

COVER STORY



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

RECITER'S CHRONICLE

Bhaswar Bandyopadhyay is a well-known reciter, actor and writer. In his illustrious career, he has even directed a few theatrical dramas. In this interview with Rafi Hossain, he talks about how his interest in recitation started, and his thoughts on the future of poetry recitation.

Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today, we are joined by actor and reciter Bhaswar Bandyopadhyay. Thank you for joining us, Bhaswar Da. How are you doing?

Bhaswar Bandyopadhyay: In these current times, I think the most important thing is that I am healthy. I am hearing a lot of news about how many people I knew working in the cultural field who are either falling sick or passing away. That is why I consider myself to be extremely fortunate.

Rafi: Did your interest towards recitation begin when you were young?

Bhaswar: Even when I was very small, I had an attraction towards reciting poetry. My father used to recite and act, so that made me interested in it as well. We used to listen to a lot of good programmes from Kolkata on the radio. I lived in Khulna, so the radio signals that came from Dhaka were quite weak, and we could only get the ones from Kolkata. We used to listen to *Akashvani* a lot, and it featured some amazing vocal performances like singers, people reciting poetry and even radio dramas. By listening to amazing people like Birendra Krishna Bhadra, Debudul Bandyopadhyay, Sombhu Mitra and Tripti Mitra, among others, my interest grew in recitation. What I really loved about recitation is that it showed just how nicely you could present words. It inspired me to see the use of emotions when delivering lines. There are some artists who fake emotions, but I think that to do this properly, you must learn to properly channel your emotions and then feel it while you are doing it. To do this properly, one must practise regularly. Since I studied drama at the National School of Drama, I learnt to channel my emotions in dramas.

Rafi: Has the overall interest in poetry recitation decreased in people nowadays?

Bhaswar: I do not think so. When we created the *Bangladesh Abritti Somonoy Porishod*, there were only around fifty groups all over Bangladesh that used to recite. But now, we have over 350 to 400 groups. This shows that people are still very much into this. When I came to Bangladesh in 1984, I saw that Kazi Arif had released a cassette of poem recitations. That was the first one to be released here. I was amazed by it, so I made one of mine the following year, called *Praan E*



Bajai Baashi. A lot of copies were sold, and that made a lot of people make their own cassettes. It even got to the point where they had to stop selling them at the Boi Mela, as people complained to Bangla Academy that they were there to buy books, not listen to people recite. So, the cassettes were moved to be sold on the streets outside the Boi Mela. Nowadays, many people are still making CDs where they recite, and many also do programmes where they perform.

Rafi: You might not agree with me on this, but I think that from the newcomers who are doing poetry recitation, not many are as well known as those who did it in the past. Why do you think that is?

Bhaswar: I agree with what you are saying. When I started doing recitations in groups around 1974, we used to write the script ourselves, and not only that, we used to also compose the music ourselves and then perform with live musicians. We did shows like that, and like us, many other groups would form, and they would also perform. There are many groups now who will need some more time to establish

themselves. Then they will become more well known. But, some do have a lacking when it comes to dedication and passion. To recite poetry, you need to study the piece a lot. You cannot just go and read one and expect to recite well. Some might not be renowned because they lack these.

Rafi: Many newcomer poets are upset over the fact that many senior reciters do not recite their poems. Do you recite poems by new poets?

Bhaswar: I do. I like to read the poems by newcomers. Some of them have very good style and understand poetry very well. I really like their structure and wordplay. The message their poetry has also amazes me. These newcomers can channel their inner emotions to turn it into poetry. What I like to do when picking a piece to recite is that I ask the poet to read me their writing. When the person who wrote it reads the poetry, I can understand the emotions going on, and also get to know what tempo the piece is going to be going with. We can learn a lot by just listening to them. For me it is necessary to understand the poet's emotions throughout the poem as I need to project those same emotions in my recitations. If I don't, I think I would be doing the whole piece injustice. I got to hear many famous poets recite their own poems like this, and I consider myself to be very fortunate to have been able to have that opportunity.

Rafi: What tips would you give to people who are interested in recitation?

