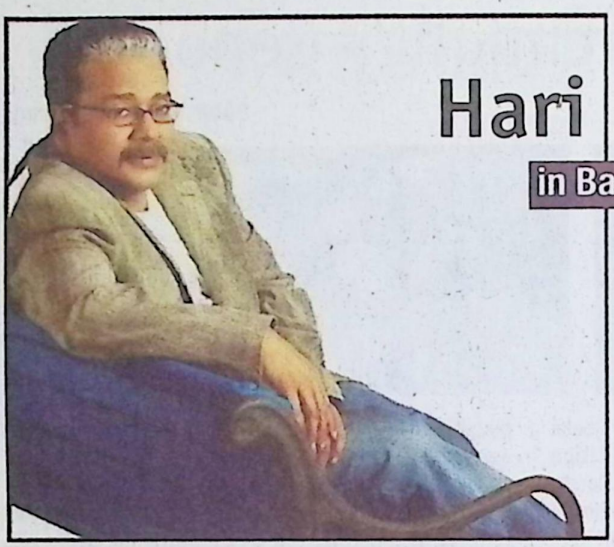


Hari Haran

in Bangabandhu Conference Hall

Nazia Ahmed

IF there is a singer who is beyond all the barriers between north and south it is none other than Hariharan.

My Thursday night couldn't get any better when I got the ticket in my hand and entered the Bangabandhu Conference Hall for the show. As I was sure it wouldn't start before at least 20 minutes from the original time, but it turned out I was April fooled and late. The organizers surely have kept their promise.

Looking from a distance, he surely did not look what he usually looks like on TV. But his heavenly voice did not change even a bit. He started with his Ghazals "tum haqiqat koi khwab" and "Kaash aisa koi manzar". His crystal clear pronunciation of words whether it is tamil, Hindi or Telugu with proper stress and pause leaves a great impact. He then moved on to his amazing "Urdu Blues", as he calls it.

In "ye aine se akele" and "Masti hai" he demonstrated blues with chromatic notes and the guitar solos with the blues legatos reverberated with his each notes. He even switched to a completely different raga mid song with the chromatic notes that sounded absolutely out of the world.

His charismatic stage presence was evident even when there were minor sound problems that he tackled with grace and humour.

"mohey apni hi rang me rang de" was the sufi kalam that demonstrated complex gammukas and swaras. His way of stretching words and its finite ending is excellent in most of the above songs. His rendition in voice perfectly reflects the feel of the character and emotes the feel of the song.

After a short interval there was the much-awaited moment. The Flute played the familiar notes of the timeless "Roja Janeman" and as he sang the audience fell in love with the song all over again. "ji raha hu isliye, dil mein pyar hai tera.. Zulm seh rahahu kyun, intezar hain tera" brought tears in my eyes thinking about the inhuman torture people faced during the war with the hope to find peace someday. His voice so divine and soft reached the high notes with such ease.

His next number was the famous "Naghme hai" from the film Yaadein. Following these were the timeless film songs 'Khili Chand' (tamil version), "thoda thoda pyar ho gaya" (indira), "nahi samne"(taal), "Dheemi dhemi"(1947: Earth), and the beautiful "Chanda re" (Sapnay).

His talent to sing in variable pitch range simultaneously in a single song and also he switches from one style(classical) to another style(western) of singing with ease in a single song and Cindrella song is a proof. Although, he seemed to have forgotten a few lines from his songs that he covered by singing "something something" in the middle. I am guessing its the temperature that got to him.

"Krishna"(colonial cousins) and "tu hi re"(Bombay) were his last numbers for the night ending it short. Nevertheless it was worth it.

Born in Bombay on April 3rd, 1955, Hariharan has bachelors degrees in science and law. Born of musician parents, music came on to him naturally and spontaneously. He learned his first lessons in music from his mother Alamelu who was a Carnatic vocalist. His father H.A.S Mani was also a renowned Carnatic singer. Mom was Hariharan's first guruji. From her he picked up Carnatic music skills. In his teens, inspired by the songs of Mehdi Hassan, Hariharan developed a passion for ghazals and started training in Hindustani music from Padma Shri Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan. He used to put in nine hours of singing practice everyday. Hariharan's affinity for ghazals lies in the fact that ghazals offer, in his words, "immense scope for innovation". The committed Hariharan also put heart and soul into learning Urdu when he decided to become a ghazal singer. He has perfected his Urdu diction to such standards that even his audiences in Lucknow, the heartland of the language, have been wowed over.

Last night's show was brought to us by Papyrus Communications LTD. The Daily Star, Shomokal, Channel 1, bdnews24.com, Radio Today and Anondo Alo were the media partners.