

MAN OF MANY TALENTS

TELEVISION
OF A
LIFETIME 

FARIDUR REZA SAGOR

There was a talk about Selim and Shimul that if they start performing in front of camera then they can make any program so interesting instantly. It has to be mentioned, that child artist named Shimul Billah is now working at television, stage drama and even in music with full of power.

There were so many other child artists apart from Selim-Shimul who can be so much amazed seeing back to their early life. There is a program called "Chhotto Khobor" which has been telecasting from 30 years on television. The facts and events based on children happened around the world used to be telecasted in this program. Ali Imam had planned making this and he himself had been writing the script of the program for a long time. Nowadays we can see news from the internet. There are now CDs and DVDs of movies, cartoons and programs available. But at that time there were few newspapers and magazines from abroad for children. Ali Imam showed his bravery by taking initiative of making "Chhotto khobor" every week writing scripts based on those foreign newspapers and magazines. Ali Imam was not involved in making this television program



during the liberation war. At first the program used to be anchored by Master Ripon. Ripon at that time used to participate in several dramas that have been telecasted in various programs for children. He also played the young role in the drama "Shangshaptak". But initially Abdullah Al Mamun had faced so many troubles in making "Shangshaptak" since it had so many arrangements. Because everyone said, it was impossible to shoot this type of bigger screened drama serial in such tiny studio of DIT. Abdullah Al Mamun himself also realized this problem while making the script. But at that time not only Abdullah Al Mamun but also everyone of television had courage to work. Almost everyone came ahead to help Abdullah Al Mamun considering if he successfully do this drama then it



will bring some good reputation for the television since "Shangshaptak" is a very big novel. At that time the television center of Rampura was still under construction. No light, no makeup room, no studio floor had been made yet and no air conditioner had been installed. Then the recording of "Shangshaptak" used to be held by putting recording machine in the car and the light had been hanged up in the rod. Besides Rozi Samad film stars like Kobori and Fateh Lohani have acted in this drama. Everyone had worked during the whole night for this play. Overall, this active team work has given "Shangshaptak" massive praises. But due to the liberation war in 1971 the broadcast of "Shangshaptak" got end after telecasting only 9 episodes.

After the liberation war Abdullah Al Mamun got Rampura studio with its bigger arrangement. He got more facilities. Even he took help of a helicopter to shoot the last scene of the new "Shangshaptak" drama serial and that was the first ever drama which has taken shot from a helicopter.

The newly made "Shangshaptak" had changed the line-up of its artists. The artist of the first drama of television Ferdousi Majumder has come to play the role of Hurmoti. Khalilullah Khan has replaced Fateh Lohani. Subarna Mustafa replaced Kobor and Mujibor Rahman Dilu replaced Master Selim. Imdadul Haque Milon has joined the production team to contribute. Considering everything "Shangshaptak" has become the best drama of Abdullah Al Mamun.

Abdullah Al Mamun loved to adjust himself with the time and that is why Shangshaptak has become the best drama. In Abdullah Al Mamun's each and every work he tried to make the story relating the current phase.

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Translated by Imtiaz Salim



LIFE'S LYRICS

BHUPOTI BHUSHON BARMAN

NASHID KAMAL

With the arrival of almost 30 channels in Bangladesh, we get to listen to the interviews of many men and women who are lauded for their achievements. They are usually people, who liaise well with TV stations, but there are yet many who are in showbiz but they lag behind in advertisement. They are actually more like social workers, trying to bring about change in society by being 'change agents'. I suddenly met one such gentleman and my eyes were opened like never before.

I had gone to attend a concert in Kolkata. It was organised jointly by Bangladesh High Commission in Kolkata and Abbas memorial (A Kolkata based organization headed by Dr. Sukhvilas Barma). It was on 27 October 2014, my grandfather's birthday. I represented Abbasuddin's family and heard that an expert bhawayya singer had arrived from Kurigram. When I heard him on stage, I was completely bewitched. He is an amazing singer. He has been teaching bhawayya songs and heading a 'Bhawayya Academy' in Kurigram.

This academy had been established 23 years back and the land was donated by Alhaj Gilafuddin Sarkar, former Union Council Chairman. Bhupoti is very enthusiastic. He hails from a family of seven and all of them are performers; his brothers Odhir (dottara player), Jogot Proti (singer), Bihar (dhol player). They have trained 2100 people so far (in bhawayya) and without any payment. Out of them, fifty two are now performing as bhawayya artists in various radio



and TV stations. Apart from bhawayya, they teach kirtans and Abbasuddin's songs. He sang in my grandfather's lilting style and it was so touching. It was like a discovery! I have lived almost all my life in Bangladesh and through my family contacts I have known so many artists, but I had to go all the way to this conference in Kolkata to discover Bhupoti! In our day to day lives we are forgetting that bhawayya was a very famous genre from north Bengal, Abbasuddin had toiled hard to bring this dialect to the homes of the elites in Kolkata.

Abbasuddin wrote in his book "Amar shilpi jeeboner kotha" that the head of

HMV studios, Bhogoboti Babu was much opposed to the recording of folk songs of this genre. He said, "Such dialect will never be admissible to the Kolkata elites." However, after Abbasuddin made his entrance via the songs of Kazi Nazrul Islam in bhawayya tune (*nodir nam shoi anjana and poddo dighir dhare dhare oi*), the audience just took them like their latest trend. Bhogoboti Babu removed the hurdle and let Abbasuddin record the songs which he longed to record. The phenomenal story of the stork and she stork "Phande poriya boga kande re" or his song of the cart man "Oki gariyal bhai", became the most popular songs.

Abbasuddin's choice of songs, his addition of the right combination of elitist pronunciation, retaining the rustic flavour made the songs comprehensible to others not so familiar with the local dialect.

Bhupoti has the same charm, the same unusual combination. He retains the rustic flavour, and yet presents the song with the mark of a professional. He has participated five times in the Rajjo Bhawayya Utshob (India). He went to the Thakur Ponchanon jonmo utshob in Mathabhanga. He was a judge in a bhawayya competition in India and went to several programmes observed in the name of Abbasuddin Ahmed. He received the Momtaz Ali Khan award in 2014.

Next morning, Bhupoti brought me a magazine. He was accompanied by a friend and they were publishing a magazine with poems and short stories etc. in this Rangpuri dialect. I was so touched by his enthuse. One of the contributors had written a poem on Abbasuddin, it was so soulful and so enriching to know that more than fifty years after his demise people care to write poems on Abbasuddin. Poet Jasimuddin had been much bewitched by Abbasuddin's songs and had written one in the early 30s. I felt that through the works of people like Bhupoti Bhushon Barman, our folk heritage, cultural heritage has survived, allowing our contributors to renew their pledge to the pleasures of Abbasuddin. Bhupoti indeed deserves recognition and mention.

The writer is an academic, Nazrul exponent and writer.