

Memories of their martyred father

In conversation with Sadi and Shibli Mohammad

A CORRESPONDENT

Rabindra Sangeet singer Sadi Mohammad and dancer Shibli Mohammad are familiar names in our cultural arena. In 1971, collaborators of the Pakistan army killed their father brutally. The siblings shared their thoughts on the Liberation War, memories of their father and a host of other issues.

The first part of the conversation was dominated by recollections of their father. Though Sadi recalls the incident, which cost his father's life, Shibli said he was too young to remember it.

"Our father was not actively involved in politics. He was rather known as a philanthropist and a respected individual in our neighbourhood. Mostly non-Bengalis lived in the area (Mohammadpur) then. As a committed individual, my father always fought against the odds from an ethical point of view," said Sadi.

"They killed our father on March 26, 1971 in front of our house," said Shibli. As a sign of honour, a road in the Mohammadpur area was named after their father, Shaheed Salimullah.

"My impressions of our father is not like my elder brother's, as I was too young to remember anything; rather whatever I

am today is due to the support and encouragement of my mother and siblings," added Shibli.

Shibli has been a dancer since 1980, after graduating from Jahangirnagar University. On the other hand, Sadi was into music.

The conversation then veers to the question of how they draw inspiration from their father or how they remember him on their respective cultural fronts. The siblings have differing views.

"In my performances, I always try to demonstrate the spirit of the Liberation War. Dance gives me the option to articulate that spirit in a more profound manner," said Shibli.

"Music seeks universal peace. So, my way is to disseminate the message of peace through songs. I think it's not only about my father, who is one of the three million martyred during the war; through my performance I try to honour all of them," said Sadi.

What about the hurdles that they faced being the offspring of a Shaheed?

The siblings lamented that they were blacklisted from the cultural arena during a political regime, which they found unexpected. "I bear no political label, why then did I have to go through such ordeal?" -- questioned Sadi.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



A scintilla of the indomitable human spirit

GEMS OF NAZRUL READY TO RELEASE ITS THIRD SONG

FAHMIM FERDOUS

One of Bangladesh's biggest asset as a nation is its massive youth demographic, as can be seen in the country's economic and social development. And that is why in a society that seems to be on a downward slide in terms of humane values and spirit, it is the youth who has the power to change the course of the tide. Sadya Afreen Mallick's ambitious musical project 'Gems of Nazrul' looks to spark that change armed with a powerful tool – music. Our National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam left behind a largely undiscovered treasure-trove of songs that inspire people to be brave, honest, compassionate and strong, and the project aims to

bring those songs in modern music arrangements to disseminate amongst the people.

The third song of the project, "Shonka Shunno Lokkho Konthe", is all set for release, after completion of the music video earlier this week. Sajia Sultana Putul, Ismat Ara Eva, Fatema Tuz Zohra, Bulbul Mahalanabish, Rebeka Sultana, Suptika Mandal, Tanzina Karim Swaralipi, Chhanda Chakravarti, Shahnaz Tasneem Mourushi, Yasmin Mushtari, Murshid Jahan, Shithi Shaha, Waqeel Ahad, Bijon Chandra Mistry, Shahid Kabir Palash, Ashish Kumer Sarker, Mahmudul Hasan, Ritu Raj, Prithwi Raj, Abir Nayan, Sunil Kumer Sutrodhar, Yusuf Ahmed Khan, Tanveer Alam Shawjeeb and Sadya Afreen Mallick have

sung the song, with music arranged by Shawjeeb.

The music video, also directed by Shawjeeb, takes the artistes close to Nazrul – quite literally. Most of the filming was done around the Dhaka University area where the Rebel Poet is laid to rest – Charukola, the Oporajeyo Bangla sculpture and Nazrul's grave.

The song speaks of a fearless voice of unison that marches towards victory, determined to overcome all obstacles on the way. The complex, dramatic lyric is archetypal of Nazrul's genius with words, and the composition has a gradual buildup into a magnificent crescendo that continues to ring in the years. The age-old premise of 'destruction is the prelude to creation' comes to life in "Shonka Shunno", as

Nazrul expertly delves into the indomitable spirit of human nature and makes it the hero of the song.

Gems of Nazrul, conceptualized by eminent Nazrul exponent Sadya Afreen Mallick, plans to make Nazrul heard at all levels across the globe. "Nazrul and his works are more relevant than ever at this time, and we want to reach his message out through these songs that are so powerful, but very few people have actually heard them," according to Mallick. The songs and music videos are just stepping stones for the project, with the ultimate goal being a big campaign that touches the mass of the population.

The music video was supported by IFIC Bank, with wardrobe by Tangail Saree Kutir.

WEEKENDER

"I love Tagore and Nazrul, as well as patriotic songs..."

--Kornia

ROBINA RASHID BHUIYAN

Kornia, whose rise to fame surged since her participation in the music reality show "Power Voice," has continued on a successful musical career with a number of popular singles and albums to her name. Her on stage performances at concerts and shows have secured her as a firm favourite in the hearts of audiences, and today the artiste shares her interests outside of music, and more.

What do you like to do on weekends?

Kornia: On weekends I love hanging out and catching up with my friends. I love watching movies and going on long drives, and trying out new restaurants!

What is your favourite restaurant to eat at?

Kornia: Peda Ting Ting, Tastebud, and Nandos are some of my favourites.

What are you currently working on?

Kornia: I am about to start working on a new music video featuring a new single. The title of the song is not fixed yet, but the plan is to release the video before Eid-ul Fitr.

Is there a genre of music you haven't explored yet, but really want to?

Kornia: I love Tagore and Nazrul, as well as patriotic songs. I have never tried my hand in those areas, and would like to soon.

