

**International Women's Day Concert**

Organiser: TIB & Anti-Corruption Commission  
 Artists: Azam Khan, Kanganali Sufia, Fahmida Nabi, Souls, Renaissance, Maksud O Dhaka, Dolchut, and others.  
 Venue: Gulshan Youth Club  
 Date: March 8, Time: 2:00 pm

**Solo Exhibition**

Title: Perception  
 Artist: Abdul Muqtadir  
 Venue: Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts, House 275/F, Road 27 (old), Dhanmondi  
 Date: March 6-17  
 Time: 12pm-8pm

**2nd Jatiya Manabdhikar Natya Utsab '08**

Venue: Rabindra Sharobar, Dhanmondi  
 Date: March 9-11

**Film Screening**

Organiser: Bangladesh Short Film Forum  
 Venue: Bangladesh Film Centre, 110-112, 2nd floor, Aziz Cooperative Super Market, Shahbag  
 Date: March 8  
 Time: 4 pm and 6pm  
 Film: Yi Yi and Blissfully Yours



# Celebrating Womanhood

## Playback: Behind the scenes

*Sabina Yasmin reminisces*

KARIM WAHEED

To the music lovers of this country Sabina Yasmin needs no introduction. During her illustrious career, spanning almost five decades, she has recorded around 11,000 songs. She is also considered to be the artist who has done the most number of playbacks for Bangladeshi films.

The diva was diagnosed with cancer last year but her passion for her music, life and the unending love of her fans have helped her pull through.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, this 'woman on top' talked to *The Daily Star* on the changes in playback and reminisced some memorable experiences.

"My introduction to playback singing happened with the film *Natun Sur* in 1962. I was a child artist then. I also performed on the radio show *Khelaghar*. In 1964 I first performed on TV. My first playback as an adult singer was for the film *Agun Niye Khela* in 1967. Shaheed Altaf Mahmud was the music director of the film. I recorded two songs for the film -- a duet with the late Mahmudunnabi and a solo, *Madhu jochhonar deepali*," says Yasmin.

"When I started my career in playback singing, Ferdousi Rahman and Shahanaaz Rahmatullah were all the rage. The process of recording was poles apart. We used to record songs at FDC at night. Sometimes recording one song took almost the whole night. One reason was that the musicians were enlisted radio

artists, so they had to work there till 10pm. Also, back in those days, we didn't have 'multitrack recording'. We had to record a song at one go. You can imagine how difficult it is coordinating all the musicians and the vocalist to produce a song that is up to the director's standards. Sometimes we had to go through 80/90 takes before we got the song right," recalls the artiste.

"Then things changed. Thanks to 'multitrack recording', now the musicians and singers don't even have to meet. Use of acoustic instruments has been minimised. Synthesizers and the keyboard have taken over. Now the focus is on attaining the 'perfect' sound. In the process however, the spontaneity and the gradual build-up of emotions prevalent in a song recorded on the mono-tape have disappeared," Yasmin continues.

"The feel and themes of Bangla film songs have gone through some changes as well. Films songs up until the mid-'80s used to have a 'gharoua' feel. Many of them were fine demonstrations of the *adhunik* genre. Gradually film songs have become faster and racier. I suppose songs reflect the changing times."

Yasmin's voice has also added a certain touch to the genre of contemporary patriotic songs. Songs rendered by her including *Shob K'ota janala khuley dao na*, *Janmo amar dhanyo holo mago* and *Ekti Bangladesh tumi jagroto jonoitar* have become classics.

"*Janmo amar dhanyo holo mago* -- written by Nayeem Gawhar and composed by Azad Rahman -- was recorded in Karachi in 1970. What



many don't know is that the original version was a duet. It featured legendary Nazrul singer Feroza Begum and me. However that version of the song was not aired much on the radio. I re-recorded the song in the '80s and this solo version became hugely popular. *Shob K'ota janala* -- written by Nazrul Islam Babu and composed by Ahmed Imtiaz Bulbul

-- along with some other patriotic songs were recorded for BTV. Much of the popularity these songs enjoy has to do with the exposure on TV," shares the artiste.

According to Sabina Yasmin, she is set to record a new patriotic song composed by Ahmed Imtiaz Bulbul soon. The audience will eagerly await this new offering from the duo.

## Moushumi on the social responsibilities of actors

ERSHAD KAMOL

Besides working in seven new films, one of the leading actors of Dhaliwood, Moushumi is also doing a TV commercial. After many years the actor who began her career as a model, will be seen in an ad. Moushumi's modelling career took off after winning the Anandodhara Photo Shundori contest in 1992.

