

"My greatest achievement is Feedback"

- Foad Nasser Babu



SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

Foad Nasser Babu has been the leader and keyboardist of Feedback for 40 years, a crowning achievement in the band music arena of the country. As a composer, he has also created countless memorable jingles, as well as kick-started many young musicians' careers with his tunes. On the occasion of his birthday yesterday, the humble legend talked to The Daily Star about his musical journey, plans, and more.

We wish you many happy returns of the day. What are your plans for today?
I don't have many plans, I hit the studio for some work earlier in the morning. Some of my friends are coming over in the evening. Honestly, I treat it like any other day, but I appreciate the wishes and good thoughts that I receive. Feedback celebrated its 40th birthday recently, which is a huge achievement. Where do you see yourself after this? It was indeed a very emotional day. However, we don't intend to stop here, and we will keep doing what we have done for the past 40 years: make music. Yes, the music industry has changed, there are far less tangible audio albums out here, and more singles are being released nowadays. However, we will keep making music amidst the changes.

How do you see the newer artistes in the music industry today?
Of course, there are many talented musicians in the industry, and they have an edge over us, as they have everything at the touch of a button. When we started out, there were very few materials and references to follow. We had to figure things out as we went, although that was an exciting journey on its own. Music recording software, tutorials, videos of live performances, theories are all very easy to find now, but we have to be careful so as to keep our originality intact.

What is your biggest achievement in your illustrious musical career?
Undoubtedly, my greatest achievement is my band, Feedback. I have given it my all over the years. I am also very lucky to have been under the guidance of the great Alauddin Ali, who was a treasure of knowledge for me. I feel grateful to have started music when the likes of Azam Khanm Samar Das and Satya Saha were playing, I learned a lot from them as well.

PHOTO: COLLECTED

An Ode to Benaras

Suchisree Ray's treat to semi-classical music

ZAHANGIR ALOM

Bengal Foundation recently launched an audio CD titled *An Ode to Benaras*, featuring semi-classical music including thumri, dadra, chaiti and kajri by the talented artiste Suchisree Ray. Apart from receiving extensive training in khayal and thumri, Suchisree Ray's years as a senior disciple of well-known musicologist Pt Kumar Prasad Mukherji propelled her interest in research and experimentation.

As a tribute to the stalwarts -- Badi Moti Bai, Siddheswari Devi, Rasoolan Bai and Kashi Bai -- the CD starts off with a chaiti titled *Eri Thaiyan Motiyaa Heraye Gaili*, set on raga Mishra Jhinjhoti. The piece, originally sung by Badi Moti Bai, describes the bereavement of a young bride whose husband is in a far-away place.

The second track, a dadra, *Guiya Mose Bharawe Gagariya*, is based on raga Pancham Se Gara. It was originally rendered by Siddheswari Devi. Next, *Kankara Mohe Lag Jaihe Naar*, is another dadra on raga Mishra Piloo, which was originally sung by Rasoolan Bai.

The fourth track *Teri Kaatily Nigaho Ne Mara* is also a dadra, originally sung by Kashi Bai. In the song, a woman narrates her endearment towards her lover whose enticing eyes keep her on her toes.

The following track, *Bhig Jau Mein Piya*, is a Mishra Khamaj kajri, which was originally performed by Siddheswari Devi. The final song is a thumri, *Muraliya Kaun Gumaan Bhari*, set on raga Manj Khamaj. It was originally rendered by Siddheswari Devi as well. In the thumri, the singer describes the attributes of an enchanting flute. Here, the flute is personified as Lord Krishna and in describing it, the singer expresses her desire for his love.

Suchisree Ray has a Master's degree in English Literature. She is a scholar and recipient of a junior fellowship in classical music from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, and is an enlisted artiste of Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Eastern Zonal Cultural Centre (EZCC). Her mellifluous voice, encompassing a rich blend of emotions, has enthralled audiences all over the world. Apart from being a successful performer, Suchisree Ray is acknowledged as a good music trainer, as well as an accomplished writer, painter and publisher.

