

Tower Hamlets Council presents

# FREEDOM & INDEPENDENCE THEATRE FESTIVAL

In association with A Season of Bangla Drama

**5 - 28 NOVEMBER 2021**

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Bangladesh50](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/Bangladesh50)



**#Bangladesh50**

# WELCOME TO THE FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE THEATRE FESTIVAL

For many years, Tower Hamlets Council has been proud to support A Season of Bangla Drama, an annual festival which brings the borough's communities together each November to celebrate the magic of theatre as well as the arts and cultural traditions of Bangladesh.

As we mark the 50th anniversary of the Independence of Bangladesh, this has been renamed the Freedom and Independence Theatre Festival. The themes in the title have inspired the plays and events that make up this year's programme. We are delighted that we are continuing to profile British Bangladeshi theatre as an important way to spotlight key events of 1971, tell untold stories, and reach out to new audiences.

The variety of plays on offer cover topics including the plight of women, the tales of freedom fighters, the journeys of refugees such as the Rohingya and Vietnamese, as well as the power of protest.

There will be a fringe programme of events including a Bengali heritage walk, film screenings, an international youth writing project, talks and exhibitions. The festival will also provide opportunities for audiences to participate through Q&As, and to be immersed in the richness of poetry, music and dance.

This is a fantastic way to learn about the history, legacy and impact of what unfolded half a century ago.

For full listings, please go to [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/bangladesh50](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/bangladesh50)

**John Biggs, Mayor of Tower Hamlets**  
**Councillor Sabina Akhtar, Cabinet**  
**Member for Culture, Arts and Sports**



**DAEDALUS THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS**

# **GERRARD WINSTANLEY'S TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS MOBILE INCITEMENT UNIT**

**Friday 5 and Saturday 6 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm  
+ Matinee 2pm on  
Saturday 6 November**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE  
English | 90 minutes  
£10/£8 concessionary**

## **SYNOPSIS**

Dissent and rebellion are as English as rainy bank holidays, cream teas and plundering foreign countries. But the great radical moments of our history are often forgotten or ignored. Many people today struggle to find a voice and feel alienated from politics. Even our past is under threat: the UK Government's official history for citizenship tests omits the Peasants Revolt, the Diggers, the Tolpuddle Martyrs...

The Black Smock Band has joined with Daedalus Theatre Company to tour the country with their homemade Mobile Incitement Unit. They aim to reclaim

history and idealism for the dissenters and rebels. They share big, positive ideas and form a collective voice. The result is an uplifting gig-theatre show from an LGBTQ+ led company. It tells the story of English protest and dissent through songs which span six centuries.

This show reflects the history of each place it visits. It invites local guest performers to join and will celebrate east London within the context of protest in England. It's a bold and entertaining invitation to audiences to reclaim our history of progressive thought and radicalism.

## **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

Daedalus makes high quality, socially engaged, accessible work exploring contemporary issues across multiple artforms. It is committed to bringing professionals and community members together in innovative, meaningful ways. A Tower Hamlets-based, LGBTQ-led charity, it gives people from all walks of life space and support to develop their creativity and self-expression.

**5-28 NOVEMBER 2021**

RESTLESS BEING PRESENTS

# THE FREEDOM ANTHOLOGIES

**Sunday 7 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English | 45 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

---

## SYNOPSIS

The Freedom Anthologies is a series of three short plays on the themes of freedom and independence. Working on the premise that 'no one is free until everyone is free', the three short plays make this point for the Rohingya community. The first play focusses on a school setting and on Rohingya identity in the diaspora. The second explores the notion of nature in expression of

freedom. The third play is a powerful short history of South Asia. It highlights the poignancy of freedom and its universality which escapes the Rohingya.

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Restless Beings is an international human rights organisation – the majority of their work focusses on promoting equality and human rights for all. They work especially closely with genocide victims, and in particular with the Rohingya community on whom this performance is centred.



