

IN FOND MEMORY OF SHAHNAZ RAHMATULLAH

What more can the world expect from a SINGER?

A renowned figure in Bangladesh's music history with her melodious voice, Shahnaz Rahmatullah is among the few singers who sang patriotic songs for both Bangladesh and Pakistan, and won the hearts of millions.

MOHAMMAD AL-MASUM MOLLA

She began her singing career at the age of 11, which illustriously spawned over five decades, during which she released four albums. Despite her somewhat humble discography, four of her songs were selected in the list of the top 20 Bangla songs by BBC. I had the privilege of watching her perform live thrice; the last time was at her home, around two years ago. Her music was so enthralling, so delicately beautiful, that it left me with memories that I shall forever cherish.

Around a decade ago, she announced her retirement from music. But among her closest people, she would at times unveil her melodious aptitude. One day, I asked her whether she felt bad for leaving her musical career, having mastered the craft over so many years. "I sang for 50 years at a stretch. People showered me with immense love and affection. Not a single song of mine has let anyone down. Is that not enough for a singer?" came her swift reply.

The debate that troubled her for many years was that one of her songs, *Prothom Bangladesh Amar Shesh Bangladesh* was used,

without her consent, as the theme song for BNP. During my discussions with her, she expressed her frustration with the fact that her songs were politicised, although she sang for the nation as a whole, and not for any specific party.

Interestingly, during the Liberation War, her song *Joy Bangla Banglar Joy* served as the opening soundtrack for many programmes which inspired the Freedom Fighters.

Her extraordinary voice caught the attention of ghazal maestro, Mehedi Hassan, under whom she trained for a few years. She further received training under the tutelage of revered names including Ustad Phul Mohammad, Ustad Munir Hossain and Shahid Altaf Mahmud.

Shahnaz Rahmatullah was the beloved sister of late Anwar Parvez, a renowned music composer and celebrated actor, and singer Zafar Iqbal. After her demise, musical legend, Runa Laila addressed took to social media saying, "A great loss to the music world. Shahnaz Rahmatullah is no more. How many more of these great artistes will we have to lose? Another legend becomes a bright shining star in the sky. May Allah rest her soul in peace."

The 67 year old singer gained fame in Pakistan after singing iconic national songs of Pakistan including *Sohni Dharti Allah Rakhay* and *Jeevay Jeevay Pakistan*.

Famed Pakistani journalist, Hamid Meer writes, "Shahnaz Begum passed away in Bangladesh on March 23 when many Pakistanis were listening to her famous song *Sohni Dharti Allah Rakhay* on Pakistan day."

To me, Shahnaz Rahmatullah is a singer who possessed the rare quality of having an everlasting impact on your soul with her melodious voice.



PHOTO: COLLECTED

REMEMBERING Shahnaz Rahmatullah

SHAH ALAM SHAZI

Renowned singer Shahnaz Rahmatullah passed away at the age of 67 in the early hours of Sunday. Known for songs such as 'Ekbar Jete De Na Amar Chotto Sonar Gaye', 'Je Chilo Drishtir Shimanay' and 'Ek Tara Tui Desher Kotha' among others, she was an Ekushey Padak recipient in 1992. Celebrities offer their condolences on the tragic demise of the musical icon and share their fond memories of her with us.



Gazi Mazharul Anwar

I had penned the now well-known song, *Joy Bangla Banglar Joy*, soon after Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's speech on March 7, 1971. I invited musicians Anwar Parvez, Altaf Mahmud and Abdul Jabbar over to my studio afterwards. On the suggestion of Altaf Mahmud, we all collaborated on the song. Shahnaz, who was quite young at the time, sang the song beautifully. She also collaborated on the song, *Neshar Patre Dhele*, with me. Be it film, adhunik or patriotic songs, Shahnaz's talent as a singer shone through every project that she was a part of. She was a brilliant singer and human being. Her music will be passed on across generations.



Khurshid Alam

I am at a loss for words at the moment. My deepest sympathies go out to Shahnaz's family and loved ones during this difficult time. On the 8th of this month, Shahnaz and I performed two duet songs at Gulshan Club. That was her first stage performance in two decades. Her husband, who is a close friend of mine, was present too. Just from the reactions of the crowd, you could tell that she was a natural at what she does. She truly touched the lives of millions through her melodious voice. Personally, I think that her song,

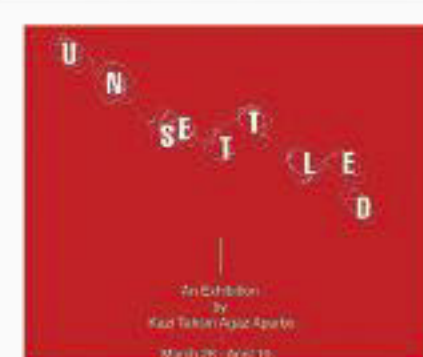


PHOTO: STAR

Rafiqul Alam

Shahnaz Rahmatullah was a passionate and dedicated singer in every aspect. I would say that one would be hard-pressed to find a singer of her caliber, and that too, someone who contributed as much to Bangla music as she did. She was the voice behind some of the most iconic Bangla songs, especially in the patriotic genre. It is truly hard to believe that we have lost such a gem of a singer and I feel that it is the end of an era for our industry and I pray that she continues to live on through her music.

WHAT'S ON



Photography Exhibition
Title: Unsettled: A solo exhibition by Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
Date: March 28 – April 10
Time: 7 pm – 10 pm

Dance Drama
Title: Dance Drama MEERA
Venue: National Theater, BSA
Date: April 13
Time: 6 pm – 9 pm

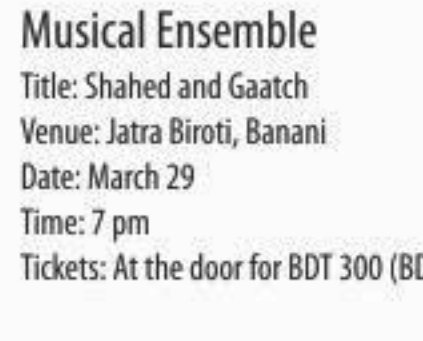


Art Exhibition
Title: Still – Life: an art exhibition by Moon Rahman
Venue: Dwip Gallery, Lalmatia
Date: March 23 – April 7
Time: 3 pm – 9 pm

Film Screening
Title: Nibash – The residence short film screening
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
Date: March 30
Time: 7 pm – 9 pm



Musical Ensemble
Title: Shahed and Gaatch
Venue: Jatra Biroti, Banani
Date: March 29
Time: 7 pm
Tickets: At the door for BDT 300 (BDT 200 for students)



Group Art Exhibition
Title: Life 2019
Venue: Gallery Cosmos, New DOHS, Mohakhali
Date: March 26 – April 9
Time: 11 am – 8 pm

