

music of non-mainstream musical exponents, the actual specific genre or style being more or less unimportant in determining one's underground status. In fact, some notable mainstream musicians have started to take issue with the word 'underground' and the scene itself as their own records have been eclipsed by them. Not understanding the significance of the scene, they are trying to create confusion among the fans in their interviews with the local media.

According to '27 year-old musician Kamrul: "The existing labels should stop listening to the phony versions of these so-called musicians and encourage the new talents. They are still stuck with their age-old roster of band musicians."

In the words of another enthusiast: "It is time that new labels like Arshee come into action to accompany G-series and Ektaar to complement the new trend and era of music."

As one of the musical icons Maqsood of Dhaka and ex-Feedback, whose socio-political lyrics brought about a revolution in the mind-set of his listeners, says: "It is high



Progress of work in a digital recording studio.



An underground band performing on stage.

time that the face of music should change. I would much more appreciate ten different bands producing different types of compositions instead of one hundred groups following one. There should be variations. "The Bangla band listeners have a diverse music taste now and the groups should properly contribute to this scene. An interesting phase of music is going on at the moment and definitely for the bands doing commercial music and producing twelve albums a year for their livelihood -- their game is gone! This is 2005 and we need fresh music changing the face of this industry."

James -- known universally as the Nagar Baul (the City Bard) -- was the pioneer of psychedelic rock in the local scene and can be termed something of a guru for young musicians. He thinks the new generation is making a tremendous effort to produce international quality music.

"It is a very welcome change for contemporary music in the country. They term themselves as underground bands and their tunes are fresh and full of life. But they need to pay a little more attention to the lyrics. This change will definitely upset a few of the traditional musicians but their fight must go on. They are doing great!" says the charismatic James.

Music enthusiast Russell, upon buying the latest CDs from an audio shop says: "This new trend of music should be channeled properly and must reach even the remotest parts of the country because a change should come to our listening habits."

The Internet has played a major role in promoting Bangla music, especially rock and fusion, as acknowledged by most musicians. Web portals from different organisations are actually hosted by the passionate listeners. It needs a handsome amount of money to run these sites, usually paid out of their own pockets. They thus upload rare, latest hit songs, and share them over the World Wide Web free of charge is quite a noble gesture.

Many bands and their songs were promoted via this media and this in fact is one of the best and fastest ways to hear good new music. The Internet has surely taken our music one step ahead -- amaderGaan.com and Bangladeshinfo.com are two of the best and most popular sites right now promoting both mainstream and underground music through online streaming or online radio. Other forums promoting underground music are uginc.org and tunesbd.com.

Television channels are also airing programmes such as Rock Link hosted by celebrity musicians Sumon of Aurthohin and Jewel of Miles, showing very exhilarating music videos and interviews of popular bands. Ferdous Bappi's Music Express is another show on TV which caters to a great audience across the country.

The contemporary music scene is more original and vibrant than it has ever been. Young artists are synthesising and reconstructing music of high quality, making sure that the music world will never be the same again. ■