with his haunting voice. We just listened in rapt admiration to his songs. His singing was both mellifluous yet had a melancholy touch to it. I think he managed to endear himself even more with the audience especially the female contingency by dedicating a song to his wife as she was unable to perform with him due to unavoidable circumstances. I do not get to listen to Bangla songs the whole time but being used to listening to Rabindra Sangeet with the accompaniment of a harmonium and tabla, it was refreshing to hear the song complemented by the sounds of the guitar played by Ornob, the electric guitar by Feisal Siddiqi (Bogey), the managing director of Ektaar All Stars and drums. Unsurprisingly at the end of the performance, the applause was tremendous and there were shouts of "one more" from the audience. Luckily for us, we were indulged with an additional song. We were all reluctant to see the singers leave the stage and during the interval there was a sudden rush to try and buy CDs by Ornob! I noticed that many of the people queuing to buy the CDs were non deshi people. However, it seemed that there were none available until a box was retrieved from somewhere and people managed to get their hands on the eagerly awaited songs.

After the interval we had a group called Lokkhi Terra. This is a 'new world fusion outfit created by pianist Kishon Khan, combining his Bangladeshi music heritage with traditions from Africa and the Americas'. There was a Cuban musician on the congas, a Swiss guitarist, an Indian percussionist, a Pakistani flautist and many more. It was a melding of many cultures with a Bangladeshi undertone. I was thoroughly impressed with the skill of all the artists there. What was infectious was all of them seemed to be enjoying themselves and appreciated the performances of their fellow artists. This was clearly evident when they had a little jamming session to end their act.

I sat in the audience and felt an overwhelming sense of pride. I had just spent a few hours listening to a number of truly gifted Bangladeshi musicians. The creative energy in that auditorium must have been immense. All around the world Bangladesh is known for its poverty, corruption and natural disasters but how many people are aware of the fact that we have such an incredibly rich musical cultural heritage. It is events like this that will put us on the map and bring us closer to achieving a stepping stone onto the international music scene. ■

