



AB's raison d'être: his wife, Chandana, and two children, Fairuj and Tazwar.

PHOTO: AB KITCHEN

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it was the lengthy and difficult process of exploring and experimenting with different tracks to recreate the perfect sound that made learning more enjoyable. "It was a challenging process, and I loved it."

It was his father who bought him his first guitar—that, in a nutshell, was the beginning of the end. "It began innocently enough as a hobby, but at one point, I became very serious that I would have to do music. It became an obsession, and from that, a profession," he says.

His family staunchly resisted his decision, arguing that the entertainment business was no place for a son from a decent family. "In my family, most of them are haji. Initially, they simply couldn't accept that I would do music professionally. I don't really blame them. Back then, that path was really difficult for



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**According to AB, in addition to fighting for copyright, artists should also focus on creating original and inspiring music.**

musicians. That path is difficult even now—artists can't be sure if they can survive solely by doing music," explains Bachchu.

When he first came to Dhaka, he couldn't afford to rent a house, so he

stayed in a hotel in Elephant Road. He would try to avoid meeting the landlord, whenever he was low on cash to evade the rent. "If there was a gig, we could pay, and if not, we would have to owe the landlord for days. He was very nice though and understood our situation," reminisces AB about his days as a struggling musician.

In 1978, he joined a band called Feelings, and then in 1980, Souls. Band music was a novel concept in Bangladesh at that time, but it was all AB wanted to do with his life. "From my childhood, I was fascinated by western bands like Deep Purple, Pink Floyd, Dire Straits and Led Zeppelin—I wanted to popularise that sound, that concept, among our audience," he recalls. "I've always wanted to be a guitar hero. Singing was never that important to me; guitar was always my first choice."

He spent a decade with the now-famous band, slowly coming into his own as a lead guitarist. After producing such memorable songs as *Mon Shudhu Mon Chuyeche*, *Torey Putuler Moto Kore Shajiye*, *Eitoh Ekhane Brishti Bheja* and *Ek Jhaak Paakhi* with Souls, he left to form his own band, LRB (originally Little River Band, later renamed to Love Runs Blind) in 1991.

"I left Souls because of different tastes in sound. I was into loud, rocking, powerful sounds, and the rest of the members wanted quiet, melodious sounds. You cannot compromise day after day. We never really had any big arguments, but it occurred to me that it would be better if I just quit and do something different," says Bachchu.

LRB is a hard rock band—always was, always will be, insists AB. Although musicians such as Zinga Goshty, Akhand Brothers and Azam Khan introduced and experimented with the concept of Bengali rock long before the band came into

existence, LRB in the 90s played an instrumental role in shaping the genre's indelible image.

The audience loved LRB's first album—a double album, the first ever in Bangladesh. "There was so much fear and anticipation during our first release. We didn't know what we should do, what was happening," recalls Bachchu. "Later we found that people were actually waiting in lines outside some shops to buy our album."

There is nothing AB can't do, says his manager with quiet pride, and the truth of the statement becomes apparent when one considers the breadth and range of his work. Celebrated for his gritty blues-based lead guitar and considered by many as the best guitarist in the country, if not in all of Asia, AB is also a composer, singer, songwriter, producer, jingle-writer and recording artist.

"My sound has changed over the decades," says AB. "My target sound was a pure rock sound, not too refined, not polished, where the guitar distortion is clear. Thanks to technological advances and decades of experimentation, I am more or less settled in my sound."

Bachchu argues that his solo music is completely different from LRB's sound. He says, "LRB is complete hard rock, but the music I do myself is full of melodic and romantic songs. There is not much experimentation. Even if I want to, I can't



**AB with his contemporaries, James and Hamin Ahmed: legends in their own right.**

PHOTO: AB KITCHEN

be too experimental because my regular listeners don't appreciate it. They still prefer 'me-you' type love songs."

Bachchu experimented with two of his albums, *Shomoy* and *Eka*—infusing blues, jazz and funk elements into his usual style. Lyrically, too, he wanted to break out of the 'me-you' tradition of soft romantic songs. "But they were not received well at all. My regular audience thought it was too high-thought. They didn't want something so serious," says AB with a sigh. "After that, I didn't experiment much in my solo albums. What's the point if no one appreciates them?"

Despite his unparalleled guitar skills and his undying love for Carlos Santana and Joe Satriani, AB has only produced one instrumental album, *The Sound of Silence*, for similar reasons.

AB insists that he doesn't resent the fact that his audience is not yet ready to accept the kind of music he loves to play. "I don't resent it; I leave it up to time. There will come a time when there will be a huge number of listeners who love jazz, blues and funk-rock. There are