

Selim-Rosey: Heart to heart

How they first met

Rosey: Selim was quite established as an actor. Before we got to know each other well, one winter morning I saw him riding his bike. Call it a woman's intuition, but I immediately felt that we were going to have a relationship of some sort, not necessarily romantic, but some connection.

Selim: We were part of different theatre groups back in early 90's. We used to watch each other perform and I first noticed Rosey when she was playing this character -- *shidur* (vermillion) daubed on her forehead -- looking breathtakingly beautiful.

Who proposed?

Rosey: Obviously Selim!

Selim: Me. One day after shooting I took Rosey to an ice cream shop. She was laid back and I approached her directly; told her that I wanted to marry her and if she refused I would never marry. Initially Rosey was speechless. Then she asked me to talk to her father. The following Friday I went to her dad and asked for her hand. Though I was very polite I didn't forget to mention that if he didn't consent to that we would simply elope. Fortunately he agreed immediately. On December 16, 1993 we got married.



He is the perfect man -- educated, masculine, outspoken, articulate and one of the best actors of his time. She on the other hand, is a beautiful, shy, loving and carefree individual. It's not surprising that amidst so many they found each other and fell in love. Sitting in their tastefully decorated Niketon house, media personalities Shahiduzzaman Selim and Rosey Siddiqui talk to Mahmuda Afroz about the initial stage of their relationship and the blissful 14 years of their married life

“ He is so precise at times, it's like he is a robot ”

What were your favourite dating spots?

Rosey: Our favourite dating spots were Selim's bike and his parents' home. They loved me and treated me like their daughter.

Selim: True. At that point Rosey had become popular for this 'Bijli' character she played in a drama

serial *Jonmobhumi* directed by Amjad Hossain. We couldn't go anywhere without people approaching her. On top of that our relationship was quite talked about. We had nothing to hide but we wanted to be sure about being committed before making it public.

Today you are both major celebrities in your own right. Who would you say made more sacrifices along the way?

Rosey: You can say that I "adjusted" more but I wouldn't necessarily call that a "sacrifice". I

reduced my workload simply because for me my family is more important.

Selim: As Rosey said, no one really sacrificed. I have always believed in one's freedom to choose. Yes, Rosey has reduced her workload but then again she gets to spend more time with the kids. I miss that.

Do you criticise each other's work? What do you dislike about each other?

Rosey: Though Selim is almost 10 years older to me, I have always criticised him when necessary. If I had been the silent type then we

probably would have fought less. I remember the early days of our marriage where I would say things, which Selim wouldn't like, and we would end up not talking for days. His temper is something I am not fond of. However, it is natural for any couple to fight and we have both grown in this relationship. We have come to accept each other's negative aspects.

Selim: I do try to guide her if she needs it. Rosey was brought up in a more pampered environment. I am completely respectful of her professional decisions but she is quite indecisive. I don't generally discourage her, but at times I end

up lecturing her. She has often complained I am like the principal of her school. There is almost nothing I dislike about her. I understand and respect her individuality.

Interesting habits?

Rosey: Selim is particular about not messing up things. He ties the ends of his handkerchiefs so that when he needs one he can untie one and keep the rest in place. He is so precise at times it's like he is a robot.

Selim: Rosey always has this fear factor working for her and goes to extremes. Even if she has a common flu she will immediately make a diagnosis that she has some grave illness.

What has been your mantra for 14 years of marital bliss?

Rosey: Though Selim is hot tempered he generally is right. He is outspoken and brutally honest. I love this about him though often people misunderstand him. I also believe in being close to one's roots. Though both of us have attained stardom we come from modest middle class families. We try to incorporate our values in our children.

“ Even if she has a common flu she will immediately make a diagnosis that she has some grave illness ”

Selim: Rosey is a beautiful person in and out. She always has a clear conscience, which is rare. I can never be unhappy with her. Plus each couple has their own ingredient for happiness. We come from modest backgrounds and are grateful for whatever we have achieved in life. We are happy with our two daughters.

A niche for substantial roles In conversation with Shoma

CULTURAL CORRESPONDENT

With her impressive performance in the movie *Nondito Norok-e*, Shumona Shoma made her presence felt in the film industry. She followed that up with a more conventional role in the commercially successful movie *Na Bolona*. Currently several filmmakers are keen to cast her in their films. In a recent interview with *The Daily Star* (TDS) the talented actress talked about her budding film career and more. Excerpts from the interview:

TDS: Your role as Rabeya in *Nondito Norok-e* was well appreciated. However, you haven't signed that many movies since then. Why?

Shoma: Since *Nondito Norok-e*, I have done another movie -- *Na Bolona*. Like any committed artiste, I want to act in quality films. If I receive offers for such movies I will certainly be a part of it.

TDS: Do you currently have any such offer?

