

History and development of Bangla Drama in London

Introductory presentation, based on a very short study

MAYOR OF TOWER HAMLETS

A Season of Bangla Drama
3 – 25 November 2012

3 November **Ekti Asharhe Shopno - A Fantastic Dream**, (English/Bangla) presented by Mosaic, directed by Dr Mukid Choudhury

4 November **Jamuna** (English), presented by Theatre Folks, directed by Md Ali Haider. Ticket prices: £8.00 & £5.00

8 November Seminar: **Shopno Bilash** performed by Leesa Gazi & Md Ali Haider followed by **The Life and Work of Humayan Ahmed**, by Dr. Shiekh Selim, Bishwo Shahitto Kendro (FREE)

9 November **Banbibi** (English) presented by Culturepot Global, directed by Filiz Ozcan Rich Mix, 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, E1 6LA Tickets: £8.00 & £5.00 Box office 020 7613 7498

10 November **Hey Mahajibon - The Great Life** presented by Dakshinee Kolkata/Dakshinayan UK, directed by Dr Ananda Gupta

11 November **Jibon Jakhon Furaye Jay**, presented by Bangladesh Udichi Shilpi Goshhi UK Branch, directed by Sayeem Choudhury

15 November Seminar: **'A Comparative Study' History and Development of Bangla Drama in Bangladesh and the UK**, presented by Dr N Ahmed and Dr M Ahmedullah Brick Lane Circles (FREE)

16 & 17 November **Colours of Hope** (English) presented by The Rokeya Project, directed by Showmi Das and Claudia J Haley Rich Mix 35-47 Bethnal Green Road, E1 6LA Tickets: £8.00 & £5.00 Box office 020 7613 7498

17 November **Arha**, presented by Sanskriti London directed by Debashish Banerjee, Tickets: £8.00 & £5.00

18 November **Hasya Kawluk** presented by Charon Cultural Centre directed by Rubaiat Sharmin Jhara

23 & 24 November **Londonee** (English) presented, Mukul & Ghetto Tigers, directed by Mukul Ahmed

25 November **Pasher Bari Bhalobasha - Love of Neighbour**, directed by Mojibul Hoque Moni, Bangladeshi Teachers Association

3 – 25 November Exhibition: **A Retrospective A Season of Bangla Drama** curated by Maraz Ahmed

Unless otherwise stated all performances are at the Brady Arts Centre
192-196 Hanbury Street, London E1 5HU

To find out more about the festival call box office 020 7364 7900 or email
festivalsandevents@towerhamlets.gov.uk
Online tickets at: <http://www.wegotickets.com/aseasonofbangladrama2012>










MAYOR OF TOWER HAMLETS

Tower Hamlets Council Presents
A Season of Bangla Drama
Live performances, exhibitions & seminars
3 – 25 November 2012