**BRITISH BANGLADESHI POETRY COLLECTIVE PRESENTS**

# **FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENCE: PEOPLE SPEAK**

**Thursday  
11 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**ARTSONE, PINTER STUDIO,  
QMUL**

**English | 75 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

## **SYNOPSIS**

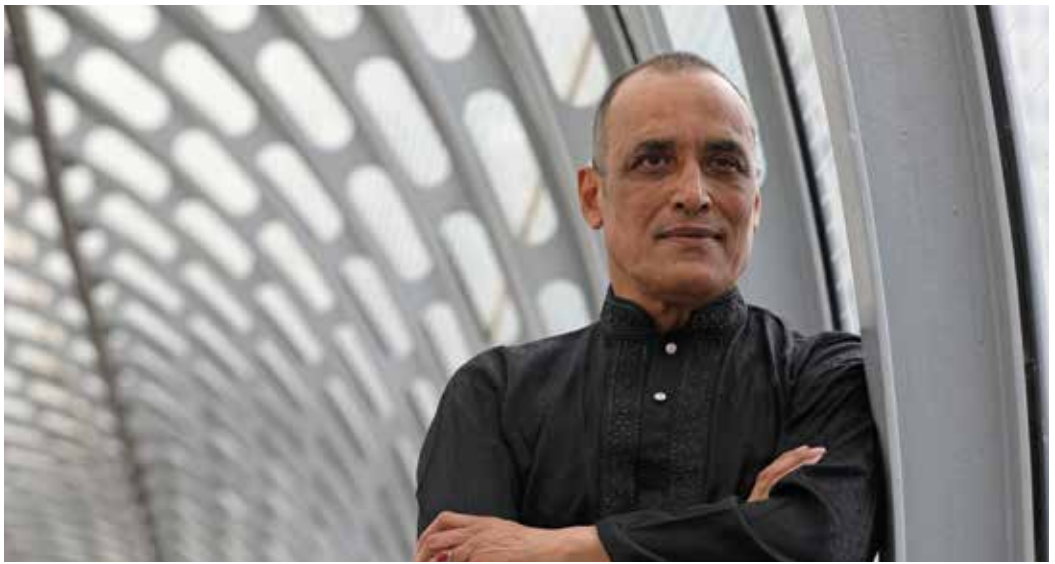
This is an event in which audiences are invited to participate and join poets on stage for an evening of full interaction and engagement around the concept of freedom and independence. This theme will be explored in all its forms via the broad-ranging genre of poetry

and spoken word. There will be poetry performances and poetry games for those of all ages. Although most of it will be conducted in English, other language-speakers are welcome.

## **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

British Bangladeshi Poetry Collective (BBPC) is made of poets and poetry lovers, with a focus on multilingual sharing of poetry. They use poetry as a tool to expand on the British-Bengali identity, explore and celebrate the generational heritage of British-Bangladeshi culture here in the UK. Their work involves performance, writing, translation and publication.





**MUKUL AND GHETTO TIGERS PRESENTS**

## **MUJIB - THE REBEL**

**Friday 12 and  
Saturday 13  
November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**ARTSONE, PINTER STUDIO,  
QMUL**

**English | 75 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

and the struggle for independence. We hear about East Pakistan and then the crisis of 'democracy' which led to independence. Bengal tells us that this is the story of that last phase, the crisis and the conscience of one man, Bangabandhu Mujib-ur-Rahman. He personified the spirit of Bengal, freedom and Independence. This play examines the motives and consequences of his assassination.

### **SYNOPSIS**

Bengal introduces herself to the audience and speaks about the land of Bengal from ancient times to today. She speaks of its geography, the land of a thousand distributaries of the Goddess Ganges: its heritage and its history. She speaks of the aborigines, the Hindus, then Buddhism, Hinduism again and Islam. She covers the conquest by the British at the battle of Panipat and Curzon. Next come tales of reunification

### **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

Mukul and Ghetto Tigers is an east-London based theatre company who believes in theatre as a place for exploration and dissent in democratic society. It has grown into an established name working in the community and across London as well as expanding into regional and international work.

Supported by Tamarind Theatre Company



**AYNA ARTS PRESENTS**

## **ORNA (THE COVER)**

**Saturday 13  
November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English/Bangla | 45 minutes  
£10/£8 concessionary**

### **SYNOPSIS**

Orna (The Cover) is set in Bangladesh in modern time. It explores the issues of abuse and oppression of women, rape and victim blaming while challenging social taboos. While most dialogues are in English there are some repetitions and songs in Bangla and Hindi. The main character is an 'orna' - a piece of cloth women in some cultures wear over their chests and heads. The orna tells the story of its owner, what and how

she suffered while wearing it. This play explores one question. Has orna (the cover), succeeded in performing its duty which is protecting women?

### **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

'Ayna' (mirror in English), also means 'come along'. Based in the north-west, Ayna Arts is a platform for creative people to come together to empower and express themselves. The group aims to develop individuals' creativity and sense of community through theatre which explores social and humanitarian issues that affect our community. Ayna is working towards building bridges between generations and cultures.



