

ALBUM REVIEW

Obostha Bujhe Beboস্থা

A lesson in cathartic anarchy

ASIF AYON

Issa Nibras Farooque is now a prominent name within Bangladesh's bustling underground indie scene with his album Obostha Bujhe Beboস্থা ushering him to centre stage. Widely praised for its lyrical content and unique melodies, what sets his music apart is how faithfully he breathes the life and struggle of the angst of this country.

The 8-track album kicks off with "Shikol Chirra, Kutta Bhagey". In your face, as the artist put it himself, the song is as much political as it is a song about self-reflection. With the accompaniment of a suave yet ominous guitar intro, Farooque's voice takes the reins from the get go. The fierce, cut-throat nature of his singing shapes the harrowing truths of society, our deepest resentments and even our own hypocrisies. The first two minutes of the song talks about all the issues that plague Bangladesh's socio-economic scheme and the haphazard ideologies which are only present to serve our own greed. The song moves into a techno beat for its epilogue perhaps signifying that everything has all but gone to the dogs, only for the artist to end stating the bipolar reactions we have towards elections, swing voting, and our deep seeded dissatisfactions with our systems.

After the barrage of social commentary that is the opening song of the album, it moves on to "Bolo Abar Keno" -- one of the more personal tracks on the album. The song moves along its course like a pendulum, his voice freely flowing through the whole process as he sings about deceit and the consequences of it. The beautiful guitar melody perfectly complements the poetic charm of Farooque's singing on this track as he looks for answers in the corner of the eyes of his faithful, only to feel marred by lies. The song makes it powerfully clear that everyone has to deal with the same lies. The melodies he belts throughout this song are endearing and are never plagued by a dull moment. The last section of this song is accompanied by a beat and a simple yet gorgeous melody, closing off the vicious circle of liars and believers.

If the first two songs are polar opposites of one another, then the following song is the median of the first two in terms of structure and feel. "Na! Na! Na! Ae Hotey Pare Na!" dictates how we are unfamiliar with living in cages despite being chained to shackles our whole lives. It's a depressing reminder

of how boxed in we all are despite the varying degrees of wealth or social brownie points we possess. With elements of funk and blues guitar melodies colouring the song, Farooque's raspy voice is a lot more relaxed through this track but not shy to let

between the two sides of the album as soon after, the unabashed "Haatey Tojbi, Alkhallar Nichey" starts playing. The song which put this musician on the map is a visceral outtake regarding how we act on the outside as opposed to the demons we truly are on the

him and his exciting guitar strumming, followed by a searing synth beat. Farooque keeps it clean and never borders on a cause for concern with the self-deprecation as all the lines on this song are playful and it translates over rhythmically as well.

The second last song on the album is a beautifully crafted lullaby titled "Shey Ekta Bandar Hain". Like a father speaking to his child, Farooque's melodies are kept simple on this track; the warm overtones of his guitar and his voice cradled me to a lull. The sense of comfort this song imbues is unlike any other Bangla song I've ever heard.

The album closes off with "Nonna Jole" rather unceremoniously but to a great effect. Farooque's voice cracks further as he sings about how there's no love and hope to be found in the murky and salty waters of life. The song closes off with beautiful vocalising by Nitasha Randhwana. A slow curtain falls on the eventful album that is Obostha Bujhe Beboস্থা.

For all the stories Farooque has packed into the album, you'd think that it's a 60-minute album but clocking in at 21 minutes, it's one of the shortest Bangla albums ever released. Each screech and melodic nuance make up eight of the most honest Bangla songs which portray struggles which we are all too familiar with by now.

Obostha Bujhe Beboস্থা is a great lesson on how to stir the melting pot of greed, anxiety, loss of love, and all things that shape the Bengali psyche. It's a cheerful and yet unapologetic bunch of songs, which despite not being written like a concept album, feels like one because of how smoothly the album flows. The album is available for listening on YouTube, Spotify, and Deezer and is available for purchase on iTunes and CD Baby.

Check out the links below for more:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k80J_TDpfFs
<https://www.facebook.com/farooquebhaiproject>



loose when it felt like it.

The album defining single "Shokaleo" comes in at the middle of the pack and just about has all of the best features of this album. An echoing electric guitar paired with a hypnotic back beat takes the spotlight here as Farooque delivers a chill expose on everlasting morning blues. The song is more upbeat compared to the rest of the tracks and is thematic to the song in that, despite how blue you may feel in the morning, it will all pass by the time evening rolls in.

"Shokaleo" acts as the perfect bridge

inside. A song about hiding and deceit ironically leaves no word unhidden as Farooque throws shade to everyone who's ever tried to hide their evil behind a veil of goodness.

If you were starting to wonder whether this man is going to call everyone out then you were right, because he wasn't going to leave himself out of this either. While he self-deprecates himself here and there through the course of the album, "Tumi Murkho Farooque Bhai" is an uncensored dig at his own ego and successes. The song comes in two stages, the first being just