

EDITORIAL

After every new app gains popularity among the youth, it is inevitable that soon its reputation is to be tarnished after some unfortunate news surfaces about the platform being misused by certain users. Cue talks about the platform being banned, cue adults telling us life was objectively better before kids were hooked on to their phones and they had to swim three miles, cross the Himalayas and recite the alphabet backwards for a leprechaun in order to reach their school each day.

It is a natural first reaction to wonder why, like giving away one's money so one can no longer be robbed, we want to take away these platforms much loved by the youth entirely, instead of regulating and creating safer cyber spaces for the youth to engage in. However, that only addresses part of the problem.

When we embrace globalisation, technologies reach us before we know we are capable of handling them. A platform that originates in a different place was never created keeping a different society's problems in mind. The craze the youth has for these apps proves its popularity, but there is nothing to prove our preparedness for the dangers or exploitations an app brings before it is ready for downloading.

-- Mrittika Anan Rahman, Sub-editor, SHOUT



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PLAYWATCH

MUSIC



Miles' Prottasha: 25 Years and Aging Like Fine Wine

SABIH SAFWAT

Miles are... oh wait, they don't really need an introduction. For a band that's piggybacked the country's rock scene for more than four decades, that'd be an insult.

Prottasha was their fourth studio album, coming out at the time rock music was perhaps approaching peak popularity in the country. Songs like "Neela", "Dhiki Dhiki", and "Phiriye Dao" defined the era, and to this day are loved by people across generations. Oh, and did I mention Neela? An absolute icon of a ballad.

I discovered the albums, in three stages, spanning two decades.

Firstly, in childhood. Dad was a fan of the band, and had a collection of their cassettes. Of course, their songs would pop up frequently on the radio, too. Miles was everywhere, and I didn't mind in the least bit. I didn't understand the lyrics, barely took in any of the intricacies of the music, but I loved the feelings the songs evoked in me. As if I was peeking into a whole new world. I vaguely remember memorising one or two lines from songs like "Phiriye Dao", "Shopno Bhongo" and singing them all the time.

The second stage was during early teens, trying out random CDs from dad's collection on my desktop. Streaming music online was far from a mainstream thing back then. I can't really express the waves of nostalgia when I realised I'd been familiar with the songs since preschool. This was, for me, a ride through the meanings behind the songs.

There's something about the vibrant, energetic soundscapes that border on carefree, and Shafin Ahmed turning verses that could've been labelled cheesy, feel charming and endearing instead. The emotions are all there: fantasy and wonder (Pahari Meye), heartbreak and yearning (Phiriye Dao, Kotokal Khujbo, Hridoyheena), relaxation (Rim Jhim),

frustration (Shaanti Chai), despair and lamentation (Noshto Oteet, Shopno Bhongo) and pure love (Neela, Jaadu).

Fast forward almost a decade. There's a big event in the campus and guess which band's coming to perform? I had to go rediscover Miles' discography.

This time, the music hit me hard. Over the years, I'd learned a few things on analysing and composing music, and it was like unlocking a secret map in an RPG game. I figured out the special ingredient that made them stand out so much; the balance between pop, funk and rock elements in their compositions.

Manam Ahmed's keyboard arrangements on the songs are brilliant. The catchy musical phrases that people remember the songs by, captivating solos, and in general decorating the soundscape with lush chords outdid his role. Hamin Ahmed's clean guitars dish out the funky vibes, while leaving enough space for Shafin Ahmed's beast of a bass to go wild. The insanely groovy bass lines are pretty much the engine driving the train forward. The lead guitars are also placed thoughtfully within the songs in places that demand seriousness and emphasis. Add to that consistent drumming with a love for hi-hats and bells, you get top tier musicianship.

The production of the album was quite impressive for 90s Bangladesh standards. Crisp clean vocals, half a dozen layers of instruments mixed without the least bit of muddying and about the right amount of prominence, especially the bass. Aural delicacy.

Prottasha is a milestone in Miles' journey. They were way ahead of their time back when they released it, and 25 years later, its charms haven't stagnated the least bit.

Cheers to the coming years of vintage love. Excuse me while I loop "Neela" for a few hours.