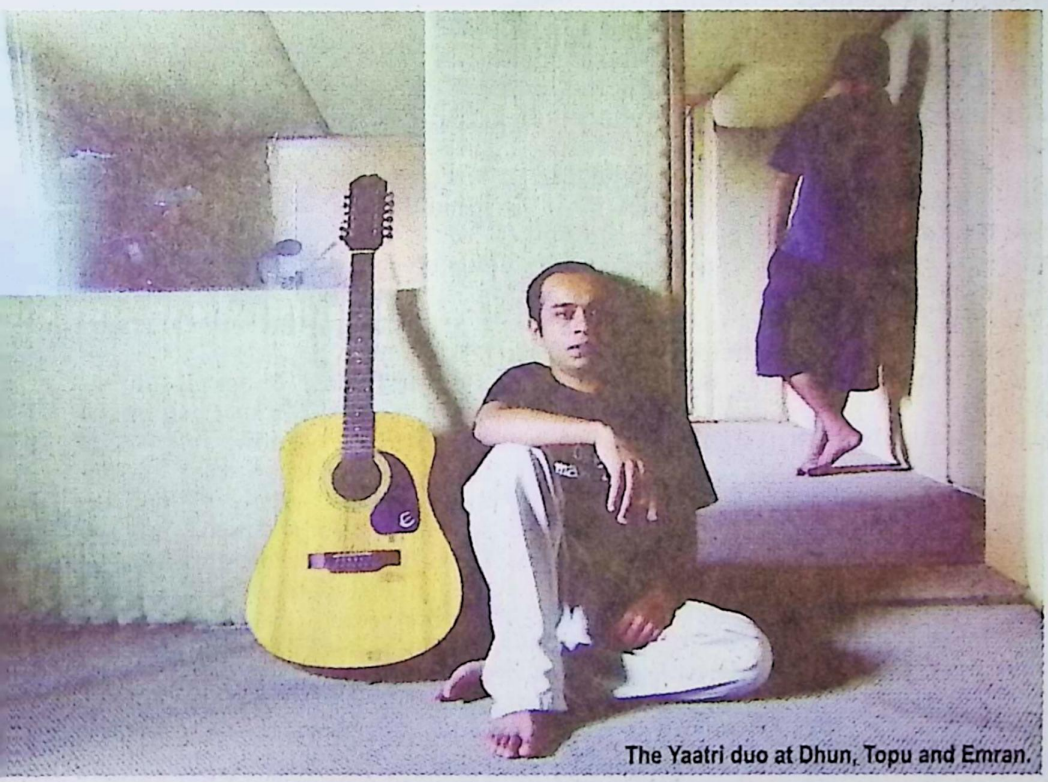
musical talents and identities. Topu discovered his love for music back in high school when he started to compose and sing on his guitar. He was literally inspired to write by what he saw around him. Not only did he observe elements of nature like leaves changing their shades of colour in fall and winter birds coming in from foreign lands, but he also wrote about many of his friends that he used to hang out with. The song 'Jitso' in his album, written by GG, is a collection of all the quips and colloquial street language used by Topu and his friends at North South University.



The Yaatri duo at Dhun, Topu and Emran.

Topu met Emran, yet another composer and also the producer of Daak, at North South University Shangskritik Shangothon (NSUSS), one of the biggest clubs promoting culture and music in the university. There was no looking back as they started to jam together almost every other day after classes. Emran was already a part of the band RaaGa (whose self titled debut album was released in February 2005.) The first line up of their band consisted of Bipu (guitars), Mitu (bass), Emran (keys) and Topu (vocals). It was then when Tony (drummer of Black) collaborated with them for their first single Ek Paye Nupur which was released in Tony's Shopnochura at the end of 2004.

Yaatri was not officially formed until 2005 when Tony asked for another song in his sequel album Shopnochura II. Their song Ekta Gopon Kotha at that point was one of the highlights of that album, and this fame and recognition brought Khaled from G Series to offer them a record deal in November 2005. For the next eight months, both Topu and Emran worked with Buno (bassist of Bangla) in his studio Dhun, who mixed and mastered the album. Collaborating with other guitarists, vocalists, bassists and drummers, Yaatri finished their debut album Daak in October 2006.

Guest musicians, who worked in Daak include James from Stentorian (guitars), Adil (guitars), Shams from Stentorian (bass), Tony from Black (drums), Jishan from Arbovirus (bass), Zubaer from Purbo Poshchim (flute), Selim (violin) and producer Fuad Al Mukhtadir. The album was recorded at Neer, Dhun and Dreamdesk. Reza designed the sleeve while Zico did the photography.

"In a way, we belong to the Underground scene where rock is the in thing," says Emran. "We came in with an album with a different sound as compared to the others around, and thankfully people are taking it very well.

"I don't know what genre our music could be categorised under," says Topu. "However, it can be described as pop/easy listening with simple yet soulful melodies filled with a medley of various acoustic and electronic sounds with romantic and awakening lyrics."

Many wonder about the name Yaatri, which has a taste of 'Indianisation' in it. The term Jaatri, meaning 'traveller' is Yaatri in Hindi. "Initially," says Emran. "One of Topu's friends had come up with the name Aatrei, meaning a being possessing great knowledge in Sanskrit. However, when the final copies of the posters and the sleeves of Shopnochura had come out, it was then that we realised that out name was misprinted as Yaatri and not Aatrei! We just didn't bother to change the name later on."

According to many a musician, it's a dream come true when a debut album is finally launched. "We have spent an endless number of sleepless nights trying to come up with the perfect sound and the right melody!" exclaims Emran. However, it is only because of the many imperfections that a masterpiece is recognised and admired. ■