**PURBANAT CIC PRESENTS**

## **SECTOR 12**

**Sunday 14 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English | 75 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

### **SYNOPSIS**

During the liberation war in 1971, Bangladesh was divided into eleven sectors according to the geographical area. The play makes a strong argument for a 12th sector. British Bangladeshi's (East Pakistan at that time) were fighting to campaign for the noble cause of liberation. They garnered international support. They collected funds to support the fight for independence and they arranged demonstrations.

In 1971 a young man named Yousuf from Birmingham, started his own battle to rescue his 9-year-old daughter Rahima from Bangladesh. As military operations began in Dhaka, freedom fighters in Birmingham staged a huge demonstration at Small Heath Park. They flew the independent Bangladesh flag in Birmingham to mark the event. Newly married Jebun Nessa donated all her

wedding jewellery for this campaign. This encouraged people to raise funds by giving their full weekly wages.

Desperate Yousuf started his rescue journey and was able to reach Karim Ganj in India. This is close to the border of Sylhet. As the war continued, campaigns and demonstrations in the UK grew in tandem with Yousuf Ali's rescue mission. Yousuf's journey became a metaphor of war. His successful rescue mission mirrored the ensuing victory in the War of Independence. The sacrifice made by Jebun Nessa 50 years ago, is not forgotten.

### **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

Purbanat work collaboratively with their partners to create theatre that works across cultures, specialising in producing new plays and also adaptations of existing international written works. Since 2014 Purbanat has become an established theatre company in the West Midlands. Recently they have evolved and extended their creative activities beyond traditional theatre.

## DOUBLE BILL

COMMUNITY OF REFUGEES FROM VIETNAM PRESENTS

# OUR JOURNEY FROM VIETNAM TO TOWER HAMLETS

**Saturday  
20 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English | 60 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

## SYNOPSIS

The Community of Refugees from Vietnam will showcase a new short play and dance called Our Journey from Vietnam to Tower Hamlets. This chronicles how refugees escaped from Vietnam by a small fishing boat during the 1980s. It documents how they came to the UK where the community had no connections, and how they navigated a new life in this country.

They would like to introduce Vietnamese culture to residents in Tower Hamlets. The community have resided here for over 40 years and have kept a low profile. They are a small group within the myriad diverse communities of Tower Hamlets. They are keen to tell the wider world that they are here and share their experiences.

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

The Community of Refugees from Vietnam (CRV) was established in 1983. This was to support Vietnamese refugees with settling into east London. They were ethnically both Chinese and Vietnamese. The majority came from rural backgrounds, with limited formal education. Moving to the UK was a radical change and they struggled to adjust to a new language and culture. CRV have organised a range of different activities and services to support this community.





**DOUBLE BILL**

**ROKEYA PROJECT PRESENTS**

# MUKTI

**Saturday  
20 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English | 60 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

## SYNOPSIS

Mukti tells the stories of the several women who played a huge part in the liberation war of Bangladesh. As we celebrate Bangladesh at 50, Mukti reflects upon the ordinary women who took on extraordinary roles. They were both soldiers and civilians. They became victims of war crimes. They sacrificed themselves and their families for their motherland, and so much more. Mukti means freedom, which is what we celebrate today. But some of these women will never be free of their experiences and sufferings. They live to tell their stories as freedom fighters,

Birongonas, or just Women. Mukti focuses highlighting and celebrating these unsung heroines including. Many are still regarded as outcasts though they played a pivotal role in the liberation war.

Bangladesh has become independent but what about these women, have they tasted independence? A cast of Bangladeshi women use the mediums of dance, music, poetry and theatre to tell these true stories.

## ABOUT THE COMPANY

Rokeya Project is a non-profit initiative. They produce performances and workshops based upon and inspired by the principles of humanist Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain. The company profiles issues of feminism, extremism, global warming and conflict. They aim to raise awareness about how to improve communities and society in the present day.

