

Hitting all the right notes!

Wahida Hussain on jazz and fitness

A singer, fitness enthusiast, sports model, and teacher – Wahida Hussain has carved a unique niche for herself. As the vocalist of Blues Brothers & Soul Sister, she brings jazz to life alongside her band while captivating audiences with her covers of international classics.

Discovering her passion during the pandemic in 2020, Hussain continues to break barriers, especially in a country where jazz is still considered a niche genre.

In this interview with Star Lifestyle, she shares her love for music, the challenges she faces, and the passions driving her forward.

What inspired you to specialise in Jazz music?

I have always resonated deeply with blues and jazz, as these genres are timeless, soulful, and incredibly special to me. My band – Blues Brothers & Soul Sister – primarily focuses on blues, jazz, funk, rock n' roll, and classic tracks from the 1930s to the 1960s.

Jazz stands out because of its emotional depth and intricate melodies, which inspire me every time I perform. When I joined the band, I felt the need to stay true to these genres while encouraging us to experiment and mix things up. These styles might be a niche in Bangladesh, but they hold a unique charm that I wanted to preserve and share with audiences.

Personally, I felt inspired by artists like B B King, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Ella Fitzgerald. Beyond my band, I also have an interest in other genres that capture my attention.

What challenges have you faced in gaining recognition?

One major hurdle we face, is tailoring our song selection to suit diverse audiences, as not everyone shares the same enthusiasm for blues and jazz.

Additionally, the local music industry often prioritises foreign artists over homegrown talent, making it harder for local musicians to receive the recognition and support they deserve. Despite these challenges, our niche audience deeply appreciates our music, and the demand for our performances has steadily grown.

To help jazz thrive, the industry should create a more supportive environment for local artists. We remain committed to our craft and hope to see greater acknowledgement for our contributions in the future.

How do you balance adding a personal touch to international song covers while staying true to the original?

When performing international song

covers, I go all-out to balance staying true to the essence of the original while incorporating my style and flair. Growing up, I was inspired by several women and musicians whose singing styles shaped my perspective, and I have developed a unique approach over time.

I ensure that my personal twist enhances the music without overshadowing its original charm. My band plays a key role in this process – we regularly hold practice sessions where they provide constructive feedback and helpful pointers.

How does your fitness routine complement your singing career?

I have always been very active. Back in school and university, I was an active member of the volleyball team. But after a while, I started feeling restless, and that's when I decided to join the gym. I joined the gym a little over five years ago, purely out of necessity.

For me, working out intertwines physical and mental changes. How we think and feel is deeply connected to the hormones secreted by our bodies. Physical and mental health are inseparable, forming a holistic connection. I currently train for personal reasons, but as a by-product, it has benefited me immensely. I'm happier, more positive, and more confident on stage. I'm very particular about my appearance because, in my line of work, it matters.

Fitness also directly supports my singing, as healthy lungs are like being on a constant workout. Good lung capacity is vital for holding long notes, for example. Two people who inspire me the most in this journey — first and foremost, my father. And secondly, my boyfriend, who constantly inspires me to work harder and push my boundaries.

Do you plan to release original compositions?

I am incredibly excited about the next chapter of my life. I am currently doing cover music, and I absolutely love it. This is something I want to continue, but at the same time, I feel a responsibility to my family heritage and myself to create something original. Music is in my blood, and producing something uniquely my own feels like the next step.

By Ayman Anika
Photos: Courtesy

