

PRESS RELEASE

CONCERT FROM বাংলাদেশ

1 August 2021

Online at pioneerworks.org/programs/concert-from-bangladesh

6pm Dhaka - 6pm London - 6pm New York

Concert from Bangladesh is a mixed reality music concert, using cutting edge technology to take audiences on a virtual audio-visual journey through Bangladesh past and present, encompassing mystical Baul singers from rural Kushtia, experimental electronics and hip hop from the streets of Dhaka.



Shezad Dawood, *Concert From Bangladesh - concept sketch*, 2021. Courtesy of the artist and UBIK Productions.

Concert From Bangladesh is a groundbreaking mixed reality digital collaboration between **UBIK Productions (London)** and **Samdani Art Foundation (Dhaka)** supported by the British Council Digital Collaboration Fund. The organisations have commissioned acclaimed British-South Asian artist **Shezad Dawood** to create a virtual reality stage for a concert released on **1 August 2021** via **Pioneer Works' (NYC) website**, **expanding on the 50 year legacy of Concert For Bangladesh**: the original charity concert initiated by Ravi Shankar and George Harrison of Beatles' fame, in aid of the relief effort and refugee crisis during the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971.

Co-curated by **Diana Campbell**, **Artistic Director of the Samdani Art Foundation (SAF)**, with Dhaka-born music producer and artist **Enayet Kabir**, together with assistant curators **Ruxmini Choudhury** and **Shoummo Saha**, *Concert From Bangladesh* updates the 1971 concert to showcase a wealth of talent across varied Bangladeshi musical traditions – from

mystical Baul singing to experimental electronics and socially engaged Dhaka hip hop – and raise funds for the Bangladeshi climate change and human rights charity **Friendship**.

The concept was developed by Campbell together with multiple collaborators including Dawood. In the words of **SAF Founder Nadia Samdani**, "As Bangladesh celebrates 50 years of independence, we are delighted to be a part of producing a work that allows the world to listen to the wealth of music and culture found in our country, and to reconsider the role that music and art can play in banding people together to fight for a better and more equal future." **Miranda Sharp, UBIK Productions Director**, says, "We're thrilled to be working with SAF and Shezad Dawood on this multidisciplinary, transnational project that pushes the boundaries of art and music production and develops new digital collaborative workflows."

Concert From Bangladesh will go live to audiences on the **Pioneer Works'** digital platform on **1 August 2021**, accompanied by live events at **Yorkshire Sculpture Park** (Wakefield) as part of **Yorkshire Sculpture International** and **Pioneer Works** (NYC), 50 years on from the original concert. Additional events will take place with **Chisenhale Gallery** (London), at **Leeds City Varieties Music Hall** (Leeds) and **Srihatta Samdani Art Centre and Sculpture Park** (Sylhet). These institutions are located in significant diasporic or rural Bangladeshi areas and will further de-centre and democratise the project's reach, amplifying the experience to diverse Bangladeshi and international communities.

The concert will take viewers on an expansive sonic journey spanning six centuries, beginning with renowned Baul singer **Arif Baul** accompanied by instrumental virtuosos **Nazrul Islam, Saidur Rahman, and Sohel**. This will be followed by a piece composed by **Enayet and Nishit Dey** exploring the shared musical language between Nazrul sangeet, classical raga and 90s jungle, by blending cutting edge electronic production and arrangements by **Enayet, Provhat Rahman and Siaminium**, with classical raga and Nazrul sangeet vocals by **Meerashri Arshee and Moumita Haque**, Bansuri flute by Jawaad Mustakim Al Muballig and sitar performance by **Nishit Dey**. The concert will end with the Bangladeshi hip hop duo **Tabib Mahmud** and 12-year-old **Gully Boy Rana**, whose socially engaged lyrics highlight some of the pressing issues the Concert aims to fundraise for.

Shot against a green screen by a Bangladeshi team in Dhaka, *Concert From Bangladesh* will feature the musicians performing against **shifting virtual sets** that will immerse audiences in **vibrant Dhaka streets**, and transport them to the **riverbanks of Gorai River Kushtia** via **mangrove ecosystems** and **Somapura Mahavihara** – one of the best known monasteries in the Indian Subcontinent built in the 8th century AD –, culminating with a performance in the iconic **Beauty Boarding**, a historically vibrant literary hub in Dhaka and a meeting place for intellectuals to this day.

The performances will be interspersed with archival and contemporary documentary footage, and the concert will be amplified by **Augmented Reality assets**, including a free filter activated through audiences' phones and laptops, bringing 3D objects from the screen into viewers' immediate surroundings. The Concert's graphic identity is developed by long-time Samdani Art Foundation collaborator **Fraser Muggeridge Studio**.

