What would have happened if Anusheh Anadil had not met Arnob at Shantinekatn, and then later agreed to have worked with him? We'd not have Bangla, that's what would have happened! It's their collaborated efforts that led to the formation of a small band named Bangla. Think about it. There was no reason for this unhip-for-its-time band to find its way to the heart of thousands of Bangladeshis. They made their formal public appearance in 1999, a time when bubblegum pop music, imported tunes and crass, seemingly rustic tracks ruled the roost. There was no way that this experimental band could be popular. But Bangla did not just become popular when they released their first album *Kingkortobbobimurho* in 2002; they became legends. The members may have now gone their separate ways but the band will always be remembered for being the trailblazers, the first ones to popularise the blend of folk and Western music. And to remind us of the awesomeness of the original *bauls*.



Arnob and Friends PHOTO COURTESY: ARNOB AND FRIENDS

Anusheh Anadil now sings independently or with her new band *Bahok*, comprising of Baul Shafi Mondol, Palki Ahmad, Nazrul Islam and Seth Panduranga Blumberg. The band has already earned rave reviews for their performance at the Sounds of Freedom concert in New Delhi, featuring punk legend Bob Geldof, popular Indian fusion band Kailasa, and blues band Soulmate, among others. The band has adopted the *baul* philosophy into their songs, but their music is not just limited to mysticism. In songs like *Ma*, the band talks about embracing the feminine. In an interview, Anushesh has even said that the song is about "how we have kept her [femininity] behind the purdah and by doing that, we have denied half of ourselves." In another song, *Dhik Dhik*, written during the Shahbag movement, the band deals with religious intolerance while also expressing hope that things are changing for the better.

There is no end to Arnob's talent. If there is any chance of making music with the most mundane instrument, like a long clay pot with a narrow mouth perhaps, Arnob will have tried that at least once. Seeing him play a varied range of instruments with the same ease makes you wonder whether anything is impossible for this young virtuoso. It's probably this ease with instruments, this expertise at creation that makes Arnob identify himself more as a musician rather than a singer. Be it the somewhat trippy, haunting *Dik Bidik* from his third solo album *Doob*, the heavy, impactful orchestration of *Tui Ki Janish Na* from *Hok Kolorob*, or the overall softness of *Shey Je Boshe Ache*, the song that pushed him to the limelight, Arnob is never shy of experimenting with music.



Bahok PHOTO COURTESY: BAHOK

In 2008, Arnob made a highly successful tour across the United States, and in Toronto and London with artists like Nazia Ahmed, Andrew Morris, Resalat, and Nazrul Islam. The show was so popular that the producers decided to release an album of the show *Arnob &Friends Live* the following year, featuring 12 tracks played during the tour. A tour resulted in an album which in turn resulted in the formation of a band. At present Arnob & Friends has Arnob, Pantha Kanai,