



Prof Surjit Singh

Professor Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fanatic, period.
He is a retired Theoretical Physicist.
He has been watching Hindi movies since 1952, has been collecting Hindi songs, movies and magazines since 1969, and has been writing about these things since 1996.
He has had a website since 1999,

<https://hindi-movies-songs.com/joomla/>

REC. MUSIC. INDIAN. MISC

RMIM Articles:

3. Music Directors

Prof Surjit Singh

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Compiler

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By professor toofaanii publishers, East Lansing, MI USA

DEDICATION

Friends [including from (but not limited to) both the classic RMIM and the new RMIM] who encouraged me to keep up my craziness for films, specially Hindi films of the 30s and 40s

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Immense debt is owed to the pioneers, the regulars, the lurkers, the posters, the warriors, the fanatics, the contributors of articles, photos, videos, and songs, the maintainers, the moderators, the meet holders, the meet attenders, the commemorative preparers, the quizzers, the photographers, the videographers, the airport drivers, the behind-the-sceners, the software writers, and other forgotten RMIMers.

A big thanks to my wife Harmesh, and three children, Jai, Libby, and Raja, and, special huggable thanks to Benjamin, for always being there for me.

Professor Surjit Singh

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PREFACE

In the early days of the Internet, I used to read news and other stuff about India on the Yahoo portal and its directories. One day, one of my Indian students told me about Mailing Lists. So, I started reading some of those, e.g. soc.culture.indian. From there I discovered rec.music.indian.misc, which I learnt how to read on Deja News.

This was early 1995 and I was teaching at the Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX. I read the FAQ, the articles, and lurked for a while. I noticed that apart from the lyrics, the most common questions appeared to be about the movie cast, and the list of songs. So, my early posts were on helping people using the now legendary and pioneering Hindi Film Geet Kosh (HFGK) by Har Mandir Singh “Hamraaz”. I also helped with the identification of lesser known characters in the movies, specially some of whom had famous songs picturized on them.

I learned a lot from some very knowledgeable RMIMers, e.g. Vish Krishnan, Rajan Parrikar, guri, Ashok Dhareshwar, Chetan Vinchhi, and the late Satish Kalra, to name a few. I and Harmesh enjoyed participating in the quizzes. From 1995 to now (2017) a good part of my waking hours have been spent on the Web, and a big chunk of that has been devoted to interacting with fellow RMIMers.

A few years ago, Suresh Chandvankar, the Honorary Secretary of the Society of Indian Record Collectors, asked me to contribute an article on RMIM for the Society’s magazine, The Record News. I started to write slowly and carefully taking my own time, but soon realized that there was no way to write briefly about RMIM. So I asked him if he could devote a whole issue of the magazine to RMIM! He said that magazine was no longer being published, but why don’t I write a book on RMIM. It was an excellent suggestion, because so much original valuable content has been generated by RMIMers that it should be collected before it disappears. So on the Facebook RMIM group, I started to collect pdf files of various posted articles. It is a work in progress and is continuing.

In the meantime, January 1, 2017 was the 25th anniversary of RMIM. I thought about writing a mini version of the book to go with the Silver Jubilee meet being planned for Bangalore, India. But there was not enough time and I was discouraged. Then, Pavan Jha asked if I was going to attend and Anup Pandey mused that it would be great if I could release the book during the meet. That was enough incentive to get to work. There was no way to include everything, so I had to select. Result is in your hands. The big book is called Omnibus, I decided to call this version the Minibus :)

I decided to keep the book a surprise. I had to have an accomplice from Bangalore to distribute the book at the meet. I chose Chetan Vinchhi, he agreed readily. But when I finished the ms on April 2 and asked my US and Indian printers if they could print and deliver 50 copies to Bangalore by the 7th evening, they said no way. Again Chetan came to the rescue, and he, along with Ashok Dhareshwar, was able to keep the secret and deliver the book on time. Amazing people we have in RMIM!

In preparation for the big Omnibus, I looked at the material. It turns out that we have generated thousands of relevant posts, hundreds of articles, thousand of song lyrics, hundreds of quizzes like Rim Jhim Geeton Ki, Chitrahhar, etc, and dozens of individual series like A Sher A Day, Abhi To Main Jawan Hoon, Fill in the Blanks, to name a few. All this would have come to thousands of pages. What I plan to do is a series of books on different topics, about 200-300 pages each. I will make the pdfs available for free to download and also have the paperbacks to buy on Amazon and Pothi.

I am starting with the Articles, there will be 3-4 books on Articles, this one is on Music Directors.

RMIM Archive Article "3".

And now there is silence.. R D Burman

Posted by: ameghani@bnr.ca (Amin Meghani)

Source: Filmfare , Feb 1994.

Author: Gulzar

{This article was originally posted in two parts. Both the parts are present in this document}

Hi RMIMers. I've been meaning to post this very special article for a while but couldn't find the time. It's a loving tribute to Pancham by one of his closest friends and colleagues: Gulzar. They were friends during their days of struggle and associates as well when they they made it big. Gulzar remembers their days of laughter and music.

AND NOW THERE IS SILENCE...

by **Gulzar**

Part 1: THE MAN IN THE MUSICIAN

We knew each other from the moment we were hopefuls. We were assistants-he to his father and I to Bimal Roy. When SD would come with his compositions, his son would come carrying a "dag-ga". He'd be wearing shorts the way kids wear Bermud as today. My first lyric for Sachinda was "Mora gora ang lai le". Pancham would be there. Shailendra did the other lyrics for BANDINI. And Pancham would encourage me-g o meet baba, go and talk to him. He'd invite me to their apartment in the one-storey building, 'Jet', on Linking Road. Today there's a tall building over that one-storey structure. I don't know who stays there now, Sachinda was there till his end.

Pancham was three-four years younger than me. He was always a kid, he remained one. He was fond of pranks, of colorful clothes and especially of the color red. He had a nickname for me-'safed kavva'. He'd phone, if I wasn't at home he'd leave a message, "Tell his sense of humor was his very own. He knew Asha Bhonsle was very particular about keeping the house clean; so he sent her a gift-two big brooms in bright wrapping paper.

One of his passions, besides music, was cooking. He grew chillies in his terrac e garden-as many as 40 varieties, cross-breeding them to get new exotic tastes. Ashaji now wonders, "Who'll look after his plants? He's gone."

If a friend was going abroad, he'd ask him to get back some soup packets. Like he asked Rahi Sabarwal of Air India to bring him some soup packets which you can only find in Hong Kong...Pancham even sent him a telegram, "Don't forget my soup." The telegram was signed Soup Lover.

As young men in our 20s, we shared many common interests-interests in home-cooked food and in sports. He was a soccer fanatic, he was a true Mohan Baganian, he'd get into heated arguments with (director) Gogi Anand over soccer. Yet Gogi remained Pancham's friend till the end.

Pancham married Jyoti. It was a love marriage, but I think it didn't work out because they were two very different people. He was immersed into films and music; he'd spend long hours away from home in the recording studio of Film Centre. He was so ob-

essed with his work that he had little time for any other love in his life.

Pancham was a terrific mouth-organ player; he played the organ in his father's orchestra. And he was an outstanding sarod player too...he had trained under Ustad Ali Akbar Khan.

Pancham would have his differences with his father. But he was Sachinda's only child, he was the pampered one. And he could get pretty possessive about his father. They hailed from a royal family; for them it was a matter of pride that they had carved out their own little kingdoms with their music.

There'd be good-natured bantering between them. "Baba," Pancham would pout, "you don't give me enough pocket money." And Sachinda would laugh back, "Oi Pancham, when are you going to contribute to the kitchen expenses?" Whenever the son would try to shuffle out quietly from the music room, Sachinda would say, "Jao jao, I know you want to smoke a cigarette."

Pancham would frequently compose his tunes in the course of car drives. He'd hum, we'd reach Film Centre and he'd say, "OK, you go home now, I've got the tune in my head. I'll try it out with the musicians." If he was especially excited about a tune, he'd scream with joy. He never kept his happiness within himself, he shared the moments of ecstasy with others.

Pancham would keep the actor's face in mind while working on a composition. He'd tell me that, at times, he thought of my face while conjuring a tune-which I thought was a great compliment.

AND NOW THERE IS SILENCE...

by **Gulzar**

Part 2: GULZAR, RD & ASHA: THE WINNING COMBINATION

We first worked together on PARICHAY. It was important for me to sit with him on the music sessions. He inspired certain moments which I picturised later, his music was that visual...I went to Rajkamal studio where he was recording a background score for another film. I gave him the mukhDa- 'Musafir hun yaaro/Na ghar he na thikaana'-and I left. That night he woke me up at 1 a.m. and said, "Come, come down with me to the car." He'd recorded the tune on a cassette already. He started driving through the empty streets of Bandra, he played the beat on the dashboard. It was my first song as a director with him.

By the time he composed 'Saare ke saare', he had shifted from home-he was in the process of acquiring a new flat-to Caesar's Palace Hotel. The most beautiful song in the film-'Beeti na bitai raina'-was also composed in the hotel room. It was based on a classical 'bandish'; it fetched Lata and Bhupendra National Awards for best playback singers.

In all, we did eight films together, as a composer-director team.

Besides PARICHAY, there were: KHUSHBOO, KINARA, AANDHI, KITAAAB, NAMKEEN, LIBAAS and IJAAZAT. How did 'Tere bina zindagi se koi shikwa to nahin' (AANDHI) come about? He was recording Bengali songs for Durga puja around that time. The lyrics were by the renowned Gauri Shanker. I liked the tune that Pancham was composing; I filled it up with Hindi words and said, "Look, I'm going to use this for AANDHI."

As for 'Is moD pe jaate haiN, kuCH sust qadam raste', I gave him

the words from one of my poems. He composed the tune instantly. He never took time. Spontaneity was his specialty. If he struggled over a song, he would prefer to abandon it. For instance, 'Ek hi khwab kai baar yuhi dekha hai maine' (KINARA) exasperated him. He found that metre a bit difficult, but two months later I put it before him again. He caught the scanning, and the song was finally recorded.

When I gave him 'Mera kuCH saamaaan tumhare paas paDa hai' (IJAA-ZAT), he waved the lyric aside and said, "Huh, tomorrow you'll bring me the front page of *The Times of India* and expect me to compose a tune around it. What is this blank verse you're giving me!" Ashaji was sitting there, she started humming the phrase, "Mujhe lauta do." He grasped it immediately; from that one phrase he developed the song, which was quite a feat! This time Ashaji and I got National Awards. Poor fellow, he did all the work and we enjoyed the 'kheer'.

Ashaji's and his was a superb creative companionship. He used the potential in her voice to maximum effect. No other composer ever placed Ashaji's voice above his music the way he did. We recorded the non-film album DIL PADOSI HAI, and the variations from semi-classical and ghazal to pop and jazz, were a valuable experience for each one of us. There was a three-way harmony of voice, music and lyrics.

After his heart ailment, Panoram did feel that producers were sidelining him. He did feel hurt. He would laugh, with a touch of bitterness, at the new music composers who copy his tunes and make a mess of them. They would even imitate his singing style which was unmistakably his. 'Mehbooba mehbooba' (SHOLAY) and 'Dhanno ki aankhon mein' (KITAAB) were his creations, but others tried to clone his style, only to sound like amateurs.

My last meeting with Panoram was on December 30 [1993]. He went to Sahara recording studio in Goregaon. Ashaji was recording a song for G.V. Iyer's VIVEKANANDA. Salil Chowdhry had composed the music. Panoram and I had gone along with Ashaji. At the end of the evening, he said in his customary manner, "Milte hain."

