



Deep imprint

THEATRE ANSHUMAN BHOWMICK

with World Theatre Day around the corner, it is time to raise a toast to two successful adaptations of indigenous performing arts on the Bengali proseenium stage. In Maya (Sisir Mancha, February 17), Ichapur Aleya attempts an adaptation of JM. Synge's Riders to the Sea. Krishnanagar-based Swapan Baran Acharya, hitherto renowned for transla-

See, Krishnanagar-based Swapan Baran Acharya, hitherto renowned for translations of Shakespear's trag-edies, transplants Synge's play onto the mangrowes of the Sunderbans where men venture into dense forests to collect honey, occasionally falling prey to man-eating tigers. Acharya succeeds in scripting a traige play with a mother and her two daughters at its centre. Kaushik Chatteriee, the guest director, explores the landscape where a syncretic culture reigns, where Dakshin Ray and Bon Bibi are ever-present in the lives of the inhabitants of this riverine delta. Suggestive rituals, pepped up by sprightly music, add buggestve mans, perped up by sprightly music, add authenticity to the produc-tion design. Jayanta Bandyopadhay's innovative use of fabric to

design a deceptively heavy stage is supplemented by

He light designer, Joyanta Mukhopadhyay, and his flirtation with light and shade. The acting honours go to Sangita Chowdhury for playing Maya, the mother. With

her movements restricted, Chowdhury strains her voice and stretches her facial muscles to etch this role of a lifetime (picture).

Jatra may have lost much of its command over rural Bengal but Burdwan Kushilob's Jiyankanya, a retrospective look at Jatra's ability to assimilate the oral tradition ("Manasamangal", in this case) to address real-life issues plaguing the socially marginalised, leaves a mark. Recently staged at Rabindra Sadan (February 10), this Timir Baran Roy script is directed by Priyatosh Roy with an eyo ne reviving the warmth and joie de vivre that underlines a Jatra performance. After a relatively sedate start, Jiyankanya picks up post interval when the proseenium arena is transformed into a Jatra stage. Munnema Shabnam, playing a Muslim girl taking refuge in a touring jatra group led by Tamal Kanti Das, enacts Behula is part like a dream. Among others, Anupam Banerjee impresses as the cross-dressing Manasa, as does Priyatosh Roy playing the singer-narrator with excellent support from the live accompanists.

Towards the inner realm

SRIMOYEE BAGCHI

he third and last part of 12 Masters

he third and last part of 12 Masters, CIMA's expansive showcasing of a dozen artists who have shaped the course of modern art in India and whose journeys reflect the birth and the evolution of the republic, moves from neorealism and social realism Towards the Personal (on view at CIMA till April 13). The four artists featured in this edition are Somnath Hore, Sarbari Roy Chowdhury, Lalu Prasad Shaw and Sanat Kar.

A shy teenager in pigtails with her arms folded across her chest — Roy Chowdhury's Rinku — greets the viewer stepping into the gallery. This nearly 30" bust, placed at eye-level with the viewer, hints at a kind of familiarity and closeness that marks the rest of the show. Bringing together a range of works, this exhibition revisits the manifold aspects of Roy Chowdhury's aesthetics as it imbibed cubist, realist and abstract elements to emerge as a unique amalgam of all three styles. as a unique amalgam of all three styles. Much like James McNeill Whistler, Roy Chowdhury's art had a vision of the musical sublime—heads of Siddheswari Devi, Bade



Ghulam Ali Khan and Ali Akbar Khan are caught mid-song as the human imperfections of their faces stand out in contrast to the flawless grandeur of their melody. The smooth shapes of the smaller sculptures seem as if they have been rolled out of clay and not cast in bronze (picture, left). The pensive figures crouched all alone and the grotesquely misshapen female bodies carry the imprint of the living hands that fashioned them; the technical exigencies of the lost-wax process and bronze-casting are dissipated in their vibrant humanity.

Humanity is also the moving spirit of Somnath Hore's courve. Having witnessed human suffering up close, he distilled it into prints of luminous clarity in his Wounds Ghulam Ali Khan and Ali Akbar Khan are

prints of luminous clarity in his Wounds series, which had white-on-white paper





(19)

The bare realism of Hore gives way to the more personal and playful exploration of the

human condition by Sanat Kar. Central to this exploration are eyes — whether in the sparse lines of his pioneering wood intaglios or in the sprite-like figures that flit across his paintings done in tempera and other media, it is the eyes that draw the viewers in (picture, third from left). Spare yet fluid lines effortlessly bend to form figures that are spontaneous yet fifful, while negative space and free-flowing cross-hatching are used to create a mysterious and sullen atmosphere around them. In his hands, even inanimate objects are turned into sentient beings where cups, furniture and clothes sprout eyes, hands and legs and are 'arranged' in a surreal tableau as in the Ikebana series.

The line is the muse for Lalu Prasad Shaw. It takes a life of its own, whether in his signature portraits of Babus and Bibis or in the brooding, bold, abstract, geometric etchings and lithographs (picture, right). Shaw's figurative paintings, in which the styles of Kalighat pars and Mughal miniatures coexist seamlessly, are charged with nostalgia. Brooding characters are frozen into quiescent gestures and often livened up by Shaw's sly sense of humour. The depth and the wideness of Shaw's body of work, often overlooked in favour of his later, figurative creations, was on display at this show.

Laughter from Japan

PERFORMANCE ARTS

SHAOLIPRAMANIK

hat makes traditional comedy relevant? Is it its capacity to transcend cultural specificities? Or the use of stock characters and themse that are universal? Kyogen, a classical form of comedy that originated in 14th-century Japan, presented recently at the Victoria Memorial Hall, provided an opportunity to ponder these questions. Although developing at the same time as Noh, a form of Japanese theatre, Kyogen evolved independently as a comedic stage art and began to be performed by niche groups as an interlude between serious Noh segments.

Kyogen, staged by the Shigeyama Sengoro clan — the members are current-ly 14th-generation practitioners — at the Western Quadrangle of VMH, offered a sam-ple of this ancient form that struck a balance between slapstick and parody. Followed by an explanatory prelude about the tenets of Kyogen, the recital consisted of two segments, each of 30-minute duration, that attempted to find humour within the mundane.

The first piece. Kaki Yamabushi (picture),

The first piece, Kaki Yamabushi (picture), The first piece, Kari Yamaousni queue explored the myth of the yamadushi or mountain priest (a stock character in Kyogen) who, feeling famished, climbs up a persimmon tree and starts devouring a fruit when he is accused of trespassing by the farm-owner. The ensuing dialogue, as the farm-owner goads the priest to emu-

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late animal calls and jump off the tree, was marked by witty ripostes and performative ridiculing. With a stool as the only prop, the vast stage stimulated the imagination as the two performers enunciated their words and expressions, stomped, slid and jumped with martial arts-like agility, etching out the comic bits.
Bo Shibari, the second piece, portrayed

Bo Shibari, the second piece, portrayed the story of a feudal lord who ties up his servants to prevent them from stealing his search to prevent them from stealing his sake. The performers employed rigorous action, twisted and turned to depict the servants' outwriting their master as they get drunk even with their hands tied to a pole. Such blunders, furny accidents and absurdities that are integral to Kyogen are perhaps instrumental in the continuity of the repertoire.









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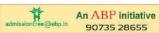
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	ISI Marked ACSR Dog Conductor	18:00 Hrs	18:00 Hrs.	18:00 Hrs.
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