সিজন অব বাংলা ড্রামা

A Season of Bangla Drama

Ticket costs: £5.00
Doors open: 6.45pm
Starts: 7.15pm

Brady Arts Centre
192 – 196 Hanbury Street
London E1 5HU

Box Office: 020 7364 7900
www.towerhamletsarts.org.uk



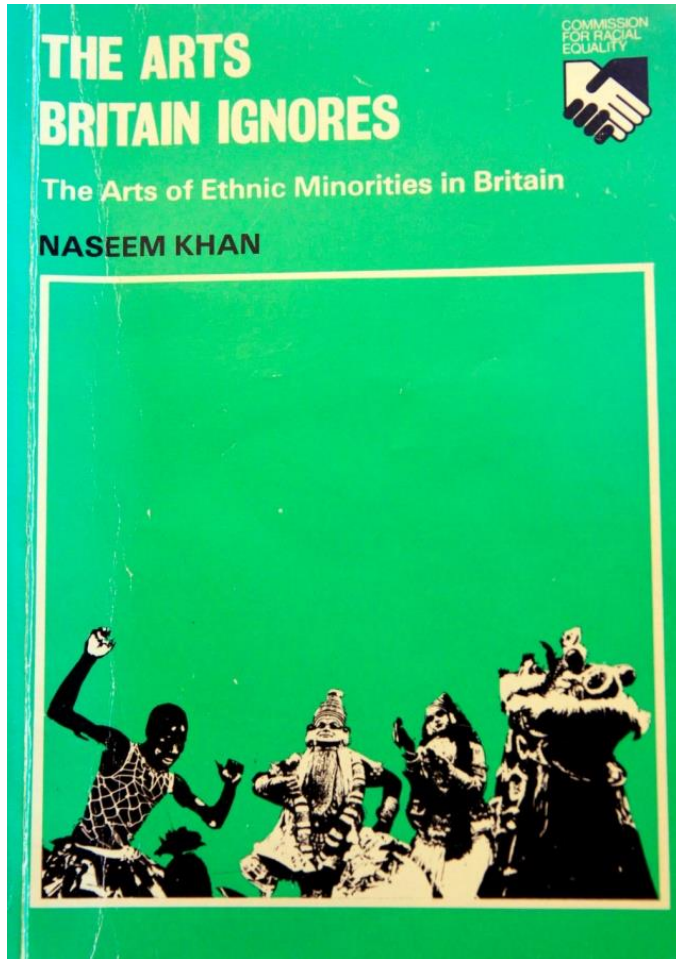
By Dr M Ahmedullah, 15 November 2012

My background in links with drama

- a. Dhaka in 1972**
- b. Negative experiences in the UK
and identity crisis**
- c. School theatre visit**
- d. Bangladesh Centre**
- e. Bangladesh Youth Movement**

Bangla drama in London

Sources of information and research



Interviewed

1. **Khali Kazi** – Newham councillor
2. **Abdul Aziz Toki** – playwright and director
3. **Dr Rahman Gillani** - Director of Toynbee Hall Asian Studies Dept / actor
4. **Ruhul Amin** – film maker
5. **Ashraf Mahmud Neswar** – playwright and director
6. **Kutub Uddin** – director / actor
7. **Nurul Islam Putul** –
8. **Aqeel al faradhi** – person in charge of Message Cultural Group
9. **Fanu Miah** – BYM co-ordinator / actor
10. **Runi Khan** – Co director of Culturepot Global Ltd

1963-2012

Some examples Bangla drama

1. **1963 - The Orientals deliver Sirajuddaul** at Barbican Centre
2. **1971- Mukti Jodi Patey Chau Ostro Hate Tule Nao** – by Dr Enamul Huque – started July 71 and toured for 3 months, including ICA Gallery – 6/7 cast and the first play was at Trafalgar Square
3. **Early 1970s- late 1980s / early 199s** – Bengali Artists Association and Bangladesh Youth Movement delivered many plays in a several different venues
4. **1992-** Marilybone Bangladesh Association stage 3 plays
5. **1996-2000** – by annual Bengali Drama Festival at Toynbee Hall
6. **1985 – 2012** - Surma Centre arranged many plays
7. **1999-2012** - Message Cultural Group was formed as a creative cultural organisation in the late 1999 by a group of young and enthusiastic people
8. **2006-2012** - Soulfire Theatre
9. **2001 – 2012** - A Season of Bangla Drama at Kobi Nazrul Centre and Brady Arts Centre

Bengali Artists Association (BAA) and Bangladesh Youth Movement (BYM)

Bethan Green Adult Education Institute

1. Struggled to attract Bengali people to attend the English classes set up by the Institute and high degree of distrust existed
2. A charity concert at the Institute in late 1960s to respond to a disaster in Pakistan lead to more people attending the classes
3. An increase in the demand to use facilities at the Institute lead to the setting up of drama classes and then later music and poetry
4. Key people are: **Mr Amar Bose, Barrister Lutfur Rehman Shahjahan, Kutib Uddin**
5. Mr Bose taught drama and directed many plays and Mr Shahjahan played role of production co-ordinator
6. The institute became a base for individuals to meet, join a variety of classes, socialise and work towards producing cultural shows
7. At first the activities were undertaken under the umbrella of Bengali Artists Association and later into several including BYM Drama Group, the major group to continue drama in East London

BAA and BYM

Siraj ud Daullah – first play in 1963 and then many times subsequently into the 1970s



BAA and BYM

মিলনসেতু




STUDENTS OF THE
BETHNAL GREEN INSTITUTE
(WHITECHAPEL COMMUNITY ARTS CENTRE, WYRDLE STREET, LONDON, E.1. BRANCH)

PROUDLY PRESENT
MILONSETO
a Bengali Drama

AT
**TOWER
HAMLET SCHOOL
RICHARD ST.
Commercial
Road LONDON E.1**




ON SATURDAY
25 MAY
1974
AT 6-30 P.M.

