

LOVE OF MY LIFE

liza

A winner of the Close-up1 tells us in an interview that in every round, she feared she would get eliminated. To us, she is modest - a young, intelligent star in love with music so much that she is humbled by it.

This week, Star Showbiz sits down with Sania Sultana Liza, talking about her experience in Close-up1, her new album, her TV shows, stage shows, singing in movies and so on.

Which was the first song you picked up on the harmonium and which was the first song you sang on stage? My mentor, M. A. Hai, helped me pick up the melody of 'Maago Ami Gaibo Na Go Shadinotar Gaan'. He basically laid the foundation of my singing. This is also the first song I sang on stage. I was so little that I had to sit on the table with the harmonium.

How did the Close-up1 chapter begin for you?

It happened rather suddenly. I used to participate in competitions since childhood. My parents thought it would be good if I gave this a try. This was back in 2008 - my SSC exams were going on at that time. My father had registered for me. On the day of the regional audition (I was born and raised in Gouripur, a small town in Mymensingh) I had my accounting exam in the afternoon. Right after, my father took me to the audition.

The judges made me sing many songs. They were a bit sceptic, but I was handed the Yes-card.

And then you came to Dhaka.

I was nervous. I had successfully participated in numerous competitions back home. But this was different.

The organisers did not allow anyone to sing with the lyrics written down on paper: you have to sing from memory. This was a problem for me: I need to have the lyrics in front of me when I'm singing. They were kind enough. Considering my young age, they made an exception to their rule, and there I was, in front of the judges, holding the microphone on one hand and a paper on the other. The judges really praised my singing.

How did you feel when you were announced as the winner?

I was surprised! I never thought I would be the champion. I honestly thought every round would be my last. Then I was among the final four. Even at that time, I thought, there's no way I'm going to be number 1. When my name was announced, it felt surreal; I was dizzy.

Figuring it all out

There was a one year lag after Close-up1; I was busy with my studies. People were starting to forget me. This competition indeed moulds and grooms you. But one negative aspect is that they don't teach you many practical things you need to know about the industry - like how to release an album. So it took me a while to figure out everything. My first album, Liza Part-1, came out in 2012.

You have recently released your second album, Pagli Suraiya. Quite a curious name! What kind of songs does the album comprise of?

I initially didn't want to give this name. The video song, Suraiya, became such a big hit that whenever I got up on stage, everybody used to shout that Suraiya had come on stage. Live audiences, wherever I go, really applauds me when I'm singing this song. Given the popularity, I decided that

Pagli Suraiya would be album's name. Going beyond an artist's name to associate the artist with her art is a big achievement for any singer. There is a wide plethora of songs, semi-classical, duet, romantic and so on.

New generation singers seem to be more concerned about viewership online than the sale of albums. What's your take on this?

Times have changed, so has the media. For example, we can earn through YouTube, which I do too - although my main source of income is the stage.

What advice would you give to a newcomer about getting sponsorship and releasing an album?

If I were a new singer, I would go ahead and invest in my first song myself. I would take this to the potential sponsors. If my work is good enough, why won't they invest on me? Sponsors want good songs.

You have been a TV host for a few shows. Doesn't it take your mind off music? How do you juggle?

Weirdly, the TV shows I do actually bring me closer to music, because they are revolve around music.

And I usually do 30-minute shows, so it doesn't really affect my singing.

Did you get any offers for acting?

Plenty! Acting is a serious art. After Suraiya, I received many offers. At this moment, I'm not that interested. If the movie is a musical or is 'song-based', I might reconsider.

All my plans are about singing. I would like to continue it till the end of life.

When do we get to publish news of your wedding?

Not sure, but it's not too far-off. We like each other, we're engaged.

By Zahid Akbar and Himadri



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