



THROUGH THE EYES

FAKIR ALAMGIR

Fakir Alamgir is one of the prominent names in the Bangladeshi Gono Sangeet scene. He formed the 'Wrishiz Shilpi Gosthi', a musical platform which has taken Gono Sangeet to overarching glory. His songs are time-honoured, and have left a mark in the hearts of the common people. In his celebrated career, the veteran singer has received several prestigious awards, including the 'Ekushey Padak', 'Sher-e-Bangla Padak' and 'Bhashani Padak'. This week, the iconic singer opened up to Star Showbiz about his true calling for music.

A MUSICIAN'S JOURNEY

My hometown is in Bhanga, Faridpur. There used to be a large Hindu population in our area, and I was fortunate to grow up in a culturally rich environment. My friends and I would sing *Kirton* and *Baul* songs at the top of our lungs. When people would gather for impromptu musical evenings, my father would always take me to see them perform. My love for songs stemmed from that. Soon, we got a radio at home. There was a programme that taught music, and I would intently listen and try to pick up the tunes and rhythm. That's how my musical journey began.

MUSIC FOR THE MASSES

Patriotism has been the driving force behind my musical pursuits. *Gono Sangeet* has always been my calling; it has been my service to the people. Even today, I make music solely for the people, for humanity.

Gono Sangeet, or music for the masses, are songs about freedom, about liberation from tyranny, and for human rights. It cleanses our souls. *Gono Sangeet* has been a part of our Language Movement and Liberation War. I have travelled to over thirty countries in the world to perform my music. I have songs of many languages in my repertoire; just as I have sung Bangla, English, Hindi and Urdu songs, whenever I visit a foreign land, I learn and perform songs in their native language.

REVOLUTION IN TUNE

Following the 1952 Language Movement and the 1960s, we were hungry for revolution, and soon enough, it led to the mass uprising and the Liberation War. I was a freedom fighter. On July 1, 1971, I went to India for my training, and soon joined the war. I would listen to *Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra*, which incited my desire for revolution through music.

Moushumi Bhowmik's song *Jessore Road* will forever be etched in my memories. The songs would be aired live on *Swadhin Bangla Betar Kendra*. There was a single microphone for all four instruments: the tabla, dotara, harmonium, and mandira. Back then, we had to struggle quite a lot for our music. When we heard Bangabandhu's revolutionary speech on March 7, 1971, we were in our early 20s, some even younger; and we went to war without a moment's pause. I salute the leaders of our nation, and I pay tribute to our freedom fighters.

LETTERS TO HIS LOVE

My marriage is one born of love. Many of my admirers would write me letters, and my wife was one of them. I had lovingly given her the name *Bonolokhkhhi*. Firoz Shai, a few of my other friends and I would meet in Shahbag late at night to

answer her letters. The letters would be delivered to a lady's house, where I would go to collect them. In retrospect, it's crazy to think about the lengths I would go to for just one letter.

A PATRIOT'S PIPE DREAMS

Our dream that urged us to fight for our liberation has not entirely been fulfilled. I suppose we need more time to accomplish that. At present, Bangladesh is engulfed in dust, pollution and storms. I dream of a Bangladesh that is teeming with lush, green fields. Back then, I envisaged a Bangladesh free of poverty and suffering, which we haven't yet achieved. Nevertheless, I am a dreamer and I dream of a prosperous Bangladesh.

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