

Mala

Dynamic, soulful, talented: there are countless adjectives that could describe Mala as an artist. However, one word that fits her perfectly is "passionate". Even though she lives in Australia, she always visits Bangladesh on her breaks and leaves a lasting impact through countless hit singles and performances. Star Showbiz catches up with the beautiful diva.

I am intrigued by how much music you manage to do even though you live in Australia! How do you manage?

Well, I look at it a bit differently. When I am in Bangladesh, all I concentrate on is doing music. My routine now consists of waking up and setting off for a show, recording or some other musical purpose. When I go back to Australia, I consider it as a timeout for me to reflect on my musical prowess and to make myself even better. I will admit, it is a little hard to balance family and music like this, but I am adamant on what I want to do.

What are your current projects?

I want to do theme-based work this year. For example, I've done a song with Shaker Raza this time which was about Dhaka, and another is on the way which will be themed around rain. I am doing three songs with Emon Chowdhury. One track named *Bondhu Re* is already out and it has been well received by the audience. I am also planning to work on a duet with Tahsan very soon, and also collaborations with Sajid Sarker and Minar are on their way. Besides these, I am doing some songs for Nirjhar bhai (Enamul Karim Nirjhar).

Tell us about how you became a singer. Do you have any particular inspiration?

My mother is a very good singer; she used to sing for BTV back in the days. She always used to urge and inspire me to sing, and I started learning music from a very young age. I had to leave for New Zealand to study computer science in the University of Auckland, and became detached from music. I was very unhappy, because at the back of my mind I always wanted to study music. After finishing my degree, I started practicing music and started doing shows locally. After I came to Bangladesh, I had a demo made and sent it to Fuad Almuqtadir, who really liked it and my first song with him was called *Rupali Raate*. I eventually ended up doing my first album with him, which was called *Fuad Ft. Mala*. I would definitely annotate that as the proper beginning of my musical career.

Do you have a particular genre in music?

I love doing the softer folk songs, but at the same time do pop and other types of music as well. I do not want to be limited in the type of music that I do. For example, my second album *E Ki Ajob Karkhana* composed by Arnob consists of folk covers while many of my first album songs were more pop-ish. However, I would say that I am very comfortable doing folk music.

Do you have any particular plans for 2018?

I actually want to do something different this year; I plan to work with street musicians in Australia. I have already talked to some very talented people that I have come across, and I am really excited for the project.

Describe yourself in one word.

It would have to be the Bangla word "Paagol"!

Do you have any message for the readers?

There was one thing I wanted to say to the female readers in particular. Please believe in yourself and move forward with confidence. I struggled a lot to get where I am now, and I know how hard it is for a woman to build a proper career here. We are mothers, daughters and sisters; but most importantly we are individuals. Always remember that.

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Interviewed by Sadi Mohammad Shahnewaz