Bhaswar: I don't think that giving any tips would help. To be good at this you have to be dedicate yourself to it. You need to work for it and also study poetry a lot; there are no shortcuts. You need to learn to channel emotions, understand the stoppages, and also follow the tempo. If someone does this, then they can be a good reciter.

Rafi: Do you enjoy recitation more than acting?

Bhaswar: Since my childhood, I have been very passionate about recitation. But that doesn't mean that I'm not passionate about acting. I even wrote books about drama, so I am also very invested in it. But I am much more passionate about reciting poetry.

Ridwan Intisaar Mahub

GRAPE VINE

A new musical beginning

Sabina Yasmin has given tune to a song for the first time in her career for the song *Duti Chokhe Chhilo Kichhu Nirob kotha, Tumi Photale Shei Chokhhe Choncholota* in the Sarah Kabori directed government-granted film, *Ei Tumi Sei Tumi*. The song has been written by Mohammad Rafiquzzaman. Sabina Yasmin said, "I never imagined that I would be working as a composer. Kabori is very close to my heart, so when she gave me the proposal of giving tune to this song, I was interested. I will have singers sing to the tune of my song, so it will definitely be a new experience for me."



PHOTO: STAR

Amina Hossain

Starring in her own show

Sohana Saba will release a six-episode web series for *Binge* through her production company, *Khamarbari*. The series, titled *Twin Returns*, has been written by Sohana herself, directed by Alok Hasan. Sohana will be starring on the show along with Sourav Chakraborty, Manoj Pramanik, Runa Khan, Maznun Mizan, Sushma Sarker, Sayantani Tisha and Rahat, among others. Sohana said, "We started the shooting for the web series in Sylhet. After finishing the shooting in Dhaka, we'll go abroad. I wrote this in 2013, but tweaked it during the quarantine. I hope it turns out well."



Amina Hossain

Two new Mahi's

Amidst the pandemic, popular actor Mahiya Mahi is currently shooting for two new films, Anonno Mamum's *Nawab LLB* and Mostafizur Rahman Manik's *Ashirbad*. For the 2019-2020 budget year, *Ashirbad* received government grant, and actor Roshan will be seen starring opposite of Mahi. Regarding the shoots Mahi said, "I resumed shooting keeping my audience and viewers thoughts in mind. Currently, for the sustainability and future of our film industry, there is no alternative to shooting. The audience will find me in two unique characters for the new projects. I hope they will appreciate the hard work."



POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.



AASHRAM

Aashram is a Hindi crime-drama series, first aired on August 28, 2020 on *MX Player*. It was written by Habib Faisal, directed and produced by Prakash Jha under the banner of *Prakash Jha Productions*, and stars Bobby Deol, Aaditi Pohankar and Tushar Pandey, among others. The plot follows a con man preacher, Baba Nirala, and a police officer set on exposing his lies.

Mystic Pop-up Bar

Mystic Pop-up Bar is a South Korean drama fantasy television series on *Netflix*, which has been based on the webtoon *Twin Tops Bar*. It has been directed by Jeon Chang-geun, produced by Kim Bo-kyung, and stars Hwang Jung-eum, Yook Sung-jae and Choi Won-young, among others. The series focuses on a bar with access to various worlds, where customers can get help with emotional troubles through their dreams. The series aired on May 20, 2020.



Still 2gether

Still 2gether is a Thai romantic-comedy series, directed by Noppaharnach Chaiwimol, produced under the banner of *GMMTV*, distributed by *iWant TFC*, and stars Vachirawit Chiva-aree and Metawin Opas-iamkajorn as the leads. The storyline, which is based on *Because We ... Belong Together* by JittiRain, is a five-episode sequel to *2gether: The Series*, and follows the established relationship of Sarawat and Tine. The first episode was released on *GMM 25* and *LINE TV* on August 14, 2020.

TENET

Tenet is an action-thriller and science fiction film. It has been written and directed by Christopher Nolan, who also produced the film alongside Emma Thomas, under the banner of *Warner Bros. Pictures* and *Syncopy*, and stars John David Washington, Robert Pattinson, Elizabeth Debicki and Dimple Kapadia, among others. The film, involving aspects of time travel, revolves around a secret agent trying to stop World War III. It was released on July 23, 2020.

Shreya Shomoyeeta & Amina Hossain

