

COVER STORY

ACKNOWLEDGING RISING TALENTS

In this special interview with Rafi Hossain, the two talented musicians Palki Ahmad and Tasfia Fatima Tashfee talk about topics ranging from feminism to the new faces in the Bangladeshi music industry.

RAFI HOSSAIN: Palki, I have a question for you. You are a very good singer, and your presentation is great, but it seems to me that you didn't take music too seriously. Is it true?

PALKI AHMAD: To be honest, there is some truth to that. Firstly, I think that I am a little lazy. Along with that, I have lapses in confidence when I am composing and writing my own songs. I find joy in covering songs, but when it comes to my own work, I feel skeptical. But, I have been working on that. I enjoy working on all kinds of songs, be it English or Rabindra Sangeet. I am yet to find a specific style that I can stick to.

RAFI: Tashfee, you have been carving a name for yourself in the industry since you started.

PALKI: If I may interrupt, I wanted to say something about Tashfee. I once saw a concert of hers where she was collaborating with Miles. During the show, she sang *One by U2* along with Miles. After seeing that, I was just blown away. I was the MC for the concert, and I think that is the day we properly became friends.

TASFIA FATIMA TASHFEE: I felt the exact same way when I first heard Palki. She's not only one of the most beautiful girls that I have seen, but she's also so talented. Her guitar playing is so good. I really think that you should take music seriously, Palki. I felt terrible hearing that you faced confidence issues when making your own songs because I used to face the same. I think all artists in general have faced confidence issues when creating. But, we must get over it because if we don't believe in ourselves, other people will not either. Once we do, other people will follow.

RAFI: I completely agree with you. You both found what you are good at and stuck to it. I think that you both gave priority to what you want and did it. That's why I think the industry needs more artists like the two of you. I must ask you both, do you identify as feminists?

PALKI: Well, when it comes to finding what you are good at, it can take even a lifetime to find it. Even in music, there are some ways that I cannot fully get into. That's why I am probably not that much in the mainstream. I am still finding myself, really. And when it comes to feminism, I never thought too much about it, but what I always do is look up and listen to women. From there, I have been learning and I have found out how we can



empower women more. I don't want to put a label on whether or not I am a feminist, but I just want to say that I love strong empowered women. And from the women I look up to, I see their traits and try to be more like them.

TASHFEE: I think that my view on the topic is quite similar to Palki. If we look at the principles of feminism, then everyone should be a feminist. We, women, want to live good, happy lives just like men do. It is very inspiring for me to see how empowered some women are. It inspires and amazes me to see just how much women are doing nowadays. A lot of the time things are not easy for women, but there are so many women breaking down barriers. At the end of the day, I am a feminist.

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

PALKI: I think that nowadays we are seeing a lot of upcoming artists coming into the industry. I think that the upcoming artists are now getting a platform to showcase their talents. I also see so many talented musicians uploading their music on Facebook. There is a group on Facebook called *The House of Art*, and I sometimes see some amazing musicians there. It's good to see such talented people from Bangladesh. However, the online platform for music is much more widespread than the physical presence that musicians have, for example, stage shows. We still have

work to do in that sector. People are coming up, but we still need to make sure we give them space and opportunity to explore and find their sound.

TASHFEE: One can never stop talent from rising up. I completely agree with what Palki said about how we are seeing so many talented musicians rising due to Facebook. However, I think that if we did not have social media, these musicians would find a way to do it offline. You can never stop someone if they are dedicated enough to their craft. But, I think it is much more difficult for artists now due to the pandemic. Artists faced a huge crisis as many artists had to face financial struggles caused by the pandemic. Even though artists all over the world have to struggle, we are also some of the most hopeful people. We always know where to find hope. Even when we were fighting for the liberation of Bangladesh, artists were singing. This is how we express our emotions. At the end of the day, I don't think any form of art can be held back. Also, with the rise of social media, people here are getting exposed to different cultures and different forms of music, so I think more different types of music will rise from Bangladesh due to it.

RAFI: Who do you think are some of the most talented upcoming artists?

