



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

In Conversation with RAFIQU ALAM

APORAJITA MUSTAFA

Celebrated musician and revered Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artiste, Rafiqul Alam has been making waves in the Bangladeshi music industry through his playback and 'adhunik' songs for decades. The Daily Star caught up with the renowned musician for a chat recently to talk about his experience with Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra, latest works, expectations from the new year, the upcoming generation of artistes in the industry and more.

Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra artistes are regarded as the all-time gems of Bangladesh's music industry. Could you tell us about some of the highlights of your experiences as an artiste for Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra? Working for Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra in itself was a monumental feat. Our aim was to ignite passion and dedication for the Liberation War in our fellow citizens through fiercely motivating songs. My first performance for the Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra was the song *Nongor Tolo Tolo*. A few months after the war began, we were asked to prepare a number of new tracks, and I was given the opportunity to sing a solo *Jai Jodi Jak Pran*, written by Abu Hena Mustafa Kamal. We sang many memorable songs, mostly in choir, including *Shaat Koti Aaj Prohori Prodeep*, written by my elder brother, Sarwar Jahan, and the last song aired by Shadhin Bangla Betar Kendra – the first song for independent Bangladesh – *Bijoy Nishan Urchhe Oi*.

Which projects are you currently working on?

I have recorded twelve 'adhunik' songs in the past couple of months, composed by various music directors. All the tracks will be releasing on YouTube soon. I felt like work was quite stagnant even three years ago, but the industry has become more active in the recent past. The popularity of online platforms and establishment of intellectual property rights in Bangladesh have definitely facilitated this boom in the music industry.

What are your expectations from the new generation of artistes who have entered the Bangladeshi music industry?

I have noticed that the newer lot of musicians are giving in to the publicity hype and only focusing on covering songs by famous musicians, instead of creating original work. As a result, most of their career trajectories are not reflecting their true potential. There has been an abundance of fresh talent with stellar vocals and skills in recent years, but their fixation with getting under the limelight as quickly as possible is also leading to stunted career growth in the long run. My expectation from them would be to invest enough time and effort into creating original content to offer their own individual flavor of music to the audience.

WHAT'S ON

Musical Ensemble
Title: Mala
Venue: Jatra Biroti
Date: Today
Time: 7 pm
Details: facebook.com/jatrabirotiworld

Winter Festival
Title: Him Utsab
Venue: Jahangirnagar University
Date: January 17 – January 19
Time: 10 am

Musical Evening
Title: Sovota And The Band Live At Ajo Idea Space
Venue: Ajo Idea Space, Uttara
Date: January 19
Time: 7:30 pm – 9 pm

Musical Evening
Title: The Armeen Musa Band at The Junction
Venue: The Junction, Niketon
Date: Today
Time: 7 pm – 10 pm

Bulbul Chowdhury Birth Centenary
Organisers: BSA & BNSS
Venue: Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy
Yearlong Celebration currently under

ArtistTalk
Title: Leelaparab-1 Kathapokathan
Venue: Dwip Gallery, Lalmatia
Date: January 5
Time: 6 pm – 9 pm

Asiatic Society Heritage Museum open to all

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The Asiatic Society Heritage Museum in Old Town, Dhaka, was open to all yesterday from 9:30 am to 2 pm, on the occasion of The Asiatic

Society of Bangladesh's 67th anniversary. However, the museum will be open to visitors today and tomorrow from 10:30 am to 4:30 pm. There is a one-hour break for Jummah prayers from 1 pm onwards.



PHOTO: COURTESY



The three new tele-fictions were announced at a press conference held yesterday.

Deepto TV launches three new serials

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

With a fresh start to the calendar year, Deepto TV is all set to air three new tele-fictions starting from tomorrow. A press conference was held yesterday for the introduction of the new ventures. The television serials are scheduled to air six days a week. The list begins with *Khonayok*, which revolves around a middle-class man named Rumi. With the hopes of making a fortune, he befriends a rich girl and embarks on a dark path. Directed by Firoz Kibor Dollar, the television serial stars Golam

Kibria Tanvir, Ishana Khan, Fazlur Rahman Babu among others. *Khonayok* will telecast every Saturday to Thursday at 6:00 pm and 8:30 pm.

Next in line is the television serial *Bhalobashar Alo Adhaar*. After the demise of her husband, Nandani struggles to give her child a better life, who suffers from leukemia. Burdened by a financial crisis, she is forced to return to Dhaka for her child's treatment. When she is unable to find any aid, her boss extends a helping hand, but at the cost of Nandani's self-respect. *Bhalobashar Alo Adhaar* is directed by Mehedi Hasan.

Actors Boishakhi Ghosh, Shahid Sharif Khan, Shampa Reza and others will be seen in the television serial that is scheduled for broadcast every Saturday to Thursday at 6:30 pm and 9:30 pm.

The third serial is *Maan Obhimaan*. It is about a middle-class girl named Ranu. Rahat, an industrialist, is in love with Ranu, but his friend Forhad turns into a third wheel in this story, and later falls for Ranu's sister Bithi. Directed by Razu Khan, *Maan Obhimaan* stars Shomapti Mashuk, Rozy Siddiqi and Tofa Hasan amongst others. The serial will air every Saturday to Thursday at 7:00 pm and 9:00 pm.

REVIEW

Why 'Black Mirror: Bandersnatch' is not a cinematic masterpiece

MOHUA MOULI

When I started seeing posts all over social media about *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch*, I couldn't help but ask myself whether this is actually revolutionizing the art of film-making, or is it a Netflix gimmick to keep its audiences entertained.

The idea of making an interactive film is not new to Netflix. They have been using it on several children's shows on the platform and had started talks with the producers of *Black Mirror* about making an interactive film in 2017. After much speculation, the film was finally released on December 28, 2018.

Set in the year 1984 in England, the movie follows a young programmer named Stefan Butler, who sets out to design a game based on a fantasy novel named *Bandersnatch* for a company called Tuckersoft. While working on perfecting the game, Butler tumbles into paranoia and psychosis which strains his relationship with his father and he begins to

question his reality.

As you begin your journey into the life of Stefan, you come across choices you have to make for him. These lead to a series of consequences that eventually produce a variety of endings depending on the path you take. There are a total of five different endings, each varying in length of viewing time.

The film takes inspiration from Lewis Carroll's depiction of the creature bandersnatch, and also from a 1984 game under the same name that was unreleased as the company went bankrupt. It is also littered with references to previous episodes of *Black Mirror*, much like some of the episodes of the show itself.

While the production quality was excellent, the film was very poorly edited. The abrupt scene transitions, which I assume was made to depict the volatility of Stefan's mind, failed to be coherent. It looked as if the director shot hundreds of different scenes and pieced

it all together through permutations to provide for the various endings through unique pathways.

The arbitrary nature of storytelling also made it difficult to form connections with the characters. This is a shame because actors like Fionn Whitehead, from the Oscar-winning film *Dunkirk* and BAFTA award-winning actor Will Poulter did their best at playing their respective roles.

The subject matter of the film dabbed in a meaningful exploration of existentialism, but it was far more focused on giving the audience an interactive experience rather than a well-planned out film, through cinematic experimentation.

Overall, the film did not deliver to my expectations of a mind-bending story that will leave me unsettled and doubtful about the modern world. But if you're simply interested in a unique experience, *Black Mirror: Bandersnatch* could be worth a watch.