We never did.

-Amin

RMIM Archive Article "4".

A Most Versatile Music Director - An Obituary

Posted by: Prince Kohli (pkohli@cc.gatech.edu)

Source: The Times of India, Delhi edition.

Author: Meera Joshi

A Most Versatile Music Director - An Obituary

The versatile music director, Rahul Dev Burman, 54, who died this morning following a heart attack at his Maryland apartment at Santa Cruz, was one of the giants of Indian film music.

Born on July 27, 1939, "RD" was the only child of the famous singer-music director, Sachin Dev Burman. He was brought up in Calcutta. Popularly known as Pancham (the nickname given to him by Ashok Kumar when he found him only singing pa...pa..pa from the "sargam") he scored music for more than 350 films.

After coming to Bombay on completing his matriculation, RD learnt the sarod under Ustad Ali Akbar Khan And later Ashish Khan. He began to assist his father in music-direction. The first film he signed as an independent music director was "Bhoot Bangla" though his first release was "Chhote Nawab" for the same producer. His rise to fame was slow but steady. And in the early seventies, he had few competitors.

Dev Anand ("Hare Rama Hare Krishna," "Heera Panna"), Shakti Samanta ("Amar Prem," "Kati Patang"), Ramesh Sippy ("Sholay," "See-ta aur Geeta"), Ramesh Behl ("Jawaani Diwaani"), Vinod Chopra ("Parinda," "1942 - A Love Story"), Nazir Hussain ("Teesri Manzil," "Caravan," "Hum kisi se kam nahin," "Zamane ko dikhana hai") and Gulzar ("Parichay," "Ijaazat," "Kinara," "Khushboo," "Aandhi") were staunch RD loyalists.

While "Ijaazat" won him the National Award, RD bagged two filmfare awards for "Sanam Teri Kasam" in 1982 and "Masoom" in 1983. The MP govt. conferred on him with the Lata Mageshkar award for 1992-1993 for his "outstanding achievements and long-time devotion to music." The award carries a cash-prize of Rs. 1 lakh and a citation.

Among his most notable films were "Apna Desh," "Aap ki kasam," "Agar tum na hote," "Betaab" and "Love story." While "Drohi," "Muskurahat" and "Gurudev" were some of his recent releases, those still to hit the big screen include "Ajay," "Ghaatak," "Love and War" And "1942 - A love story."

FUSION OF MUSIC: Panchamda was among the first to about the fusion of western rock and jazz with Indian classical music. Though he was often criticized for "borrowing" tunes and not being original, he found nothing wrong with his style of working. He admitted to taking off from his father's tunes or others that inspired him. And when younger composers followed in his footsteps, he took it as a compliment.

His last years were not too happy. When "Sagar" failed at the box office, he found himself being sidelined. The only two to stand by him were Dev Anand and Rajesh Khanna. He was shattered when he lost "Ram Lakhan," which Shubash Ghai had promised him, to Laxmikant Pyarelal, the duo who had played in his orchestra.

Following a heart attack in 1988, he underwent a bypass surgery

abroad the next year. While recuperating he is said to have composed over 2,000 tunes which he kept in his memory bank. He often said that his best tunes came to him in his dreams and that he had to be in happy frame of mind even while composing sad tunes. "When I am down, I end up making a mess of things," he is reported to have said.

The music-maestro also composed non-film music. His two most notable attempts in this field were the international album "Pan-tera" which he brought out in collaboration with the Latin American composer, Jose Flores, and "Dil Padosi hai" sung by Asha Bhonsle with lyrics by Gulzar.

Rahul Dev married Rita in 1960 but they were divorced in 1974. He then married Asha Bhonsle for whom he had composed many a memorable song in 1980. Indeed, the RD-Asha duo delighted audiences the world over with their "live" performances, with RD's showmanship and Asha's natural exuberance making them the perfect pair. It was only fitting that Asha was there at his bedside when RD breathed his last.

-By Meera Joshi

RMIM Archive Article "34".

The Sound of RD's Music - A Tribute

Posted by: parrikar@spot.Colorado.EDU (Rajan P. Parrikar)

Source: Times of India, 1994

Author: Raju Bharatan

The Sound of RD's Music

by

Raju Bharatan

The one who ruled the sound waves through the '70s is no more in the '90s. It seems incredible that the man who shook the stalwarts like only C. Ramchandra did in the '40s and O.P.

Nayyar in the '50s should, in the end, have been consumed by the genie he uncorked.

Kishore Kumar's passing in October 1987 found R.D. Burman feeling suddenly diminished in composing stature. The sound of the voice, through which Rajesh Khanna had arrived like an avalanche in Aradhana, was stilled. Yes, it can now be told that it was R.D.

Burman, not S.D. Burman, who conceived and executed the music score of Aradhana.

Dada Burman was far too ill during the recordings of Aradhana to alter substantially the shape and direction RD gave to the film's tuning and orchestration. Insiders knew this, none more so than Shakti Samanta as the maker of Aradhana.

That is the reason Shakti turned from SD to RD for Kati Patang and Amar Prem. I was among the select invitees to "The Jet" home of Dada Burman to announce the release of the records of Aradhana. Everyone present there that evening showered high praise on Dada Burman for what sounded even then a path-breaking score. Everyone present there that evening ignored the son standing in the corner of the drawing room, the son who had been instrumental in creating this totally fresh-sounding score.

Is it not significant that RD chose to break away from SD after Aradhana, for mother Meera Burman to emerge as the chief assistant of Dada Burman with Tere Mere Sapne, when the credit for the wave-making tunes of Aradhana went entirely to the father? It is as if in that moment, in which he stood isolated in "The Jet" corner, RD took a spot decision to cease to be SD's chief assistant and move out to be his own music man, make his own individual mark as a composer off the beaten sound track.

There was a whole new generation of music lovers waiting to be conquered by Kishore Kumar and Rajesh Khanna on the oral evidence of Aradhana. And RD soon made this generation empathetically his own to change the visage and format of Hindustani film music with Jawani Diwani.

"I feel sorry to say this, but the boy doesn't understand poetry at all," Majrooh told me. To which I replied: "But Majrooh Saab, even Dada Burman did not understand Hindi poetry." Majrooh's counter to that: "Dada Burman might not have understood Hindi, but he understood poetry, which is the same in any language."

Give RD credit for the fact that he remained wholly undeterred by such innuendo regularly hurled at him. RD had tuned with the same

Majrooh to metamorphose the sound of film music with Yaadon ki Baarat. It was the same Majrooh I encountered in RD's Santa Cruz music room, sheepishly handing over to the composer "a piece of paper that's not poetry", to quote his own words.

Majrooh need not have bothered to stress his point. RD asked for poetry only when he needed it. And when he needed it he went to Gulzar, knowing Majrooh could never bring himself in tune with his generation even if he condescended to write for it. For only a Gulzar could comprehend RD's depth of feeling in an Ijazat vein of Mera kuchh saaman tumhare paas pada hai. In the Ghar of Gulzar alone could RD fly with his notes: Aaj kal paaon zameen par nahin padte mere.

I heard those RD notes fly one last time on December 21, as I chased Pancham on the phone, to Film Centre, Tardeo, to invite him for my daughter's wedding reception. I was put through straight to RD's recording room and, during the four-five minute wait, thrilled, on the phone, to the harmony of what, ironically, was to prove Pancham's last live recording. As the tune came resonantly over, as RD lost no time after that on coming on the line, I said: "Congrats, the sound of RD music, it's still so refreshing, though the tune sounds suspiciously like Raat akeli hai from Dada's Jewel thief!"

"Who can escape your ears!" moaned RD. Spare a thought, therefore, for twice-widowed, Asha Bhonsle, whose "amazing breath control" in Raat akeli hai Dada Burman publicly praised. It was this that RD harnessed to his art and craft to bring to our film music a new vim, a new vitality, as a composer who understood both electronics and Western notation.

Asha and Kishore, the two formed the life-breath of RD's music. Yet RD was so versatile that, like SD in Taxi Driver, he could get Lata, as late as 1969, to 'do an Asha` all through Pyar ka Mausam. Lata spelt melody, Asha rhythm, in RD's recording room. A spontaneous tribute to RD's hold on the public imagination came from Ravi Shankar when Panditji was engaged with a Meera recording. An instrumentalist played a wrong note for Ravi Shankar who whispered through the mike: "I say, play it right, otherwise it will become RD on the LP!"

*** [Now that sounds very derisive on Ravi Shankar's part, doesn't it? Or am I missing something? Why Bharatan would want to cite this remark as a compliment to RD beats me. If I have read it right, it just goes to show that even great musicians like Ravi Shankar are not above talking through their hat even on matters musical! - RP] ***

Laxmikant-Pyarelal were the only ones in the late '70s to ward off the RD challenge. The duo had to work extra hard to overcome the solo maestro. Dev Anand found RD to be in such wonderful tune with the spirit of the film that he wanted, from the outset, that Pancham, as he was affectionately called, score Hare Rama Hare Krishna independently. But how was he going to jettison Dada Burman, who had come to symbolise the Navketan signature tune? Dev told me that he cleverly suggested to Dada Burman that he compose the traditional tunes for Hare Rama Hare Krishna, leaving his son to do the mod songs.

"No way!" said Dada. "Let Pancham do the film all by himself.

Pancham is now a full-fledged music director, Dev. My combining with him, for the first time in our careers, will help neither me nor him. So let the entire Hare Rama Hare Krishna score be Pancham's."

Remember, Dev's Ai meri topi palat ke aa tune in Funtoosh had been composed by prodigy Pancham at the age of nine. Dada had quickly filched his own son's tune! Upon Pancham's asking how Dada could possibly palm off RD's tune as SD's, Pancham had quoted Dada as saying: "I was testing your tune on the public! Now that Ai meri topi has proved a hit, I know you will make it as a composer when your time comes."

That time came much earlier than expected when Guru Dutt booked 19-year-old R.D. Burman to score the music for his Raaz. The film was later shelved after RD had done the musical spadework for it. "How did you find working with Guru Dutt?" I asked Pancham. "Want the truth? I found Guru Dutt to be most whimsical. No tune Guru Dutt okayed was ever final. What he approved this evening he would scrap next morning!"

"Was your experience the same with Raj Kapoor on Dharam karam?" I sought to know. "On the contrary, I found Raj Kapoor very firm in his judgement," noted Pancham. "I felt distinctly shaky about the fact that the very first tune I was asked to compose for Dharam Karam was to be in Mukesh's voice on Raj Kapoor, who's playing the piano in the film. I came up with a selection of six tunes fearing the worst. But Raj Kapoor okayed the very first tune I played, adding by way of bonus: 'Hit tune hai, bottle kholo!' That's how my very first tune for RK went on the screen as Ek din bik jaayega maati ke mol."

Yet his best lesson in music, said Pancham, came from his father SD. Shakti Samanta had outlined to RD something that sounded to Pancham like the usual bhajan situation (on Sharmila Tagore) in Amar Prem. "And I had come up with the standard bhajan tune for it," revealed Pancham. "But Dada was there when I was giving the finishing touches to the tune and wanted from me the precise details of the song situation. When I gave him a picture of the setting in which Lata Mangeshkar was to render the number on Sharmila Tagore, Dada was aghast.

