive, risk-taking setting. Up to five short presentations will be showcased in this ground-breaking event, allowing new work to find a voice and to receive critical feedback so that it can be developed. QM Drama students will be on hand to participate in rehearsed readings, improvisation and to give technical support: whatever a new piece needs to grow.

Queen Mary Drama Department presents

**The Long Table: How can Bangla performance create social change?**

**Sunday**  
**22 November, 5pm**  
**Arts One Pinter Studio, Queen Mary University London**

For the third time at A Season of Bangla Drama we are delighted to present Professor Lois’ Weaver’s remarkable cross between a panel discussion and an improvised performance. All guests are invited to evoke the setting of a dinner party discussion, allowing questions normally associated with formal seminars to be explored in a more intimate and revealing manner.
Hope N Mic

Friday 27 November
Doors: 7pm Show: 7.30pm
Kobi Nazrul Centre

Join us for our monthly Hope N Mic Nights, a night of networking and live acts from singers, poets, wordsmiths and musicians. Hope n Mic is the best open mic scene in East London, providing a platform for spoken word artists, both established and those who are new to the scene, raising money for charity and giving the public an entertaining night out for only a £5 donation that goes to the charity of choice. We are called Hope n Mic because our event provides hope: hope for those wanting to try out spoken word performances, and hope for the charity we support each month with our entry fee.

www.hopenmic.org

"We thought dance class was good, we thought dance class was English. We were wrong. Now we see you are fully English, because you argue with your parents. In Bangladesh this wouldn’t happen. Well you’ve done what we never could. You’ve left Bangladesh behind.”

This is a show for anyone who ever had to grow up, a show about being a second generation immigrant in the UK but feeling like an Englishman abroad.

RICH MIX
Sat 5th December, 7.30pm
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www.richmix.org.uk

www.travellinglighttheatre.org.uk
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Selection panel: Kazi Ruksana Begum, Ali Campbell, Karen Hubbard, Rokshana Khan, Suna Miah and Dr Canan Salih

Log on for What’s On!
Brochure information correct at the time of going to print. For up to date programme information please see www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/arts

Feedback (and win)!
We would like to hear your views about A Season of Bangla Drama and would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to fill out a short survey – AND you can be in with a chance to win a £30 Amazon voucher.

Either scan us on your smartphone or log on to https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R3V8TS3

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone involved in making A Season of Bangla Drama possible.
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