

The '60s are considered to be the heydays of Beatles, Rolling Stones and the Eagles. These bands literally took the world audience by storm with their sheer energy, live concerts and somewhat rebellious appearance. Bangladesh or erstwhile East Pakistan was also soon catching up with the verve and in no time a couple of band groups came into being, namely Underground Peace Lover and Lightening which started by performing popular English numbers by Beatles, Eagles and Rolling Stones at various clubs and hotels. But it was Pop guru Azam Khan who first ventured into the realm of blending Bangla lyrics with western style rendition in the early '70s. This new genre of music instantly struck a chord with the young generation and leading to the emergence of some band groups in rapid succession. Azam Khan's Uchcharon Shilpa Goshthi was soon followed by Spondon, Souls, Feelings, Winning, Chime, Miles, Renaissance, Feedback, and Rock Strata. Many more names could be included in the long line of bands that have come to be formed since the post liberation period but only a handful of them have managed to make a lasting impression on the music aficionados.

Miles, now celebrating their silver jubilee, is one Bangladeshi band that can be singled out for gaining popularity not only at home but also beyond the borders. Founded way back in '79 by Fareed Rashid, Miles is widely considered to be the bench mark for any band for superb performance and a largely unchanged line up for a long period of time. Miles' popularity first transcended the national borders in the 90s when they were invited to perform in Bangalore. The show was an instant hit. Afterwards Miles took part in a charity show aimed at raising funds for the earthquake victims in Gujarat in '01. In that particular concert, Miles' riveting performance caught the imagination of everyone present at the show. Recognition came pouring in Miles' way from all directions and for the first time a Bangladeshi band was interviewed by CNN. Interestingly enough, Miles is equally popular in non-Bangali regions of India such as Delhi and Chandigarh as it is in Calcutta. Feedback and LRB are two other notable band groups that have had considerable success all over Bangladesh.

Even well into the late '80s, Bangla band songs didn't hold much appeal to the audience, but Feedback changed the whole scenario with 'Melai Jiray', one of

A Peek into the Bangladeshi Rock n' Roll History

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the most popular band songs ever, that sent ripples all over Bangladesh. Feedback's success arguably set the tempo for Bangla band songs and more and more bands started singing Bangla songs. Miles who were yet to bring out any Bangla album, also decided to venture into Bangla songs banking on the success of Feedback; this signaled a revolutionary change in the band music industry. However, it's the '90s that heralded the heydays of band music in the country. This particular decade marked the rise of some gifted and mercurial artists to prominence that came to mesmerise the audience with their inimitable style and poise. The enigmatic James of Nagarbaul arguably has had the largest fan following ever. His robust energy, Eric Clapton-like strumming,



Punjabi-clad rough and tough appearance and heavy metal voice were enough to drive the concert goers into a state of frenzy. Hasan of Ark, who with his unique, high-pitched voice caught the attention of many music fans. Ayub Bachchu of LRB is another name that came to gain immense popularity in the '90s. Considered as one of the niftiest pluckers in the region, Bachchu's popularity stemmed from brilliant musical composition and rocking performance on stage.

A lot of water has flown under the bridge since the early days. At the beginning most bands played pop or pop-rock. Gradually with the proliferation of the number of bands, genres diversified; some ventured into Rock n' Roll, some others started hard rock and many others have had their time experimenting with fusion of many genres. Many see Rock Strata as the pioneer of hard rock in Bangladesh; this group started in the '80s. Then in the '90s Warfaze took over from Rock Strata and became a huge hit with rock fans. Cryptic Fate was