Concert From Bangladesh will revisit the history of solidarity embedded in the historical Concert For Bangladesh: a concert album and ethically produced merchandise will be made available via the online streaming platform on **Pioneer Works**. All proceeds raised will be equally distributed between the performing musicians and Bangladeshi **charity organisation Friendship** (led by Ashoka fellow and Schwab Foundation social entrepreneur **Runa Khan**) which provides healthcare for **climate change refugees** and promotes **women's rights** in Bangladesh.

Notes to Editors

Musicians and Performers

Siaminium (Electronics and Recording Engineer); Meerashri Arshee (Classical Raga vocalist); Arif Baul (Baul vocalist and composer); Nishit Dey (Composer, Sitar and Tabla player); Enayet (Producer, Electronics, Composer); Moumita Haque (Nazrul sangeet vocalist); Nazrul Islam (Dhol player); Gully Boy Rana and Tabib Mahmud (Hip hop artists); Jawaad Mustakim Al Muballig (Bansuri flute player); Provhat Rahman (Electronics); Saidur Rahman (Harmonium player); Shoummo Saha (Audio producer); Sohel (Percussionist).

Concert From Bangladesh On Tour (Further tour dates to be announced soon)

1 August 2021, 6pm Dhaka, 6pm London, 6pm New York: As-live stream across three time zones on pioneerworks.org/programs/concert-from-bangladesh

1 August 2021, entry from 7:15pm, screening at 9:15pm - Yorkshire Sculpture Park (Wakefield): An outdoor screening of *Concert From Bangladesh* and associated tours of sculptures in the grounds in English and Sylhet, in partnership with artist Thahmina Begum. Book via: <https://ysp.org.uk/events/shezad-dawood-concert-from-bangladesh-an-open-air-film-screening>

8 August 2021 - Pioneer Works (NYC): A screening of *Concert From Bangladesh* as part of the Second Sundays event series, which engages Pioneer Works disciplines through live music, food, artists' open studios, and interactive programs.

31 August 2021, 1pm - In the Neighbourhood (London): An outdoor screening of *Concert From Bangladesh* - <https://www.allpointseastfestival.com/nbhd/>

16 September 2021, 7pm - Leeds City Varieties Music Hall (Leeds): A screening by **Yorkshire Sculpture International** in partnership with Hyde Park Picture House's On the Road programme followed by a talk with Shezad Dawood.

2021, Date TBC, Covid-depending - Event with **Chisenhale Gallery (London)**, details TBC.

2021, Date TBC, Covid-depending - Event at **Srihatta, the Samdani Art Foundation Centre and Sculpture Park** located in **Sylhet**, Bangladesh, a lush and green rural tea district approximately 250km (or a 45 minute flight) from the capital city of Dhaka.

For more information about the project, please visit <https://www.samdani.com.bd/concert-from-bangladesh>

Follow the hashtag **#ConcertFromBangladesh**, [@ubik productions](#) and [@samdaniartfoundation](#) on Instagram for updates.

For all press enquiries, please contact:

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- London: Miranda Sharp - miranda@ubikproductions.com

Official Credit Line

Concert From Bangladesh is a project by UBIK Productions and Samdani Art Foundation in collaboration with Shezad Dawood and in partnership with Pioneer Works, Yorkshire Sculpture International, Chisenhale Gallery and Friendship. It is supported by the British Council Digital Collaboration Fund, which supports UK and overseas cultural partnerships to develop digitally innovative ways of collaborating.

About Co-Producers

UBIK Productions is an immersive film and digital arts production company based in London. It focuses on feature length and short experimental film production as well as cutting-edge digital animation, artworks using algorithm technologies and VR development for theatrical, festival and institutional distribution. We produce interdisciplinary works, building dynamic teams with bespoke methodologies for each project from a range of specialties such as 3D animators, composers, editors, cinematographers, choreographers, researchers, sound technicians, coders, game designers as well as motion capture and world building experts for our award-winning works. <https://ubikproductions.com/>

The Samdani Art Foundation (SAF) is a private arts trust based in Dhaka, Bangladesh founded in 2011 by collector couple Nadia and Rajeeb Samdani to support the work of the country's contemporary artists and architects. Led by Artistic Director and Curator Diana Campbell, SAF seeks to expand the audience engaging with contemporary art across Bangladesh and increase international exposure for the country's artists and architects. Its programmes support Bangladeshi artists and architects in broadening their creative horizons through production grants, residencies, education programs, and exhibitions. www.samdani.com.bd

About Shezad Dawood

Shezad Dawood is an artist working across the disciplines of painting, film, neon, sculpture, performance, virtual reality and other digital media to ask key questions of narrative, history and embodiment. Using the editing process as a method to explore both meanings and forms, his practice often involves collaboration and knowledge exchange, mapping across

multiple audiences and communities. Dawood's work has been shown internationally at institutions including Tate (London), Southbank Centre (London), The British Museum (London), MoMA (NYC), Guggenheim (NYC), WIELS (Brussels), MOCA (Toronto), Manifesta, Venice Biennale, Gwangju Biennial, Toronto Biennial. Dawood is a Senior Research Fellow in Experimental Media at the University of Westminster and lives and works in London.

