

# What Your Playlist Needs

RAYAAN IBTESHAM CHOWDHURY

Armeen Musa's *Simultaneously* is essentially a pop album but terming it as just 'pop' would be a great disservice. Her voice is drenched in elements of jazz and world music and is clearly, by the time the fourth (and title) track comes in, the voice of someone raised in eastern classical. It's a unique blend and Armeen being just what she is, has come a long, long way from her simplistic debut album *Ai Ghum Bhangai* (2008).

The album features ten tracks in total and every track has something different. There's no tied down definition of her music. The relaxing nature of her voice is probably the only constant. It kicks off with "Essa Quam Videri," a track where the string section probably steals the spotlight. For those who are wondering, the phrase means "To be, rather than to seem" in Latin and the lyrics go with the theme. The myriad of instrumentalists who play on the album have their moments but they probably shine the most here, with a powerful, expansive backdrop. I can confidently say no Bangladeshi artists' music has thus far featured an instrumental track

of this magnitude.

"Frost" is faster paced and could probably become a successful indie rock radio staple. The violinists from the earlier track make a comeback but they are more in the background this time. Armeen's voice takes full flight on this one and it's catchy but not really in a pop way. "The Brighter Side" follows in a similar vein, only growing in intensity.

As I said before, the title track "Simultaneously" reminds us that Armeen was raised in eastern classical traditions. The song has strong subcontinental flavours but the fact that a number of Berklee graduates are playing in it isn't lost either.

"Jokhon Chole Jao" is the first Bangla track of the album. Musically, it follows the established theme of tying down the East and the West. But it's faster and the electric guitar gives it a rock vibe too. This is probably the track in the album with the most fire; a haunting narrative of walking away and the pain it gives.



The ninth track 'When You Are Gone' is an English version of this song.

A wide assortment of musicians,

many of them Armeen's friends from her time at Berklee, play on this album which gives it its own aura. The violins stand out so in some ways this is more than just Armeen's album. The production is on spot but it does not have the excessive polish that a lot of modern music does, which gives it an organic feeling.

All in all, it's a powerful evolution for an artist who is still very young. With her music branching out like it has, fans can have high expectations of

where Armeen Musa's career is going.

Bangladeshi fans can purchase the album on [shurjorajjo.com](http://shurjorajjo.com) CDs are available at shows mainly and a limited number at [rokomari.com](http://rokomari.com)

To get news about her shows visit her Facebook page: [facebook.com/armeennm](http://facebook.com/armeennm)