ORGANISED BY
**BENGALI
ARTISTS
ASSOCIATION**



PRINTED BY SAHNI PUBLICATIONS LTD. 36-38 APPELRY LANE, LONDON E.1. TELEPHONE 91-217 921



BANGLADESH YOUTH MOVEMENT DRAMA SOCIETY
PROUDLY PRESENTS




**এ পৃথিবী
তাকর গোলাম**
ON SATURDAY

3RD SEPTEMBER 83
AT 6 PM

AT THE TOWER HAMLETS
GIRLS SCHOOL
RICHARD STREET
COMMERCIAL ROAD LONDON E1
TUBE: ALDGATE EAST AND
WHITECHAPEL
BUSES: 25, 10, 5, 40 AND
15, 23 253

PLAY BACK SINGER:
MASUMA SULTANA NARGIS
ASAB AHMED
MOHIBUR RAHAMAN RANA &
RAJU AHMED

DIRECTOR:
KUTUB UDDIN

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR:
SIRAJUL ISLAM

LYRICS:
SRI RANJAN DAS
EKLAS UDDIN

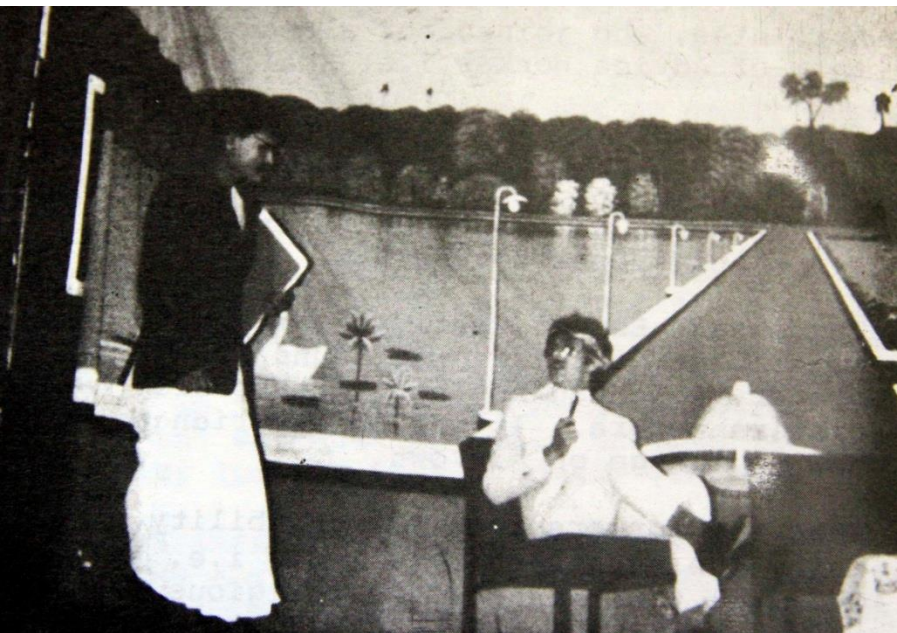
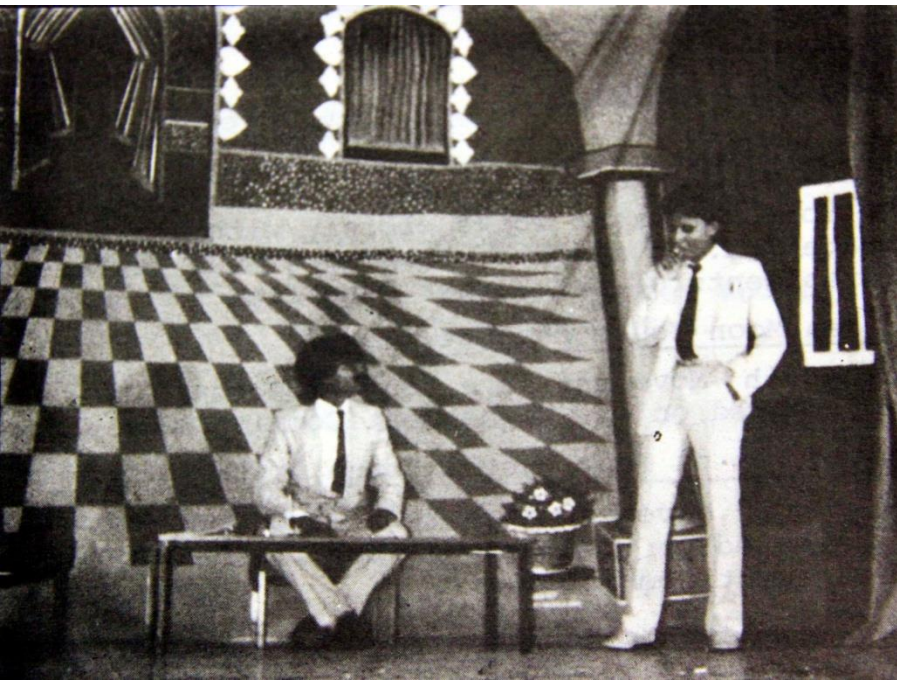
MUSIC DIRECTOR:
ASAB AHMED

