

The future of music copyright

How protected are our artistes?

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In recent times, Baul Shah Abdul Karim's family received royalties from the Copyright Office after his songs were digitally archived. Similarly, Ayub Bachchu's family also received royalties for his songs when they were brought under the digital protection act.

Many artistes, singers, lyricists, and composers have benefited from the digital archiving of their work. As a musician it's their right to protect their intellectual property and ensure that they don't face any form of exploitation. Thus, the progress in the field of copyrighting music has been beneficial for many. Now, like Baul Shah Abdul Karim and Ayub Bachchu's families, other artistes are also receiving royalty payments from the Copyright Office.

In order to properly protect the rights of musicians in Bangladesh, and ensure that they are compensated for their work, the Copyright Office has taken the necessary steps to ensure the digital form of music is thoroughly safe guarded.

Last year, Baul Shah Abdul Karim's family received USD 10,000 as a one-year royalty payment from the copyright office. The State Minister of Cultural Affairs, K M Khalid, MP handed over



Ayub Bachchu's family receiving royalty.



"I did wonder how our children would receive the royalties of the songs. Now, the Copyright Office has made the necessary arrangements. Having received royalties for his music, we settled the payments with the songs' lyricists."

Ferdous Akhter Chandana, wife of Ayub Bachchu.

the royalty check to the family.

Baul Shah Abdul Karim's son, Nur Jalal regularly receives the royalty payments earned by the late artistes' music. Speaking to The Daily Star, he said, "My father never thought that his songs could make money. If he could see this when he was alive, he would have been very happy. Before the royalty money was disbursed to me, I was struggling a lot. I could not arrange better treatment for my mother, due to a lack of finances. Now the Copyright Office has stored my father's songs in digital format. I hope that his songs

reach even more people now. I truly feel blessed to receive payments for my father's music."

Section 78 of Bangladesh's Copyright Act states that a song may not be commercially broadcast (as welcome tunes, on TV, YouTube, etc) without the permission of the lyricist and composer, who owns the rights to a song.

Following Baul Shah Abdul Karim's death, many used his songs commercially without seeking permission from his family. Taking this into consideration, the Bangladesh

Copyright Office registered the intellectual property rights of 472 songs by Abdul Karim on December 2021.

Later, the songs were archived on the website shahabdkarim.com. ZM Studios provided technical assistance in the development of the website, under the supervision of Zafar Raja Chowdhury, former registrar of the Copyright Office, to help preserve Abdul Karim's music.

Apart from Shah Abdul Karim's music, the Copyright Office is working extensively to digitally archive the works of Rabindra Sangeet exponent Rezwana

Choudhury Bannya and Hason Raja, by launching their websites.

Eminent singer Rezwana Choudhury Bannya told The Daily Star, "I am a person who is dedicated to singing. Nowadays, music rights are protected in various ways. The copyright office is making this possible. They have already stored a number of songs by different artistes with the help of technology, which is really a blessing. I hope that many artistes will benefit from it like I have."

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