"But where's the composer in you in this tune, Pancham?" he wanted to know. "So what if Shakti said it's the usual bhajan situation. Still it's a most creative situation for any composer. For Sharmila here is something more than the nautch-girl she plays. Her motherly instincts have been aroused by that kid. Your tune therefore must communicate all the agony of the nautch-girl wanting to be the mother she can never be. Do it again, your way, but with the moving human situation in mind."

"That's how," admitted Pancham, "my Amar Prem tune finally came out of Lata's thrush throat as Bada natkhat hai re Krishna Kanhaiyya. It was my tune and yet not my tune, for it was Dada who had taught me to put the right shade of feeling into it." There was thus something of Dada Burman, something recognisably his own, in the music so trendily made available by Rahul Dev Burman. This is what saw RD score as no other composer did in the annals of Hindi cinema. There has been only one SD, to be sure. But there has also been only one RD. Now both are no more.

And popular music, in the words of Gulzar, is reduced to a plastic art.

RMIM Archive Article "38".

RDBurman: "Flashback"

Posted by: Vandana Venkatesan (vandana@charlie.ece.sc Carolina.edu)

Source: Excerpt from article "Flashback" Indian Express

Bombay Ed., Jan.9,1994.

Author: Lancy P Correa

Pancham, when queried about the super success of 'Teesri Manzil' once revealed how he got the God-sent offer. "When Nasir Hussain started the movie Dev Anand was the hero," he had said,"and I was signed to compose the music. Later on, however, there were complications and Devsaheb couldn't do the film for some reason, and Shammji Kapoor was signed on instead. When I heard about this new development I thought in my mind that 'mera patta kat gaya' (my chance is lost). Because Shammiji had his own troupe with Shanker-Jaikishan and I assumed that he would insist on the duo giving music for the film. But Nasirji insisted on retaining me, though Shammiji was not too keen. Anyway he came for the recording and was mighty pleased with my musical offering. The rest is history."

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RMIM Archive Article "39".

SPARKLES: Pancham and his music

Posted by: Vandana Venkatesan (vandana@charlie.ece.scarolina.edu)

Source: Indian Express, Bombay Ed., Jan.16 1994.

Author: Seema Sinha

SPARKLERS

Seema Sinha

Panchamda's favourites were the ones which he enjoyed composing and recording. Dum maro dum, Mere naina saawan bhadon, Mehbooba, popular numbers from Mere Jeevan Saathi, Aandhi, Kinara and Kati Patang were the creations he loved. He liked Shankar Jaikishan-Lata Mangeshkar combination, but found it difficult to choose between Lata, Asha Bhonsle and the lyricists he worked with. "If Latabai is Don Bradman of cricket, Ashabai is Gary Sobers. Majrooh in mood is at his best and Anand Bakshi when in his true element is superb," said Pancham diplomatically.

Rated as one of the most original composers, Pancham started his career with his father S.D. Burman in 1955 with Guru Dutt's Pyaasa and composed the famous song, Sar jo tera chakraye. In 1963, Pancham helped his father compose various mukhdas for the film Guide. Finally Pancham made his debut with Chhote Nawab in 1961. In this endeavour to be different from his father Pancham was helped by Kersi Lord and Manori Singh, India's leading saxophone player. Pancham popularised the brass element of the orchestra along with electric guitar resulting into some memorable numbers like Aaja aaja from Teesri Manzil, which is still a rage. Pancham wasn't very confident about the song as it had an unusual beat and approached Asha hesitantly. He knew Asha could do justice to it. "Pancham would be hesitant whenever he came up with a truly inspiring tune. He was shy, self-effacing and locked," Asha had observed.

When Asha heard it, especially the last portion O o aaaaja, oh oh aaaja, aaaaha she knew the song was going to be a trend-setter. Recently he had expressed his desire to make a comeback. Ek dao aur marna hai (I want to make one more effort), he had said in his last interview. But unfortunately, by then it was too late.
-S.S.

RMIM Archive Article "40".

THE SWAN SONG

Looking back on the melody-rich life of R. D. Burman
Posted by: Vandana Venkatesan (vandana@charlie.ece.sc Carolina.edu)
Source: Indian Express, Bombay Ed., Jan.16,1994.
Author: Lancy P Correa and Seema Sinha

THE SWAN SONG

Looking back on the melody-rich life of R.D. Burman
Music, His Birthright, was the title of Music Idia Limited's
cassette brought out some years ago to commemorate 15 years of
the company's tuning with Rahul Dev Burman, who left his musical
journey unfinished as a stroke snatched him away on January 4,
1994.

For music indeed was everything for Pancham, the nickname given
by the thespian Ashok Kumar, whose brother the late Kishore
Kumar, gave some of his best performances when singing under the
baton of RD.

A publicity-shy man, RD let his music do the talking for him.
And talk it did - in more than 400 films. The unanimous opinion
in the industry was that RD was the best among his peers - a gi-
ant among music maestros like Laxmikant-Pyarelal, Kalyanji-
Anandji, Ravi, Shiv-Hari, Rajesh Roshan, Usha Khanna and Ravindra
Jain. Says Kersi Lord, whose father Kawas Lord like him was the
arranger for many top music directors of yore, "There's no doubt
in my mind that R.D. Burman was the best. I played for him in
many films. Infact it was RD who first introduced the electronic
organ in India for the composition O mere sona re sona in Teesri
Manzil for which I had the privilege of playing the organ."

This aspect of introducing new styles was the main reason for his
super success. In fact innovativeness became synonymous with RD.
He has been quoted as saying: "I don't say that I am a knowledge-
able man when it comes to raags. I don't say I tried to do so
and so song in Raag Darbari or attempted some difficult raag in
another song. Whatever comes to my head I compose."

So we have such creative gems as diverse as Aaja aaja main hoon
pyaar tera (Teesri Manzil), his passport into the big league, Dum
maro dum (Hare Rama Hare Krishna), heralding the bell-bottom-
hippie culture into filmdom, Muthukodi kawadi hada (Do Phool),
which introduced comedian Mehmood as a singer, Jaane jaan dhoon-
data phir raha (Jawani Diwani), where the echo effect was used
tellingly, Ek chatur naar (Padosan), without doubt the most comic
song ever to be filmed, Duniya mein logon ko (Apna Desh), intro-
duced the distinct Pancham rhythm and voice, Mere naina saawan
bhadon (Mehbooba), gave ample evidence of RD's classical base,
and Tu rootha to main (Jawaani), had Asha singing in an ephemeral
voice to a new foot-stomping beat. Suggests veteran Dev Anand, a
fan of RD's father, the great S.D. Burman, "Pancham combined the
tradition of Dada (S.D.) Burman and the modern melody. Dada
wasn't very happy about my Hare Rama Hare Krishna project, as he
felt that the brother-sister story wouldn't click therefore I de-
cided to take his son. Within 10 days we recorded six songs! Dum
maro dum became a cult song."

The Pancham style came to symbolise a unique culture which spawned many die-hard fans. Says lyricist Majrooh Sultanpuri, with whom RD had a memorable innings, "Pancham had this knack of copying a foreign tune and Indianising it." Concur another top lyric writer Anand Bakshi, "I have worked with many music directors but RD was just extraordinary."

RD's shrill intonations, an innovativeness that was too much for the conservative '60s and '70s, notwithstanding, his gurgling voice for Duniya mein logon ko (Apna Desh), Monica O my darling (Caravan), Mehbooba mehbooba (Sholay), Yamma yamma (Shaan), Samundar mein nahakar (Pukar), Sapna mera toot gaya (Khel khel mein) and Dil lena khel hai dildar ka (Zamane ko dikhana hai), were chart busters.

His repository of music didn't end with songs, they extended beyond and embellished the background score too, a little known fact that many have found convenient to push under the carpet. Who can forget the memorable banshee wails in the greatest Hindi film ever, Sholay?

Recalls Rahul Rawail, who did seven films with RD: "He was a very enthusiastic person. I remember when we were struggling to get the background music in Betaab for Sunny Deol's introduction. RD called me at 2 o'clock in the morning and suggested something that became a memorable signature tune."

For all his talents and outputs, however, awards came in few and far between. He bagged two filmfare awards for Sanam Teri Kasam and Masoom but after many eons in filmdom. He narrowly escaped getting the national award for his music twice - first when Parveen Sultana won the best singer award for Humein tumse pyaar kitna (Kudrat) and later in Gulzar's Ijaazat when Asha and Gulzar bagged the awards for best singer and best poet. An irony it was that the jury deemed it fit to honour the film's songs but keep the publicity away from the master. This was the way RD lived his public life-as private from the public as only he could keep it.

Many who were associated with him promised that they would work with him again even when he wasn't quite the rage, but few kept their word. This life for RD in his later days was quiet on many fronts, with both health and friends deserting him. He died in his sleep leaving behind his dreams for a million melodies.

-Lancy P Correa and Seema Sinha.

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RMIM Archive Article "249".

RDB: In Memoriam

Posted by: Raju Bathija (bathija@sindhu.theory.tifr.res.in)

Source: Middy (Jan 6 '96)

Author: Raju Bharatan

In Memoriam
Asha on R D Burman
by
Raju Bharatan
for Middy

Yesterday was R D Burman's second death anniversary. Also yesterday, Asha Bhosle was in tune with R D Burman, while day before yesterday, she harmonised with O P Nayyar, and today, she is in sync with A R Rahman. Tell me, has there been a singer who has gone along with a trendsetter of the 50's, the 70's and now, the 90's?

What Asha, therefore, had to say of Pancham when he was living acquires an even deeper meaning -- now that R D Burman is no more.

``Do you know'', revealed Asha to me once, ``that Pancham would literally dance while recording a Khel Khel Main due like `Sapna mera toot gaya'. Even as Pancham danced, I got the flow of rhythm, the mood of the song and could add that bit more to the number as I watched this born composer foot tappingly express himself to the singer.

In this sense, Kishore and Pancham were made for each other.

``I remember Pancham rehearsing Kishore and me for S D Burman's Nau Do Gyrah duet, `Aankhon mein kya ji'. What I didn't know then was that the tune idea of `Aankhon mein ...' was RD's, not SD's! Likewise, I recall -- once again without knowing the original tune to be the son's -- Pancham coming to rehearse with me for Dada Burman's Teen Deviyani duet, `Arre yaar meri tum bhi ho gazab'.

When R D Burman finally became a music director himself, even after coming up with a truly inspiring tune like `Aa jaa aa jaa, main hoom pyar tera' for Teesri Manzil, Pancham had this habit of querying: `Do you think this song is good?'

``With my long experience of singing, I could feel it in my bones that `Aa jaa aa jaa' was going to make waves. But Pancham those days (mid '60s) lacked the gumption to assert his viewpoint.

``In fact, I had to take `Aa jaa aa jaa' to Lata didi for Pancham to be convinced that it was a beat-based tune without parallel in the annals of our music. Didi sat up with a jerk as I hummed the Pancham refrain, `Aa jaa, aa jaa, aa jaa, aa jaa, aa ja, aaa ...'. Didi told me I should not change a note, that I should give this part of the song to Pancham exactly as he wanted it rendered.

``I had asked Pancham for a day to make up my mind whether I wanted a change here -- I was then an established singer, he a rising composer. I mention this only to bring into focus

Pancham's being needlessly conscious of his junior stature in the music world.

“I knew him to be set for big things from the moment I rendered ‘Maar daalega dard-e-jigar koi iski dawa kijiye’ from Pati Patni.

I had discovered that even a seasoned singer like me, to be effective here, had to keep a careful count of the beat.

