



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

We all have a ‘mostaan’ and a ‘bhalo chele’ within us: Arnob

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

With tracks like “Shey je Boshe Ache”, “Tomar Jonno”, “Hariye Giyechei”, “Bhalobasha Tarpor”, and “Tui Ki Janishna”, prodigal musician, composer and singer, Shayan Chowdhury Arnob has solidified his name among the most endeared artistes in Bangladesh.

Through his marvellous Rabindra Sangeet renditions, the singer has reintroduced the legacy of the noble prize winner to the younger generation.

Echoing the singer’s journey, the Chorki’s first original musical film “Adkhana Bhalo Chele Adha Mostaan”, was released recently. In a candid conversation with The Daily Star, Arnob shares his experiences, the tale of his becoming, and talks about his upcoming projects.

“Adkhana Bhalo Chele Adha Mostaan” is directed by Abrar Athar, Arnob’s close friend and confidante.

“Hailing from the same circle, Arbar has been one of my closest friends,” shares Arnob, whose rendition of the Rabindra Sangeet “Majhe Majhe” is seen as one of the most popular number on the playlist of young listeners.

Both Abrar and Arnob, being artistes, have shared a similar journey – experiencing upheaval and downfall at times and

struggling through their tussles.

“When he approached me for this project, I thought there could not have been a better craftsman than him as he was the witness to my story since the very beginning,” adds the musician.

When it came to the scripting and documentation process, Arnob had serious concerns working within set forms and structures has always been difficult for him. “The arduous process of scripting, by no means, can come into agreement with my personality,” laughs Arnob.

Breaking the regular norms of film production, Abrar opted for a rather lucid process, compiling bits and pieces from Arnob’s life. “Films like these are very important as I believe they are the only way to document the voyage every musician makes through his career,” asserts Arnob.

“Every song has its own story and I believe my fans will be able to discover the stories behind my compositions through ‘Adkhana Bhalo Chele Adha Mostaan,’” he adds.

With his better half, talented singer Sunidhi Nayak stepping into his life, the Arnob now spends most of his time now at Shantiniketan, absorbing Tagore’s essence and integrating them in their joint releases.

“I have learned a lot about online platforms and how an artiste can actually earn through video streaming platforms such

as YouTube,” shares Arnob who believes musicians in Bangladesh should be more aware of their copyright privileges, especially for online releases.

Arnob is also looking forward to releasing the second volume of his much celebrated album ‘Arnob and Friends’. “This album will feature over 10 tracks, comprising of numbers from ‘Adkhana Bhalo Chele Adha Mostaan’ and new originals,” he says.

The singer has also created an A2 size artwork, based on the film. The artwork will be available for his fans for online purchase. “The art piece is a signed limited edition and only, the ones buying it will get a downloadable link of Arnob and friends Volume II,” mentions Arnob.

People usually have such docu-fictions written about them after their careers are pass their prime. However, that has not been the case for Arnob.

“Life is unpredictable, and I want people to know the story of my becoming. I hope ‘Adkhana Bhalo Chele Adha Mostaan’ paves the way to celebrating not just the successes but also the struggles and downfall every person face.”

“We all have a ‘mostaan’ and a ‘bhalo chele’ within us, and this film just leads to unfold my explored combination of the two,” he concluded, promising to be more regular for his fans.

Catching up with Nusraat Faria

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

In her career spanning only 6 years, Nusraat Faria has worked in 18 films. She has shared the screen with stars like Shakib Khan, Jeet and Ankush Hazra – and is a popular on both sides of the border.

In a candid chat with The Daily Star, Nusraat Faria talks about her current plans, upcoming releases, and more.

You had kept away from shooting during the coronavirus pandemic. The release of your much awaited ‘Operation Sundarban’ was also halted due to the lockdowns. What are you currently busy with?

Three of my films, “Operation Sundarban”, “Dhaka 2040” and “Patal Ghor” are waiting for theatrical releases. The productions are of varying genres and I had to work very hard while opting to extensive research for these projects.

I had to hold back for a while as I was busy preparing for my LLB finals. I intend to start shooting for films by the end of October.

