

# CULTURAL

# DIARY

## April

### Bengali Drama by Hindusthan Cultural Society

Ajit Gangopadhyaya's *Thana Theke Ashchhi*, a Bengali adaptation of Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, was staged, on April 3 at the Fine Arts Theatre, New Delhi, by Hindusthan Cultural Society. The play was produced by Manik Roy, and directed by Ranajit Sen.

### Surbahar Recital by German Musician

A function was held on the 6th April 1960 at the Max Mueller Bhavan in New Delhi under the auspices of the German Cultural Institute. On that occasion a *Surbahar* recital was given by Shri Michad Junius, Professor of German Literature at Allahabad University.

### Concert of Modern Compositions

The United States Information Service and the International Music Society of New Delhi presented on April 9, Helen Boatwright (Soprano), Howard Boatwright (Violin), Eric Nissen (Flute), Ralph D'Mello (Clarinet) and Louis D'Mello (Trumpet) in a concert of modern compositions.

### Arthur Benjamin Dead

Arthur Benjamin, the Australian-born composer, conductor and pianist, who was a child prodigy, died in a London hospital on the night of April 9. He was born in Sydney. He came to England in 1912 with an open scholarship to the Royal School of Music after starting his career as a pianist at the age of six. He returned to Australia in 1919, but came back to England two years later to teach at the Royal College of Music. He will be remembered best for his compositions although his reputation as

a composer was established in 1931 with his opera *'The Devil Take Her'*. His musical piece, *'Tale of Two Cities'*, was written for the 1951 Festival of Britain and won an Arts Council Award. He composed a fanfare for the wedding of Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh in 1947.

### Banga Natya Sahitya Sammelan

The first session of the Banga Natya Sahitya Parikalpana was held at the Bishwaroopa Theatre premises, Calcutta, on April 14; Dr. N. K. Sidhanta presided.

The following subjects were discussed: Bengali dramas and one year of its development movement; one year of the non-professional drama movement; one year of the professional stage and Bengali drama of one year.

### Plays by National School of Drama

Two short plays, *'Khandahar'* and *'Bhagavadajjukam'*, were staged by the National School of Drama on April 14 at the School Theatre in New Delhi. The performances were in the nature of training exercises. *Bhagavadjukam* was translated into Hindi by Shri N. C. Jain, from a Gujerati adaptation of the original in Sanskrit, and was produced by Shri D. N. Thaker. *Khandahar* was produced by Smt. Sheila Bhatia. They are all in the teaching staff of the School.

### Drama Festival by I.P.T.A.

The West Bengal branch of the Indian People's Theatre Association held its seven-day drama festival at the Ranji Stadium, Calcutta in April 1960. The organisers presented a complete picture of Bengal's cultural treasures, both urban and rural. Well known artists took part in the folk items such as *"Jari"*, *"Tusu"*, *"Jhumur"*, *"Chou"* and *"Gambhira"*.

## **"Rangeela Rajasthan" At Bombay**

The Sur-Singar Samsad sponsored a folk dance, drama and music festival devoted to the folk art of Rajasthan in aid of the Bharatiya Lok-Kala Mandal of Udaipur. The three-day festival, entitled "*Rangeela Rajasthan*" was held at Rang Bhavan in Bombay from April 25.

## **New Open-Air Theatre**

A new open-air theatre has been constructed on the Northern Railway's recreational grounds in Kishanganj, Delhi.

With a seating capacity of 7000, the auditorium is said to be the capital's largest open-air theatre. The stage is also one of the biggest in Delhi with an eighteen feet wide apron in the front.

It took nearly five years for the theatre to take shape. The idea for the construction of a theatre was mooted when the celebration of the Railway Week became an annual feature. Cultural teams from all over the country present programmes of dance and drama every year during the Railway Week.

## **Annual Festival of Plays**

The Theatre Centre, Calcutta, held the Sixth Annual Festival of Plays at Mahajati Sadan, Calcutta, from April 14 to 20. True to its tradition the Festival this year also had plays in different languages; the selection of plays being based on merit. Five selected plays in Bengali, two in Hindi and one in Gujarati were staged. The multi-lingual character of the Festival is its unique feature which is organised mainly with a view to give opportunity for play-production in various languages on a common platform.

## **Data on Art Institutions Being Collected**

Mysore Education Minister, Shri Anna Rao Ganamukhi, told the Mysore Legislative Council on April 18 that the Mysore Government was collecting data relating to the number of institutions imparting training in dance and music in the state.

## **Vienna Academy Choir Group in Delhi**

The Vienna Academy Chorus, a section of one of the oldest conservatories of Europe—the Vienna State Academy—gave its perfor-

mance in Delhi on April 26. The Vienna troupe was on a tour of South-East Asia. The performance in Delhi consisted of a musical fare in three parts.

## **Drama Festival at Asansol**

'*Uttar Sarathi*', a cultural organisation of Asansol, organised a three-day drama festival here from April 22 to 24. On the occasion discourses by experts on Indian drama were also arranged.

## **May**

### **All-India Music Conference**

The three-day All-India Music Conference was held at Jodhpur in May 1960. A number of reputed artists including Shri Ravi Shankar and Shri Ali Akbar Khan gave recitals on the occasion.

### **Thyagaraja Festival**

Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President of India, inaugurated on May 3 a two-day festival in honour of Saint Thyagaraja, the great Karnatic musician, at the Constitution Club, New Delhi, under the auspices of the National Cultural Organisation.

It was announced in the function that the organisation's request to the Union Government to bring out a commemoration stamp with the portrait of Thyagaraja had already been accepted.

