



নববর্ষ উৎসব ১৪১৩
Bengali New Year Celebration

“গান আমাদের বিশ্বাসের ভাষা”

Amra Kojon proudly presents

“Let Music be the Language of Our Conviction”

Saturday, April 22, 2006

Cambridge -- Music was certainly “the language of their conviction” as a group of music-lovers presented a slice of their culture to a packed auditorium in the Morse School auditorium on April 22, to celebrate the Bengali New Year.

Twenty of Amra Kojon’s best singers serenaded about 300 guests in a five-hour concert with instrumental and solo renditions of Bengali songs covering a wide range of styles, from classical to popular and folk.

From the first strains of David Upegui’s trumpet to the final chorus “O Amar Desher Mati” saluting their motherland, this group of Bengali-speaking amateur musicians once again left their audience with a beautifully presented evening, one that many agreed took them back to their roots in India or Bangladesh. As the performers and volunteers urged the audience to join them in singing the final song, there were many misty smiles and much patriotic fervor on display.

The April 22 show was a comeback for Amra Kojon (literally meaning “a few of us”), after their mega-performance in the Kresge Auditorium, on Feb. 9, 2003, showcasing 1,000 years of Bangla musical heritage in chorus, with more than 100 singers on the stage. Please visit www.amrakojon.org for more details.



The amateur music enthusiasts who formed this group three years ago believe they became the first ever successful attempt at putting aside individual differences of nationality, political ideologies, ethnicity or religion, and coming together to present their language and culture from one common platform, united by their passion for Bangla music.



The 2003 show received press accolades in Boston, New York and Dhaka. Hailed in the Boston Globe as “a festival of friends” and the first positive impression of a country that usually makes the headlines with natural disasters, it was one of the largest South Asian ventures in the area that year, sold out to a 1,200-strong audience, with 200 people turned away at the door.

While on a much smaller scale, Saturday’s show was also sold out a week before. The singers captivated their

audience with a wide variety of Bengali songs from upbeat modern songs like “Shat bhai champa” and “Pa, pa ma ga re sa” that set feet tapping, to deeper folk and classical-based numbers like *lalongeeti* and “Jete dao amay deko na.”

American and Indian guests who did not speak Bengali, said they enjoyed the show immensely and were impressed with the caliber of the performers and the beautiful melodies.

The lobby was tastefully decorated with Happy New year posters, photos from past Amra Kojon rehearsals, press clippings, colorful saris and *alpona* (traditional Bengali designs painted on floors during celebrations). The stage was similarly set up in a feast of color and art. Participants and volunteers were dressed in traditional festive attire – the women in colorful *Dhakai Jamdani saris* made out of a fine cotton weave, and the men in *kurtas* or long shirts.



In the lobby, Amra Kojon presented informational booths highlighting their affiliate organizations. Abol Tabol Music (www.abolabolmusic.com), a music production company, presented their debut album ‘Amra Kojon Sessions’ – a production of solos sung by four AK singers and recorded during their informal *addas* or parties at home. Alongside was an informational booth presented by

Drishtipat, a human rights watchdog organization with a worldwide membership of student and young professionals. Drishtipat shares the Amra Kojon spirit of unity and amity despite individual differences, in cooperating with our friends to promote respect and compassion for our fellow human beings.

ATN Bangla were present with their media crew to record the entire show. They will televise the event worldwide – please check back on our website at www.amrakojon.org for updates and announcements. Mr. Manzurul Islam Monzu and Mr. M. J. Panir Bhuiya from ATN Bangla joined us on stage to address the audience and personally hand out gifts to each of the performers. In turn, Amra Kojon honored them with our plaques in recognition of their continued enthusiasm and support.



An interval midway into the show had the audience feasting on tempting snacks like *samosa* and *laddo*. During the show, Amra Kojon announced their plans to perform in London this summer in their first international concert. This will lay the groundwork for their dream to take Bangla music all over the world in 2007, the next step. For more information on the Amra Kojon on the Road (AKotRo) project, please see the project plan at www.amrakojon.org. Additional photos, press clips and a web blog documenting Amra Kojon's life behind the scene, are also available online.

We proudly present our Performers:

Abhijeet Bhutra, Amlan Bhattacharyya, Anila Naz Choudhury, Anjuman Chowdhury Mukta, Atiq Rahman Sujan, David Upegui, Fawad Reza, Jhila Biswas Jhilmil, Koyel Ghosal, Madhumita Saha, Mahrukh Mohiuddin Nadia, Mugdha Velankar, Mohitosh Talukder Taposh, Moshtaque Talukder, Nabeela Alam, Nasreen Shibli Rumi, Nita Mahalanobish, Niva Rahman, Noha Ahmed, Nuzhat Karim Himi, Rahul Ray, Rima Kamal, Razab Quasem Chowdhury, Sabina Ahmad Tani, Saurav Mukherji, Shafaq Islam, Shahiduddin Ahmed, Shaila Zaman Dina, Sohini Alam, Sujan Bin Wadud, Tahira Sharmeen Ruhina, Zahid Osmani Mamun.