



IMAGE: SOULSBD.COM

The significance of remastering classic Bangla songs

ABIR HOSSAIN

The iconic ballads of Hasan, the piercing riffs of Souls, and the jazz melodies of Feedback -- these are acts that not only provoke a sense of nostalgia for some but also serve to remind us of the drastic changes that have overseen the cultural landscape of Bangladesh.

What started as a hobby for young individuals went on to mould the outlook of an entire generation's perception of music. Their songs could be found on almost everyone's playlists, blaring through speakers across the nation, and being celebrated in student halls as well as concerts.

For an era that continues to stand the test of time, we, the audience, must wonder how the weight of their legacy can be truly preserved. While a small fraction of their discographies can be explored in the depths of YouTube and SoundCloud, it is imperative that whatever is left of their musical catalogue is carefully archived and remastered.

The 70s marked the beginning of a new wave in the scene. Souls began in 1973, initially covering western radio hits and playing shows in hotels. A massive stride was made when they released their first album *Super Souls* in the 80s and rendered themselves as pioneers of cultural change. This was the catapult that paved the way for generations that came after and deserves to be documented.

Inadequate recording material, less than favourable studio settings, and outdated technology likely plagued the greats of their generation. It would be safe to presume that such resources also required great sums of

money which eluded the then young musicians. Even if the recordings were found, they might not translate well to a digital medium. Either way, the technique of remastering is difficult from an engineering standpoint. The track order, dynamic range, and EQ decisions might leave a lot to be desired.

The process of remastering involves taking the original analogue recordings and then dissecting the layers. Locating the master recordings is a hurdle in itself. With physical copies gone obsolete and a few tracks hovering around the internet, much of the album is difficult to find, and hence, the prospect of remastering the songs becomes uncertain. In addition, with a lack of distribution deals and record labels, the original bits and pieces have likely been lost.

Nonetheless, remastering has been under scrutiny for decades. Some complain that it fails to capture the vision of the artist to the point where it compromises the authentic artistry. This is perhaps because remastering does not involve direct input from the artists themselves and risks deviating from what the musicians wanted it to sound like.

However, for a time that has well transitioned to a digital age, the music that continues to inspire young musicians must be archived and handled with care. Artistry like this helps us dream and even has the potential to garner a new generation of groundbreaking talent.

Abir Hossain is a failed SoundCloud Rapper. Tell him you too can't find anything to rhyme oranges with at fb/abir.hossain.19

How Hollywood is failing "feminine" female characters

ARYAH JAMIL

With the release of the highly anticipated *Space Jam: A New Legacy*, a reboot to *Space Jam* (1996), Hollywood continues to degrade "feminine" female bodies.

Lola Bunny, a *Looney Toons* character, is an anthropomorphic rabbit who is the lead female character in the film. In the 1996 version, Lola wore a cropped jersey with high-waist shorts, while other male characters wore jerseys that are more practical. Lola was amorous and a conventionally attractive female. As Bugs' romantic interest, her character was built to be "desirable".

With the reboot came changes in Lola's physical presentation. She is now shorter, her body differently shaped, and she wears looser fitting attire. Her feminine features have been toned down and her personality has been altered to be more bubbly and goofy. This redefinition of attractiveness rooted in the infantilisation of female romantic interests has been an ongoing trend.

The problem with sexualisation of feminine figures, whether it be hyper or desexualisation, is its relationship with the male gaze. Harley Quinn doesn't need to be barely clothed to perform the same tasks as the Joker.

In *Suicide Squad* (2016), Quinn's body and sexual nature were highlighted, while her evil witty self was understated. She was simply something to look at. *Birds of Prey* (2020), directed by a woman, tells a different story of Quinn, one which upholds her personality and physical abilities rather than her skin.

Space Jam: A New Legacy's director Malcolm Lee states "This is 2021. It's important to reflect the authenticity of strong, capable female characters."

According to Lee, capable women cannot have curvature in their bodies. This is exhibited by the new design of Lola's character which tones down her feminine features. This enforces the idea that peak athleticism can only be attained through a traditionally masculine body, and that feminine features are nothing but hindrances in attaining one's true athletic potential.

This is rooted in society's need to strip women of their traditionally feminine features to see them in positions of power. Why it is that powerful women need to resemble men? Hillary Clinton and Angela Merkel both have what *Vogue* termed as the "political bob" because having short hair and wearing suits are deemed "powerful" and "assertive".

If the removal of female anatomical features is so necessary, why stop there? Why not ask LeBron to wear a sweater or change his body to tone down his conventionally masculine appearance? This may sound absurd, but that's only because we've been socially conditioned into accepting the objectification of women and accepting that women have to absolve themselves of their femininity in order to succeed.

It's time to reconsider our mindless media consumption of the male gaze and its perception of women and rethink how we portray female bodies.

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