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Amra Kojon announces

“AKotRo” – “AK on the Road” – coming to London, Summer 2006

“Summer of 2006. We are coming to London. That’s a done deal” said Mohitosh Talukder Taposh, speaking of Amra Kojon’s 50 strong troupe of amateur music lovers and their plans to come perform at Logan Auditorium, London in the summer of 2006. Their London concert will be a test run of their dream of taking Bangla music all over the globe to a dozen international destinations in 2007.

At the Invitation (Amontron) restaurant, 49 Hanbury Street, Bricklane, London, on Saturday, March 11, Amra Kojon representatives, Mohitosh Talukder Taposh and Sujan Bin Wadud, attended an informal meeting asking friends and well-wishers for support in their next endeavor, “Amra Kojon on the Road” or “Poth’e Poth’e Amra Kojon”. For more information, please check www.amrakojon.org.

The group comprises of more than 100 music enthusiasts from New England, who showcased 1,000 years of Bangla musical heritage to a packed Kresge Auditorium at MIT three years ago. The unique endeavor was endearingly termed “A Festival of Friends” by The Boston Globe – the first ever successful attempt by Bangladeshis and Indians, Hindus and Muslims, at putting aside all individual differences of nationality, ethnicity or religion, and coming together to present a language, culture and heritage, from one common platform, united by a passionate love of music.

The organizational meeting was hosted by the London chapter of Drishtipat, www.drishtipat.org, a global human rights watchdog organization, comprised of students and young professionals from the expatriate Bangladeshi community worldwide, and committed to safeguarding every individual’s basic human rights. Identifying with the Amra Kojon’s spirit of “setting aside individual differences to unite and work together towards the realization of a common dream of passion”, Drishtipat London invited the leaders and representatives of local cultural organizations, student groups and members of the Bengali speaking community to determine how a team of local organizers in London can host **AKotRo – London 2006**.

The meeting began on time, with about 50 people in the audience. The room was elegantly decorated with the Amra Kojon display boards – showcasing pictures, newspaper clippings and other archived materials from their 2003 show. After a 15-minute clip from the DVD of their 2003 show, Sujan Bin Wadud presented their ideas for the next project, “AKotRo” – an acronym for “Amra Kojon on the Road” – a Bengali word that literally means “together” or “united.” To see their presentation, please check: http://www.amrakojon.org/announcing_akotro.html.

Sujan spoke to the guests in attendance about their plans of integrating music enthusiasts of the local community into their shows at the international destinations in their planned tours, and highlighted the other logistical issues that a local organizing team in London would be in charge of.



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Finally, Sujan invited the guests present, “At a time when our lives are shrouded by the overpowering turmoil of natural calamities and devastation, of international strife and dissonance, of intolerance, hatred and suspicion, of poverty, illnesses and pain, a few of us want to dream of Hope, of Sharing, of Bonding through our common love for music, despite our differences in beliefs, values or nationality. Come dream with us.”

Driven by their passion, yet guided by logic, discipline and organization, Sujan and Taposh then announced their three-tiered approach to this grand project, details of which can be found at http://www.amrakojon.org/on_the_road.html.

Voicing their support and enthusiasm for the project at the meeting were Shamim Azad, a poet and journalist, Runi Khan an organizer, Masuda Bhatti a journalist, Ansar Ahmed Ullah from Shadhinota Trust, Lucy Rahman, an acclaimed singer, Nabonita Chowdhury from BBC, Badal Khan an activist from Bangladesh and H. Rashid from Bangladesh Society. Also present were Shahgir Bhakat, a politician, Ahsan Akhtar, Syed Md. Rakib, Leesa & Faisal Gazi from Dristipat, Freelance journalist Manjurul Azim Polash, Shoumesh Das and other members of the local student community.

For the remainder of the weekend, the Amra Kojon organizer’s team was hosted by Asif Saleh, Executive Director of Dristipat, and Sohini Alam, a participant in the 2003 show and now a London representative for Amra Kojon (sohinialam@yahoo.com). They were accompanied by Anwar Chowdhury, an youth leader and Syed Md. Andalib, an undergraduate student. The Amra Kojon team’s meetings with BBC, Bangla TV and Channel S in London, to discuss media partnerships, went well and their ideas were received with enthusiasm and support. Both Sujan and Taposh were able to identify enthusiastic volunteers from among those they met throughout the weekend, to manage the London end of logistics for the grand concert. Tentatively, the London concert is now slated for early September, and up to date information can be found at www.amrakojon.org.

The Amra Kojon team thanks wholeheartedly all those who took time out of their hectic schedules to meet with them in London, as well as to their gracious hosts who were attentive to the team’s needs.

For information on upcoming auditions, performances, and involvement in this unique venture, please visit www.amrakojon.org. A complete project proposal and detailed manifesto is available on the web site, or upon request. Please email amrakojon@gmail.com, or contact Mohitosh Talukder Taposh, at 401-331-5825(h), 401-743-0685(c), or 401-831-5042(f).