“It is this unusual beat of his that finally enabled Pancham to carve out a niche for himself. Pancham had picked up from his father the art of engaging Kishore and me in no end of verbal teasing. There always were those naughty Pancham ‘touches’ in a duet by Kishore and me. How mentally nimble I had to be to ensure that Kishore did not steal the moment from me!

“But Pancham was always there to even out things. That's how we three -- Pancham, Kishore and I -- could come up with masti bhare duets like ‘Jaane-e-jaan dhoondhta hi raha’ and ‘Agar saaz cheeda tarane banege’ in Jawani Diwani; ‘Bhali bhali si ek soorat’ in Buddha Mil Gaya; ‘Rekha o rekha jabse tumhen dekha’ in Adhikar; and ‘Hawa ke saath saath’ in Seeta Aur Geeta. With Pancham, there to even out things between Kishore and me, there was no limit to my sense of innovation under this flexible baton.

“It took me long, very long, to grasp the fact that Pancham was a composer first, a husband after. For instance, it didn't matter if he slept on the floor, but his recording system, his stereo, had to be immaculately kept in the place. Pancham lived, ate and slept music.

“You couldn't find a gentler husband, once you left him with his music -- in peace to create something out of this world like ‘Mera kuchh saaman tumhare paas pada hai’ for Gulzar's Ijaazat. Look at the wildly irregular metre of this song lyric! Who, but Pancham could have so turned it as for it to fetch me the National Award as best Singer?”

RMIM Archive Article "256".

Pacham Passion

Posted by: Satish Subramanian (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

Source: Screen

Author: Subhash K Jha (for Screen 1997)

Pancham Passion
HMV's Golden Collection - The Genius of R D Burman
by
Subhash K Jha

Three years have gone by since R D Burman left us (January 1994). In the years preceding his sudden and irreplaceable demise his longstanding friends and admirers in the film industry had more-or-less dismissed the Burmanesque mystique as out of step with the times. R D Burman didn't live to see the revival of interest in his music. If he had lived to experience the upsurge of laurels in the wake of "1942-A Love Story" he would have been more saddened than gladdened by our tendency to write off artistes of illimitable aptitudes when they hit a dark spot in their careers.

After being in his father's shadow for several years and having ghost composed some of the senior Burman's most successful compositions in the late sixties, junior Burman proved he was 'beta' than the best. RD made an immediate impact with two back-to-back antithetical scores in long-standing friend Mehmood's "Chhote Nawab" and "Bhoot Bangla". While the former contained such effulgent classical nuggets as "Ghar aaja ghir aaye badra sanwariya", the latter found RD doing a tantalising twist that branded him as the most modern composer of our times.

One wonders what the shape of RD's career would have been if early in his career Nasir Husain's "Baharon Ke Sapne" had been the decisive blockbuster instead of Husain's "Teesri Manzil". If Baharon Ke Sapne had clicked RD would have had the chance to compose more compositions closer to his heart like "Aaja piya tohe pyar doon"; "Kya janoon aajan hoti hai kya" and "zaamane ne maarey jawan kaise kaise". Wisely, the anthology released to observe the third year without RD Burman selects "zaamane ne maarey jawan kaise kaise" from "Baharon Ke Sapne". This Burman score was brilliantly collaborated in the inceptive years of his career.

The collection lives up to the promise of delivering a rare largely obfuscated side of the Burmanesque genius. The side that never overcame hurdles imposed on the composer after the success of the rock n roll score in Teesri Manzil. One number out of fifty one selected for the collection alone suffices to lend a tonal multiplicity to RD's enduring image as a versatile composer.

Listen to Lata Mangeshkar sing "O ganga maiyya paar laga de mere sapnon ki naiyya" for the long-forgotten Meena Kumari in April 1967. This precious composition from RD's vast ditty-kitty is as purely Indian as the Ganga. One of Lata's most cherishable songs,

"o Ganga maiyya" has seldom been put in any anthology of RD'S or Lata's songs.

The thrill of rediscovering a large number of RD's nuggets that were sidelined by the failure of parent films, is sustained almost to the end of the anthology. There's a telltale Rafi number from a pre-Zanjeer Amitabh Bachchan starrer. "Koi aur duniya mein tumsa" from "Pyar Ki Kahani" not only sounds very similar to RD's "Maine poocha chand se" in Abdullah, the two compositions are similarly worded and sung by the same singer Mohammed Rafi.

This collection stresses the more reflective artistry of Burman than previous collections. In this era when RD's songs are being remixed and restructured to suit the chart's purposes it is a pleasure beyond words to hear the originals. Without the untold benefits of multi-track recording facilities, R D Burman created edifices of enigma like "O hansini" in "Zehreela Insaan"; "Ni sultana re" in "Pyar Ka Mausam" and "Acchi nahin sanam dil lagi dil-e-beqaraar se" in "Rakhi Aur Hathkadi". All these compositions of classic modernism co-exist happily in this sun-kissed anthology.

When the prolonged lean phase set into RD's career circa the early Eighties RD was at the acme of his composing skills. The films that Burman composed for during the decade of doom, flopped. But were his longstanding filmmaker-friends like Mehmood, Rahul Rawail, Ramesh Sippy, Nasir Husain and Raj Sippy impervious to the elevated quality of music that RD composed for these disastrous films? If they missed the point earlier on here's their chance to catch up with the irrefutable convictions that Burman poured into songs from his flop phase. "O meri jaan" in Nasir Hussain's "Manzil Manzil"; "Jeene de yeh duniya chahe maar dale" in Lava. "Kabhi palkon pe aanson hai" in "Harjaee" are among the choicest, most fluent and filigreed compositions of RD Burman's career. They were also the essence of creativity in film music of the Eighties.

Why did RD Burman's career get relegated to the back rows of the charts? It's a pity he was born in an era when the fate of a film and its music scores were inextricably linked to each other.

Today his imitators Jatin-Lalit become chart-ka-badshahs by echoing RD's style in "Khamoshi-The Musical" even though the film is a disaster at the box-office.

"The Genius of RD Burman" album doesn't do full justice to the composer. No single anthology can ever do that. What it does is familiarises listeners with some of the crucial career-defining make-or-break songs from RD's repertoire. Back in 1979 when Hema Malini's literary semi-classic Ratna Deep flopped its music too went down the drain. Today when one listens to RD's "Kabhi kabhi sapna lagta hai" from the film one is filled with wonderment and admiration. Was the multi-talented RD Burman a mere dream?

RMIM Archive Article "360".

Remembering RD

Posted by: Raju Bathija

Source: Sunday Times of India, 1997

Author: Raju Bharatan

Hi,

The following article appeared in the Sunday Times of India, January 5, 1997, on the occasion of 3rd death anniversary of R D Burman.

- Raju Bathija

Remembering RD ...

Raju Bharatan

Three years ago, on January 4, at 3:58 a.m., Rahul Dev Burman passed away, leaving behind him a whole generation of his admirers, shocked at the sudden loss. Panchamda was no more.

Soon after his death came the Filmfare award for his brilliant score of Vidhu Vinod Chopra's 1942 - A Love Story. 1942 ... also won Kavita Krishnamurthi her maiden Best Singer award for her compelling rendition of Pyaar hua chupke se.

If there was no argument regarding that posthumous award, there was no end of argument in the prestigious Sur Singar Samsad council in 1967 when it came to awarding Pancham for the best Classical Song of the Year. As the convener of the Sur Singar committee set up to pick that year's Best Classical Song, I can state that Pancham lost that award in peculiar circumstances.

This was after he had shown his paces in Teesri Manzil (1966). Teesri Manzil won spot recognition for him as a musicmaker with his own style -- distinct from that of S.D. Burman -- but the same music typecast him. His O Ganga maiya, paar laga de meri sapno ki naiya ... set in Raag Jogiya and sung by Lata Mangeshkar for the film Chandan Ka Palna was a strong contender for Sur Singar's best Classical Song of the Year award for 1967. He himself had high hopes for the song. O Ganga maiya was shortlisted among the four songs in the final context that year, the other three being Lata Mangeshkar's Maine range li aaj chunariya composed in Raag Pilu by Madan Mohan for Dulhan Ek Raat Ki, Asha Bhosle's Saawan ke raat kaari karri in Raag Malkauns by Ravi for Meherbaan and Lata's Dar laage garje badariya set in Raag Surdasi Malhar by Vasant Desai for Ram Rajiya.

Brijnarain, who headed the Sur Singar Samsad, called me frantically on the morning after we had bought R D Burman's O Ganga maiya into the reckoning. "Are you out to destroy the classical reputation of Sur Singar?" he asked. "How could you as convener possible permit a song by R D Burman even to get a look-in at my Sur Singar?". The award eventually went to Madan Mohan.

The way Pancham came to be jettisoned for that Sur Singar citation gives me the opportunity to draw attention to 'the other side' of Pancham. If he was beat-based, he was also melody-based. In fact, by the time Sankarabharanam (from the South) came to make cinematic waves, Pancham longed to break out of the tight circle of the trendy music he was acclaimed for composing. His point was that if he had indeed set a trend in the early '70s, it was for the younger composers to take over the baton in the mid-'80s. He himself, by 1985, yearned

to compose melody-based music, as he had for Gulzar's Aandhi, Kushboo, Kinara and Namkeen. "I love doing soft themes," he once confessed. In Gulzar's Ijazaat, Pancham's Mera saaman mujhe lauta do (a song-lyric that he had at first refused to touch as a "metreless" piece of rhyming by Gulzar) went on to win, deservedly for Asha Bhosle, the National award for Best Song. Yet Pancham always regretted the fact that a few other beautiful songs that he evoked from Gulzar's poetry never reached the people in his lifetime. Like his stunning Lata Mangeshkar solo from Libas -- a film that was never released -- Sili hawa chhu gai, sila badan chhil gaya or her Kuhu kuhu koyaliya in Devdas. Then there was Bahut raat hui by Kishore Kumar in Musafir.

The point here is that Pancham, though tuned in with such melody-based themes, was stuck with his modern image. His Saare ke saare gama go lekar gaate chale by Kishore Kumar, Asha Bhosle and chorus in Gulzar's Parichay is one such a take-off. Yet Saare ke saare ... carries a whiff of Raag Bilawal, which is the Hindustani parallel of Raag Sankarabharanam.

Indeed Pancham was my recommendation to director K. Vishwanath for Sur Sangam, a classical remake of the film Shankarabharanam. But R D Burman's name was rejected the moment it was mentioned to distributors. Sur Sangam was finally scored by Laxmikant-Pyarelal. It was this tinsel-tag that he was stuck with after having already composed so much meaningful music, that distressed and disheartened Pancham. Initially, he has deliberately cultivated that image in an effort to sound different from his father. Even as he finally broke away from being S D Burman's assistant, his parents remained justifiably proud of him. "Tell me," said his mother Meera who assisted S D, "Is there a composer in our films today who could have done the classy music of Amar Prem along with the jazzy music of Hare Rama Hare Krishna?"

S D Burman shared his wife's pride -- he had refused to go along with Dev Anand's idea of him doing the traditional tunes of Hare Rama ... and Pancham the Dum Maro dum song in the film. "Never mix our musical identities," S D Burman had told Dev Anand. "Leave Hare Rama ... to be wholly scored by Pancham. I have trained my son to do both traditional and modern music."