**“THIS WORLD IS A
SLAVE OF MONEY”**

It is an outstanding social play written by Sri Ranjan Das

P & P - The Bangladesh Youth Movement, The Berner Club, Ponier Street,
off Cannon Street Road, London E1 Tel: 01-481 1188
Printed by: UNIFIED PRINTERS.

BYM



Dhaka Association

Cllr Khali Kazi - chair for many years

The association staged many plays including

Chor

Izzat Ali's Prestige

Barkater Ma – 21st February

Held at many venues including Bangladesh Centre, YMCA Camden, Commonwealth Institute, Logan Hall, Half Moon Theatre, Badden Paul Centre

1992 – 2002

Marylebone Bangladesh Society

Abdul Aziz Toki – co-ordinator

Wrote and delivered 3 plays at North Westminster Community Schools

- 1. Sesh Drisha – Sylheti language (1995/95)**
- 2. Haji Shaheber Heart Attack (1997)**
- 3. Shainiker Mrittu (1998)**

Sesh Drisha has been played in different venues subsequently



1985 – 2012 - Surma Centre arranged many plays

Nurul Islam Putul – chair for 2 years and MC member for 10 years – Surma Community Centre

Some of the plays staged includes:

Ora Kadam Ali

Shurma Kande

Nipoti

They also contributed to the A Season of Bangla Drama

Nurul Islam Putul has been involved in delivering about 15 dramas, some short plays and several major performances

1996-2000

By-annual Bengali Drama Festival at Toynbee Hall

Dr Rahman Gilani, Director of Toynbee Hall Asian Studies Dept organised 3 by-annual Bengali Drama Festivals at the **Toynbee Hall's Curtain Theatre**