TASHFEE: Firstly, I would like to mention

Pragata Naoha. She released a song called *Kalo* two years back, and it is absolutely amazing. From writing and producing to even having a lot of influence behind the video, she did an amazing job. One of my favorite bands at the moment is *Conclusion*. I think that they are doing amazing. They are extremely talented. There are many other upcoming artists who are doing great, and if I wanted to name every single one, it would take me a long time. There's also another amazing young singer, Sahil. He is still in high school if I'm not mistaken, but he sings so well.

PALKI: I agree with Tashfee I think these two artists are making really good music. There are so many upcoming artists whose music simply blows me away. I cannot name all of them as there are too many. There is this girl called Masha Islam. I am a huge fan of her. Another amazing musician that I am a huge fan of is the *Farooque Bhai Project*. He has a

The virus has spread a lot recently and it has even affected many people close to us. I think that after the first dose, many people started to stop being careful about COVID-19, so that has made the situation much worse. People still need to remain super cautious about the virus. I know that people must go out and if you do go out, please at least wear a mask and maintain as much social distancing as possible. I am trying to stay as cautious as possible because I do have to go out of the house. Since my parents are a little old, I make sure to maintain social distance even when I am home, so that they cannot get the virus from me if I bring it home. We must all try to stay careful, and if we do, we can overcome this virus. We all must do our part and stay careful.

PALKI: Wearing a mask when we go out is a must. If we do not take this seriously, we cannot overcome this crisis. If we can



very interesting sound and really well-written lyrics. There are many people whose music I enjoy, and I am sure that after this interview I will probably remember more names and regret not saying them.

RAFI: Do you both have any parting message for the readers?

TASHFEE: We are going through a very difficult time right now due to the pandemic.

stay careful ourselves, we can make a big difference. If we stay home and make sure to take measures to limit the spreading of COVID-19, we can make this pandemic go away sooner. Many did stop being careful as a year has passed and stopped taking it seriously. But, if we want to overcome it then it is crucial to stay cautious.

RIDWAN INTISAAR MAHBUB



KABORI LIVES FOREVER WITHIN THESE FILMS

Mishti Meye Sutorang Hiramoni, Moynamoti, Chorabali, Paruler Shongshar, Binimoy, Bahana, Titash Ekti Nadir Naam, Rongbaz Dorpochno, Binimoy, Sareng Bou, Dip Nibhe Nai, Devdas, Bodhu Biday, Agontuk, Aradhona, Beiman, Nil Akasher Niche, Sujon Sokhi Ayna Ei Tumi Shei Tumi Sritituku Thaa Bangladesh National Film Awards The Daily Star-Standard Chartered Celebrating Life Lifetime Achievement Award 2019

POPCORN HIGHLIGHTS

Here are some binge worthy movie and series you can spend your time watching while you stay at home social distancing, keeping yourself, as well as others, safe.

Run On

Run On is a South Korean drama romance television series on Netflix. It has been directed by Lee Jae-hoon, produced under the banner of MAYS Entertainment and Zium Content, and stars Im Si-wan, Shin Se-kyung, Choi Soo-young and Kang Tae-oh, among others. It follows the story of a man working towards becoming a sports agent and a subtitle translator who fall in love. The latest episode was aired on February 4, 2021.



THIS IS NOT A BURIAL, IT'S A RESURRECTION

Quo Vadis, Aida? is a Bosnian war-drama film. It has been directed by Jasmila Žbanić, who also produced the film alongside Damir Ibrahimović, and stars Jasna Đuričić, Izudin Bajrović and Boris Isaković, among others. The

film follows a UN translator trying to interpret important data at a crucial time, when her family is seeking shelter at a UN camp after their town is taken over by Serbian soldiers. It was initially released on February 26, 2021.

This Is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection

This Is Not a Burial, It's a Resurrection is a Mosotho drama film. It has been directed by Lemohang Jeremiah Mosese, produced by Cait Pansegrouw and Elias Ribeiro, with Mary Twala Mhlongo in the lead. The film follows an old widow preparing for her death when she finds herself with the task of giving her community strength and perseverance in the face of danger of being permanently removed from their homes for a reservoir construction. It was released on April 2, 2021.

Shreya Shomoyeeta