**ARTS WITHOUT BORDERS PRESENTS**

# UMMSIYAH

**Sunday 21 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English | 60 minutes**

**£6**

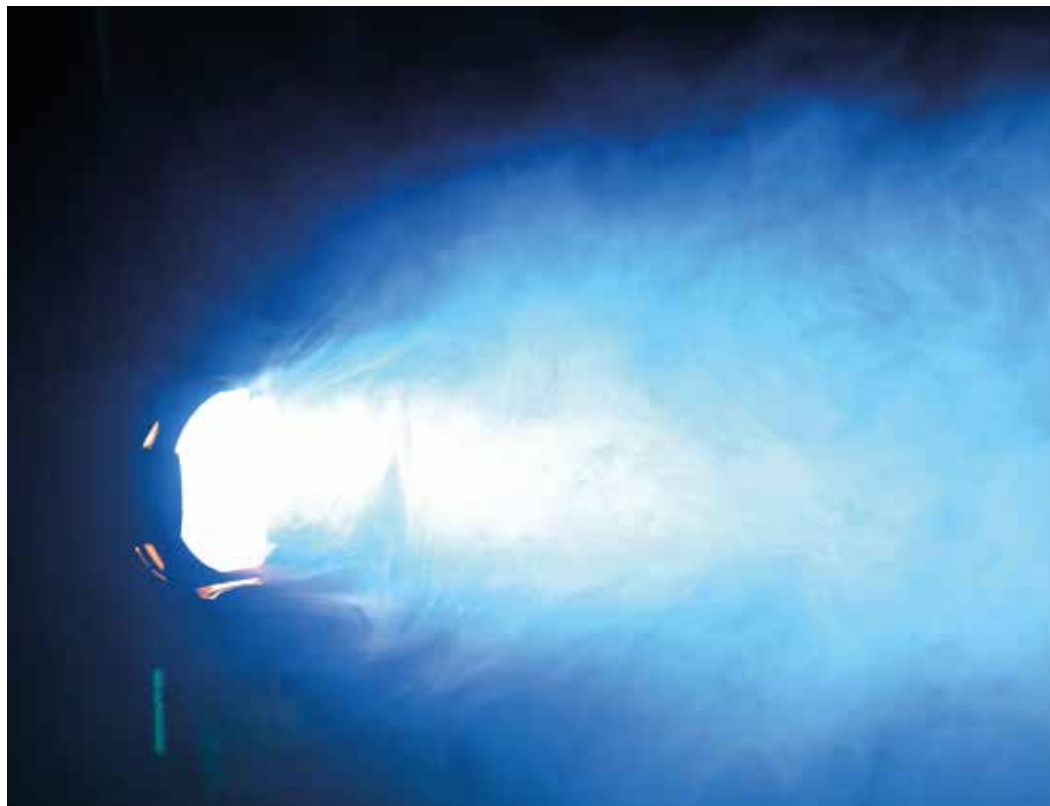
---

## SYNOPSIS

This is an evening showcasing different art forms such as a reading of a newly commissioned script, an extract from Ahmed Massoud's new play, and dance and poetry from Hawiyya the female Dabke Group. This is a celebration of

Palestinian arts and culture, and the lived Palestinian experience. This will provide an opportunity to listen, feel, connect, and interact with the themes of freedom and independence, with a focus on Palestinian, and British Palestinian voices. There will be live performances by artists of Palestinian heritage and artists inspired by the unique landscape, culture and journey of the Palestinian people.

Different artists of Palestinian heritage or inspired by the country have come together to curate the content for this one-off event.



**5-28 NOVEMBER 2021**



**NUMBI ARTS PRESENTS**

## **FUTURE 001 XURIYO**

**Friday 26 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English | 60 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

### **SYNOPSIS**

Future 001 Xuriyo is an Afro-Futurist project that tries to imagine the possibilities of a Somali future. 2021 marks three decades since the onset of the Somali war. This play takes this critical moment as a springboard to step into an imaginary future. It will be a

verbatim piece that explores the first-person future tense and carves out the space for all who care about Somali heritage and culture.

### **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

Numbi Arts is Somali originated and African centred. This not-for-profit organisation champions African diaspora art and culture here in the UK. Numbi facilitates this through platforming African artists as well collaborating in long-term projects. They work with artists as well as a multitude of organisations focused on heritage and culture.

**MESSAGE CULTURAL GROUP PRESENTS**

# **SEIZE THE FREEDOM**

**Saturday  
27 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English | 50 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

---

## **SYNOPSIS**

Bangladesh independence has started. The Pakistani army has seized East Pakistan and started to kill innocent Bengalis. This was for the simple reason that they voted for Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. They demonstrated for their legal rights and the right for freedom.

The Pakistani army arrested Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and took him to West Pakistan. Across the world, communities came out to support the Bengali cause and protest against Pakistani brutality. In 1971, London had several massive demonstrations, particularly from the Sylheti community.

During that time, many south Asian immigrants worked together in factories.

This play follows the story of one such factory worker, Mr Jamir Uddin who faces animosity in London from co-workers of Pakistani origin. This drives his return to Bangladesh, via India, where he joins the ranks of freedom fighters.