July to September

1996 – 17 plays

1998 – 21 Plays

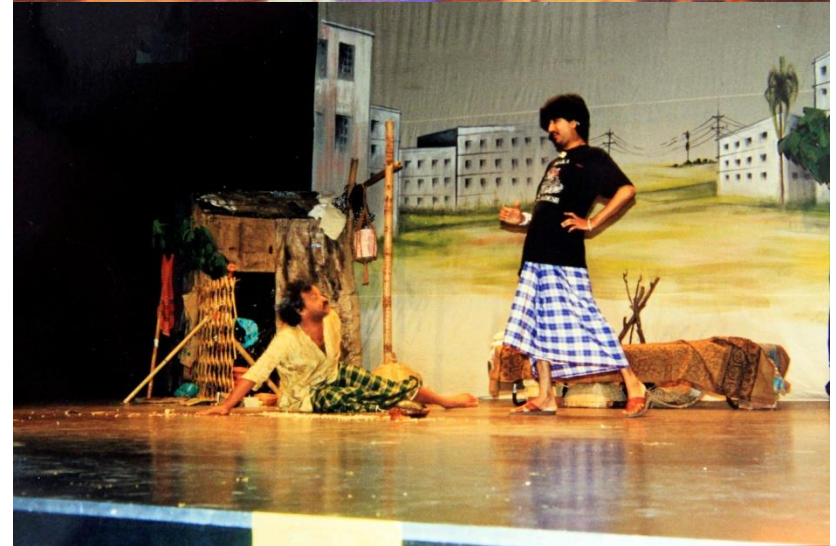
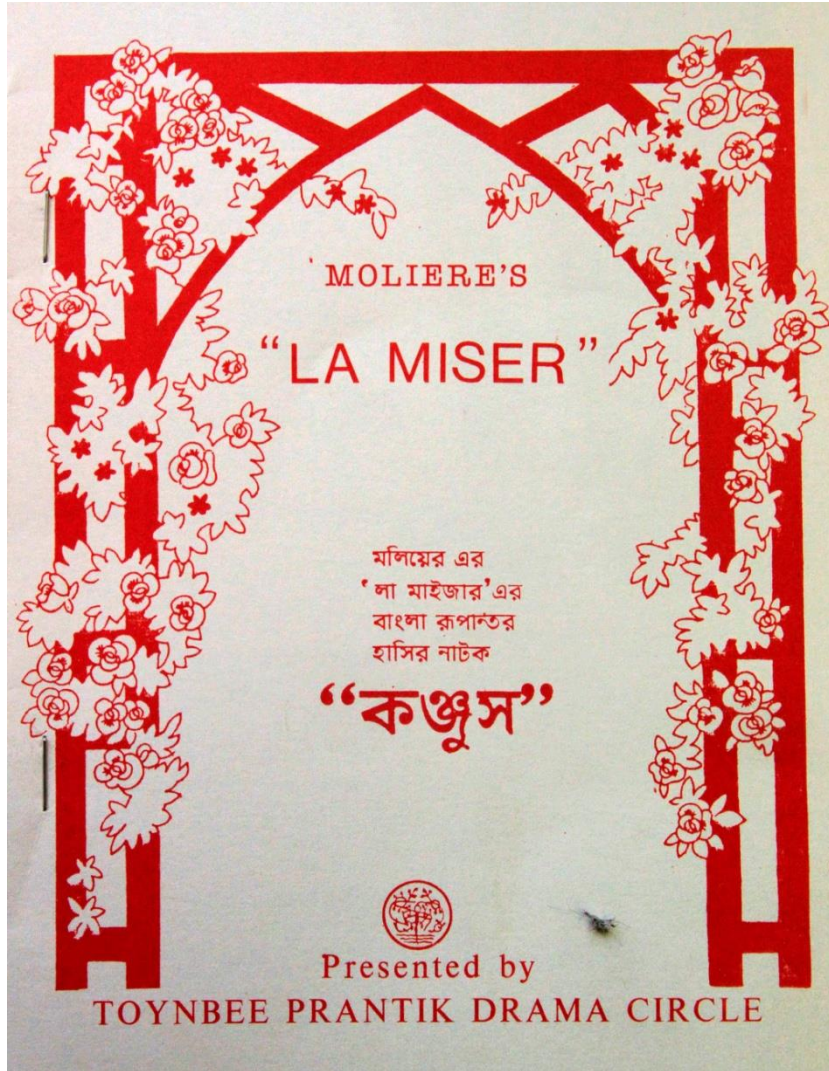
2000 – 26 Plays

