

The Revival

THIS is an era when change is being accepted with open arms. The generation is seeking a fresh makeover, a feel-good environment, trendy looks and a rhythmic way of life. That's where the remakes and remixes of our folk numbers come in with a fresh sound and a new appeal.

17-year-old Rashed Hussain is really into the new age frenzy, the loud combination of head banging music and an urge to look, be and feel different. The youthful heart of his tends to look for the bright side of everything in life. One of his everyday habits is listening to music late into the night and trying to hold on to the rhythm. Very recently, however, he discovered a new side to himself. His iPod now lists flute pieces by Chawrasya, fusion by Talvir Singh and the folk-fusion beats of Bangla. "It is an amazing feeling," says Rashed as he switches on his music system flaunting his new playlists for everyone. "These remixes and remakes of our old folks are what I listen to all the time now."

To the youngsters, folk music, today, is not only symbolised merely with a *dotara* and the *bangla dhol*. Thanks to musicians and bands like Bangla, Habib and the legendary Maqsud ul Haque, today, folk music has been revived. Listening to Anusheh of Bangla sing the heartfelt words to the song *Aami opar hoye boshe achi*, listeners and music lovers can feel the pain of loneliness and sense the sweetness of solitude. Even today, listening to *Zodi bondhu zaibar sao, gharer gamsa thuiya zao re* creates the image of one watching her beloved rowing away, fearing and at the same time, accepting the fact that she would have to now wait for nearly an eternity, before her beloved returns to her. This is the beauty of the folk music in Bangladesh. It speaks of the common man and his everyday observations. His daily life is sketched and harmonised into beautiful renditions by folk artists.

Today, these folk songs are presented in a new package by musicians, which actually appeals to youngsters. "Times have changed," says 23-year-old Shahana, a BBA student doing her final semester in a private university. "Not everyone can be expected to actually listen and at the same time like the folk tastes. In fact, young people today are not even aware of many folk numbers which used to be 'hit numbers' at one time in places like Old Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh as well.'

When Habib featuring Shireen's album 'Punjabiwala' had hit the stalls, listeners were blown away with the witty lyrics in the album, not to mention the suggestive tones used in accordance with many of the lyrics. These songs, however, are very old, and according to the elderly, the song *Punajbiwala* was based on a music lover who would put on a red Punjabi and delve into the nights filled with music. Over the years, these songs were almost forgotten