Mr Uddin travels from training camps to refugee camps and sees first-hand the horrendous plight faced by innocent Bengali's. He encounters the particularly moving tale of a child called Songram, whose father is a freedom fighter, and whose mother is missing.

With victory on 16 December and the creation of the new nation, Mr Jamir Uddin never returned to the UK.

## **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

Message Cultural Group is a community cultural organisation established in 1999. They perform and deliver theatre, short dramas for YouTube, recitations, workshops, children activities and Nasheed. Message has been part of A Season of Bangla in 2018 (Cries of the earth), 2019 (Our World) and 2020 (Class). Message Cultural Group have also performed on stage across the UK.



**5-28 NOVEMBER 2021**

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2021

**MONDAY**

**TUESDAY**

**WEDNESDAY**

**THURSDAY**

Doors open 7pm, shows start at 7.30pm sharp (unless otherwise stated)

Tickets cost £10/£8 concessions (unless otherwise stated)

**1-28 Nov**

**Exhibition BAC – Bijoy '71 and Colours of Bengal**

8	<b>TALK: ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE UK 1971/ PRESS FREEDOM IN BANGLADESH</b> QMUL FREE 6PM	9		10		<b>PEOPLE SPEAK</b> QMUL	11
15		16		<b>FRINGE: BENGALI HISTORY WALK</b> ALTAB ALI PARK £8/£5 2PM	17	<b>FILM: FROM CABLE STREET TO BRICK LANE</b> BAC FREE 2PM	18
22		23		<b>FILM: WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY</b> GC £7.50 6PM	24		25

More info: 020 7364 7900

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/bangladesh50](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/bangladesh50)

## FRIDAY

**GERRARD WINSTANLEY'S TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS MOBILE INCITEMENT UNIT** **5**  
BAC

**TO FATHER A NATION** **12**  
QMUL

**FILM: A VERY BRITISH HISTORY: BRITISH-BANGLADESHIS** **19**  
BAC FREE  
6PM  
**FRINGE: STORY OF INDEPENDENCE**  
OH FREE

**FUTURE 001 XURIYO** **26**  
BAC

## SATURDAY

**GERRARD WINSTANLEY'S TRUE AND RIGHTEOUS MOBILE INCITEMENT UNIT** **6**  
BAC

**TO FATHER A NATION** **13**  
QMUL  
ORNA  
BAC

**DOUBLE BILL: OUR JOURNEY FROM VIETNAM TO TOWER HAMLETS + MUKTI** **20**  
BAC  
**MAESTROS OF BENGAL**  
KNC £5

**SEIZE THE FREEDOM** **27**  
BAC

## SUNDAY

**FRINGE: SUNDAY IS SAREE DAY** **7**  
BAC FREE  
12PM  
**THE FREEDOM ANTHOLOGIES**  
BAC

**SECTOR 12** **14**  
BAC  
**FRINGE: THE REBEL AND THE WASTE LAND**  
RM £10  
6PM

**FRINGE: USE YOUR WORDS!** **21**  
ONLINE FREE  
2PM  
**UMMSIYAH**  
BAC £6

**WHEN MADONNA WAS DYING** **28**  
BAC

## VENUES

**Brady Arts Centre (BAC)**  
192-196  
Hanbury Street,  
E1 5HU

**Genesis Cinema (GC)**  
93-95 Mile End  
Road, E1 4UJ

**Kobi Nazrul Centre (KNC)**  
30 Hanbury  
Street,  
E1 6QR

**Oxford House (OH)**  
Derbyshire  
Street, E2 6HG

**Queen Mary University of London (QMUL)**  
Mile End Road,  
E1 4NS

**Rich Mix (RM)**  
35-47 Bethnal  
Green Road,  
E1 6LA

To book tickets:  
<http://freedomandindependencetheatrefestival2021.eventbrite.com>

**5-28 NOVEMBER 2021**



**BISHWO SHAHITTO KENDRO (BSK) UK PRESENTS**

## **WHEN MADONNA WAS DYING**

**Sunday 28 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**English | 60 minutes**

**£10/£8 concessionary**

### **SYNOPSIS**

On 25th March 1971, Operation Searchlight genocide wiped out thousands of Bengalis in what was then East Pakistan. War broke out and the biggest international source of support for independence came from expats living in the UK.