You are currently appearing in a lot of advertisements and TV commercials. Are you looking to endorse a brand anytime soon? I had signed to become the brand ambassador for the popular e-commerce platform Chaldal in March, and am currently shooting for their commercials. I will also be seen promoting Berger in the

upcoming days.

Other than these two, I have signed up with some other noted brands too, but I cannot announce their names as I am under a non-disclosure agreement.

Did you recently shoot for any film in Tollywood?

I am waiting for the release of my upcoming Kolkata-based film “Bhoy”. I have also finished shooting for “Bibaho Obhijaan 2”. “Bibaho Obhijaan”, the first release of this production, had received a warm response from the audience, and I am sure that my fans enjoy the sequel too.

The emergence of OTT platforms has managed to create a new and much appreciated medium for the entertainment industry. Have you taken up any OTT based project recently?

My first OTT release, the Zee5 original “Jodi Kintu Tobuo” directed by Shihab Shaheen, was much appreciated. I now see filmmakers developing an inclination towards more serious genres like crime thrillers or murder mysteries. However, I love rom-coms.

I will be finishing my final exams on November 5, and wish to take up a rom-com OTT production as soon as I am done. I believe, we should give out audience light-hearted content which will keep them positive in such perilous times.



PHOTO: COLLECTED



MOVIE REVIEW

‘Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings’ shines with an emotional origin story

SHABARA IQBAL

Marvel Studios’ latest superhero offering, “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings”, is the movie that brought me, masked up and sanitised, back to the theatres — and as a longtime Marvel fan, I am glad it did.

The film introduces us to Wenwu (Tony Leung Chiu-wai), Shang-Chi’s father and the feared leader of the Ten Rings terrorist organisation. He is also the possessor of the ten rings of power, mysterious artifacts of unknown origin which give him superpowers and make him immortal.

But when he meets Ying Li (Fala Chen) in the mythical village Ta Lo, he puts his criminal days behind him, giving up the Rings to raise a family. Ying Li is rejected by her own village people for marrying the leader of the terrorist group, reformed or not.

Does Shang-Chi take over Wenwu’s empire? Does Wenwu’s past come back to punish him for his crimes? Such questions are answered throughout the rest of the film. At its heart, “Shang-Chi” is a story about a son’s relationship with his father.

Director Destin Daniel Cretton is an American of Asian heritage. Hence, Marvel’s first movie with an Asian lead character, is in safe hands. Cretton’s “Just Mercy”, a respectful cinematic telling of a real-life lawyer fighting for Black Americans wrongfully put on the death row, also testify in his favour.

For “Shang-Chi”, he embellishes MCU canon with story and background from the comic books, creates new characters with writers Dave Callahan and Andrew Lanham, and marries it all with a lived experience of being an Asian American, without stooping to cultural appropriation.

Simu Liu plays the titular Shang-Chi. His best friend, Katy, is played by the charming Awkwafina. Shang-Chi feels like a fish out of water in the USA, and attempts to hide that with his charisma. Meanwhile, Katy has difficulty committing to a direction in her life, something that is a relatable struggle for many Asian Americans due to their own expectations as well as those of their parents and society.

The movie shines when Liu and Awkwafina are on screen together. Jokes are made, and we are reminded that this,



Snippets from “Shang-Chi”

in fact, is a Marvel movie happening post “Avengers: Endgame”, when half the population was erased and brought back. For these characters, the worries that come with being children of immigrants are increased manifold, as super beings like Thanos are a real threat.

Throughout the film, it is made clear that Shang-Chi is not proud of his father, but he empathises with him.

It helps that Wenwu is a multi-layered villain with a deeply personal goal, which resonates with his entire family. Shang-Chi becomes his father’s nemesis, without looking down upon his own heritage.

As a film that pays rich tributes to Chinese heritage at every turn, “Shang-Chi” is second only to “Black Panther” as an example of how even the most mainstream, commercial, hyped cinema can be used as an agent for progress, if done right.

Liu, overall, is the life and blood of this movie. Apart from delivering an impressive acting performance, he does some pulse-pounding stunt work, as his character is a skilled martial artist. The fight sequence in a moving bus with which the movie takes off, and another on a bamboo scaffolding, are ones to look out for.

That being said, the movie’s final battle becomes another CGI fest with world-ending stakes, and its themes of identity and loyalty sometimes get lost in the bombastic action.

