

# An Essay on Existentialism and Cat Power

FATIMA JAHAN ENA

Being an ardent fan of the movie *Juno*, I find myself rewatching it every few months or so with the same untainted love and teary eyes every single time.

The last time I watched it, I became fixated with the song "Sea of Love" by Cat Power, which plays during the final heartbreaking scene of the movie. There is this particular video of the song on YouTube that seems like nothing special on the surface. The video is a series of black and white photographs that change along with the melancholic song, which seems oddly befitting. However, in the description box of said video, lies a somewhat secret message that people, including myself, tend to miss at first glance.

The man who made the video wrote about a tender glimpse into his life a decade ago, where he talks about his fall from grace after a breakup, his views on the world through the eyes of a lonely man in his late twenties, and his yearning to express himself through his photography. He also wrote about how



PHOTO:  
ANTAR CHAKMA

# JAZZ NIGHT

## with Imran Ahmed Trio

MOHUA MOULI

On October 11, 2018, Dhanmondi's 3rd Space was the venue for Jazz Night, with performances by Imran Ahmed Trio, with an opening act by students of Imran Ahmed.

I reached about ten minutes early, only to find a room full of a young audience, eager to witness one of the most prominent jazz acts in the country. For those still unaware of this band, Imran Ahmed Trio consists of Imran Ahmed on guitar, Mohaimin Karim on bass guitar, and Arjo Shrestho on drums. They've been making jazz music for about three years and stand as the first jazz group from Bangladesh to have been on a world tour, earlier this year.

Once I found myself a spot, I noticed four boys getting up on the stage and setting up their instruments. These were the students of Imran Ahmed, who've been learning to play jazz music on the guitar for the last couple of months.

As the audience shuffled into place on the carpeted floor, Max Mystel, the host of the show, came up to the stage to introduce Imran Ahmed to the crowd. He came forward and welcomed his pupils, Yeameem, Ishraq, Faiyaz and Aumio and told the audience that they'd be playing a set they'd only been practicing for less than a month.

The group started off with a song called 'Billie's Bounce', while a proud teacher, Imran, stood in the corner of the room, cheering them on. The students displayed a sincere performance of three more songs, one of them being a classic jazz number, 'All Of Me', which was

also sung by Faiyaz, one of the students.

After they were done, it was now time for Imran Ahmed Trio to take the stage. They started off with Rumba, an original composition by the trio. This was followed by a few more originals, including an unnamed ballad and an energetic performance of 'Ode To Brazil', a Brazilian jazz influenced song to which the entire audience was cheering to and clapping in sync with the upbeat rhythm of the drums. By the end of the show, the audience, including myself, were left with a sense of satisfaction that left me craving for more evenings like this.

I got a chance to speak with Imran's students and ask them about how they became interested in learning jazz and where they hope to see themselves musically. "All four of us have been playing the guitar for the last 4-5 years and we all found a common ground in wanting to learn more in the technical aspect of music," said Ishraq Atahar Dipro, one of Imran's pupils, who is also a medical student. While they were still on the fence about taking up music as a future career option, they all seem to find hope and inspiration in their teacher Imran.

When asked about his future plans, Imran said, "Right now I am focused on building a jazz scene in Bangladesh that'll be talked about in the international jazz community. And that's where I see my students and younger musicians, representing Bangladeshi globally."

Imran Ahmed Trio is currently working on its second studio album that is scheduled to release by the end of this year. To catch them live, keep an eye on their Facebook Page: [fb.com/imranahmedmusic](https://www.facebook.com/imranahmedmusic)



his photography helps him to capture moments that may be considered mundane but deserve observation and acknowledgement. Finally, he had linked his photography page at the end, which I proceeded to pore over once I had digested the quiet immensity of what I had discovered.

I remember feeling so greatly moved by that tiny message tucked away in a corner of the Internet as a solitary myopic slice of life, waiting to be discovered by chance. Here was this man who had offered the world a tiny chip of himself or who he was ten years ago and there I was, a nobody from Bangladesh crying over it in a dark room filled with unfinished assignments. I felt strangely connected to the man. A connection which was like a fraying string, sure, but a connection nonetheless. I wanted to give the man in the text, who existed a decade before and is no longer the same, a hug and tell him everything was going to be okay and to thank him for gently placing such a genuine piece of his life upon the world.

The discovery has certainly made a definite impact on how I perceive other people. We're all just ants in an ant farm, digging deeper and deeper, never fully satisfied with just having enough. We're all just moths, constantly searching for a comfortable source of light or dying in the process. In this vast, cold, ever expanding universe, we desperately crave connections and a sense of belonging that we hunt for them. In reality, life brushes past us swiftly but sometimes it hits us like a battering truck when we least expect it and in places where we may have stumbled upon purely by luck.

The way the world works is beyond me, but I do know that there is surrealism tucked away in the nooks and crannies of our lives, whether that's larger than life coincidences or bona fide magic. We may never understand the mechanism of life but we can hope to be fortunate enough to step on these cracks once in a while, to remind us of our place in our wonderful little planet.

I did and I hope you do, too.