It was further announced that the New Delhi Municipal Committee was considering a proposal of the organisation to name "Curzon Road" as "Thyagaraja Road" to mark the bicentenary occasion.

### **New Music Society Opened**

Krishna Gana Samaj, a new music society set up in Delhi, was inaugurated on May 1 by Shri T.L. Venkatarama Aiyer, Chairman of the Law Commission. A programme of music was presented to mark the occasion. The Samaj has among its objects the promotion of music and other fine arts particularly among South Indians of Delhi by organising concerts and encouraging the local talent.

### **Soviet Adaptation of Tagore Play**

Smt. Nandita Kripalani was invited by the Soviet Government to visit the USSR to assist the Kinloyshev State Opera and Ballet Theatre in the production of Tagore's *Chitrangada*. She left for Moscow on May 19 and spent a month there for this production work.

### **Bharat Natyam Dance at Karachi**

Kumari Yamini Krishnamurti, an Indian Bharat Natyam danseuse, and her troupe, gave a Bharat Natyam, dance recital on May 4 at Karachi, before a distinguished gathering including foreign diplomats. The programme was arranged under the auspices of the Indian High Commission in Karachi and was sponsored by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The troupe gave a performance at Lahore before going to Karachi.

### **Popularisation of Music in Gujerat**

Shri Rasiklal Parikh, Home Minister of the Gujerat State, said at Ahmedabad on May 7 that concerted efforts would be made to popularise Indian music in Gujerat, which lagged behind in comparison with other regions in the country.

The Home Minister, who was declaring open the two-day conference of the Bharatiya Sangeet Prasarak Parishad organised by Bruhad Gujerat Sangeet, observed that music was one of the characteristics in building one's career and he was happy that in Gujerat efforts had been made to make classical music popular among masses by such institutions.

### **Sanskrit Play Staged in Nepal**

A Sanskrit play, based on Smt. Kshama Row's epic, *Shri Tukaram Charitam*, was presented at the Indian Embassy, Kathmandu, Nepal, on the occasion of the death anniversary of the poetess.

The play was written by her daughter, Smt. Leela Row Dayal, wife of the Indian Ambassador in Nepal.

### **Theatre for Every State Capital**

Shri Humayun Kabir, Union Minister for Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, announced at Baroda on May 16 that each State Capital

in the country would have a national theatre by May 8, 1961, the eve of Rabindranath Tagore's birth centenary. Shri Kabir was inaugurating a drama exhibition in connection with the eight-day drama festival being held at Baroda. These theatres, he said, would stage classical dramas including those of Rabindranath Tagore translated in regional languages.

Shri Kabir said that "this national theatrical movement would not be confined only to cities but would also spread to rural areas. The Government would help the professional dramatic companies by giving grants". Shri Kabir called upon artists to enrich the cultural life in India by staging plays of cultural value.

### **An American To Stage Tagore's Plays**

Mr. Jack Lee Morgan, an actor-director from the United States, toured India during the month of May in search of suitable talent to stage two of Tagore's plays, *Chitra* and *Post Office* in English.

Mr. Morgan said that he would experiment with a bold technique in the plays. He would employ different dance techniques to express varied moods of the actors.

Mr. Morgan had already staged Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Tagore's *Chitra* in America. He was of the opinion that with improved thematic treatment, Indian classical dances could earn immense popularity in U.S.A.

Mr. Morgan's chief interest is to popularise some of the well-known Indian plays in the United States and he expressed the hope that his present trip to India would help him to understand better the subtleties of Indian drama. One of the places in his itinerary was a visit to Shantiniketan.

### **Grow More Food With Music**

Experiments conducted in Pondicherry have shown that paddy plants stimulated by music have better growth and give larger yields. This has been claimed in their report on experiments with four varieties of paddy by Shri G. Purushothaman, a paddy expert of the Department of Agriculture, and Shri B. Santhanakrishna Naidu, Director of Agriculture, Pondicherry State.

Musical stimulation started exactly twenty-four hours after transplantation and continued

till the grains were formed. Paddy plants were treated daily to 30 minutes of recorded music in the morning. The *Raga* was *Charukesi* and the instrument was the *Nagaswaram*.

The Pondicherry Government is now conducting similar experiments in groundnut, tapioca and sugarcane cultivation.

### Indian Plays to be Staged in New York

Two new plays of Indian origin are being planned for production in New York, as reported by the *New York Times*. Those plays are *The King of Dark Chamber* and *The Guide*. The former is from the pen of Rabindranath Tagore and the latter is based on Shri R. K. Narayan's novel. The plays are being prepared by Harvey Breit and his wife, the former Patricia Rinehart.

### Tagore Theatre at Jaipur

An air-conditioned theatre costing about ten lakhs of rupees will be constructed at Jaipur and will be known as Tagore Theatre.

This was decided at a meeting of the State Tagore Centenary Committee held at Mount

Abu on May 30. The Chief Minister of Rajasthan and the Speaker of the Rajasthan Assembly were among those who attended the meeting.

## June

### New Cultural Group in Capital

The Vice-President, Dr. Radhakrishnan, inaugurated on June 3 a cultural group in the Capital which aimed at introducing the common man to our cultural heritage. The group, entitled Lok Kala Manch, presented a three-day festival to mark its inauguration. The festival was held at the Football Stadium outside Delhi Gate.

### Cultural Tour of Indrani Rahman

Smt. Indrani Rahman, Bharata Natyam dancer, left India on a tour of the U.S.A. in June 1960 with a troupe of seven artists. The Government of India gave her a travel grant under the Cultural Activities Programme, for visiting the U.S.A.