How do you prepare for a live or stage show?

Kornia: Preparing for a TV live show is vastly different from a stage performance. I am usually more nervous on TV shows and prefer not to repeat old performances. There is also lesser freedom compared to concerts. On stage I am more myself, and the audience is also freer to make their demands. Audience requests vary on the locality, for example concerts at corporate events have demands for more modern songs whilst audience in the rural areas have a special preference for folk songs.

Do you have any passions apart from singing?

Kornia: All my interests and aspirations surround music.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

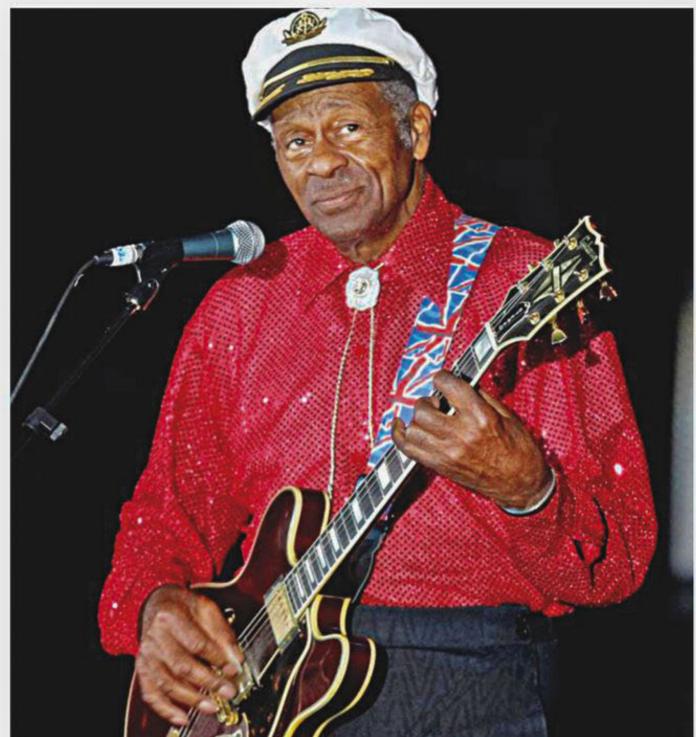
Inside Chuck Berry's first new album in 38 years

Chuck Berry played his final concert on October 15, 2014 – three days shy of his 88th birthday, at St. Louis' Blueberry Hill. But like many of his recent performances, it was rough. Berry had trouble hearing, causing him to play off-key, and he forgot lyrics. "The audience was with him the whole way," says Joe Edwards, owner of Blueberry Hill, where Berry appeared once a month for 21 years. "But sometimes he'd come off and say, 'Oh, man. I could've done a little better.'" Berry, who always drove himself to shows, told Edwards he wanted to take the winter off, so he wouldn't have to drive in the snow.

It was Berry's last public appearance, but he was still making musical plans. With the help of his family, he finished "Chuck", his first new album since 1979's "Rock It". (The album is set for release on June 16, though the estate released first single "Big Boys", featuring Tom Morello and Nathaniel Rateliff, on Wednesday.) Made up of material recorded between 1991 and 2014, the set is full of the music he invented in the Fifties: sped-up blues, double-stringed-guitar breaks and heavy wordplay. "Lady B. Goode" is a sequel to "Johnny B. Goode", and "Jamaica Moon" is a rewrite of "Havana Moon".

But the album is also uncharacteristically reflective for Berry. In a statement last year, he dedicated "Chuck" to Themetta "Toddy" Berry, his wife of 68 years: "My darlin', I'm growing old! I've worked on this record for a long time. Now I can hang up my shoes!" He sings about her on the rollicking "Wonderful Woman". The gospel-steeped "Darlin'", meanwhile, is a love letter to his daughter Ingrid about what to expect from old age. In "Dutchman", Berry wanders into a bar and tells the patrons his story.

Some of these songs date back to the '80s. After releasing "Rock It", Berry turned his attention to touring the oldies circuit. "He always had a pad and a pencil with him," says Jimmy Marsala, his frequent bass player since the early '70. "On the airplanes, when we'd be flying somewhere, he'd be writing. And he was changing the words constantly." Berry recorded at his Berry Park compound outside St. Louis, but a fire in 1989 destroyed the tapes. "The studio burned to the ground – he lost 20 years



worth of music," says Charles Jr. "My dad was determined to re-create as much of it as he could."

Chuck later learned to use Pro Tools, and often invited his band over to play the parts he'd written on piano. At the end of the day, Chuck would play the recordings for Themetta: "My mom would give a thumbs-up or a thumbs down," says Charles Jr. "Thumbs up, he was done. Thumbs down, I've got more work to do."

Berry discussed the material in 2012: "I have six songs that have been ready for 16 years now," he told journalists. "It's the same type of music I've been playing. As soon as I can get someone to guide me in that, I'm gonna come back and push 'em out, if you know what I mean."

But touring always came first. Charles Jr. tells a story about a 2007 European tour when they played 17 shows in 18

days, with the 82-year-old Berry driving himself to gigs. "It would wear on him," he says. "But when it was time to do that show, he was rolling. At that point he was eighty-something years old, and he had the energy of a 10-year-old. It was inspirational."

After retiring, Berry spent his days at his Berry Park compound watching TV on two giant side-by-side screens: news on one, baseball on the other. Before his death, he was fighting pneumonia that was difficult to bounce back from. Edwards described a conversation with Berry a year and a half ago, when Edwards brought up the album: "You could tell he was really happy it was finally done. He said, 'Joe, this might be my last album.' And he got a look on his face. Not the whimsical, joking Chuck Berry – real serious."

Source: Rolling Stone