Over the next nine months, women's groups mobilised support from London to Birmingham and beyond. They organised demonstrations, hunger strikes, cultural shows, pop up food-stalls and collected donations. The

march in April saw more than 300 women walk hand in hand towards central London. These included mothers, pregnant women, young wives, students, restaurant workers and owners all.

Written by Bulbul Hasan and directed by Syeda Saima Ahmed, *When Madonna was Dying* is the story of the women activists in 1971 in the UK. It is 'herstory' – depicting those many known and unknown women who were the forerunners in raising voices for freedom.

### **ABOUT THE COMPANY**

BSK UK is an established name on London's cultural scene. The organisation tries to tie the communities together by bringing in classic literature in English and also by working with local and regional organisations to create art that reflects local issues.

# EXHIBITIONS: BIJOY '71 BY AHMED CHOUDHURY AND COLOURS OF BENGAL BY SUDIP CHAKROBORTHY AND SHAMEEM HOSSAIN

**Monday 1 – Sunday  
28 November**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**  
**Free**

---

The fascination with the natural beauty in our world is what inspires Ahmed Choudhury to keep making art. He uses a variety of techniques and mediums to create fine art pieces with oil paint, watercolour and pastel and photography. His work switches from abstract to figurative. Subjects vary from landscapes of far afield to the cityscapes of east London. He is currently focusing on the theme of 50 years of Bangladesh's independence.

His expanded range of media also incorporates print making as well as digital art.

Colours of Bengal are beautiful hand-painted banners which celebrate the arts and culture of Bangladesh in the year of its 50th anniversary. Each banner reflects something of the rural life of Bangladesh as depicted in folk tales and traditional storytelling. Whimsical, evocative and colourful, they show people dancing, singing and making music. They also illustrate flora and fauna native to Bangladesh, including the magnificent tiger.

The banners were designed by Sudip Chakroborthy and painted by Shameem Hossain.



**CHANDOSIK PRESENTS**

# **JAGORONER PONGTIMALA - THE STORY OF THE LIBERATION WAR**

**Saturday 6 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**KOBI NAZRUL CENTRE**

**90 minutes | Free**

Chandosik throw light on the terrible plight of women and intellectuals during the independence war in 1971. Their ongoing struggles are under-reported. The Birongonas, or brave women, suffered humiliation at every stage of their life. Huge numbers of professional men and academics were executed.

Poetry and spoken word tell the extent of the dark deeds perpetrated by the Pakistani army against these groups. This evening aims to profile the enormous sacrifices made in the fight for freedom. This is a way to pay tribute to both the victims and survivors whose bravery deserves wider recognition. It celebrates the ongoing journey of Bangladesh's success, five decades on.

**MOHILA ONGON PRESENTS**

# **SUNDAY IS SAREE DAY**

**Sunday 7 November**

**12pm – 5pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**Free | Women only event**

This is a women only event to celebrate womanhood through both sarees and the Bangladeshi delicacy, pittha. There will be a variety of entertainment, stalls and activities including saree workshop and a fashion show as well as a drama performed in Sylheti, traditional Bengali music, dance, and spoken Bengali poetry. Delicious food will also be available.

Mohila Ongon is a grass roots organisation which represents ethnic

minority women, predominantly of the Bangladeshi background. It was established in 2010 in order to organise and promote women and women's causes. Mohila Ongon organises a wide range of activities, events and educational workshops/sessions.



**LONDON BANGLA PRESS CLUB PRESENTS**

# **BANGLADESH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE: ROLE OF MEDIA IN THE UK + PRESS FREEDOM IN BANGLADESH**

**Tuesday 9 November**

**Doors 6pm | Starts 6.30pm**

**ARTSONE, PINTER STUDIO,  
QMUL**

**90 minutes | Free**

The UK media played a significant role during the Bangladesh War of Independence. They brought the genocides committed by the regime

to the outside world. This generated extensive public support for freedom within the British people and across the world. The first part of the evening will tell the stories of the time using slides as visuals. In the second part, a discussion paper will explore press freedom and touch on the global situation today. It will focus on Bangladesh and lead into a long table discussion involving members of the audience.

**SAUDHA SOCIETY OF POETRY AND INDIAN MUSIC PRESENTS**

# **THE REBEL AND THE WASTE LAND**

**Sunday  
14 November**

**6pm**

**RICH MIX**

**90 minutes | £10**

This is a unique centenary celebration of two literary masterpieces of the 20th century. Classics from both English and Bengali literature collide in this haunting theatrical performance. The Waste Land by T S Elliot meets Bidrohi by Kazi Nazrul Islam. Live music and drama help interpret these two poems by finding connections to bring the words, and their meanings to life. Scripted and directed by poet T M Ahmed Kaysher.