Shoma: I have received quite a few offers recently. But I've tried to set a standard with my roles in *Nondito Norok-e* and *Na Bolona*. I don't want to disappoint my audience with run of the mill work.

TDS: You are also very active in television...

Shoma: I made my entry in the media through Television. After taking part in the "Anandadhara Photoshundi" pageant, I got offers to act in TV plays. Later I joined the theatre troupe Aranyak Natyadol. I've also worked in several TV commercials.

TDS: Did your background encourage you to become an actor?

Shoma: I'm from Khulna. As a child I grew up in an environment surrounded by healthy cultural and political practices. In school and college I was involved with Udichi Shilpi Gosthi and Bangladesh Student's Union. Conse-



Shumona Shoma

quently, I participated in several cultural and political programmes on a regular basis. One day an advertisement in the magazine *Anandadhara* for its "Photoshundi" pageant grabbed my attention and I sent my photos. My success in the contest increased my level of confidence.

TDS: Have you experienced a shift?

Shoma: I am not sure if I actually felt the shift. But after spending some time here I could feel that a strong attachment for

the medium is growing in me. Now it has become my passion.

TDS: How did you prepare yourself for your breakthrough performance in *Nondito Norok-e*?

Shoma: In the movie, my character Rabeya was a young woman whose psychological state was that of a 9/10 year old. I read the novel by Humayun Ahmed several times. While doing the movie director Belal Ahmed would explain the whole situation to me and I tried to follow his instructions.

Camellia Mustafa in critical state



Camellia Mustafa

FAHMIDA NABI

Camellia Mustafa reminds one of sparkling vibrancy and charisma that one rarely comes across. There are but a few names that come to mind when we talk about people with impressive cultural upbringing. Camellia is undeniably one.

Her versatility was unique. She was known for her recitation skills, articulating every word and at times she would fiercely enact a

character on stage; within hours her melodious voice would come floating across in some commercial on radio or TV. At any cultural event she would be the first in line. With her positive attitude she paved way for generations to come. She dedicated her life to our culture, never thinking about materialistic gains. Hence today she doesn't have much.

Camellia is someone's colleague, someone's kin and some-

one's close friend. She used to have a large fan base. Today, in her middle age she is alone and penniless. Her physical and psychological health have deteriorated to a great extent. She is homed at room no. 402 at Ayesha Memorial Hospital. She owes over Tk 1,50,000 to the hospital. Though the doctors have been supportive, her treatment is uncertain due to lack of funds. She has no idea what's going on, or if and when she might be able to leave the hospital. I read about her in the column *Manush Manusher Jorno* in a daily newspaper and went to visit her with a few other artistes.

The first thing that came to mind on seeing her: If we truly have a conscience and are supportive of the people who tirelessly work to uphold and promote our culture, we will show our support to Camellia apa at this stage of her life.

I would like to request our artistes, cultural organisations and the people of this country to extend a helping hand to Camellia apa. Whatever little you can contribute can make a world of a difference. I do thank Dr. Ashish and the Ayesha Memorial Hospital for their support. However, that alone is not enough to save Camellia Mustafa.

Letting committed artistes fade away is a national shame. I hope everyone realises that.

Contributions to Camellia can be made at account number S.B 34026842, Agrani Bank, Gulshan Branch, Code-978/7.

The author is a noted singer

Combining contemporary with rural traditions

Concerts by Rupkotha Productions Ltd

ELITA KARIM

Sujan and Robin of Rupkotha Productions Ltd once again brought together some of the leading rockers in the country recently. *A Boishakhi Mela*, sponsored by Grameen Phone, held at the Gulshan Youth Club was attended by at least 26,000 people. The *mela* featured puppet show, *baul* music and much more. Bands like Nagar Baul, Maqsood O dHAKA, Hassan and Jannabhum, Black, Yaatri and Roots performed at the show.

Rupkatha Productions Ltd organised another concert in Chittagong at the M A

Aziz Stadium. Fifty thousand Chittagongians rocked with Nagar Baul, LRB, Black, Hassan and Steeler.

Surprisingly enough, for both the shows, Rupkotha had sent out invitations, rather than selling tickets.

Rupkotha, to date, has organised a number of shows and concerts, including charity programmes. Some of their memorable shows include a charity concert for the flood victims in 2004. Rupkotha also organised several shows in collaboration with university students generating awareness on issues like global warming and working for a better environment.



James performs at the M A Aziz Stadium in Chittagong

Buddhapurnima celebrated in Rangamati



Devotees at the Rajban Vihara

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA, Rangamati

The Buddhist community of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) observed their greatest religious occasion "Buddha Purnima" at different temples including the internationally recognised Rangamati Rajban Vihara with festivity and fervour.

Celebrating the birth of Lord Gautam Buddha, different religious programmes under the auspices of Rajban Vihara Upasak Upasika Parishad were held at the Vihara.

