

Just for the Funk of it

Nazia Ahmed

Arif Hafiz

EVER since *Lounge Culture* started in this city, cover bands have been streaming into the music scene from every nook and corner. Their genres mainly covered Rock and Pop. But as days passed by, very few of them could persist as a band or even simply as musicians. I first saw Groovetrap when they were covering R.E.M at Kozmo Lounge, and I felt that I'll be seeing much more of them. They started off in the music scene only a year back, and had put together a lively blend of James Brown, Jamiroquai, Maroon 5, Stevie Wonder and Micheal Jackson from their own influences.

GrooveTrap also known as GT, released their very first self-titled album last November. An afternoon tête-à-tête with the talented trio - Saif, Simin and Jasper took me into the groove where all the magic happens.

"I used to send my compositions to Simin, one of my closest friends, in 2004," recalled Saif. "We then started coming up with names that would go with our genre. Simin came up with the name Groovetrap and everyone agreed to it. It was perfect!"

As the band proceeded further, they realized that only funk wouldn't be legible for the listeners. So they mixed Pop, Jazz, RnB, and Rock n Roll.

Saif, the band's lead guitarist, is mainly influenced by Jamiroquai, James Brown, Marvin Gaye, and a whole lot of Funk. While studying in Teesside University U.K, this young musician also did compositions for a film and was fairly active in the cultural club during his short time in NSU.

Simin, the female vocalist, is one of the leading female singers in the mainstream scene. The GT compositions comé alive with her soothing touch and her lullaby effects that are very popular among her ardent listeners.

"I got tremendous help from a bunch of friends with our lineup," Saif continued. "And eventually it came to Emran (Keyboard), Adil (Bass), and Turjo (Drums).

"Most of the compositions are mainly Bangla transformations of English songs made by Saif, but in such a way so as to preserve the essence of the original compositions. The skeletons of the Bangla lyrics are given by Shaquie Ahmed and the rest of the work is done collaboratively by all the band members. *Mayabi Choyay* is a very special song for me. Its original version was called *Magic of the Moment*, which Saif wrote for me. You'll know what it's about once you hear it. I made it a point that those which we were deriving from the English compositions didn't lose the original thoughts that were behind them. The song *Ek Ochena* is a tribute to the famous Marvin Gaye song *Grapevine*, where a girl talks about her lover's betrayal."

Proceeding further in the album, the second song *Keno Bolona* features playful piano tunes that blends slickly into the vocals. Andrew Morris's soulful saxophone tunes gave *Shopno Abir* a whole new color. But the backing guitar just uplifts its height into a whole different level. *Osthir* is inspired from *La Villa Strangiato* by Rush. A deviation from their default genre is *Achi Ei Gaane,* where Saif comes in with Simin on the vocals bringing out the core of the song with catchy lyrics by Ashique M Fahim, followed by *Shesh Porichoy* in a classic Blues style. The 9th and 10th tracks are in English with slap of Rock, fast riffing, piano on the run and a hit of Jazz. Jasper's vocals shape into that of an early '70s entertainer and leave the listeners begging for more. The album closes with an instrumental titled *Aphrodisiac*, a 4-minute blend of Funk and Rock, smoothly thrown in at the right places.Simin recollects, "In November 2007 we finished the album. As it's more or less a new genre for our country, we weren't expecting miracles.

SEE PAGE 13