

"I miss Bangladesh terribly"

Sahana speaks about her Bangladesh connection and new album

FAHMIM FERDOUS

Sahana Bajpaie has made a name for herself in Rabindra sangeet, but her connection to folk music has been a long one. In her early days at Santiniketan, she came in close contact with many Bauls and was always eager to learn. When the first Bangladeshi folk-fusion band, Bangla, was formed, she was initially the vocal for it. And even today at her live performances she makes room for a folk song or two. So it was only a matter of time until the teacher-by-profession decided to make a folk record, and the time is now. Ahead of the release of her first album of folk songs, titled "Mon Bandhibi Kemone" in Kolkata on September 27, the artiste spoke to The Daily Star via Facebook, about the album and her deep-rooted love for Bangladesh. Excerpts:



Was there a specific reason why you chose to do the album now?

Sahana: It's not exactly that I chose a particular time for this particular album. I get a two-month vacation at my university at this time, so it's the only time I get to work on a big musical project. There's no specific reason. I just recorded songs that I love to sing. Making music is always great fun for me, so what more do you need!

Tell us about the songs and the musical arrangement.

Sahana: So there are eight songs. Of them, Satyaki (Banerjee) has arranged four of them in very traditional folk arrangement. The other four were done by Samantak, where British folk guitarist Mal Darwen and jazz clarinet player Idris Rahman has played. Idris' father was from Bangladesh, and he is very familiar with Bangla music. There was no forced attempt to combine jazz and folk, so there was a comfortable atmosphere. Idris played clarinet in one song, and duduk (Armenian double-reed woodwind flute).

We recorded the traditionally-arranged songs live, all at once, to keep the spirit of a live performance. Like old times - no cutting and pasting. If someone made a mistake, we had to start over. It was a great experience.

Do you miss Bangladesh? And if so, what do you miss the most?

Sahana: I miss Bangladesh terribly. I left an entire life of mine there; so many loved ones, students, friends. I miss Fakhruddin's biryani, Kasturi's morog polau (chicken pilaf), kabab from Star, and the unending love from the people.

Back to the album. What are your expectations?

Sahana: I don't really have a specific expectation. I just want people to listen to the songs. It has always been like that for me. Singing is not my profession, I sing for the love of it. I didn't try to force anything new; whatever resonated in our hearts created the soundscape. It would be very rewarding if my listeners like them. Constructive criticism is also most welcome, because I am still learning.

How can your Bangladeshi fans get your album? Digital format is the present and future of music, but that is not a common practice here yet.

Sahana: It is saddening and frustrating. I want to reach my music to Bangladesh through the available digital medium. No one buys CDs any more. If music becomes free, how will musicians survive just on appreciation and applause?

Finally, when will you come to Bangladesh and sing for us live?

Sahana: Very soon. It has been too many years since I had to leave this dear country of mine. I can never pay back the love people of Bangladesh have given me. I will definitely come, to sing, and to taste all the amazing food that I miss.



Star Melodies' tribute to Kanan Devi

Musical soiree on September 27

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Star Melodies will hold a special musical programme, paying tribute to Kanan Devi (April 22, 1916-July 17, 1992), the first Bangalee female star of film and music, marking her birth centenary.

Dalia Nausheen, Badrunnesa Dalia, Tanjina Toma, Zahangir Alom and Raisa Islam will perform songs recorded by Kanan Devi, at the event on September 27, at 6 pm at the AS Mahmud Seminar Hall of The Daily Star Centre.

Sadya Afreeen Mallick will compere the programme. The event has been organised with assistance from Chalachhitram and Eastern Bank

Limited.

Kanan Devi was among the early singing stars of Indian cinema, and is credited popularly as the first star of Bangla cinema. Her singing style, usually in rapid tempo, was used instrumentally in some of the biggest hits of New Theatres, Kolkata. After making her debut in silent film "Jaidev" (1926), and successfully transitioned into talkies to produce numerous hits, both as an actress and singer.

Those interested to attend the programme may collect cards from The Daily Star Centre between 11 am-5 pm depending on availability. Seats are limited.

Bassbaba announces "Soul Food"



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned Bangladeshi rock bassist Saidus Salehin Khaled Sumon - known better among his fans by his stage name Bassbaba -- has announced his first bass solo album, to be out next month. The album, titled "Soul Food - Part 1", has been in the pipeline for a while.

Sumon made the announcement on his Facebook page on Wednesday, adding that he will have a number of international collaborators featured in the album, namely Robert Bubby Lewis, Felix Pastorius, Josh Cohen, Bob Franceschini, Mark Don and JD Blair.

Sumon, the bassist and front-man of seasoned rock act Aurthohin and considered by many as one of the best bass players of this part of the world, has looked in recent years to break away from the mold. For the last few years, he has been a regular at the NAMM Show in California, USA, heralded 'the biggest trade-only event for the music products' and a gathering of some of the world's top musicians, where he has been seen rubbing shoulders with the likes of Steve Vai, Joe Satriani and Victor Wooten, to name a few. His other work has also been off-beat, be it with fingerstyle guitarist Mahaan Fahim, or a 360-degree YouTube video for a new song for Aurthohin, titled "Chaito Paro - You Have to Bujhte Hobe".

Sumon, who has been in the music industry for two and a half decades, is credited as one of the key musicians who helped in the development of the Bangladeshi underground rock music scene. Early in his career he played with bands like Feelings and Warfaze, before forming Aurthohin in 1998. He was diagnosed with cancer in 2011, and has undergone 12 surgeries in five years. The latest album of Aurthohin, titled "Cancer-er Nishikabhyo", was released on international platforms earlier this month.



ISHANA juggling seven TV serials

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Popular actress of recent times, Mounita Khan Ishana is now busy working in seven ventures. Among them five TV series are being telecast in various private television channels: Syed Shakil's "Samrat" and "Shanti Odhidoptor", Mainul Hasan Khokon's "Tumi Ami Shey" and "High Society", Habib Masud's "Khela Ghor" which are respectively telecast by ntv, Rtv, ETV, Asian TV and Deepto TV.

Another current project, directed by Ferdous Hasan Rana, "Ek Pa Dui Pa" is a romantic-thriller, where she is cast opposite Apurbo. Another one of Syed Shakil's ventures, "Palta Hawa", will also have Ishana as the lead, where she will play a university student.

Talking about her work, she said, "My role varies in every storyline. All of them show a different side of me."

Ishana also has a single-episode play, directed by Ananta Hira, in the pipeline. In this play, she is cast opposite Tariq Anam Khan.

JOHN AND SONAKSHI in new espionage thriller



Director Abhinay Deo's "Force 2", a sequel to 2011's "Force", promises viewers a perfect blend of thrill and drama. While John Abraham returns as tough cop ACP Yashwardhan, he will be joined by Sonakshi Sinha, who essays the role of a RAW Officer. Tahir Bhasin also has a pivotal role in this action thriller, which is set in parts of China, Budapest and India. Abhinay says, "The film's story will take us to places like Budapest in Hungary and China. So by nature, we had to go international this time. Also, the fresh pairing of John and Sonakshi is another interesting element. There's a lot of colour in their chemistry, which the audiences will love." Producer Vipul Amrutlal Shah said "Force" is a true action franchise. In today's world, the stories of the forces that protect our country are the most relevant ones. "Force 2" will be released on November 18.

Source: TOI

