



## FERDAUSI RAHMAN

MUSIC

**F**ERDAUSI RAHMAN is one of the most celebrated singers of the country. Daughter of legendary folk singer Abbas Uddin, Rahman was born on June 28, 1941 in Cooch Bihar, a district in the northern part of West Bengal, India.

Rahman's long walk on the path of music began at an early age. She was initially trained in music under the tutelage of her father, and in 1946, she performed on stage for the first time in Kolkata.

After partition in 1947, her family migrated to the then East Pakistan and that very same year she performed for the first time on radio as a child artiste in a programme called *Khelaghor*.

Years later, Ferdausi Rahman, still a minor, started singing on the radio as an adult after getting special permission. Her first programme went on air on an August morning in 1955.

Ferdausi Rahman released her first record from HMV in 1957 in Karachi, which included two folk songs that became very popular then. She made her debut as a playback singer in 1959 with Ehtesham's film, *Ei Desh Tomar Amar*, where she lent her voice under the music direction of legendary singer-composer Khan Ataur Rahman. The next year, she gave her first music direction for *Rajdhanir Bukey* with co-director Robin Ghosh. She eventually went on to playback in around 200 Bangla and Urdu films. Her melodious Bangla songs and flawless Urdu singing brought her accolades.

In 1964, she became the first artiste to sing on the newly established Pakistan Television (now Bangladesh Television) in erstwhile East Pakistan. Ferdausi Rahman initiated an interactive musical show *Esho Gaan Shikhi* on BTV to teach children Bangla music. The programme has been running for 52 years.

Ferdausi Rahman, a virtuoso singer, can sing Classical, Khayal, Thumri,

Ghazals, Nazrul Sangeet, Bhawaiya, Bhatiali and *Adhunik* Bangla songs with incredible ease. She has over 500 disc records, a few LPs, and a good number of cassettes and CDs which were released from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

Not only in music, she excelled in her academic life as well, standing first among the girls and 7th in combined merit list in Secondary School Certificate Examination from Bangla Bazar Government High School in 1956. In 1958, she secured 12th position in combined merit list in Higher Secondary Certificate Examination from Eden Girls' College. She went on to finish her Bachelors and Masters in Sociology from the University of Dhaka. In 1963, Ferdausi was awarded a UNESCO Fellowship for music and studied staff notation at London Trinity College of Music for six months.

Ferdausi Rahman has continued her father's legacy of presenting Bangla music on a global platform. She has put her distinct mark on all genres of Bangla music.

She has many awards to her credit. As recognition for her outstanding contribution to music, she was awarded the Lahore Cine Journalist Awards (1963), President's Pride of Performance Medal (1965), National Film Award (1976), Bachsas Award (1976), Ekushey Padak (1977), Independence Award (1995), Meril-Prothom Alo Lifetime Achievement Award (2008), and Citycell-Channel i Lifetime Achievement Award (2015), among others.



## HASAN AZIZUL HAQUE

LITERATURE

**C**ONSIDERED as one of the most beloved short story writers of contemporary Bangla literature, Hasan Azizul Haque was born on February 2, 1939 at Jabgraam in Burdwan district of West Bengal, India. However, his parents later moved to Fultala, near the city of Khulna, Bangladesh. Hasan Azizul Haque was and remains one of the most respected and beloved professors of Rajshahi University, even after his retirement from its Department of Philosophy.

Even as a child, Hasan Azizul Haque felt the pull of literature, and during his school days, he penned several short stories. In 1960, while still a university student, he decided to turn his passion for writing into a full-time career. This turned out to be a blessing for readers, as Haque's works on issues like nationalism, philosophy and criticism of Bangali literature have, over the years, formed a considerable body of canonical literature. Even today, a new fiction by Hasan Azizul Haque shakes up the literary scene in both Bangladesh and West Bengal.

Starting from a childhood in a rugged West Bengal village to his migration to then East Pakistan in 1947 to his education and stint in Leftist politics, Hasan Azizul's life is as full of nuance as his fiction.

Haque is well known for his experimentations with language and for introducing certain modern idioms, particularly in the genre of short stories. In over 50 years of an illustrious literary career, he has written short stories that have given life to an exquisite form of literary language hitherto unknown. His fictions deals with themes such as the indescribable suffering of farmers and working class people, the dehumanising effects of the partition and the ensuing communal violence, the deterioration of values, unfulfilled promises of the Liberation War, and the distress and resistance of working class

women. His first published volume is *Samudrer Swapna, Shiter Aranya* (1964). Among other notable volumes are: *Atmaja o Ekti Karabi Gaachh* (1967), *Jeeban Ghase Agun* (1973), *Pataale, Haspataale* (1981), *Ma Meyer Sansar* (1997), *Raarbanger Golpo* (1999). The realities of the Liberation War of Bangladesh are expressed with great artistry in *Namhin Gotrohin* (1974). He has also written two volumes of essays, *Kathakataa* (1981), and *Aprakashar Bhaar* (1988).

His views about the creative process of writing fiction are illuminating and challenge all rules prescribed by any school of criticism, as can be seen in his autobiographies, *Fire Jai Fire Ashi* and *Uki Diye Digonto*.

Hasan Azizul Haque has received almost all the major awards of the country including the Bangla Academy Award, Druhee Katha-Shahityak Abdur Rouf Choudhury Memorial Award, Adamjee Sahitya Puroshkar, Lekhok Shibir Puroshkar, Alaol Sahitya Puroshkar, Alokto Sahitya Puroshkar, Agrani Bank Puroshkar, Philips Sahitya Puroshkar. He was also awarded Ananda Puroshkar for *Agunpakhi* in 2008. He is also a recipient of the Ekushey Padak.

Hasan Azizul Haque was the second Bangabandhu Chair of the Department of History, Dhaka University.