



Sabina and Suman



Badhon and Sabina



Shampa Reza, Sabina and Kabori



Mustafa Kamal Syed, Sabina and Syed Abdul Hadi

*Continued from Centre fold
FRIENDS IN FILMS

I performed with the actor Kabori on stage. It was from that time she became my good friend.

Kabori and I were inseparable. I have been friends with Anjana since my childhood; we used to learn music together. With Kabori and Anjana, I have been to many trips. I was also friends with Shabana and Bobita. Actually, I had a good relationship with everyone. I met Bobita a few days ago. She said whenever a movie had songs in it, she used to ask whether there were any of Sabina's or not. I am a huge fan of Razzak. I was so in love with him!

I have been to Bombay, and sang in the Bollywood movie, 'Annai Obichar'. I sang in both Hindi and Bengali songs. I also sang in the movie, 'Shatru'. I have sung with Kishore Kumar. The music composer was R D Burman. I have worked in many songs in Kolkata, with Hemanta Mukhopadhyay, Ajoy Das and V Balsara.

For example, I did an entire album with V Balsara. Musician Gouri Prasanna Majumdar was very affectionate towards me. I used to call him dad. So, the autograph he signed for me also reads, 'Sabina's father'. I have kept it with a lot of care. I was also close to Pulak Bandyopadhyay. I used to gift his wife Jamdani saris. Although we didn't work together, I was pretty close to Salil Chowdhury and I have been to his houses in Kolkata and Bombay.

Singing Shyamal Mitra's song is one of the most memorable events of my life. I cannot explain how big a fan I was of him. There was a music director by the name of Amir Ali. He used to work with Ata bhai. I told him that I wanted to work with Shyamal Mitra.

I used to drive a car then. I remember an instance when Shyamal Mitra and Bhupen Hazarika were in the car and the fuel ran out. Consequently, these two renowned artists had to push my car! Good humoured as they were, they said that it was fun for them to push a foreign car (probably at that

time imported cars in Kolkata were rare).

With Shyamal Mitra, I sang 'Pothero Sathi Namogo Pothe Aaj'. And with the composition of Bhupen Hazarika and the lyrics of Masud Karim, I sang two songs.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

The philosophy of my life is much like Khan Ataur Rahman's 'Jibon Shey Je Poddo Patar Bindu': if you think of it, life is really long. But on the other hand, life is too short. If we could've gotten more time, perhaps we could have given more.

RULES OF THE BUSINESS



One thing I don't like about our music industry is that there is more or less no provision for royalty. Paying royalty to artists is a common practice all around the world. On one hand, the telecommunications companies are making big bucks with ring tones and welcome tunes of our songs. And on the other, when an artist falls ill, funding for treatment becomes a grave issue. Why are we singing? We might tolerate it but what about the next generation of artists? There was once a time when television and radio channels used to pay royalties. But this practice has disappeared.

I remember that my first pay check from singing in the radio (for the programme Khela Ghar) was Tk10. When Altaf Mahmud paid me for the first time as a playback

singer, the amount was Tk500. In 1967, that was quite a sum for a song! But I never worked for, or kept track of, money. And many people have indeed taken advantage of it. Alauddin used to say, "There are a very few people who have not taken your money." Well, the love I have received from all is the most important thing, not the money.

AWARDS

I first won the National Award for the songs in the film, Shujon Shoki. I was really excited. After that, I went on to receive 13 of these awards. I have received the most number of this award. In 1975, I received the National Award from Ziaur Rahman. Not just me, there were many others who received National Awards that year.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

I have never been jealous of other artists. Yes, that there have been times when I loved a song sung by another artist so much that I thought, "I wish it was me who got the opportunity to sing that song!" But whenever a fellow artist sang beautifully, I always took it positively and thought that I should also try to sing as good.

I am in very good terms with Runa Laila. We have also sung together. I like her songs; some of them are simply marvellous. A duet where both singers are female is scarce! But the song 'Tumi Boro Bhaggapati' was one of those rare occasions.

EVERYDAY

When I am home, I practice and continue cultivating my art. Sometimes, I cook, particularly when my daughter Badhon has an order for me. These days, I am spending the afternoons by searching for my songs on YouTube! Among the 15000-16000 songs I have sung, when I stumble upon an old song of mine, I feel very delighted!

So, that's how my life is going by.

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Interviewed by ZAHID AKBAR AND
Narrated by M H HAIDER
Photo: COLLECTED

Living the dream: Suborna Mustafa

Long term fans of the famous actress Suborna Mustafa already know that she has always been a long time cricket buff. The famous actress never really did have a chance to indulge in this deep passion of hers until quite recently when she started commentating on the sport on Radio Bhumi. So to those who thought you heard a familiar voice on the radio were absolutely spot on as its none other than Suborna Mustafa.

