

A CHAT WITH....

Sonia Hossain For the sake of art

In terms of audience capacity, number of performers in a single stage and duration of the event, Bengal Classical Music Festival is the world's largest of its kind. Sonia Hossain has been one of the singers of last year's music fest, performing in a stage where world renowned maestros of the classical genre have also performed.

Apart from being a singer, she is a teacher of maths and science, teaching in Cardiff International School, Dhaka. Balancing between arts and numbers, she dedicates herself to listening and learning music, nurturing a love for the art form within herself.

Star Showbiz caught up with her, discussing her performance in the classical musical festival and her thoughts on music, both classical and contemporary. **Tell us about your childhood. When did you start singing?**

My father was a music enthusiast. When I was about five years old, he enrolled me and my sister to train under Ustad Khursheed Khan Majlish. That was the start. I have learned from many other teachers as well. When I was about eight years old, I participated in Notun Kuri.

I received many awards for music. But since I was young, I didn't value them as much. Now that I am older and more matured, I understand their worth -- not just of receiving an award but the worth of participation too.

My family continues to support me. Without the support of my husband, my daughters, teachers and a good stroke of luck, I would not have been where I am today.

Let's start with your performance in Bengal Classical Music Festival 2014. What was the experience like?

It was an experience of a lifetime. After a



rigorous screening process, there were slightly more than a dozen musicians in our team. The opening performances of all the five nights of the festival were carried out by local singers. We sang in one of them. Prior to the night of the performance, there was a lot of training. Bengal was very flexible and understanding when it came to flexible timings. I am personally very thankful to Bengal -- for their feedback, training and a lot of other things.

My biggest achievement in Bengal's music fest was that I performed at a stage where world renowned classical artists have performed. The fact that I

shared a stage with such legendary artists has been a matter of huge satisfaction for me.

Do you focus only on classical music, or do you spread out to other genres as well?

I love classical music and heavily practice it. But it does not mean that I do not sing any other songs. Having a good grip on classical music helps me perform various kinds of music. Classical music builds firm pillars for a singer, and once you can master it, you will have a strong base as a musician.

Be it classical or contemporary, a good song is one that touches your

heart. We listen to so many old songs today, and many of them have been remixed too.

I sing because I love singing. It is nourishment for my soul.

There are many singers coming up nowadays. What is your view of the new generation of musicians?

Many of them are indeed doing very well. But at the same time, these days there has been too much focus on quantity rather than quality. The staggering number of television channels is also providing opportunities; but I think they need a stronger filtering system and should strive to maintain a certain standard.

Indeed, there are many singers coming up these days. But there is a difference between singers and artists. Therefore, you will see many singers shooting into stardom and then becoming a fallen star. Fame does not drive me. Art does.

Songs of classical maestros such as Tagore, Lalon and Nazrul are now being borrowed by many musicians, who remix them or present them in a different genre. What is your opinion about this?

It depends. Remixes need to be made very tastefully, while respecting the compositions and styles of artists.

Proper presentation is important. For example, if traditionally one line of a song is sung just once but you want to repeat it three times, it's perfectly fine. But that does not mean that you can change the base of a song. We must not change the essence of the songs. Our classical songs are a subject of research in many countries of the world. We must hold on to our heritage.

By M H Haider

JENNIFER ANISTON is my lifelong goal: Billy Bob Thornton

Actor Billy Bob Thornton has revealed his crush on Jennifer Aniston following the 2015 Golden Globe Awards. The 59-year-old actor was asked to play "Who Would You Rather?" on a chat show. When asked whom he would choose between Jennifer and Reese Witherspoon, Thornton chose Aniston, reported Ace Showbiz. "Lifelong goal... That's all I'm saying," the 'Love Actually' actor said before laughing and saying, "Well I'm joking." Thornton was previously married to Angelina Jolie, who now is the wife of Brad Pitt, Aniston's ex-husband.

