

Circus in town again

The Russian circus, once part of Kolkata's cultural calendar, was back in the city, give or take a few acts, reports Anindita Acharya

The rhythm was captivating. The beats were unusual. The energy was addictive. The musical evening at Rabindra Sadan on Tuesday was an exceptional show that Kolkatans will remember for a long time.

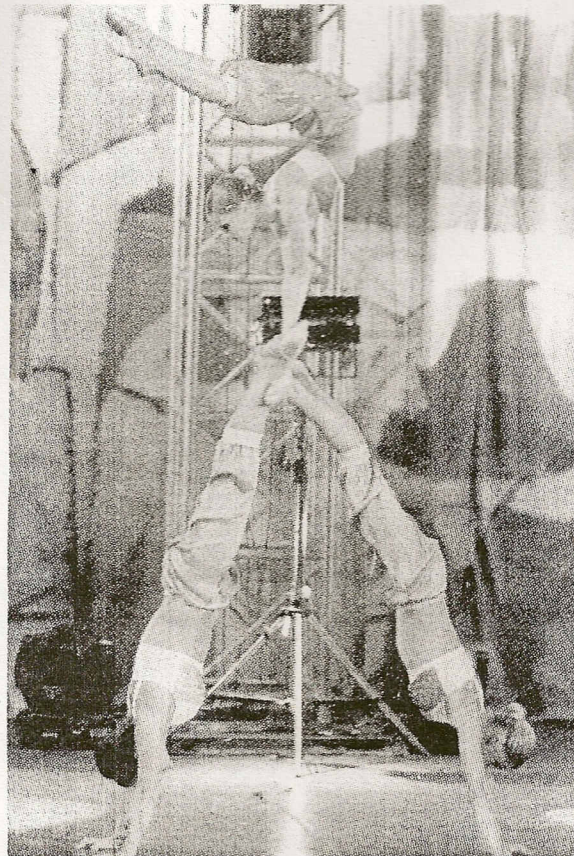
Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal presented a spectacular pre-Puja gift to the city. Thanks to the Young Circus of Russia, 'Circus Mosaic'.

Full of radiance, tempo and a rousing chorus, the musical evening was to mark the celebration of the Year of Russia in India. Said Reba Som, Director, Rabindranath Tagore Centre, ICCR, "This programme has been organised to enhance cultural bonds between the two nations. The first Russian circus was presented in the city back in 1996, though many other Russian cultural events are organised throughout the year. ICCR and the Russian cultural federation share a relationship which we hope to continue."

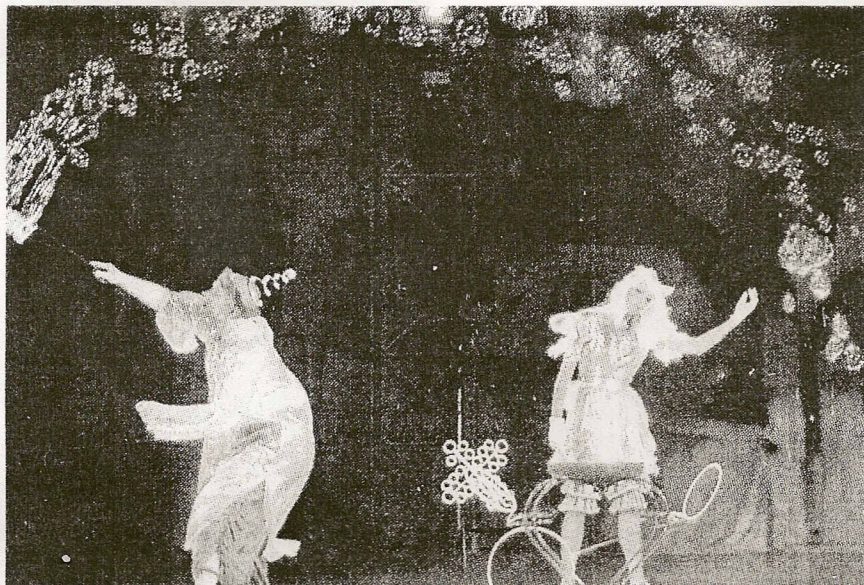
And so, for over an hour, the audience at Rabindra Sadan was treated to a blinding and unforgettable display of laser lights and sound, combined with an acrobatic show of unparalleled grace and beauty.

The show began by celebrated dance group Todes, began with a spectacular *Namaskar* to the audience. The attire, the beats and the movements were received with great cheer and applause.

Clowns played an integral part in the programme as, besides some fairly routine mimicry and gimmicks, they provided an appealing narra-



PHOTOS: PRATEEK CHOUDHURY



tive thread. *Play the Goblets*, music produced with wine glasses filled to various heights, was an item to remember as the performer, Denis Khlopov, created flawless and mesmerising melodies.

Every act delivered at least one surprise. A beautiful love story was knit through *Soap Bubbles*. Multi-coloured bubbles of various shapes and sizes appeared even more eye-catching with

the high tech light designs, helped by mime. And there was a magic show for the children that was not earth-shattering, but simple fun.

Acrobatics Trio, performed by three young

Casting a spell: Circus Mosaic's show was as splendid as it was varied

women, was sensuous, rhythmic and swift, with lots of Indian movements. The performers seemed as boneless as balloons; curving and twisting any way they wanted. Flowing with the slow composition, they seemed like angels in their blue and white dresses.

What left the crowd truly spellbound, however, was the *Juggling Equilibristic* on a free standing ladder. Valery Vlasov was magical, flying in the air with numerous silver hoops, which danced around her elastic body with extreme ease.

The western dance performance *Alabama* by Todes made many a foot tap, and the performers' interaction with the audience made the environment more personal.