

CENTRE STAGE

I AM MY INSPIRATION

Bonna Mirza has mesmerized her audience with her amazing acting prowess on stage and the silver screen. She is a high-spirited woman, who has always been committed to her roots as a theatre artist. During an interview with Star Showbiz, Bonna Mirza talks about her passion for the theatre movement of Bangladesh.



You are a part of a theatre troupe for so long now. What do you have to say about the theatre movement in Bangladesh?

First and foremost, theatre is not the work of an individual; rather it is collaborative form of fine art by a group of performers. So, I cannot alone take it towards overarching glory. After the Liberation War, theatre had its ups and downs and lacked the prominence it deserves. However, the scenario has changed and theatre lovers are again looking forward to enthralling performances. Our audiences are our centre of performance and whatever we perform is for them. Thus, as the theatre is thriving, it is no longer enclosed within Mohila Shomiti, Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, or Dhaka Theater; rather it is been shown at new frontiers and spaces for the theatre lovers. We are taking theatre to newer heights from where our legacies originated.

Do you think one can let go of the theatre world and work elsewhere?

Theatre has a fun side and I say the word "fun" because if someone is into theatre once, they can never forget the joy of it. Theatre gives a person an intellectual identity which one cherishes for their entire life. For example, when we ask a

theatre enthusiast about their favorite pick of movie they talk about films directed by Ritwik Kumar Ghatak, even though they might love Karan Johar's movies – all to emphasize on the intellectual identity and showcase the scholarly knowledge gained from studying theatre. Even in the television world we view people in a different light when we learn that they come from the theatre background. Thus for all these reasons, I would say, even though someone is working elsewhere, they will always find their way back to the heart of the theatre.

You have been associated with theatre for a very long time. When did you start your journey and how did the passion and love grow for television and theatre?

I began theatre right after my SSC examination and it has been 25 years now. Regarding working on television, I would not say that I work only from love and passion. It is my profession and I work professionally with focus and knowledge in both the fields.

Who inspired you to work in theatre?

I have done theatre and all the other work in my life till now from my own understanding and knowledge, so I AM MY INSPIRATION! I am always asked this question and every time I give the same answer. However, I did gather inspiration

later in my life when I was studying for Master's in Theatre at Dhaka University. It was my Professor Dr. Syed Jamil Ahmed who not only taught me theatre but also many different aspects of life. To add on, I would say I get inspired everyday from the works of the people around me.

Do you have any dream in life that is yet to be fulfilled?

I do not dream or have any big dream, because dreams are meant to be imaginary. All I do is keep on working hard and I do those works which are necessary and important for me. If I am capable of doing something, only then I do them and even if I am not, I learn and train myself to do so. Thus, I do not live dreaming but rather working hard and knowing my work.

You have been known as a social activist. What's your take on this?

I do not know how that tag came along with my name, but I am not a social worker or consider myself as one. A social worker is someone who is always on the field working for a cause and I am not that actively involved with any cause. I am not working for any organization; rather I am associated with my theatre troupe *Desh Natok* and it has been 25 years with them. I have worked in television dramas and a few movies.

Besides this I am currently working as the Head of Sales and Marketing at *Bangla Tribune*, and I have been in this position for the last 3 years. This is I all do. I believe I am very political not by serving any particular party; rather I say this because I know what my stance is. I speak up against anything that I feel is not right, may it be for myself or someone else. Thus I think that is the reason people call me a social activist or feminist. I am just a human being, a woman who knows her rights. I am just following the legacy of what others have done before me. I am not a feminist because the word itself comes with very big responsibilities.

You have a very busy schedule, but whenever you get some leisure time what do you like to do?

Well, I am a bookworm. So, I spend my 'me time' reading books. I can spend hours in a book gathering or discussion because I can indulge myself in this sort of activities very easily.

Thank you so much for being with us today. It was lovely talking with you about theatre.

Thank you too! Really enjoyed this conversation.

By Joana Nomrata Mazumder