Fans of films like “My Neighbor Totoro” and “Spirited Away” will find plenty to enjoy in “Shang-Chi”, for its rich mythology and fantastical settings. Overall, the movie is a delightfully refreshing experience — and I cannot wait for Shang-Chi to join the Avengers.

While I am glad I got to watch it on the big screen, if you consider going to the theatres, please be safe, and do not forget to wear a mask.

I prepare for a role as though it is my last one: Mostafa Monwar

Mostafa Monwar has made a mark with his versatile roles in a short span of time. Be it Sajjad in “Live from Dhaka”, Dayal in “Mr Jhony” or Kabir in the “Unoloukik” episode, Moribar Holo Taar Shaad, his filmography has been quite impressive. In 2014, he published his book, “Melodrama”. The recent recognition for his film, “Payer Tolay Mati Nai” at the Busan International Film Festival, is another achievement for him. In a candid conversation, he spoke about his journey, and more.

PRIYANKA CHOWDHURY

You are known to be an avid reader. Could you tell us how reading influenced your life’s trajectory?

I grew up in a strict household at Indira Road, where reading for fun was prohibited because my parents believed it would hamper my academic pursuits. During visits to different people’s houses, I used to pick up books on fairytales or folklore, I did not have any preference in reading. I got books on religion from the mosque library as well. My reading restrictions eased out after my admission in Cumilla Cadet College. During that time, Sheba Prokashoni opened up a new world to me. I was introduced to stories from around the world, and to dynamic characters like Masud Rana. I enjoy reading about concepts of ideology. The points of view in non-fiction books vary, and exploring them helps me to understand the psyche of each character I play. Sometimes, along with the director’s guidelines on a role, I add nuances of humane concepts to the background stories of my characters. Currently, I am collecting and reading different award-winning books, as I want to stay connected to world literature.

You have been involved with Prachyanat, as well as the NSU Drama Club. How did these platforms shape you as an actor?

I got into Prachyanat because I really wanted to be a part of the cultural scene. However, due to my classes at NSU, I could not continue with them. When I joined the NSU Drama Club, my peers automatically assumed that I know a lot about acting because of my earlier theatre work. Actually, I knew very little then. However, their expectations pushed me to take acting seriously, and do my homework. Books by Constantin



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Stanislavski like “An Actor Prepares” also helped me. Animesh Aich and I would often take late night walks together to observe different people and draw them – this exercise gave me a lot of perspective. Moreover, Dr Ishrafeel Shaheen, who took our classes, always challenged us with multi-layered characters.

What would you say was the turning point in your acting career?

For me, theatre was more spontaneous. On screen, however, I did not invest into the craft much until “Live from Dhaka” came along. In that film, the role of Sajjad was so challenging that I knew working hard was the only way. Ever since then, I prepare for a role as though it is my last one. I do not want to leave any room for regrets. Despite getting

interesting characters, I do not think I did justice to them until 2015. However, there are times when the screen space given to a character is too narrow, and their possibilities and dynamics remain unexplored.

Now, I have the luxury to choose my own characters, but fortunately, my livelihood does not depend on it. I have a tendency of overdoing things I am passionate about. So at this point, I work less, and choose characters that feel significant to me.

Animesh Aich’s telefilm “Holud” was your first project as a screenwriter, for which you won the Meril Prothom Alo Puroshkar. How was the telefilm planned out?

Actually, Animesh believed in my writing skills more than me. He asked me to conduct a screenwriting workshop for his group, which I resisted. My writing experience was limited to ad campaigns and shorts for Lux Superstar projects. I had not explored writing fiction at that point. The title, “Holud”, which Animesh came up with, immediately caught my attention. In one night, our imaginations ran wild, and I just let all my bizarre thoughts flow. I am now planning to write for films, and that struggle is ongoing.

What are your upcoming projects?

I have shot for Mohammad Rabbay’s film, “Tree of Knowledge”, which I hope will go into festivals too. I am also working on “Manusher Bagan”, directed by Nurul Alam Atique. Rubaiyat Hossain’s “Made in Bangladesh” is yet to release in this country, while filming for Gias Uddin Selim’s “Gunin” will begin in October.

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