**5-28 NOVEMBER 2021**

**SWADHINATA TRUST PRESENTS**

## **BENGALI HISTORY WALK**

**Wednesday  
17 November**

**2pm**

**ALTAB ALI PARK**

**£8/£5 concessionary**

The Banglatown walk and talk is for anybody interested in Bengali migration and settlement in the East End of London. It is an opportunity to learn about the Bengali community's history and heritage. Find out about the lives of people with diverse backgrounds,

values and customs. The experiences of Bengalis in the East End highlight both the value of multiculturalism and the tensions it creates. The walk/talk will look at the legacy of the British Empire. Migration from the colonies continued throughout the twentieth century. A poet will be joining this year's walk to add a new dimension to this engaging, interactive slice of local history.

**Meeting point:** Shahid Minar (Martyrs Monument), Altab Ali Park, Adler Street/Whitechapel High Street

**ARTS WITHOUT BORDERS PRESENTS**

## **FROM CABLE STREET TO BRICK LANE**

**Thursday  
18 November**

**2pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**Free but limited availability**

From Cable Street to Brick Lane is a feature length documentary dealing with the fight against racism and fascism in the East End of London. It explores how different communities came together in the 1930s, 1970s and 1990s to challenge racism and intolerance. The focuses of the film are the two iconic East London streets of Cable Street and Brick Lane.

The film was produced in 2011 to coincide with the 75th anniversary of the 'Battle of Cable Street'. This was

a seminal event in local and labour movement history. Communities joined forces to prevent Mosley's 'Black Shirts' marching through their neighbourhood.

In the 1970s the Bangladeshi community living in and around Brick Lane suffered similar racist attacks. Organised fascist groups were back on the street.

This film makes extensive use of interviews with veterans of the Battle of Cable Street and of more recent struggles around Brick Lane. The narrative is driven by these eyewitness accounts and observations.

The screening will be followed by a Q&A session with the makers of the film.

**ARTS WITHOUT BORDERS PRESENTS**

# **A VERY BRITISH HISTORY: BRITISH-BANGLADESHIS**

**Friday 19 November**

**Doors 6pm | Show 6.30pm**

**BRADY ARTS CENTRE**

**90 minutes | Free**

This personal and historical documentary is also global story. It examines migration, struggle, resistance, sacrifice, hope and triumph. It is a very human story, a very 'British' story. Dr Aminul Hoque interviews his father as he recalls the racism and isolation he experienced in the 1960s and 70s. He speaks to the 'invisible' heroines (Bangladeshi women) who worked 24/7 as seamstresses within the confines of their homes. Aminul also goes back to the village of his birth in Sylhet, Bangladesh with his British-born kids. He wants to see whether they feel a sense of connection to a place that



they have never visited before. Followed by some brief reflections from Aminul Hoque and Adam Keelan, and a Q&A session chaired by Dr Layli Uddin.

**BANGLADESH UDICHI SHILPI GOSHTI UK SANGSAD PRESENT**

# **STORY OF INDEPENDENCE**

**Friday 19 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**OXFORD HOUSE**

**90 minutes | Free**

It is the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence. It is also a celebration of 50 years of the British Bangladeshi community in the UK. 'Story of Independence' reflects the lives of the

diaspora, those in the homeland, their struggle and glory as a nation. This is a family friendly evening of music and dance. It celebrates the anniversary through traditional, patriotic songs. Music and lyrics tell the stories of freedom. Performances will be by children and young people as well as adult groups. Come along for a musical journey of discovery and celebration.



**SURBANDHAN PRESENTS**

# **MAESTROS OF BENGAL & THE SONGS OF FREEDOM**

**Saturday  
20 November**

**Doors 7pm | Show 7.30pm**

**KOBI NAZRUL CENTRE**

**90 minutes | £5**

Top UK artists will look at compositions by five of our greatest poets/songwriters about freedom and patriotism. With poetry, spoken word and dance – this is a true celebration of freedom! The works of Pancha Kabi (five lyricists) will convey

how people react to tragedy, war and freedom. This is an evening of reflection and rediscovery through music. SurBandhan aims to take the audience on a musical journey. Songs provide an emotional narrative which moves from loss and separation to evoke a sense of hope. After a difficult 18 months, we emerge with optimism to bring joy to audiences. The performance will have English narration, making it accessible to all.