Pancham had, in fact, given the very first hit of his career -- Ghar aaaja ghir aaye sung by Lata Mangeshkar for Mahmood's Chhote Nawab -- which was set in Raag Maalgunji. It has he who gave us classical gems like Vinati karun Ghanashyam in Raag Jogiya (Lata Mangeshkar in Pati Patni), Bada natkhat hai re in Raag Khamaj (Lata Mageshkar in Amar Prem), Aayo kahan se Ghanashyam also in Raag Khamaj (Manna Dey in Budha Mil Gaya), Karvate badalte rahen in Raag Pahadi (Lata Mageskhar-Kishore Kumar in Aap Ki Kasam), Mere naina sawan bhado in Raag Shivranjani (Lata Mageshkar-Kishore Kumar in Mehbooba), Jamuna kinare aa jaa in Raag Maru Bihag (Lata Mangeshkar in mehbooba), Meri bheegi bheegi si (Kishore Kumar in Anamika) in Raag Kirvani, Beeti no betayi raina (Lata Mageshkar-Bhupendra in Parichay) in Raag Bihag, Huzoor is tarah se no itrare chaliye (Bhupendra-Suresh Wadkar in Masoom) in Yaman Kalyan. Even Asha Bhosle-Mohammed Rafi qawali Hai agar dushman dushman in Hum Kisse Kum Naheen has R D imparting a typical light touch in Raag Kalavati.

And wasn't Pancham merely returning to his Rabindra Sangeet roots with

1942 - A Love Story when he came to be halted in mid-stride at a time when he was in the truly creative phase of his career? The end came too soon; time stood still -- much like his lyrical Samay ka yeh pal tham sa gaya hai...

RMIM Archive Article "361".

R D Burman: trendsetter

Posted by: Raju Bhatija

Source: Screen, Jan 1994

Author: Raju Bharatan

Hi,

The following article appeared in Screen, dated January 14, 1994, immediately after untimely death of R.D. Burman, on 4th January, 1994.

- Raju Bathija

He was a jet-set trend-setter

by

Raju Bharatan

Naushad Ali, in his prime, was referred to as 'The Maestro with the Midas Touch'. I would likewise refer to Rahul Dev Burman as 'The Maestro with the Mod Touch'.

"RD Was by far the stand-out talent among the younger line of composers, at all times innovative like me, at all times experimenting like me," says Salil Chowdhury. "In fact, I would go step further and rank him alongside all the top composers of my generation, such was his range and variety."

Salil is never one given to sentiment, not even when he is speaking of a composing prodigy who is no more. Salil, in fact, has no great opinion of Naushad. But he does rate RD highly. Salil's point is that Naushad was, at all times, predictable, RD was not.

To each his own view. But RD's early passing should teach us vintagers a permanent lesson: Never to be dismissive of young talent. The Naushad-S.D. Burman generation consistently ran down R.D. Burman. Today, when so many of RD's tunes live on in the mind and heart after his death, the generation is constrained to revise its view.

That is why I would not hesitate to pass instant value judgment on either Nadeem-Shravan or Anand-Milind. Copy they may, but was there any composer in his time who was accused of being more imitative than R.D. Burman? The point is, within the ambit of being imitative, you can be creative. You can bring your own stamp even to a tune whose base is borrowed. This RD consistently did. Much of his early work was considered inspired by foreign composers. Yet he stayed on to become an inspirational influence to the younger array of composers.

So fresh-sounding was RD that you just could not believe he was on the scene for 33 years. RD, in his lifetime, could not even dream of the possibility of his death meriting an editorial in The Times of India.

Even his illustrious father was not accorded this editorial distinction when SD discovered, on October 31, 1975, that somebody up there liked him even more than we mere mortals on earth did.

Dada Burman composed some of his best tunes for Bimal Roy's Devdas: Talat's Mitwa mitwa yeh kaise anbhuj aag re and Kis ko khabar thi kis ko yakeen tha, Lata's Ab aage teri marzi, O jaane wale ruk jaa koti dam, Jise tu kabul kar le, Geeta-Manna's Aan milo aan milo Shyam saanwre, Saajan ki ho gayi gori and, not the least, Mubarak Begam's Who no aayege palat ke and Rafi's Manzil ke chah main. When word spread that R.D. Burman was scoring the music for Gulzar's 'Devdas',

the idea of his compositionally measuring up to his father was treated with withering contempt. But, today, can we be sure tht RD would not have done as good a job as SD on `Devdas'? After all, RD had his roots in Ali Akbar.

Just think, would the Gulzar-RD teaming not rank as being as creative as any musical collaboration we have known in our films? Who but the Gulzar-R.D. Burman du could have got Lata-Kishore to articulate, as tellingly in `Aandhi' as these two singers did, 'Tere bina zindagi se koyi shikwa to nahin, Is mod se jaate hain and 'Tum aa gaye ho noor aa gaya hai? Who but this team could have got Bhupinder to blend so sensitively with Lata in Beeti no beetayi raina ("Parichay"), Meethe bol bole bole paayaliya ("Kinara") and Naam gum jaayega chera yeh badal jayaega ("Kinara").

Lata's articulation of Meri awaaz hi pehchan hai gar yaad rahe has become the Gulzar-RD puchline by which her velvety vocals are treated by us now and forever. Much like Asha Bhonsle, in her profound grief, being left all to herself today in a Bharat Vyas-. Bulsara vein of jag ke liye, aaj rone do mujhe pal ek apne bhi liye.

The Gulzar-RD combine, on Hema Malini in `Khushboo', offered us a spot comparison of the best that could be drawn out of Asha and Lata alike on the same heroine: Bechare dil kya kare sawwan jale bhadon jale, on the one hand, do naina mein ansoo bhare hain nindiya kaise samaye, on the other.

I have studiedly touched on the softer side of RD, which was best represented in his case by Gulzar, to bring home Panoram's true intrinsic worth as a composer. As the pace-setter, RD was the trend-setter in the 70s. If the 90s found him confused and uncertain about what to give, it was because RD made the cardinal mistake of going public, in the film glossies, about the fact that 23 of his films had flopped in a row.

You do not do this in films, where a 24th film could prove a superhit and wipe out the memory of all earlier failure. As it turned out, that 24th film was `Sunny', the film in which RD showed his class afresh the way he got Asha and Suresh Wadkar to vocalise the tandem: Aur kya ahd-e-wafa hote hain. But the resurrection came too late. RD had irretrievably damaged his cause with that `23 flops' acknowledgment. Look at Naushad, to this day he carries on as though nothing has happened.

But RD, he was incredibly naive for one who had hit the high spots. For one who had been a wave-maker, RD just did not know how to blow his own trumpet, he needed Bhupinder to do that for him! RD strangely had no comprehension of his own talent, no sense of achievement. Even his father did not settle for the `Chalti ka Naam Gaadi' attitude that RD did. This, when RD was no less adept at scoring in every idiom, ranging from Kishore-Manna-Mehmood's ek chatur naar kar ke singar (`Padosan') to Asha's Mere kuchh saaman tumhare paas pada hai (`Ijaazat').

Asha aptly pinpointed RD's contrasting class when she named Mera kuch saaman tumhare paas pada hai (`Ijaazat') and O mere sona re sona re sona re (`Teesri Manzil') among her ten best of all time. Likewise, Kishore Kumar had accorded RD a rare honour when he picked not one but two of his tunes among his all-time ten best: Chingari koti bhade (from `Amar prem') and Mere naina saawan bhadon (from `Mehbooba'). No doubt, Kishore Kumar was to RD what Mohammed Rafi was to OP. Yet there was

no cause for RD to have sat paralysed for as long as he did when Kishore passed away. It was a body-blow, of course. But never in this industry must you give the impression that it is a death-blow. RD did exactly that on the passing away of Kishore.

With reason, you might say. After all, who but Kishore could have rendered for RD with such meaning and feeling, O mere di ke chain ('Mere Jeevan Sathi'), Kehna hai kehna hai khena hai aaj tume yeh pehli baat ('Padosan'), O maanjhi re ('Khushboo'), Musafir hoon yaaron ('Parichay'), Yeh jo mohabbat hai ('Kati Patang'), Raat kali ek khwab main aayee ('Buddha Mil Gaya'), Diye jalte hain ('Namak Haram'), Zingadi ke safar mein ('Aap Ki Kasam'), Meri bhigi bhigi si ('Anamika') and Kuchh to log kahenge ('Amar Prem') to mention just a fistful of tunes that lend teeth to the argument that RD it was who, even more than SD, switched the aural-oral allegiance of a whole new generation from Rafi to Kishore.

RD had proved with 'Bhalika Badhu', in 1976 itself, that he had only to wok on son Amit Kumar to draw out of him the Kishore Kumar effect: Bade ache lagte hai, yeh dharti yeh nadiya hey raina aur tum. It would have needed very hard work on RD's part, no doubt, to get Amit going in Kishore's footsteps in the quicksands of filmdom. But he should have readied himself for this slog after having already scored with the same Amit Kumar in 'Love Story'. Yet Pancham just sat back, arguing Kishore was Kishore. This was true. But only upto a point in films, where a music director has to be something of a quick-change artist. I am not arguing against Kishore Kumar, only for Amit Kumar. RD's music had got so cast in the Kishore mould that, immediately, Pancham needed a prototype. And what better prototype than the son? Of course, RD was unlucky that Kishore's passing was followed by the first signs of a sway, in the industry, away from Asha Bhonsle. None of the new singers were a patch on Asha. But a younger set of music directors wanted younger singers. The Bhappi Lahiri challenge had built up to a point where RD should more urgently have explored variety in the voices he employed, without really moving away from Asha Bhonsle. But here, too, RD was slow to react.

Once again I am not arguing against Asha Bhonsle, only for R.D. Burman and the spirit of youth he had represented when he made his big breakthrough with the same Asha through 'Jawani Diwani', 'Yadon Ki Baarat' and 'Khel Khel Main'. Asha, as the Mera naam hai shabnam - Piya tu ab too aa ja - Chura liya haim tume ne jo dil do - Sapna mera toot gaya girl had sex-symbolised the ethos of RD's music in the 70s. But the 80s was a new decade that called for new adjustments.

RD, at one point, had overtaken the formidable team of Laxmikant-Pyarelal. But he let himself be beaten back by vastly inferior talents in the 80s, while Laxmikant-Pyarelal fought back like tigers. In retrospect, it can therefore be said that RD faltered at the crucial moment, LD didn't. And this is an industry in which you are only as successful as your last film. A record of 23 flops took some living down. RD buckled under the pressure.

All this cannot alter the fact that RD set a trend with Asha as he did with Kishore. No other composer would have dared to jettison Rafi the way RD did - even Dada Burman was hesitant in making a switch here. But RD showed the way and others followed suit, courtesy Rajesh Khanna. Amitabh Bachchan, to beat Rajesh Khanna at his own game, had to take on his voice. Kishore thus became established as the Voice of

Youth and it was RD who had set the course for this. RD's hold on electronics, his insights into Western notation, gave him a rare edge. But, minus Kishore, RD found his keen edge blunted. There was a generation change due in our film music. RD failed to see this change coming in 1987 as he had one in 1971. The cross commercialism of the neo-film industry also undid him. When Bhappi Lahiri started quoting less at one point, RD should have stuck to his price. He caved in.

And paid the price.

But the price never did matter much to RD. This way, he was like Dada Burman, who was happy working only in his set-ups. RD always was a bit of a loner, comfortable only in his own selection company. He was unsuited to the totally groupy style in which the industry began to function in the 80s. As Gulzar too began to lose commercial clout, there was less and less opportunity for RD to make a different kind of music, which he loved to do. He needed Gulzar badly to balance his hula-hula stuff. The 'Ghar' style of Gulzar option, by which RD could come up with something like Aaj kal paaon zamin par nahin padte mere (Lata) and Aap ke aankhon mein kuch mehke huye se raas hai (Lata-Kishore), was no longer available to RD in the late 80s.