When she was contacted, the actor was busy dubbing for a TV commercial -- generating awareness on malaria. She was struggling to articulate the dialects of Sylhet and Chittagong for the commercial.

According to her, this is a social cause. To quote her, "The production house Expressions Ltd contacted me regarding this commercial and I accepted the offer because it is an opportunity for me to do something for the welfare of the people. Quite a few popular actors of Dhaliwood have appeared in awareness-generating commercials like this. I believe actors have a social responsibility."

On her current projects, Moushumi informed, "At present I'm working in seven movies. A short film on HIV/AIDS titled *Naika*, in which I play the protagonist, will be released today."

Has the Dhaliwood scene improved after the initiatives taken against obscenity in films? Moushumi responded, "Obscenity is one of the several causes behind

the downward spiral of the Dhaliwood film industry. The bold initiatives taken by the authorities to put a stop to this are admirable. Though a few actors, being forced by producers, have appeared in movies that can be considered 'obscene', most of us have been against it from the beginning. But as I mentioned, there are other

issues as well that need to be focused on for the betterment of the film industry."

She continues, "We have a dearth of skilled actors, directors and technicians. It's a good sign that a few of the renowned filmmakers are making comebacks. But, we need more of talented people. We should concentrate on developing the skills of artists, filmmakers and technical hands in Dhaliwood."

Moushumi further added that the FDC (Film Development Corporation) should be made a corruption-free zone and it should be renovated.

According to Moushumi sub-standard theatres is another major cause behind the slump in the movie business in Bangladesh. "We don't have theatres of a certain standards. As a result people are watching movies in the comfort of their homes. The government and corporate giants can play a major role in promoting the movie industry by renovating the existing theatres and building new ones," said the actor.

Arifa Parveen Zaman Moushumi, popularly known by her nickname Moushumi, has acted in over 100 movies including *Qayamat Theke Qayamat*, *Maitriwa*, *Megha Akash* and *Khairun Shundari*, most of which have enjoyed box office success.



## Rural Bangladesh and womenfolk on canvas

In conversation with Farida Zaman

FAYZA HAQ

"When working the female figure appears naturally on my canvas," says Farida Zaman, on whom an interesting documentary has been made recently.

"I work with female emotions but this is done unconsciously. Very often I portray the fisherwoman. I feel that women can work wonderfully, and are struggling hard, side by side with men," she says.

Farida herself has had to struggle in life. "When I began painting I knew that I would have to put up a fight. In order to study my subject deeply and closely, I've had to struggle. I enjoyed my work and so kept up with it. I studied life around me and transformed what I saw into paint on canvas and paper," says Farida.

There were tragedies and disappointments in her life but she did not mull in them.

She has been inspired by the works of Zainul Abedin, Qamrul Hassan, Hashem Khan and Monirul Islam. When she roams around the countryside, in particular her village home in Chandpur, she studies the beauty of nature. The visions of Subramanyam and Ganesh Payne in India also encouraged her to forge ahead. From the west Farida has always admired Matisse and Picasso.

"I take my inspiration mostly from nature and from then on I work as my own, putting in my lines and colours as they suit me," says Farida.

*Dream* by Farida Zaman (left),  
 The artist (right)




Farida feels that she should know as much about her traditions as possible and retain them in her paintings. Her lines and dots have been taken from Bangladeshi folk elements. Even her colours are taken from the clouds, rivers and fields that she has seen. She uses orange, brown, blue and black most of all.

Farida is not taken up by the restlessness and competitiveness of contemporary life. She makes simple, uncomplicated images of village life and its surroundings. She fills it up with fish, cat, stork, fishermen, women and small pools. She abandoned the position of the Director of the Institute of Fine Arts to devote all her time to painting.

About the recent documentary on her life and work, Farida says that it was done by Anwar who admired her fascination for nature.

"I try to represent my country in my work," says Farida.

Through ages, your strength has been a contribution,  
 you are an immense inspiration,  
 you are greatness itself

 POND'S  
 International Women's Day

Bring this advertisement to your nearest face forward booth to get a free facial and free gift hampers. Face forward program is running on

• Eastern Mollika, 2nd Floor, 26 Elephant Road, Dhaka • Khulna New Market, Shop No 227, 1st Floor, KDA Avenue, Khulna • Khulna Shopping Complex, 1st Floor, Khan-e-Sabur Road (Dak Banglar Morre).

\* This offer is valid from 8 to 15 March \* Conditions apply