## USE YOUR WORDS

**Sunday  
21 November**

**2pm**

**ONLINE/ZOOM**

**90 minutes | Free**

Come along and hear how young writers have got creative and honed their craft using the themes of Independence and Freedom. Arts Without Borders have been tutoring 16 -19-year-olds from across continents in online workshops.

This has helped them tell a short story - fiction or non-fiction, write a script, a song, poetry, spoken word, or rap! The Zoom workshops have involved three groups of young people from Bangladesh, Northern Cyprus, and the UK. They have used their personal experiences and interpretations to share ideas. The resulting creative writing pieces provoke debate about differences and similarities. Join us for the results of this fantastic project, which has allowed international connections in the time of Covid.

## THE WIND THAT SHAKES THE BARLEY

**Wednesday  
24 November**

**6-8.30pm**

**GENESIS CINEMA**

**150 minutes | £7.50**

In 1920s Ireland young doctor Damien O'Donovan (Cillian Murphy) prepares to depart for a new job in a London hospital. As he says his goodbyes at a friend's farm, British Black and Tans arrive, and a young man is killed. Damien joins his brother Teddy (Padraic Delaney) in the Irish Republican Army, but political events are soon set in motion that tear the brothers apart. Followed by a panel discussion, Independence: Aftermath and Futures.



Image courtesy of Park Circus/Pathé.

DESIGNED BY IIRTH.CO

REGENTS  
LAKE

## BANQUETING VENUE

An exclusive venue with two beautiful halls, sitting by Regents Canal and surrounded by breath-taking scenery.

**BOOK NOW +44 (0) 207 998 9455**

info@regentslake.co.uk • www.regentslake.co.uk

📍 Bow Wharf, 221 Grove Road, London E3 5SN



MINT  
CATERERS

DESIGNED BY IIRTH.CO

+44 (0) 203 302 7870 • [www.mintcaterers.co.uk](http://www.mintcaterers.co.uk) • [info@mintcaterers.co.uk](mailto:info@mintcaterers.co.uk)

13A Rigg Approach, Leyton, London, E10 7QN



THE CITY OF LONDON



PRINCIPAL



MERIDIAN GRAND



FEMME





**FOR ADVERTISING AND SPONSORSHIPS 020 8523 5999**

# Bangladesh@50

## Five: 50



**Rahima  
Begum**



**Mukta  
Chakravarty**



**Karimah  
Hassan**



**Husna Parvin**



**Rukia Ullah**

**The Art Pavilion, Mile End Park**  
**Opening night**  
**8 December - 5.50pm**  
**9 to 16 December 2021**  
**11am-6pm**

Five artists share their work on the theme of freedom and independence. This mixed media exhibition will be accompanied by a talk and a musical event.

[www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/bangladesh50](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/bangladesh50)



Welcome to root/25, a not for profit London coffee house, arts and community space. We serve ethical artisanal coffee and chai as well as a variety of cakes, pastries and brunch options. We believe in bringing you the best from the roots to the cup.

All profits from Root/25 go to charity  
~ Restless Beings.

Social Media > @root25ldn  
Email > [root25@restlessbeings.org](mailto:root25@restlessbeings.org)

ROOT/25  
116 BOW ROAD, LONDON E3 3AA

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Zakir Khan, Melanie Goldstein, Fokrul Hoque, A M Neswar, Rehan Jamil, Farhan Masud Khan, Nadia Ali, Urmee Mazher, Aoife Monks, Ali Campbell, Julian Deering, Tracey Hammill, Dave Wright, Tom Wilson, Dr Canan Salih, Alomgir Shahriar, Sajjad Malik, Ferdous Ahmed, Sabina Khan, Dr Emily Keightley, Clelia Clini, Rahemur Rahman, Rukom Alom, Fiona Crehan, Laura McLean, Naomi Agyekum, Mahbub Rahman, Adam Renvoize, Phillip Nduoyo, Alima Khatun, Jessica Odubayo and Cheryl Westmacott.

Freedom and Independent Theatre Festival is organised by London Borough of Tower Hamlets Arts, Parks & Events Team in partnership with Queen Mary University of London and the Migrant Memories & the Post-Colonial Imagination Project.

Brochure information correct at the time of going to print. For up-to-date programme information go to [www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/bangladesh50](http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/bangladesh50)

Please be aware that you may be required to observe covid safety measures which are in place at each venue.

**We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone involved in making Freedom & Independence Theatre Festival possible.**

# FUNDERS, SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

for Freedom and Independence Theatre Festival 2021

