

In the Name of *Rock and Roll*

APURBA JAHANGIR

To rock and roll fans, they are known for their outstanding concerts. To musicians, they are the friendliest promoters of our country. All the new bands in Bangladesh salivate at the possibility of playing in one of their concerts. They call themselves a music and entertainment ecosystem company, which makes a lot of sense considering they had a lot to do with bringing back live shows. They are known to all as Live Square.

Live Square has been in our country's music scene for quite some time, but their journey started with introducing the concept of unplugged music. "I always had a passion for live shows. It gives you a kind of adrenaline which you will never find anywhere else," says Nafis Ahmed, CEO of Live Square. He also adds, "I think we were lucky in terms of our 'Wireless Session' because we were the first

ones to start unplugged concerts in lounges. And Wireless Session was the first step of Live Square as a company."

Live square organised a number of shows over the years but the show that caught every one's eye was 'Rocknation', the biggest rock show in Dhaka. "We couldn't do Sound City's concert because of the countrywide hartal. To make up for that, we hosted Rocknation. We received a lot of positive feed back about the show so we decided to do it more often," says Nafis.

Nafis Ahmed and his music ecosystem have brought some major bands back to glory such as Arbovirus, the ABC Generation, and many more. "I am a die-hard fan of these bands so it was more of a biased choice to arrange concerts for them. They are great musicians," says the CEO.

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the music scene. And most of the credit goes to Nafis Ahmed for taking up the challenge. To this Nafis Ahmed says, "Right now a lot of sponsors have shown interest in this field so I would ask all new comers to arrange shows for new artists and if they need any kind of support, our team will be more than happy to help."



For The Love of Food

NAZIBA BASHER

As a child, culinary expert, television personality and cookbook author, Shawkat Osman, used to go hunting with his father. "We used to go into the wild, hunt for our own food and learn to cook our meals," says Shawkat. After growing up, due to sentimental reasons, he stopped hunting. What remained was his knack to cook. That is when Shawkat's love affair with the culinary arts began.

"I never had any training in cooking. I followed my instincts," he says. During his youth, he was interested in food. He would ask the women of his family how different dishes were prepared. This curiosity ended up taking him to different parts of the world to try out different foods and learn how they were made.

"I sometimes would go abroad for business purposes and would end up trying the local cuisines and learn how they were made. There was even a time when I went to Italy and I came across a restaurant called Bologna which caught my attention more than I would expect," says Shawkat. When he went to Bologna, he asked them if he could work there and even offered to work for no money, just free pizza. He learned how to make authentic pizza and Bolognese sauce there. Even though he has never been a professional chef, his experience and the passion for food has made him a

remarkable cook with intensive knowledge in flavours. During the 80's Shawkat Osman first appeared on television in ATN for a cooking show. After that, he moved to Kolkata and hosted a show on Tara TV for 10 years. "While I was doing my show on Tara TV, a lot of phone calls would be coming in from people interested in my cooking. One of the producers had asked me to just publish a book with all my recipes to make it easier," says Shawkat. That is when Khunti Korai-Bangladeshi Cuisine was published. After the first publication, Shawkat went on to write 9 more books with recipes starting from Bangladeshi cuisine to Japanese and Thai cuisine. He has also been on various television channels with his own cooking shows. He also had a show on NTV called Roshui Ghor where he and his daughter, Rukhsara Osman, would both cook and share recipes.

Shawkat has been a celebrity judge in Rupchanda-Star Lifestyle Super Chef and has been an avid columnist for Star Lifestyle.

"I believe the Bangladeshi youth is very adventurous and innovative about food. They're not just excited about eating but also preparing," says Shawkat. "And people have started realising that the best way to make money is by selling food! It's about time people realise that the restaurant is what the chef is. And the youth seems to be in complete know of that!"

Bridging Gaps

ELITA KARIM

Long gone are the days of teachers with intimidating looks, thick black rimmed glasses perched on their nose, an occasional nod or two for the world outside, living in a world of books and papers. Add a few decades, smiles and rock concerts to the package and you get someone like Imran Rahman -- a Vice Chancellor by day and a guitarist by night.

Popularly known as the guitarist and vocalist of the band Renaissance, Imran Rahman is also an educator -- VC of the University of Liberal Arts, Bangladesh (ULAB), located in Dhanmondi. "I did work at a bank once," says Imran. "I earned a lot, but I hated it. I saw no progress or development within." But, teaching the youth, sharing ideas and creating a platform for healthy exchange drove him to move to the next level in life.

Imran Rahman completed Class 10 (Cambridge School Certificate) from Saint Joseph's and eventually shifted to London, where he completed his A Levels (Class 12). He got into the London School of Economics (LSE) for his undergraduate studies, but remembers spending a lot of time outside the confinement of his classrooms. "There was just so much more going on outside!" says Imran. "Film shows, fun lectures, meeting personalities -- this is what made me what I am today!" And he continued to love life outside the walls of his classrooms during Graduate studies at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Dhaka. "I still remember my viva exams at IBA,"



he reminisces. "Professor GA Siddiqui, the Chairman of the interview board back then, proudly announced my degree from LSE to the other professors present in the room and showed his confidence in me. However, I could not answer a single question! But I still got in!" In fact, Imran

taught at IBA for many years and was quite popular with his students.

As an educator, Imran Rahman has always been vocal about how schools should place equal emphasis on teaching both Bangla and English. Emphasising on one language only would result

in students missing out on so much from either one of the languages. "After 1971, steps were taken to uphold and protect the Bengali culture and traditions, and rightly done so," says Imran. "But laws were also made to emphasise more on Bengali rather than English in schools. This is why generations after the liberation war find it difficult to read, write, speak or communicate in English." One cannot ignore the language, adds Imran. "Now, however, the government is allowing schools with English medium curriculum," he adds. "But this should have been done much earlier."

"Music has always been a part of my upbringing," says Imran. "My family was an enlightened one. All through out my youth, I would listen to the latest music, play the guitar with friends and have fun doing so. I lived in Manchester, England for a few years with my family while studying there on scholarship at the Manchester Business School. My friend Bogie, a well known musician himself, would send me cassette tapes of all the compositions of Renaissance released here in Bangladesh. Back then, I was not a part of the band, but I loved the music and I loved the band! My children would listen to them as well."

With the digital world coming up with new distractions every day, it would be fun to take up a book and read while listening to classics on a rainy weekend. "We play a lot of oldies and classics!" chips in the popular Imran sir, as his students would call him. "You guys should come and check us out sometime."