

A 12-year love song
THE
REHMAN
DUO



PHOTOS: SHEKH MEHEDI MORSHED

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Bound by music and driven by passion, Rubayat Rehman and Ruslan Rehman have found not just melodies but a shared destiny.

As co-founders of the indie band The Rehman Duo, their music connects like whispered confessions—soulful, unguarded, and deeply human. On a golden spring afternoon, we sat with the multifaceted couple for an exclusive photoshoot. During the interval, they unfolded their musical journey with The Daily Star amid sharing much more about themselves. “Our first collaboration was in 2014 for Amitabh Reza Chowdhury’s telefilm *Surface*,” recalled Ruslan, who has composed background scores and tracks for web projects like *Karagar* (2022) and *Guti* (2023).

“In 2015, we took a leap of faith by setting up our own studio, and in 2017 we officially became The Rehman Duo. We started with covers of different songs, including renditions of songs by bands such as Warfaze, Artcell, Shironamhin, and Meghdol on our YouTube channel, which eventually led us to release our own original track, *Onnoy*, in 2020.”

Later on, they released originals like *Ashor* (2020), *Bole Dao* (2021), *Etibritto* (2021), *Isshok Jajabor* (2022), and *Ekhane Ekhon* (2024), earning them nearly 50,000 dedicated followers who communicate with the band regularly.

“In an era where success is often measured by the number of followers, we find true fulfillment in our dedicated fans—the ones who stay connected, support us wholeheartedly, and make this journey meaningful,” expressed Ruslan.

Adding to this, Rubayat shared, “Many describe our compositions and lyrics as a form of therapy and it makes us feel truly successful.”

Rubayat, a trained Rabindra Sangeet singer, is also a skilled painter and instrumentalist. She was a touring member of the renowned band Joler Gaan for a year and participated in *Bangladeshi Idol* in 2012, where Ruslan first saw her perform on television and later connected with her on social media.

“We both have similar tastes in music,” added Rubayat, the singer of the track *Jiboner Khoj* from



Shankha Dasgupta’s web series *Guti*. The track was composed by Ruslan.

The duo not only writes and composes their songs but also brings their vision to life through self-directed music videos. “Our shared taste in music and philosophy of creation binds our art,” said Ruslan.

One might wonder how a duo manages to juggle so many tasks. Rubayat explained, “It’s a tough job, but over time we’ve become self-taught, taking on everything ourselves to complete each project, and we have been doing it for a straight 12 years!”

Beyond their online presence, The Rehman Duo has performed live at events like Dhaka Makers, Festive Bangladesh, and Rickshaw Connects.

With additional touring members, their live shows create an intimate atmosphere. However, they acknowledged the challenges of live performances, particularly poor sound projection. “It depends on venue structure—glass, ceramic, and stone walls create harsh echoes, whereas wood and fabric soften the sound,” Ruslan explained. They remain hopeful that better venues will emerge.

Their current lineup includes Dippro Ahmed (Piano), Sakib (Electric Guitar), Omee (Bass), and Samiul Wahid (Drums).

Ruslan, originally aspiring to be a filmmaker, has signed onto another film project in post production. He is involved in ad film music and co-producing a government-funded film alongside cinematographer Sumon Sarker. Meanwhile, Rubayat contributed to Coke Studio Bangla’s choir section for two consecutive years, refining her harmonising skills. “My experience in Coke Studio Bangla was amazing, and it was a journey where I improved my harmonising skills, which I lacked. Moreover, performing on such a huge platform is a great opportunity for any musician.”

The duo will be releasing one song with Hatirpool Sessions’ third edition and another for a musical documentary produced by Binge, which will air in March.

Being married for 12 years and balancing personal and professional lives together is challenging for Rubayat and Ruslan. Yet, the couple has embraced it. “Since our professional and personal lives are intertwined it gets overwhelming, but we find a centre point—for the sake of art!”

Ruslan added, “When an artiste is truthful and honest with their art, they succeed.”

From humble beginnings to becoming a beloved indie act, The Rehman Duo continues to craft heartfelt music—one note at a time.

TRENDY STREAMS

Netflix
Prison Cell 211



Apple TV+
Surface



HBO Max
The White Lotus



Hulu
A Thousand Blows



Chorki
Ghumpori



OUT AND ABOUT IN DHAKA



Play: ‘Raktakarabi’
February 23 | 7pm onwards
Natmandal, Theatre and Performance
Studies, Dhaka University



Matribhashar Chalachitra
Utsab
February 23-24 | 3pm-10pm
Vintage Convention Hall, Dhanmondi



Play: ‘Ek Jora Juta’
February 22-23 | 7pm-9pm
Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

WHAT’S PLAYING

‘Sailor’ by Gigi Perez

Gigi Perez’s *Sailor* is a hauntingly evocative track that seamlessly blends indie rock and dark pop, creating an intoxicating soundscape filled with longing and raw emotion. With her husky, emotive vocals and poetic lyricism, Perez delivers a song that feels both deeply personal and universally relatable.

Lyricaly, *Sailor* explores themes of heartbreak, nostalgia, and the struggle between holding on and letting go. The melancholic verses build into a swelling, anthemic chorus, mirroring the uncertainty of an emotional journey. The brooding instrumentals and cinematic production add an almost hypnotic quality, making the track linger long



after the final note. Beyond its standalone impact, *Sailor* has found a home on social media, becoming a popular choice for creating reels. The song’s melancholic yet anthemic feel makes it perfect for emotional stories, travel aesthetics, and cinematic transitions. From nostalgic montages to slow-motion shots of road trips and night drives, *Sailor* elevates visuals with its dreamy sound.

Lisa, a member of the popular K-pop girl group Blackpink, made a striking style statement at the Bangkok premiere of *The White Lotus Season 3*, marking her highly anticipated acting debut. Fully embracing the art of method dressing, she captivated in a custom-made silk ensemble by Louis Vuitton, effortlessly blending elegance with thematic symbolism.

The look featured a cropped top with a sweetheart neckline, accentuated by petal-like off-the-shoulder sleeves evoking the delicate beauty of the lotus flower—an homage to the series’ title.

The fitted, ankle-length skirt in the same pink hue was elevated by a flowing, pleated train, adding a dramatic yet refined touch. Lisa completed her ensemble with matching pink pumps and exquisite Bvlgari jewelry, solidifying her status as a fashion force to be reckoned with.



TV TALKIES

‘Apple Cider Vinegar’:
Netflix’s bold look at
the cost of deception



Netflix’s freshest limited series *Apple Cider Vinegar*, also a fictionalised story based on a real-life scammer, tells the story of Belle Gibson (Kaitlyn Dever), an influencer who faked serious health issues like brain cancer to promote a healthy eating app, claiming that avoiding certain foods could cure her fabricated ailments and encouraging her followers to do the same.

The series incorporates fictional and composite characters to highlight the human cost of Gibson’s deceitful behaviour. She models herself after Milla Blake (Alycea Debnam-Carey), a cancer blogger who gained fame by documenting her use of alternative treatments like coffee enemas and juice cleanses instead of chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery.

A key dynamic develops between Gibson and Lucy (Tilda Cobham-Harvey), a breast cancer patient influenced by Gibson’s posts to abandon conventional treatment. Lucy’s husband, Justin (Mark Coles Smith), a journalist investigating Gibson, hopes exposing her will bring Lucy back to chemotherapy. This subplot underscores the human cost of Gibson’s influence.

The show questions the impact of smaller falsehoods — from polished posts to sponsored content — urging viewers to pay closer attention to the fine print behind curated images.