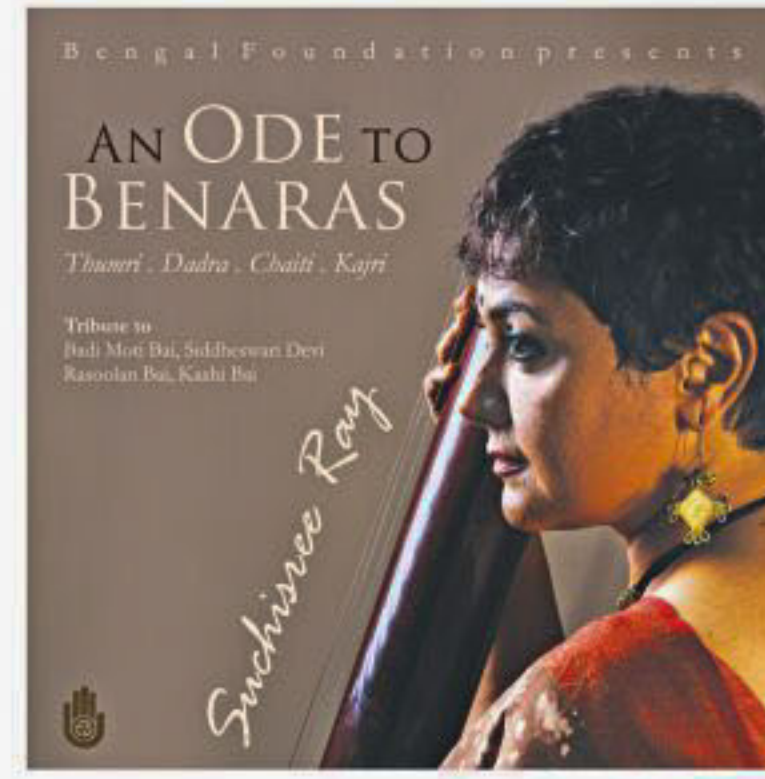


PHOTO: COURTESY

Uber makes anthem for ICC Cricket World Cup

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Uber has come up with an anthem called, *Way-O, Way-O*, to coincide with the ICC Cricket World Cup. The song is written by Ogilvy South and South East Asia's Chief Creative Officer and Vice Chairman (India), Sonal Dabral. It is composed, produced and curated by Michael McCleary, who has composed music for several Indian films and advertisements. The anthem is a collaboration between several musicians representing countries competing in the World Cup: Sanam from India, Jahmiel from Jamaica, Simba Diallo from New Zealand, choir group Khayelitsha United Mambazo from South Africa and Catherine Taylor Dawson from the United Kingdom. The song is expected to play on the stadium screens and during game breaks.



PHOTO: COURTESY

'Ramadan Cultural Night' at Cairo Opera House



PHOTO: COURTESY

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, in collaboration with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh, arranged a programme titled, 'Ramadan Cultural Night', at Cairo Opera House in Egypt recently. The programme featured musical performances from noted Bangladeshi artistes Sujit Mustafa, Tuntun Baul, Mehreen and Shahnaz Nasrin Ila. Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs of Bangladesh, Sania Akhter, and Cultural Officer of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy, Abu Saleh Mohammed Abdullah, were in attendance.



BISHOHORIR GAAN

'Bishohorir Gaan', a form of popular Bangla indigenous theatre of north Bengal, narrates the conflicting story of Mansha Debi and Chand Sowdagar as described in 'Mansha Mangal Kabya'. This structure of the pala, named 'Dhamer Gaan' is practiced in Thakurgaon with different names, including- 'shorigaan', 'sorigaan' or 'surigaan'. Dhamer Gaan is a structure of storytelling through performances, where different types of social and religious stories are plotted, and Bishohorir Gaan is one of those. Although the word 'Dham' originated from 'home' or 'place', but in this case, it indicates the small square-sized space where the performance takes place. Bishohorir Gaan is represented in lyrical and narrative verses, accompanied by luxury body movements. Generally, this 'pala' is staged during the period between Janmashtami and Kaalipuja.

IMTANAN MOHAMMAD JAQUIE

The concert at the beginning of the play, which actually calls the audiences to take their seats, resembles a flavor of *jatra*. Khol, kartal and pipes are used to build up the concert, by highly skilled musicians, who have been playing these for decades. Right after the concert, the remaining performers come to the stage and start the *vandana* (worship) song, where they worship their God and Guru. The play starts, where one actor usually portrays more than one character, by changing or adding a small, yet significant prop.

All the characters, irrespective of gender, are performed by male actors. The costumes and make up they put on do not imitate any traditional style, but are influenced by pop culture. Despite representing stories directly related to Hindu beliefs, starting the play with *uludhomi* and performing *puija* in many episodes, Muslim actors also perform. Generally there is a narrator, accompanied by a jest, who tells the story. *Bishohorir Gaan* usually takes seven nights to complete, but the duration may also be customised according to the audiences' preference. Although the story is mythical, they also add contemporary elements to their script to make it more enjoyable to the audience.

The money they make out of this is not enough to bear their daily expenses. As a result, there are not more than a couple of professional troupes existing right now.

