

Habib Wahid – The 21st century Mozart

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Being brought up in the West naturally had a profound effect on my lifestyle and expectations. Which is why I somewhat missed out in the richness of our traditions, in the



An enchanted evening with Habib

man made classes within the society. You would be mistaken to assume that his music simply stirred the souls living with the boundary of Bangladesh. He has created a sensation in the hearts of Bangladeshis of all ages living all over the world.

magic of our music and last but not least – the spices that makes our food desirable all through out the globe. At the time when our culture is bombarded by the Indian and Western media it is somewhat refreshing to see individuals who are trying to reverse the trend. And one of those individuals is Habib Wahid. He used his magic wand, which in his case being the composers baton, made music which is acceptable and cherished by the masses, breaking barriers between the

I go green with envy every time I see a composer create magic from a musical instrument. No matter how much I have tried I could never muster a single note, let alone a tune. That is why when I listen to the magic of Beethoven, Gershwin, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Vivaldi – I am somehow teleported somewhere far, far away. I get the same feeling when I listen to songs of S.D Burman, R.D. Burman, Kishore Kumar as well. Some thing tells me that the younger readers will be looking dumbstruck trying to figure out who these prehistoric beings were. Rest easy younger readers, I am equally fond of Adnan Sami, Alka Yagnik, Sonu Nigam, Abhijeet, Udit Narayan as well as A.R. Rahman. All of these people had one thing in common. They managed to give life to an inanimate object and made it world famous, to be enjoyed by millions for years and years to come. And now we can easily add one more name to that list – and that is Habib Wahid.

The first time I heard one of Habib's songs was when I was in Canada a few years back. I believe the songs were called "Maya" & "Krishno". Something in his voice and music played harp with the veins deep within the deepest corners of my soul. Not that the lyrics mattered to me that much, as I have always loved the way the music was somewhat pre-programmed within the song. Habib's main talent lay in transferring the older rusty songs and polishing them to a point of acceptability by the new millennium listeners. Mixing these old folk songs, some of which were lost dozens of decades ago, and making the main stream people accept it is no matter of joke. But Habib managed to do this with tact, hard work and determination – thus turning in a professional piece which was a gem to hear till the end.

"Anyone can write a song. But adding music to it and thus giving life takes a lot of creativity", explains Habib to me. "A composer has no social life at all", he adds. "A composer needs to use the correct theme for a song and make it acceptable to that particular scenario, otherwise all the hard work will be wasted", explains Habib while mentioning his latest song "Bhalobashbo" released in the super hit Bangla movie "Hridoyer Kotha". Apparently the movie makers made a whole lot of mistakes while portraying the scene as well as the expressions made by the actors. Song composers apparently are also directors and choreographers of their own play. Therefore, only they know what kind of back ground and theme is best for that particular song. And if the movie makers do not correspond with the composers, i.e. there is no communication between them, and then the outcome might not have the "real" touch the composers expected you to feel. That is why the makers of this particular movie made a few errors for which Habib is not completely happy with. He wants to make sure that the same do not repeat again in the future. His only suggestions to his fans was not to initially watch the movie and then appreciate the song, instead to try to appreciate the song before and then if needed watch the video. Sadly, the music video completely murdered the main theme of this beautiful song.



Talks candidly about music industry

Coming from a cultural family background definitely puts a slight effect on Habib while he was growing up. Though nothing was forced on to him, yet he had a natural talent of playing music. From a very tender age his father made sure that he did not deviate from his intended goal. Thank heavens that his father made the right choice. And now Habib happens to be an icon in the music industry – A talented star that is just lighting up. And then he merely let nature take its course. But, according to him, there is so much more left for him to learn, so much more that he needs to accomplish – and yet he has so far just merely scraped the tip of a gigantic iceberg floating within.

Habib also told me that the job of a composer is never ending. Let us take a composer who has just received lyrics of a song as an example. Naturally he will have more than a dozen tunes to play with at the least. Then comes the ever difficult task to match the



Takes snaps with a fan Eva

perfect tune and make those words come alive from the paper. Just like weaving the first pieces of a fabric and ending up with a beautiful hand woven bed sheet. Depending on the design you have in mind, the color of the fabric comes into play. Then one has to choose between various sizes of needle points as well as collecting various colored threads. Only then one can actually sit down and let the design within you guide you

through the weaving from start to

finish. A music composer has to do the same. And yet, after spending more time in the studios than your own home and having zero social life what so ever, at the end a composer is still never satisfied. No one is perfect, that is understood. Even long after a composed song hits the market a composer is always unhappy. According to them there were so many other choices, so many more varieties, “what if this”, “what if that” and more “what if the other”. Then Habib comes to the final conclusion that the next project will not have the same “bumps” again. That is how he keeps on producing wonderful pieces one after the other. If he has merely scrapped the tip of an iceberg and he has a lot more to learn, then try to imagine, dear readers, what more surprises lie ahead of us.

I know too well how much Habib has inspired the non-resident Bangladeshis living abroad. While visiting Bangladesh this time during our family’s summer vacation I got a glimpse how much effect he has had over the people back home. I asked him as to how



Last few moments with the writer

he chooses the type of music he would compose or sing for that matter. He told me that depending on the circumstances, his state of mind, the mental picture that he draws while going through the lyrics is what inspires him how to navigate his vessel of thoughts. It would be practically impossible to tell how much talent is bursting

within him just by merely glancing at him. The every shy, ever timid “boy next door” type of lad’s eyes speaks volumes of gift given generously by nature. I am not a heavy musical inspired person. The most I have ever been exposed to music was when I had to sing “Amar bhai er rokte rangano” back in St. Josephs when I was a lad of class five, a very difficult Tagore’s song but thankfully as a chorus within a group last year in Canada and every morning for the first 15 minutes or so while I brush my teeth and shower. But after spending 2 hours with this magical music genius gave me an in-depth idea of the music industry, types of music the listeners are drawn too, problems composers face etc. It was a very memorable and educative evening for me. Oh, before I forget. To those of you who do not know as of yet, do you remember the ever hip singer Ferdous Wahid back in the 80s? Well, guess what? Ferdous Wahid is Habib’s father. That is how he was inspired to come into the musical world. And Habib did so with his own effort, hard work and dedication. As well as blessings from parents and love from his fans no doubt!