# Godspeed You! Black Emperor

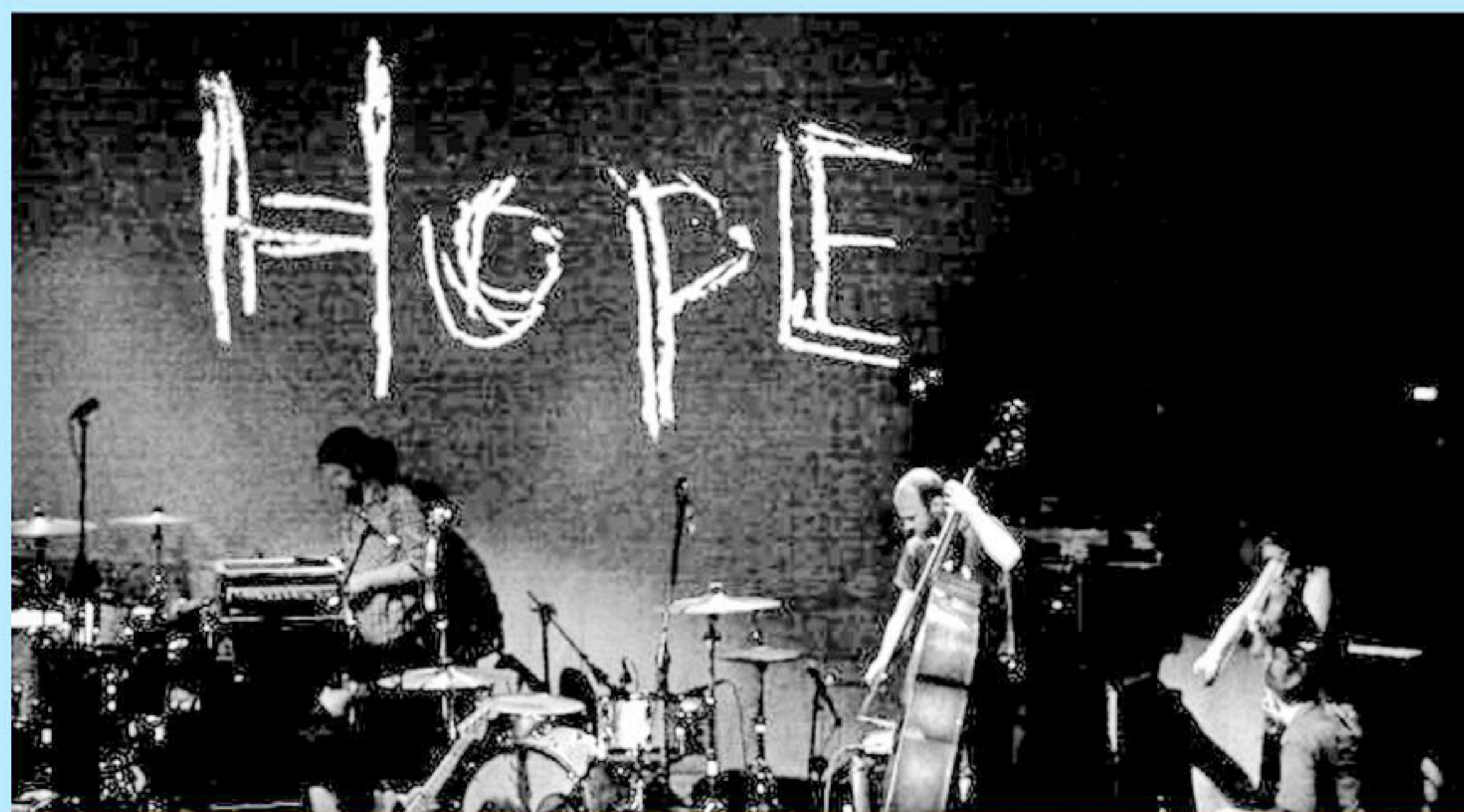
## *Asunder, Sweet and Other Distress*

SHUPROVO ARKO

If you've never heard any of Godspeed's music before, they sound exactly like their name suggests. Lengthy, complex and multi-faceted, the Montreal-based band's music has been huge in the underground scene even since the release of their 1997 debut LP *F#A#∞*, a sprawling epic of bleakness and despair appropriately referred to as the 'soundtrack to the apocalypse'.

*Asunder, Sweet and Other Distress* is the band's 5th studio album, coming off a semi-comeback album *Allelujah! Don't Bend! Ascend!* in 2012. The whole album is apparently the final product of a huge track called 'Behemoth' which the band have been playing and fine-tuning for a while in live shows. And *Asunder, Sweet* surely is a behemoth, with lengthy guitar movements and drones with slight influences from sludge metal and shoegaze.

The first track 'Peasantry or Light Inside of Light!' immediately starts off with a bang, something quite unheard of from a band known for its slow build-ups, like the famous soliloquy of hopelessness from 'The Dead Flag Blues'. Perhaps this is because of the



short length of the album. Clocking in at around forty minutes, this is the shortest LP the band has released. Starting with slight drums to a persistent layer upon layer of wailing guitars, the track starts to feel like noise rock when it quickly switches to a long guitar solo, another uncharacteristic move from the band. The end of the track sounds almost ballad-like with the accompanying strings, feeling more like a visceral and bittersweet end to a film where the hero gives up his life, and this is just the first song.

The energy simmers down in the next two tracks, titled 'Lamb's Breath' and 'Asunder, Sweet' respectively. These bring forth a tonal shift from the first song and represent in many ways the overall sound of the album. The two tracks feature lengthy drone passages akin to those in the band's preceding album *Allelujah!* The second track 'Lamb's Breath' directly references the album art, which is of a group of lambs quietly grazing in a meadow while something menacing looks upon them through the bushes. This track feels

otherworldly and almost alien with random electronic sounds piercing through the long drawn-out drone. It seamlessly flows into 'Asunder, Sweet' and you wouldn't notice if you weren't looking at the track lengths. 'Asunder, Sweet' is basically a continuation of "Lamb's Breath" only more glitchy and less coherent. The songs together invoke a feeling of constant dread and apprehension, as if something terrible is coming your way and there's no time to step away.

All of this finally flows into the fourth and final track, which has a weird title we can't print. In an album filled with experimentation, this track is classic Godspeed. Starting off with much more prominent percussion accompanied by distant violin, leading into the heavy guitar distortions, this song just keeps on building up and up throughout the 14 minutes of its duration. It serves as a visceral and passionate climax to the end of a powerful album.

Overall *Asunder, Sweet and Other Distress* lacks an overarching theme, but it is still very good and competent music. A worthy addition to the band's already impressive discography.