

WHAT'S ON



Live Performance
 Title: The Motherload: Unicorns & Muhit, live!
 Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
 Date: September 29
 Time: 7pm-10pm




DHAKA COMICON
 Title: Daraz Presents DHAKA COMICON Express
 Venue: MIDAS Center (top floor)
 Date: September 28-29
 Time: 11am-8pm
 Entry: One day Pass BDT 200



Art Exhibition
 Title: State of Mind
 Venue: Kala Kendra, Mohammadpur
 Date: September 7 – October 3
 Time: 4:30pm - 8:30pm
 Facebook Page: Kala Kendra
 Contact:



Movie Premiere
 Title: Rock Strata: Live On Silver Screen
 Venue: Star Cineplex, Bashundhara City
 Date: September 29
 Time: 7pm-9:30pm



Solo Photography Exhibition
 Title: S.M. Sultan-The Cosmic Journey of a Fugitive
 Artist: Nasir Ali Mamun
 Venue: La Galerie, AFD



Live Performance
 Title: No Excuses - Indalo Revisits AIC
 Venue: Russian Cultural Centre, Dhanmondi
 Date: October 5
 Time: 3:30pm - 8pm
 Tickets: BDT 400



Thriving with the sitar

SHABABA IQBAL

Nishit Dey, a promising sitar player, initially stepped into the field of classical music through the tabla. Born in Mymensingh, Nishit is the grandson of noted guru Pandit Mithun Dey. Nishit is a part of the fourth generation of his family lineage of classical music. He first took lessons from his father, Sanjib Dey and his paternal uncle Asit Dey, both celebrated classical music teachers of the country. At a young age, he started learning the sitar from guru Sheikh Sattar Mohammed of the Imdadkhani *gharana*. After Sheikh Sattar Mohammed's demise in 2009, Nishit started training with Pt Ashim Chowdhury, one of the finest sitar players of India, based in Kolkata. He has also been under the tutelage of renowned sitarist, Pt Kushal Das at Bengal Parampara Sangeetalay. Currently, Nishit is mainly self-taught with guidance from his father, who he says motivated him to be goal-oriented and never give up.

"Many people don't take up music professionally because they are afraid that it may never provide them with a stable source of income," says Nishit. "However, that does not have to be a source of anxiety or fear as long as you have the talent and you know how to live within your means." Nishit feels that owing to technological and cultural advancements in the recent years, initiatives and venues are promoting many emerging artistes who now have plenty of ways to create their own prospects.

Nishit further opened up about his approach to doing live performances. "An immense sense of thrill comes with playing and hearing the first note of an acoustic instrument like the sitar inside an auditorium full of people," says Nishit, who performed alongside Arnab Bhattacharya, a young talent, on sarod, and Nilimesh Chakraborty on tabla yesterday at Jatra Biroti in Banani. "I always look for just one person in the crowd who is intrigued by what I am playing – once I have tracked down that person, I do the entire performance keeping them as my focus." Nishit believes that he has miles to go before he can be at par or at least close to the level of international musicians. He aspires to encourage other artistes to take up the forms of music that are native to our culture and nation and take his sitar around the world.

The whistling sensation

How Abanti Sithi sent riptides across the music industry



PHOTO: COURTESY

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

There are singers, and there are performers. Then, there are prodigies that completely change the trend for an entire generation of upcoming musicians. Abanti Sithi, who has Kolkata and Bangladesh spellbound with her talent, is just that. Her innate ability to whistle and create percussion with plastic cups has turned her into a one-woman orchestra of lustrous melody.

"I had no idea that my performance at the event would go viral," said Abanti. Soon after her first performance in *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* aired, it took social media by storm. "When Mac *bhai* (Maqsoodul Haque), Prince Mahmud, Partha Barua and many other famous musicians started congratulating me over Facebook, I was elated!"

When Abanti Sithi was young, she used to sit by her music teacher, Shushanta Deb Kanu as he taught her elder sister. "Even though I was very young, I used to point out mistakes that my sister made," laughs Abanti. "At one point, my mentor saw the talent in me and that is when I started learning the basics."

However, her musical journey officially began in 2012 when she was amongst the top 10 in that year's iteration of *Close Up 1*. "By then, I was pretty good at whistling, but could never really put it to good use," said Abanti. "I randomly whistled one day, and everyone in the show really loved it." That is when Abanti became endeared as the 'Whistle Queen' amongst the musical fraternity.

Always eager to learn, Abanti started watching 'cup videos' on YouTube and quickly adopted the art. Her videos quickly became viral, earning millions of views across Facebook and YouTube. "I've never really appreciated the 'viral' culture much. I feel like people like that come and go, and no one really remembers them." The young musician is adamant on constantly evolving as an artiste.