RD's mod image as a youth composer also became a bar to his inevitable growth as a composer. When 'Shanarabharanam' was to be remade in Hindi, the point about who should compose for the film was referred to me. I suggested the name of R.D. Burman and then rang to ask Pancham whether he was game. "I would love to do the theme, be sure I'll surprise them with the purity of my classical score," RD said.

Yet his image was all wrong for the theme. There was no chance, I was told, of the distributors accepting the label, 'Music R.D. Burman', in a weighty remake of the scale of 'Shankarabharanam'. The remake finally went to Laxmikant-Pyarelal as 'Sur Sangam'. The K. Vishwanath film flopped in the face of a thematic enough score by LP. What kind of a score would RD have created? The same kind as he would have evoked for Gulzar's 'Devdas' vis-a-vis S.D. Burman. But the RD image just did not classically jell.

It was this image that RD unsuccessfully fought in the later part of his career. As convener of the Sur-Singar Samsad Film Awards committee, I remember RD's Lata classic from 'Chandan Ka Palna', O Ganga maiya paar laga de, coming up for live consideration. But it was finally rejected, not on its own merit, but on the grounds that Sur-Singar's name would be in the mud if it presented a classical award to R.D. Burman.

In the end, therefore, RD discovered that he was acceptable neither as a light composer nor as a serious one. Result: he got confussed about what to give. And once this confusion enters a composer's mind, it is the end.

Yet the end, when it came, saw those who had come to scoff, remain to praise. RD had become part of our vintage mind-set without our being aware of it. We knew, in our heart of hearts, that he was as much a trend-setter as his father, if in a different style. But we had religiously refused to acknowledge his fibre and calibre. Those who the gods love, die young. And when they die after having influenced a whole generation in its musical thinking, we finally grudgingly accept that the jet-setter was like one other in films.

For a composer of the depth and dimension of Salil Chowdhury to rate R.D. Burman alongside the top composers of his era is, indeed,

acclaim indeed. It needed uncommon talent for the son to emerge from 'The Jet' shadow of his father. Pancham came into Dada Burman's music room as early as 'Nujawan' (1951). And even at that early age had a keen enough musical ear to question SD's use of Rabindra-sangeet in the purely Goan setting of Kaise yeh jaagi agan ('Jaal').

Handpicked by Guru Dutt to score the music for his 'Raaz' at the age of 19, RD discovered that this cineaste was never firm on any tune he okayed. "I don't know about other composers," Pancham told me, "but I personally found Guru Dutt could never make up his mind about the final tune he wanted. You could never say he had finally okayed a piece of music and that, to my way of thinking, is not the sign of a direction who knows his mind. Raj Kapoor, by contrast, was totally different. He okayed the very first tune I played for 'Dharam Karam', the tune that acquired on him the grab of Ek din bik jaayega maati ke mol".

Hear this 'Dharam Karam' tune carefully again, is it in any way inferior to any of the many straight-line tune Shanker composed for Raj Kapoor? Give credit to RD for the fact that he instinctively recognised what, precisely, Raj Kapoor wanted. And got it right the first time out. RD thus tuned as easily with Raj Kapoor as he had with Dev Anand. He vibed easily enough with Rafi when that singer was at the top. And then helped turn Kishore into a singing legend. If O.P. Nayyar peerlessly exploited the bass in Asha's voice, it was RD who discovered her true range to strum.

RD's spaciouly ambient music room at Santa Cruz in Bombay, to who does it go? to Asha Bhonsle as his legally wedded wife? If so, what does Asha do with it? I know Asha Bhonsle has always secretly nursed this ambition of being a composer herself. Will Asha take up where RD left off? The spirit of RD, will it come back to us through the still resonant vocals of Asha Bhonsle? and what of younger singers under the baton of Asha Bhonsle? A baton what would have been handed on to Asha by her very own Pancham?

Come on Asha, there still is the Santa Cruz room at the top.

RMIM Archive Article "362".

R D Burman Song Sung Blue

Source: Filmfare, Feb 98

Author: Subhash k Jha

Song Sung Blue: Rahul Dev Burman.

by

Subhash K. Jha

Remembering the finger-snappers and the soulful songs sung by R.D. Burman himself... on the occasion of his fourth death anniversary which fell on January 4, 1998.

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It was an inherited talent. Music was a gift bequeathed to Rahul Dev Burman, who passed away so suddenly four years ago, by his father, Sachin Dev Burman. If Burman Dada immortalised himself with his two manjhi songs - O re manjhi (Bandini) and Sun mere bandhu re (Sujata) - Burman Baba belted out O manjhi teri naiyya se chhoota kinara in that long-forgotten river-bank(rupt) bilingual Aar Paar directed by Shakti Samanta.

This timeless manjhi song proves that Papa and Burman Jr were sailing in the same boat. Sadly, by the time RD's boat sailed into the 1980s, it developed a leak. If the song hadn't gone unnoticed, RD would surely have sung more such reflective quasi-philosophical songs.

Doubtless, the distinctive voice of R.D. Burman was capable of conveying the emotional of a lyric as well, if not better than some male playback singers who sang for him. This is specially true of RD's tunes for Amit Kumar. In the popular Bade achhe lagte hain (Balika Badhu), Amit's voice synchronises so well with RD's that listeners can scarcely tell when Pancham stealthily slips into the number with the boatman's clarion call O manjhi re jaiyo piya ke des... R.D. Burman often contributed key lines to his compositions without claiming credit. Though the legendary cabaret number Piya tu ab to aaja in Caravan is credited only to Asha Bhosle, Pancham's banshee cries of Monica o my darling have rooted the number in the public's mind.

In the hauntingly bare Kishore Kumar-Lata Mangeshkar love duet Hum dono do premee duniya chhod chale (Ajnabi), the composer chips in as the bystander at the railway station to ask where the fugitive lovers are off to.

In Lata's version of Phoolon ka taron ka sab ka kehna hai (Hare Rama Hare Krishna), Pancham sings for 'Daddy' Kishore Sahu - with Daddy ka mummy ka sabka kehna hai ek hazaron mein teri behna hai... These incidental vocal appearances verify Pancham's casual yet unforgettable artistry.

Recalls Gulzar, "Pancham was an excellent singer. He knew the nuances of classical singing. For my films, he sang only a couple of songs. But he lent his voice even so often. For instance, in Jabbar Patel's Musafir, the boatman's voice-over, is Pancham! As a singer, he would perfect a tune by singing it repeatedly. In the album that I did with him in

1994, listen to how well he has sang the numbers Raah pe rahte hain and Koi diya jale kahin (later rendered by Kishore Kumar and Asha Bhosle, respectively).

Then in Dil Padosi Hai, the original soundtracks by Pancham before they were dubbed by Asha Bhosle are superb. They show his range as a singer.

The solos and duets that R.D. Burman sang in the '70s asserted his growing reputation as a rock-'n'-roll renegade. Somehow the serious songs sung by Pancham (such as the manjhi number in Aar Paar) never got their due. The hits that Pancham sang were almost invariably gimmicky.

With Mohammed Rafi, RD was heard in his element in the yummy Yamma yamma number in Shaan. RD's most memorable duet of male bonding was the zany jazz-tinged title song of Gol Maal. Sung with Sapan Chakravarty, the song's verve is unmatched by any other song of male bonding in the '80s except perhaps Jaan-e-Jigar, the groovy Goan gaana that RD 'dared' to duet with his favourite male singer, Kishore Kumar in Pukaar.

Whenever R.D. Burman went solo, he made sure it was a song that needed his voice, and no one else's. Incredibly, the all-time favourite Mehbooba oh mehbooba (Sholay), might not have been sung by Pancham at all. At first, this vibrant sexy titillator was to be sung by Asha Bhosle. When Jalal Agha was brought into the picture to lend a vocal drizzle to Helen's sizzle, R.D. Burman was considered by Javed Akhtar, Anand Bakshi and Ramesh Sippy as the best bet for this number inspired by a Demis Roussos chart-topper.

Equally accomplished was Pancham's interpretation of the locomotive rhythms of Dhanno ki aankhon mein raat ka surma. Gulzar's words in Kitaab were transported to a wonderland of images. It became a voyage of self-discovery for Pancham. Equally devil-may-care was RD's interpretation of the number Kal kya hoga kisko pataa (Kasme Vaade) and Samundar mein naha ke (Pukar).

And how elegantly Pancham wore the shirt of hurt into the two Nasir Hussain musicals Hum Kisise Kam Nahin and Zamane Ko Dikhana Hai. In the ever-young songs Tum kya jaano mohabbat kya hai and Dil lena khel hai dildar ka, R.D. walked tall over a terrain of pain.

The most meditative solo melody that Pancham sang was Yeh zindagi kuchh bhi sahi in the flop Kumar Gaurav-Poonam Dhillon starrer, Romance, containing some of RD's best compositions ever. The emotional grip of the lyrical delivery rivals Kabhi palkon pe aansoon which Kishore Kumar sang for R.D. Burman in Harjaee.

With his singing soul companion Asha Bhosle, R.D. created a dense romantic atmosphere. Though they sang no more than seven or eight full-fledged duets, the slender repertoire created a voluminous impression because of their impact.

The first duet that R.D. and Asha sang was O meri jaan main ne kahaa (The Train). The Rajesh Khanna-R.D. Burman team that bloomed in the '70s was in its infancy when R.D. composed and sang with Asha for The Train. The film had two strikingly original-sounding solos Gulabi aankhen by Mohammed Rafi and

Kis liye maine pyar kiya by Lata. Inadvertently, the RD-Asha duet was left out, sidetracked.

R.D. Burman and Asha Bhosle had their revenge the very next year when their uptempo number outpaced all other chartbusters of Apna Desh. Their heat-and-run number? The high-pitched ode to raunch - Duniya mein logon ko dhokha kabhi ho jaata hai. The number stressed the outlandishness of Pancham's vocals. Rajesh Khanna and Mumtaz were dressed as a couple of freakos in this climactic song.

Just when you thought they were the '70s version of Sonny and Cher, belying all expectations, the RD-Asha pair hit an all-time high of emotional expression in Sapna mera toot gaya in Khel Khel Mein. While Kishore Kumar accompanied Asha in all the frothy fun duets in the film, R.D. Burman stepped in to create waves in this memorable song of parting and remembrance.

Peculiar, passionate and palpably Pancham is Na jaa jaan-e-jaan that largely ignored, scene stealer RD-Asha duet in Joshilay. Here and in the disco-very-very special of the '80s, Jaan-e-jaan o meri jaan-e-jaan in Sanam Teri Kasam, Pancham stepped back into the shadows to let Asha 'squeal' the limelight. But his contribution to the two duets is like a mistletoe decorating a Christmas tree.

The last duet that R.D. Burman sang with Asha was Yeh din to aata hai (Mahaan). Sadly by then R.D. Burman's career was under a cloud

There's an interesting end-game associated with R.D. Burman's career as a singer. In the selective, reluctant and meagre repertoire of songs that the chameleon composer chose to sing, one song is extra-special. Kya bhala hai kya bura in Gulzar's unreleased Libaas. It's one of the few film songs that dares to make light of the burden of existence.

The song is special for another reason. It's the only time, Rahul Dev Burman dared to face at the microphone with the singer who had seen him as a child fooling around in shorts at his papa's recordings... and whom the young adult-Pancham hesitantly approached to sing the first song that he ever composed.

