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COVER STORY

Breaking the stereotypes, talented singers, Xefer and Tashfee are taking it up a notch with their confidence. Recently, the rising stars sat with Star Showbiz, and talked about their passions, careers and dating preferences.

Rafi Hossain: Welcome to *Uncensored* with Rafi Hossain. Today, we have with us Xefer and Tashfee. Xefer, tell us about your new song, 'Dirty Tricks'.

Xefer: Usually, my songs are inspired by my personal experiences. This song, however, isn't about my dirty tricks; it's about the dirty tricks of others. This song is meant to be sarcastic.

Tashfee: I really like how you're talking about this song, Xefer. Even if it's sarcastic, it's honest.

Rafi: Tashfee, tell us about your musical ventures.

Tashfee: I'm very excited about my collaboration with Papon for *Wind of Change*. It will be released during Eid. It's a cover of a very famous song, but I wrote the part that I will be singing, and it will be in English.

Rafi: Do you mostly sing in English?

Xefer: I focus mostly on English songs, but I have been experimenting with Bangla as well. Tashfee does both Bangla and English, and sometimes Tamil.

Tashfee: I randomly stumbled upon a Tamil song on YouTube and, I was awestruck. When I released a cover of that song, Tamilians really loved it.

Rafi: Where do you think the music industry is headed?

Xefer: Now that CDs aren't popular anymore, there are many apps



and platforms to consider when releasing songs. Our audience doesn't really know how or where to get their music. Musicians have been suffering because of this for quite some time.

Tashfee: There used to be a time when there was only one source of music: we would go to the store and buy an album. Now, nobody is sure where to access new music; whether to download it or stream it.

Rafi: So, what's the solution?

Xefer: Internationally, listeners are able to depend on a few key streaming platforms to enjoy music, like Spotify, which we don't have in Bangladesh. Posting on YouTube is free, but it's not that easy. We need a shared source, where musicians will be able to release their music together. We have all the resources we need, but we don't utilise them.

Rafi: Is music a sustainable career choice?

Xefer: I'm passionate about music, and I bask in the satisfaction that comes after a show. If I had to work in an office, I wouldn't be happy. Right now, I earn enough to sustain a living.

Tashfee: Music is my soul food. I cannot turn my music into business. I'm very happy where I am, financially speaking. There will definitely be challenges. Also, there are very few women in the industry. Sometimes, I just do it for the girls, to inspire them.

Rafi: Tell us about your international ventures.

Tashfee: I am going to Singapore in August to perform in one of the biggest music shows they organise every year. It's an incredible honour that they have invited me.

Xefer: We sing in English, which opens up a lot of possibilities of performing internationally. I've been working with a music producer from Atlanta. We've been producing originals in English from the very beginning of my career. Collaborating on such projects from Bangladesh is difficult, but I'm still doing it because I want to represent my country.

Tashfee: People often wonder why we make English songs in Bangladesh. The truth is, Xefer is doing what no one else is doing; she's turning her dream into a reality. The way she's putting it out there is art, and we have to appreciate it.

Rafi: Tell us about your idols.

Tashfee: My singing idol is Beyonce. Among Bangladeshi artists, I really like Momtaz; I love her energy.

Xefer: My main influence is Amy Lee. *Evanescence* inspired me to start singing. However, everything I've done since then has been my own style. Among Bangladeshi artists, I really like Arnob.

Rafi: Tell us about your upcoming projects.

Xefer: We're about to shoot a music video for my new song, titled *Blind*. Russel Ali, from the early days of *Warfaze* will feature in the song.

Tashfee: In Singapore, I will be singing two English covers. Since I'm mostly known for English songs, I decided that would be best. I'm also working on a Bangla project. I don't want to say much about it because it's a little different from what I've done in the past.

Rafi: What have you two been up to lately?

Xefer: Last year, I was a little absent from the music scene because I was working as an executive producer for the film, *Nodorai*.

It was a great experience, although I don't think I want to pursue it professionally, unless a very unique project comes along.

Tashfee: Recently, I had the opportunity to work as the harmony and choir director of *Wind of Change*; it was a fulfilling experience.

Rafi: Shed some light on your love lives.

Xefer: Honestly, I don't find anyone attractive. There are a lot of beautiful women in the industry, but very few good-looking men.

Tashfee: I think she makes a very good point. I guess, men are intimidated by us. Our work patterns are different, the way we talk is different – we're not super-feminine. Men in this country find confident women intimidating.

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