About Key Collaborators

Enayet Kabir is a Brooklyn based, Dhaka raised, electronic musician, curator and artist whose work is focused on intangible spaces, collective memory, synthetic organics and otherness. He has worked on creative direction, stage and lighting design, and music video direction for artists including Yaeji and Photay. His debut EP Chokkor was released earlier this year by New York label SLINK which he runs collectively with rrao, Simisea and K Wata.

Ruxmini Reckvana Q Choudhury is a Dhaka based art researcher and curator and has been working as an Assistant Curator at the Samdani Art Foundation. She has been involved in the Dhaka Art Summit since the edition of 2016 and has conducted many research projects for DAS, including Art Mediation Programme and MAHASSA,(2019-20). Her research interest lies in the pre and post colonial South Asian art and culture.

Shoummo Saha is a music producer, educator, and event curator based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Through teaching community-focused electronic music workshops, forward-thinking programming and curation at venues such as the iconic Jatra Biroti, and his own musical output, Shoummo has become one of the central driving forces behind the growing experimental music and sonic arts scene in Dhaka.

Diana Campbell is a curator committed to fostering a transnational art world. Her plural and long-range vision addresses the concerns of underrepresented regions and artists. Since 2013, she has served as the Founding Artistic Director of Dhaka-based Samdani Art Foundation, Bangladesh and Chief Curator of the Dhaka Art Summit, leading the critically acclaimed 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 editions and is developing the upcoming 2023 edition. Campbell has developed DAS into a leading research and exhibitions platform for art from South Asia, bringing together artists, architects, curators, and writers from across South Asia through a largely commission based model where new work and exhibitions are born in Bangladesh.

About the Funder

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language. Last year we reached over 80 million people directly and 791 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. Founded in 1934, we are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter and a UK public body. We receive a 15 per cent core funding grant from the UK government. www.britishcouncil.org

With additional support for Covid Safety protocols generously provided by the EMK Center.

About Presenting Partners

Yorkshire Sculpture International A unique collaboration between four of Yorkshire's leading art institutions – the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds Art Gallery, The Hepworth Wakefield and Yorkshire Sculpture Park. The galleries work together to promote sculpture in the region. Celebrating the rich history of Yorkshire as the birthplace of pioneering sculptors, including Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore, and as the home of this unique consortium of galleries and celebrated sculpture collections. <https://yorkshire-sculpture.org/>

Chisenhale Gallery has an award winning, 38-year history as one of London's most innovative forums for art. With a reputation for identifying new artistic talent, we believe in making cultural impact through working with artists and learning from our neighbours. We develop ideas with artists over a one- to two-year incubation period, from concept to completion. Located in a dynamic and creative residential neighbourhood in the heart of London's East End, where many cultures converge, Chisenhale Gallery is an evolving space for experimentation, transformed by each artist's commission. <https://chisenhale.org.uk/>

Pioneer Works builds community through the arts and sciences to create an open and inspired world. It encourages radical thinking across disciplines by providing practitioners a space to work, tools to create, and a platform to exchange ideas that are free and open to all. We are driven by the realization that humanity is facing unprecedented social, intellectual, and spiritual challenges; our programs explore new ways of facing those challenges by using the arts and sciences dynamically as both a lens and catalyst. When humanity comes together and combines the ideas and talents of many, we have the ability to engineer what once appeared to be impossible. <https://pioneerworks.org/>

About Friendship

We are an international Social Purpose Organisation guided by a vision of a world where people — especially the hard-to-reach and unaddressed — have equal opportunities to live with dignity and hope. Friendship's vision is almost unchanged since 20 years and is more relevant than ever in a world facing increasing global challenges such as exclusion from vital services, environmental crisis, extreme poverty, inequality and injustice. From Bangladesh, a country facing the most pressing of humanity's challenges, we develop scalable solutions to strengthen marginalised communities, and empower people to transform their lives and reach their full potential. <https://friendship.ngo/>

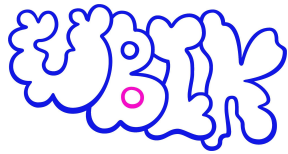
About Media Partners

The Face

Launched by Nick Logan in London in 1980, The Face is the original, definitive style magazine. Reborn in 2019, The Face remains forward-thinking, multi-platform title staying true to Logan's pioneering spirit that continues to champion fresh talent in music, fashion, TV, film and beyond; fly the flag for provocative, rigorous, long-form journalism; and celebrate the best in style and graphic design: a space for immersive, dynamic, multi-faceted stories. <https://theface.com/>

Dhaka Tribune

All the news from Bangladesh regarding politics, business, industry, lifestyle, culture, sports, crime. The sharpest opinions and op-eds from a changing Bangladesh. It is time for a new generation of Bangladeshis to be heard, for their vision for our country to be promoted. Dhaka Tribune is here to be the platform for that new voice, and new vision. <https://www.dhakatribune.com/>



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