

Xefer

FROM ARTIST TO BRAND

She is guts personified. She has been endorsed by many famous personalities as one of the most of the promising young artists, as well as one of Bangladesh's first YouTubers. Throughout her journey, she defied many unwritten rules of the industry and went on to become one of the premier Bangladeshi artists to sing in English. With her solo album 'Uncaged' set to release on 25th August, Star Showbiz presents to you an exclusive interview of the superstar in the making, Xefer Rahman!

Your first solo album *Uncaged* is releasing soon. How and when did you decide that it was finally time for a full-length album?

I had honestly never thought of making an album. I was working with Nagib Hawk on some projects two years ago. At that time, he kept telling me that it would be a great idea. I bought into the idea and eventually started working on it, and all the songs that we ended up doing were based on my personality and my vision. The songs were mostly written by Nagib, and of course, I chipped in too. We released *Somebody* along with a music video which was sponsored by Sayeman Beach Resort, and that was highly appreciated by most. I am positive that *Uncaged* will do well.

It's a bold step to make an album mainly consisting of English songs here in Bangladesh. Was that a conscious decision?

Look, if there's one thing someone should know about me, that would be the fact that I am always true to myself. I've come as far as I have by singing in English, and the songs in the album are articulated in a way that I relate to the most. I don't know if that is a bit selfish, but that is just me. That being said, there are two Bangla songs included in the album as well. I would like to say that the album is not 'mainstream' or 'commercial' in any way. I believe that if you follow your own passion instead of others, you will get somewhere and be 'Somebody'. Pun intended.

Did you always want to be a singer? Which people had the biggest contributions in your music career?

You'll laugh if you heard what I was initially aiming for. I wanted to be a rapper! When I was 17 years old, I tried singing the chorus of a rap song and that was when I realized that I can actually sing in tune! (Laughs) It was about that time I started singing, and I would say that I am really grateful to my brother Nafees Pran. He was the one who taught me how to use music recording software, with which I started YouTubing. Adnan Al Rajeev deserves a special mention because he shared one of my videos and tagged a lot of other directors and producers when I was just starting out. Fuad bhai (Fuad Al Muqtadir) in particu-

lar knocked me and said many nice things, which motivated me to no end.

Your trademark looks make you stand out, and your music and appearance combined almost makes you a brand. However, some people often tend to go out of their way to criticize it. Do these things bother you?

Not really. I take pride in whatever I am, and it's not like I dress up like that for show. I've been like this when I was little; the only difference is that people did not know me back then. And I actually tend to enjoy it when people make funny memes about me. I even shared some of them. The funniest incident happened when there was this Eid TV serial which featured a character named Shefer, who was based on me. I, along with all my friends, laughed our hearts out. I take these very lightly, and even my Facebook bio says, "That girl who walks around with a monstrous nest above her head and sings on YouTube!"

How difficult is it for a new singer to make it in this music industry? Are seniors supportive of youngsters that are coming through the ranks?

I will not lie, it's not easy. I've had both good and bad experiences with seniors, not everyone will support you the same. It is okay to have bad experiences; they will help you grow faster as an artist. Also, you need to be a hundred percent dedicated and motivated to follow your passion no matter what the outcome. Sometimes you succeed, sometimes you fail and that's life. But at the end of the day, where you end up is mostly dependent on your perseverance and talent.

Do you have anything big planned for your album launch?

Oh, that is a surprise. My album launch is sponsored by Star Cineplex, and it will take place there on 25th August this month. We are trying to do some things differently, and it will be one of the more innovative album launches of recent time. I hope everyone enjoys the spectacle that we'll put on. I am very excited!

Interviewed by Sadi Mohammad Shahnewaz