That duet with Lata Mangeshkar was the last song R.D. Burman ever sang in a film.

RMIM Archive Article "6".

Khaiyyam: The Man And His Music

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 Khaiyaam
 by
 Vish Krishnan

Khaiyyam (real name Mohammed Zahoor Hashmi) came to Bombay in 1946, after a few years in the trenches of SE Asia. He was a private in World War II - a somewhat reluctant member of the British Army. After some painful tutelage from Hazrat Chishti (his mentor in Bombay Cinema), he was ready to quit when one fine day he was offered the MD-ship for a movie called FOOTPATH (Dilip Kumar, Mina Kumari). The famous Talat song "Shaame Gham Ki Qasam." is the only one I know from that movie.

There was a brief lull following FOOTPATH. In this period, he probably spent most of his time composing the score for private Ghazals - you should not have any trouble finding a few C.H.Atma ghazals scored to music by our maestro.

Then followed a little known movie called LALA RUKH. Wonderful songs. It is a pity I only know and have 3 of them. There is a Asha-Talat duet "Pyaas Kuch ur Bhi Bhadka Di Jhalak Dikhlaa Ke.". There is also an Asha- only version of this song. Then there is a Rafi song in the movie ("Hai Kali Kali Ke LabPar, Mere Ishq Kaa Fasana..")

Then came BAROOD (from the late 50s). It has 2 great songs by Lata. One in particular is a Punjabi Giddha. It goes "Rang Rangila Saanwara Mohe Mil Gaya Jamna Paar". The percussion in this song is unparalleled. It also brought out for the first time his fascination with honest Punjabi folk music (the only other MDs I know to have done that are Roshan, O P Nayyar, Sardul Qwatra, to some extent Madan Mohan, and on a couple of occasions, Sir Salil Chowdhury). At any rate, the other song from BAROOD that I know of is also by Lata. It goes "Teri Duniya Mein Nahi Koi Hamara Apna, Besahaaron Ko Zara De De Sahara Apna". It is also a very hard song to find.

Then came the Raj Kapoor connection with PHIR SUBAH HOGI. Seven songs, all brilliant, and dominated by Asha and Mukesh. This was a left wing movie from the camp of RK Karanjia (BLITZ), Khwaja Ahmed Abbas and Raj Kapoor, and it starred RK of course and Mala Sinha. This was the first Sahir- Khayaam pairing. Somehow, Sahir's left-wing sarcasm and Khaiyyam's pathos in songs like "Chino Arab Hamara" and "Wo Subah Kabhi to aayegi" seemed to go extremely well together. There is an exquisite Asha song that goes "Kisko Mujrim Samjhe Koi, Kisko Dosh Lagaaye... Do Boonde Sawan Ki". This movie will remain among Khaiyyam's classics even from among the other great ones he has done.

Just for the record, the other songs in the movie were "Phir Na Kije Meri Gustaakh-Nighahi ka Gila" (Asha-Mukesh), Aasmaan Pe Hai Khuda Aur Zameen Pe Hum" (Mukesh) and Jo Bore Kare Yaar ko, Us

Yaar Se Tauba" (Rafi-Mukesh).

On second thoughts, I am not sure if this was the first Sahir-Khaiyyam movie. It might have started with LALA RUKH. This movie was followed by another (1962) movie called SHOLA AUR SHABNAM. One of my most favourite songs of all times ("Jeet Hi Lenge Baazi Hum Tum") is from this Dharmendra- ? movie. The serenity evoked by the (possibly) A- minor progression was to be repeated by Khaiyyam later with "Aur Kuch Der Thahar" (Aakhiri Khat) and "Pichli Yaad Bhula Do" (Mehndi). Also, this movie featured his wife Jagjit Kaur singing for the first time for her husband. She has two songs in this movie. One of them is a Hindi version of the Punjabi original (also by Jagjit Kaur) "Adi We Adi.... Dudh Pi Le Balma, Main Kaddon Di Khadi". The Hindi version goes "ladi re ladi". One might argue that this music is not a Khaiyyam original, but then again, we have seen their non-Hindi standard songs translated for Hindi movies with the original traditional melody intact. The main examples that come to mind here are O P Nayyar (for some Surinder Kaur songs), S D Burman (for one Nazrul Geet in "Pyasa"), Hemant Kumar and Anil Biswas (for a couple of Rabindra Sangeet songs).

At any rate, the fabulous Rafi song "Jaane Kya Dhoondti Rehti hain ye Aankhen Mujhme" is from this movie. Then there were some unremarkable ones. There was a real high-pitch Asha song "Mummy Aur Daddy Mein Ladai Ho Gai" and a Manna Dey-Geeta Dutt Song "Mathura Shyam Chale". Let us not forget yet another Punjabi folk song "Phir Nahi Aane Wali Pyare Aisi Milan Ki Raat". I was also a bit intrigued by this Rafi-Jagjit Kaur duet "Pehle to Aankh Milana" only because it has a couple of glimpses of OP Nayyar. This is probably aggravated by the fact that Jagjit Kaur's voice (only in this song) bears an unintended similarity to Geeta Dutt!!.

Another fact to note is that Jagjit Kaur has sung Hindi movie songs for only 1 other music director. If I remember this right, that was a Ghulam Mohammed movie called DIL-E-NADAAN. Oddly enough, more than 30 years later, Khaiyyam himself did the music for another movie by the same name (no connection)!!

After another brief lull, 1964-66 had Khaiyyam do 3 movies - SHAGUN, MOHABBAT ISKO KEHTE HAIN, and AAKHIRI KHAT. The movie SHAGUN was when Waheeda Rehman starred for the first and last time with her future husband Kamaljeet. Again, Shagun saw Sahir and Khaiyyam work together. Jagjit Kaur had 2 songs in it a Punjabi wedding song "Gori Sasuraal Chali" and the immortal piano work "Tum Apna Ranj-o-Gham..". Otherwise, the songs were by Rafi and/or Suman Kalyanpur. Also, Khaiyyam's passion for Pahadi songs (I mean based on the Raga Pahadi) became visible (audible) for the first time in Hindi movies. The song "Parbaton Ke Pedon par Shaam Ka Basera Hai" is from here. I particularly like the two Rafi songs - "Tum Chali Jaaogi, Parchaaian Reh Jaayengi" and "Ye Raat Bahut Rangeen Sahi". The latter betrays Sahir's left-wing thinking - so what was new? Although the two Suman songs "Zindagi Zulm Sahi, Jabr Sahi, Gham hi Sahi" and "Bujhaa Diye Hain Khud Apne Haathon" were good, they were overshadowed by the other songs in this movie.

So much for SHAGUN. As for MOHABBAT ISKO..., Khaiyyam almost be-

trayed his secret recipe for the quintessential romantic duet in a Rafi-Suman song "Thahariye Hosh Mein Aa Loon To Chale Jaiyega". There are very, very few songs that use this chord progression - C major -> E major -> A minor. It is haunting. I could listen to this one over and over again. The movie has other songs. A Mukesh-Asha duet "Humse Hoti Mohabbat Jo Tumko, Tum ye Diwanapan Chhod Dete" takes us back to the MD's Punjabi roots. There is a nice Mukesh song "Itna Husn Pe Guroor Na Huzoor Kijiye". There are other songs, but nowhere near as memorable. From all of Khaiyyam's songs, "Thahariye Hosh Mein.. " remains my biggest favourite.

Then came Rajesh Khanna's 3rd movie - AAKHIRI KHAT. In addition to the two outstanding Lata songs ("Bahaaron Mera Jeevan Bhi Sanvaaro", "Mere Chanda, Mere Nanhe"), there was a great Rafi Song "Aur Kuch Der Thahar", and perhaps one of Bhupendra's first Hindi movie songs "Rut Jawan Jawan Jawan, raat meherbaan". This movie also featured Khaiyyam's first (and I think last) attempt at a hotel cabaret song "O my Darling" - hideous! His fans will overlook that one only because he outdid even his own performance with Lata's Pahadi song in this movie. What was interesting with this movie was that the producer-director Chetan Anand decided not to go with his long-term friend Madan Mohan. Perhaps he was taken up by the need for the Pahadi sound(the movie was shot in the Kulu valley),and especially after what he (must have) heard out of SHAGUN, he must have decided on Khaiyyam. Further, Bhupendra's first Hindi movie song was from the Chetan Anand movie "Haqeeqat". And this was Bhupendra's second. Wonder if there is a connection there somewhere.

Around 1968, Khaiyyam made his last movie of the 60's. Very few people will remember SANKALP, but you will probably recall the Sulakshana Pandit song "Tu Hi Saagar Hai Tu Hi Kinara". Oddly enough, Khaiyyam went into seclusion at this point. There were no Hindi movies for him for almost the next 7 years. There could have been a couple of reasons for this. Firstly (and I am not sure about this - the research is still going on), he directed his attention to Punjabi movies. But more importantly, he decided to work on yet another passion of his - music for private Ghazals.

He worked closely with Begum Akhtar in her last years. There is a small but exquisite collection of Ghazals written by Sudarshan "Faakir", sung by Begum Akhtar, and scored to music by Khaiyyam. The one I can remember is "Ishq Mein Ghairat-E-Jazbaat Ne Rone Na Diya" - super.

Then, as Meena Kumari could almost see her own life withering away, she went open with her true love - poetry. In her only song album "I write, I recite", she sang her own lyrics, and needless to say, she requested Khaiyyam to do the music. He obliged. The album is a testimony to Meena Kumari's inconsistent brilliance, but Khaiyyam's musical integrity and honesty can be seen throughout.

I do believe that Asha and Rafi have both sung private songs/Ghazals with the maestro. I cannot remember any at this point.

It was now 1975.

This was also the time when Yash Chopra fell foul of his long term business colleague B.R.Chopra. I am only guessing now, but it would seem that he now needed to look elsewhere for the Punjabi and Pahadi sounds that had become the hallmark of BR Films like GUMRAAH, WAQT and HAMRAAZ. It would have been hard to approach Ravi (or even the less likely choice N.Dutta). Those two were at least by history, closely aligned with the BR Chopra camp. Yash Chopra could not have made a better choice than Khaiyyam.

The movie KABHIE KABHIE was their first, and was followed by TRISHUL, NOORIE and NAKHUDA. In the interim, Khaiyyam also did CHAMBAL KI KASAM and SHANKAR HUSSAIN. The latter has 2 exquisite Lata songs ("Aap Yoon Faaslon Se Guzarte Rahe", and "Apne Aap Raaton Mein"). It also had a Rafi song "Kahin EkMasoom Naazuk Si Ladki...". And of course, Khaiyyam's favourite Punjabi folk music was heard again in KABHIE KABHIE in a wedding song (I don't recall the words but it forms the background and interlude to a Lata song "Surkh Jode Ki..").

At this point, Khaiyyam left the world of handcrafted music and joined the distinguished elite of batch-processors, and probably became the better off for it. If you care, the list probably goes something like this:

Pyaase Dil, Thodisi Bewafai, Bazaar, Ahista Ahista, Umrao Jaan (an exception to the Khaiyyam of the 80's), Mehndi, Dil-E-Nadaan, Dard, Lorie, Anjuman, and Parbat Ke Us Paar. I might have missed some, but frankly, I did not keep track of the maestro after the mid 70's. There were some more Jagjit Kaur songs (I can remember the one in Bazaar "Dekh Lo Aaj Hum Ko Ji Bhar Ke"). He also brought in another less known singer of Punjabi songs. I think it was Pamela Chopra. And I vaguely remember a Dilraj Kaur song as well. Then in the early 90's, he was honoured by the Indian Government with all kinds of titles.