The daylong programme included hoisting of Buddhist flags atop Rajban

Vihara temple, distribution of food among monks, rally, Buddha *puja*, rendering of hymns, *panchashila* (making resolutions), *sangadan*, *asthaparikradan* (donating clothes to monks), donating Buddha statues, delivering religious speech by the venerable chief monk Bana Vante and *pradip puja*.

Thousand of Buddhists from Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari thronged the Rajban Vihara compound.

The octogenarian Sadanananda Mohasthabir (Bana Vante), in his religious speech, advised the devotees not to indulge in amoral activities and implement the philosophies of Lord Buddha.

18th National Tagore Song Festival

Organiser: Bangladesh Rabindrasangeet Shilpi Shangstha
Venue: Shawkat Osman Memorial Auditorium, Central Public Library
Date: May 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8

Group Theatre Festival 2007

Organiser: Group Theatre Forum, Chittagong
Venue: Chittagong Shilpakala Academy Auditorium

Date: May 4
Play: Dur Rojonir Swapon
Troupe: Nandimukh

Date: May 5
Play: Shampan Naiya
Troupe: Uttoradhikar

Date: May 6
Play: Koroti
Troupe: Kathak Theatre

Date: May 7
Play: Ekti Obastob Golpo
Troupe: Gonayon Natylo Shomproday

Date: May 8
Play: Modhuchokro
Troupe: Theatre Workshop Chittagong

Date: May 9
Play: Daybhar
Troupe: Angon Theatre Unit

Date: May 10
Play: Pagla Ghora
Troupe: Protinidhi Natylo Shomproday

Date: May 11

Play: Chhayabrita
Troupe: Shobdo Natylo Chorchha Kendro

Date: May 12
Play: Chader Omabosya
Troupe: Theatre Guild

Theatre

Play: Shomoyer Proyojone
Troupe: Theatre Art Unit
Venue: National Theatre Stage, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Date: May 4
Time: 7:00pm

Pata painting exhibition

Artist: Shambhu Acharya
Venue: Alliance Francaise
Date: May 3-16

Photographic display

Title: Bangladesh Matters: Capturing the EU's Development Co-operation
Venue: Drik Gallery
Date: May 8-12

Solo Art Exhibition

Title: Cryptic Reality
Artist: Abdus Sattar Taufiq
Venue: Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts, Dhaka University
Date: April 30-May 6
Time: 11am-8pm

European Union Cultural Festival

Title: Celebrating EU-Bangladesh Relations Through Cultural Exchange
Organiser: European Commission, in association with partner organisations
Date: May 3-16

'Memories Come Alive': Manna Dey's autobiography launched

PALLAB BHATTACHARYA, New Delhi

If legendary singer Manna Dey, whose songs stir up numerous emotions in millions of music lovers in the subcontinent, had not been in the business of singing, he would have been a footballer or a wrestler.

Whether or not it was a loss to the world of football or wrestling, it was certainly a huge gain to the world of music. And the credit goes to Manna Dey's uncle and mentor K.C. Dey, a singer and composer himself.

Manna Dey's adolescent pranks included shoplifting at sweet shops and swiping pickles from the roofs of neighbouring houses.

All these and more are included in Manna Dey's autobiography *Memories Come Alive*, recently launched by veteran filmmaker Mrinal Sen at a function in Kolkata last Tuesday. The book launch coincided with the singer's 89th birthday.

Manna Dey, who has wowed listeners for over six decades, was enjoying every minute of the occasion, which provided him an opportunity for a walk down memory lane.

The autobiography recounts Manna Dey's early days in Mumbai where he had worked as an assistant to his music director uncle and to legendary composers like Sachin Dev Burman. He recalls the trying days he had gone through in a bid to make his presence felt as a playback singer in Hindi movies.

The book is interspersed with interesting anecdotes like Manna Dey's kite duels with Mohammed Rafi, his acquaintance with Raj Kapoor, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Pulak Bandopadhyay and Sudhin Dasgupta.



Manna Dey

However, the man, who has won hearts and awards with his classics for decades, has remained as modest as ever.

Referring to his autobiography, he said, "I'm no writer. I've just reminisced some of my experiences."

Britney gives first public concert in nearly three years

AP, San Diego

Britney Spears strutted her way back to centre stage with a short, sexy set at the House of Blues believed to be her first public concert appearance in nearly three years.

The erstwhile pop star, more recently derided as a pop tart for her highly public forays into midnight carousing, appeared to be back in top form.

The 25-year-old mother of two went onstage late Tuesday wearing a long brown wig, covering the head she shaved in February.

She launched a short set with her classic *Baby One More Time*, using a cafe chair as a burlesque prop while she pranced around the small club stage backed up by four dancers.

Spears sped through the songs -- all standards from her earlier albums -- wrapping up after less than 15 minutes. She gave a shy goodbye before an old Madonna song came on over the sound system. "Thanks everyone for coming," she told the packed club.