The roaring success of the young trailblazer is a wake-up-call for musicians in the country to step up their game. She created an impact because she is an innovator and perhaps most importantly, a learner. It is apparent that the audience is tired of the same old clichéd music tropes that music industries tend to milk once they see even an ounce of success.

For Abanti, the results of *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa* do not matter. "As long as I am here, I want to learn. This experience has been a valuable one for me." That, however, will not prevent the country from hoping that she comes back as champion.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Bhabanagara Foundation's 'Sadhusongo'

AFSANA AZIZ NITOL

Bhabanagara Foundation has been reviving the essence of *Charyapada* for the last five years at Suhrawardy Udyan. Bauls from different districts of Bangladesh, along with academics, writers, poets and baul enthusiasts attend the event. They congregate under the open sky every

Wednesday to sing songs of *Charyapada* at their gatherings, also known as *Sadhusongo*.

Symon Zakaria, the founder of Bhabanagara Foundation, believes that *Sadhusongo* will help people connect with their roots and nature. "In this digital age, our lives mostly revolve around our mobile phones," says Symon Zakaria. "I want people to be more interactive with each other."

The purpose of *Sadhusongo* is to combine traditional and creative knowledge. Abiding by the rules and out of respect for the Bauls and other artistes, the audience does not eat or drink during the performance. No microphones or sound systems are used in *Sadhusongo*. *Khola Golar Gaan Khola Kaan E Shuntey Hobe* (listen to unamplified music with open ears) is their slogan.

Changing gender misconceptions

MOHUA MOULI

ReThink Bangladesh hosted *Jannat Gaiche* at their stage Bindudhara in Dhanmondi recently. The event consisted of a musical performance by Jannat Jahan, a transgender woman, who has been honing her musical skills under the guidance of ReThink for the past few months.

The event focused on bringing Jannat to light. She shared her story of evolving from being a socially marginalised individual to finding enlightenment through following her passion for music. The show started off with a performance of *Mayabono Biharini* by Rabindranath Tagore and the audience was instantly taken aback by the vigour with which Jannat sang. This was followed by a performance of *Bhenge Mor Ghoror Chabi* and a few folk numbers. Two other transgender students of ReThink came forward to share their thoughts on society, tolerance and what it means to be third gender individuals in Bangladesh.

While enjoying the show, I felt a strange sense of wonder, as I was seeing a transgender woman in a new light. Even though the Bangladesh government has now acknowledged people of a third gender, the social stigma surrounding their existence is still hindering them from finding acceptance in today's society. An event like *Jannat Gaiche* puts the third gender in the much needed spotlight, allowing us to understand

them better and be more respectful of their community.

This sentiment was shared by one of the speakers during the show, H A Bobby, a transgender writer and International Human Rights worker. She spoke of the various aspects of being a transgender woman and the many misconceptions surrounding the definition of transgender. Through music, stories and laughter, she encouraged the audience to not be judg-

mental towards transgender people and to be more tolerant because everyone deserves to coexist in nature.

The show ended with H A Bobby handing a token of appreciation to Jannat. So far, ReThink Bangladesh has worked with around 1000 people of the third gender, providing them with support in performance arts and other forms of practical education to create employment opportunities for them.



PHOTO: COURTESY

FAREWELL YELLOW BRICK ROAD

Elton John's final tour

The curtains finally opened for the 'Farewell Yellow Brick Road' tour many months after the announcement, in Allentown, Pennsylvania, and will continue through December 15th in Dallas, Texas. After a hiatus, the tour will resume in January 11th, 2019 in Boise, Idaho. There is nothing unusual about the fact that the show sold out soon after the declaration was made. Due to the overwhelming demand, the pop icon added 25 additional North American concert dates to his 'Farewell Yellow Brick Road' tour. Tickets for the newly added shows can be purchased at www.eltonjohn.com from October 5.



According to the website, after more than half a century on the road and an unparalleled career that has redefined the cultural landscape and seen him claim his place as a true global icon, Elton has announced via an exclusive VR180 Live Stream on YouTube, details of his final tour called *Farewell Yellow Brick Road*. Kicking off in the US on September 8, 2018, the *Farewell Yellow Brick Road* tour will consist of more than 300 shows across five continents, hitting North America, Europe, the Middle East, Asia, South America and Australasia before reaching its conclusion in 2021.

The British artiste reflected on the tour saying, "Performing live fuels me and I'm ecstatic and humbled to continue to play to audiences across the globe. I plan to bring the passion and creativity that has entertained my fans for decades to my final tour."

Source: www.eltonjohn.com