The plays were in Bengali, bilingual and Sylheti and included dance / drama

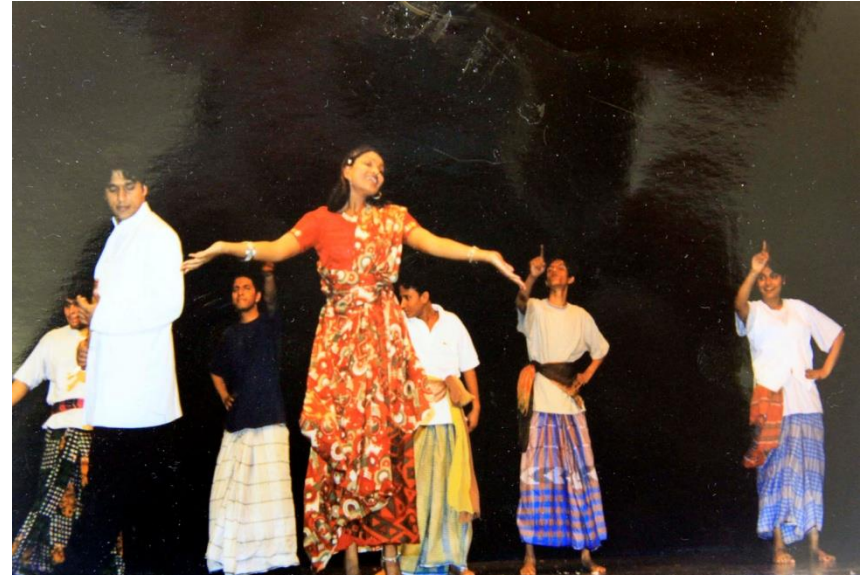
Festival had Bangladeshi and West Bengali contributions, including the participation of *Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan*

*One famous play staged was Molière's **La Miser***

Bengali Drama Festival at Toynbee Hall



Bengali Drama Festival at Toynbee Hall



1999-2012 - Message Cultural Group based at London Muslim Centre

Delivered many short plays as
part of wider programmes,
including *Alor Porosh*



Soulfire Theatre

Soulfire Theatre was set up in 2006 to create theatre in those communities that don't have a strong theatrical voice or tradition. It is particularly aimed at the Bangladeshi British community, young people and children in Tower Hamlets and other places.

Runs drama workshops and delivered several major plays in Queen Mary College, Brady Arts Centre and Departures

Some major plays are:

Blood Wedding - Departures

Street Seduction – Brady Arts Centre as Part of A Season of Bangla Drama in 2011

Soulfire Theatre



Soulfire Theatre



A Season of Bangla Drama

Kibi Nazrul Centre and Brady Arts Centre

Statement by the Management Board of Kobi Nazrul Centre Limited.



Helal Rahman
Chair Person

A Season of Bangla Drama is in its eighth year. There is a long history of Bengali theatre that has been produced and performed in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. Many people remember attending Bengali Dramas being performed at Queen Mary College, Tower Hamlets Girls School (now Mulberry School for Girls), Curtain Theatre and the Half Moon Theatre from the late 60's to the early 90's. It is worth noting that on the first opening day of the Kobi Nazrul Centre on 23 October 1982 a Bengali play was performed at the Centre. The play 'Beer Bangali' (Heroes of Bengal) was written by a local writer and performed by local actors. At present most of them are making a significant contributions in various fields.



Theo Fariduddin
Vice Chair



Sehreen Seleem Ripon

The Kobi Nazrul Centre is continuing that tradition of promoting Bengali drama for local people, and each year we urge both established and emerging local drama groups to participate in A Season of Bangla Drama providing rehearsal space and support for participants. We also welcome groups from across and outside London to get involved in bringing an even greater breadth of experience to this important cultural platform, and to local audiences.



Jenith Rahman



Jayasree Kabir

It is the Centre's aim to promote Bangla culture both across the Capital and regionally. We are proud to initiate various events and projects including music, dance, drama and poetry recitation. We welcome your suggestions and participations to make the Centre strong and vibrant to promote Bangla culture.



Emdadul Haque Chowdhury



Abdul Malik Khukon



Ekbal Hussain Ali

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Drama**

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Playwrights

I have interviewed 3 playwrights

1. **Abdul Aziz Toki** – playwright and director – written 3 plays and many short stories
2. **Ashraf Mahmud Neswar** – playwright and director – written 30 scripts and already 26 performed
3. **Hussain Ismael**, artistic director of Soulfire Theatre – written and performed many

Issues

1. Motivation

2. Problems

3. Future