Janaab Haashmi is one of the very few living grand masters of the Hindi movie musical soul. If I have gotten carried away in describing his work, I have a reason. You would probably agree.

RMIM Archive Article "181".

"The Perfect Note" - An interview with Khaiyyam

Posted by: Ashok (ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org)

Source: Filmfare, December 95

Author: Kavita Mishra

The Perfect Note

An interview with Khaiyyam by Kavita Mishra.

Nestled between a row of concrete blocks, there's a modest little three-bedroom apartment. The strains of an old film ditty fill the mid-day air. Music director Khaiyyam is at once transported to the halcyon past

Right from his first film 'Footpath,' Khaiyyam's dulcet melodies have struck a chord in music lovers. His other notable works like 'Lala Rukh,' 'Phir Subah Hogi,' 'Shagun,' 'Ahista Ahista,' 'Kabhi Kabhie,' 'Razia Sultan,' 'Bazaar,' and 'Umrao Jaan' have won him legions of fans.

Asha Bhosle's supple-throated rendition of his ghazals in 'Umrao Jaan' won her the National Award for best playback singer. One is also reminded of his haunting "ae dil-e-nadaan" from 'Razia Sultan.'

Yet, surprisingly, this music director is not inundated with offers. Perhaps the capricious tastes of the audience and Khaiyyam's refusal to kowtow to the crass commercial dictates have made him opt out ...

You put into the mind of the music wizard for a few answers.

Excerpts:

Now that melody has made a comeback, why is a composer of your calibre out of work?

Who says melody has made a comeback? Melody has always been associated with only Madan Mohan, Jaidev, and Khaiyyam. Melody according to today's composers is rehashing folk tunes with back-up from modern electronic instruments. And the rest of the tunes are heavily influenced by Western music.

Believe me, conditions are so appalling that producers often insist that music directors plagiarise from the hit tunes of various languages. Sorry, I won't make any compromises.

I had a nasty experience once. I had been signed to compose the music for 'Barsaat Ki Raat.' Meanwhile, Bharat Bhushan's brother Chandra brought a cassette of Ustad Fateh Ali Khan's (Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's father) qawwali and was adamant that the qawwali in his film would have the same tune. The tune was undoubtedly good, but I refused to toe the line and left the film instead.

Since I am a fastidious person people think it is better not to work with me.

Do you feel it is wrong to compromise?

Who am I to say what is wrong or right? But I would like to know

what compels the composers to listen to film-makers. Most composers have invented a formula for success. All they do is pick tunes from various languages, even old popular Hindi numbers, rework them and pass them off as their own. They don't have to work hard and yet manage to make big bucks. I don't need such cash. The money I have made from my previous work is enough for me to survive.

But surely you agree that the music market is booming today, especially the film music market?

Today's so-called good music popular because of the hype from the music companies. Since they buy the music at a high price and spend a lot on its publicity, the music companies are desperate to recover their money. They dole out free cassettes to taxi autoriskshaw drivers. The songs are blared at public functions and on the radio regularly. But this music has no sustaining power. It fades out as soon as another film's music hits the market. Today, hype sells. We never had this kind of advantage in our times.

You mentioned that we are in an age where electronic gizmos reign, but surely you too have indulged in them?

Yes, I have. In 'Footpath,' I used the Solo Vox and the Clavier. But they never sounded synthetic. I've also used these instruments in the ghazal "shaam-e-gham ki kasam." I introduced electronic instruments in 1953. The Clavier was first introduced in the industry by Kalyanji which I later used in a cabaret number "ara ram ram ram."

Is it true that Jaddanbai (mother of the legendary actress Nargis) was responsible for your first film 'Footpath'?

Yes, that's right. I had composed music for two of her films, 'Parda' and 'Pyar Ki Baat.' When producer Chandulal Shah announced 'Footpath' starring Dilip Kumar, he had three or four composers in mind. That's when Jaddanbai took me to meet him. He told me that he would sign the music director whose compositions impressed him the most. Luckily for me, my work was appreciated by Dilip Kumar, Anwar Hussain, and Chandulalji. I got the chance of a lifetime to work with Majrooh Sultanpuri and Sardar Jaffrey. The music was a hit. Offers poured in, but I was under contract with Ranjeet Movietone. I couldn't sign outside films. Unfortunately, despite the good music, 'Footpath' did not do well. Perhaps the audience couldn't accept Dilip Kumar in a negative role.

You composed under the name Sharmaji. What made you switch to Khaiyyam in 'Footpath'?

I worked jointly with several music directors in the films I did before 'Footpath.' My full name is unusually long-Khaiyyam Mohamed Zahoor Hashmi. So I preferred a pseudonym. Writer Zia

Sarhadi suggested that I change my name when I signed 'Footpath.' He said 'Khaiyyam' sounded much better.

 People say you are headstrong and have an inflated ego.

 Perhaps people feel that way because I only take on a project if I like the theme of a film and am sure that there's scope for music. Just knowing the story is not enough. I have to sit with the producer, the director and get to know every minute detail about the film.

For example, if the hero and heroine of the film are collegians, I'd like to know where they are studying. And if they get married during the course of the film, I want to know what they talk about before and after they get married, their beliefs and attitudes. I take on a film only if the film-maker understands and appreciates my requirements.

 While the music of the majority of your films was popular, most of the films were commercial failures.

 Call it destiny. Life is like that. I have worked with many people. The music of 'Footpath,' 'Lala Rukh,' 'Phir Subah Hogi,' 'Razia Sultan,' and 'Shagun' was popular. Unfortunately the films did not generate good box office collections. However, my work was always appreciated.

Let me tell you of an incident that happened years ago. Ramesh Sehgal (of 'Shaheed' and 'Samadhi' fame) was making 'Phir Subah Hogi' on Tolstoy's 'Crime and Punishment.' Sahir Ludhianvi was to pen the lyrics. He suggested my name as the music director arguing that the subject needed someone who could understand its depth. The producer was sure Raj Kapoor would insist on Shankar-Jaikishen, yet he arranged a sitting for me.

I had composed five tunes for the title song and Rajji heard each one out. At the sitting he didn't react at all. Then he took Sehgal into another room. When Sehgal emerged after 45 minutes, he hugged me and said I had made it. Rajji was so thrilled with all five tunes that he asked me to pick the one I thought most appropriate. He used to carry a tape of the film's songs with him all the time. But since the film didn't run, our association ended there.

 You often claim that you were partly responsible for the revival of 'Pakeeza.' How come?

 This is no tall claim. Kamal Amrohi had signed me for 'Shankar Husain.' During one of our meetings, my wife Jajit asked Kamalsaab to revive 'Pakeeza.' He was reluctant though, saying that Meena Kumari no longer looked the same and that she'd put on too much weight. Besides, he'd need Rs 25 lakhs to complete the film.

Jajit assured him that Meena Kumari had lost quite a bit of weight because of her illness. And that she would persuade Meena Kumari to complete the film. When Meena was approached, she asked my wife whether Chandan (Kamal Amrohi) was still interested

in seeing the project through. As far as finance was concerned, I suggested that he complete 'Pakeeza' first and that 'Shankar Husain' could wait.

Is it true that Meena Kumari recorded her ghazals when she was ill?

Actually, Meena had composed some 'shairis' and she said that after I composed the music for it, Jagjit should record them. She felt Jagjit's voice matched hers. But I insisted that the 'shairi' be recorded in her own voice.

Asha Bhosle sang all the songs in 'Umrao Jaan.' Any particular reason?

Of course. If I'd taken on Lataji who had rendered all the songs in 'Pakeeza,' the film would have had a 'Pakeeza' hangover. Especially since both the films are UP-based. Besides, Lataji's voice is high-pitched and thin. And the heroine of 'Umrao Jaan,' Rekha, has a base voice, so I thought Asha Bhosle's voice, which has 'kashish,' would be ideal.

Apart from ghazals, I also used a traditional song from Uttar Pradesh in the film. I think I am the only music director to make use of songs from the region in which the film is set.

Despite the three hit films you've done together-Kabhi Kabhie, Trishul, and Noorie-why hasn't Yash Chopra taken you on again?

When Yash Chopra signed me on for 'Kabhi Kabhie,' he was frank enough to tell me that he had had to deal with stiff opposition. He had been warned that though I gave good music, I wasn't auspicious as a member of the film's unit because I had many flops to my discredit. But God is merciful and to my good fortune, the film became a big hit.

Then I did two more films with him. However, the subject of 'Silsila' did not inspire me and I told Yashji that I didn't want to do the film. He asked me to reconsider my decision, but ... Later, Shiv-Hari stepped in. So I guess he didn't need me any more. On a personal level we are still friends.

How do you keep yourself busy these days?

I am working on the music of the epic serial 'The Great Maratha.' That's pretty time consuming. I also read the works of great poets like Ghalib, Momin, Daag. I am inspired by their verse and set their works to music.

I gave a new dimension to ghazals. I experimented with the form. I got Mohammad Rafi to render the ghazals of Mirza Ghalib and added my own nuances to the compositions.

Are you happy about the changing trends in music?

Today the accent is on sound and hip beats which Western singers

like Michael Jackson and Madonna have popularized. The youngsters of today are influenced by it. Of today's composers, I think Rahman's music is suited to current tastes. But pure melody has a greater life. Nothing can change that.

My comment:

In a recent interview with Filmfare, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan does confirm that the qawwali "ye ishk ishk hai ishk ishk" was based on one of the hits of his father and that it was used in 'Barsaat Ki Raat' with his father's permission.

Ashok

RMIM Archive Article "337".

Khaiyaam

Posted by: Anand Tiwari anand@cegt201.bradley.edu

Source: Asia Age

Author: Hamida Parkar

Kabhi, kabhi, mere dil me khayal aata hai...

By Hamida Parkar

Simplicity, melody, poetry and music in the truest sense of the word describe music director Khayyam perfectly. Without these adjectives, music lovers are bound to agree that Khayyam would not be, well, Khayyam. One of his earliest hits Shaame gham ki kasam, aaj gamgeen hai hum, aa bhi ja aa bhi jaa, aaj mere sanam, more than proves the fact. The soothing tune and impeccable lyrics have made the song evergreen. It remains so till date, as do most of Khayyam's compositions. They have been composed straight from the heart and have that quality, the stamp which sets them apart from the rest of the songs. Not surprising, since Khayyam has a way with words and constantly searches for deeper meanings in life.

Philosophy is a way of life for Khayyam and his affiliation with his roots are evident in the way he speaks about the current state of affairs all over the world. According to him, selfishness is creeping into most people's hearts. "Why compete with people who own weapons and are powerful? For what purpose? I am not talking about only India, this is happening everywhere. Education has got us nowhere, we are regressing towards the jungle age," he points out. He quotes a small verse to explain his point, "Ashraf-ul-Makhlukat — which means God has given everything that a man requires, all the treasures are bequeathed upon him, trees, fruits, mountains, birds, sunrise, nature, everything. All that man has to do is search for them, God has been equal, it is man who is lacking in his search." No wonder the man has composed a variety of tunes like Punjabi, folk and classical with equal expertise. The reason for this is that unlike many people, he feels music.

Born and brought up in a small town called Rahon in Punjab, Khayyam's first brush with music was with the tune and kashish associated with the call for azaan (The Muslim call for prayer) his father gave in his powerful voice which travelled across a long distance. As a child, the faint strains of aarti, with cymbals and the hymns narrated in the church, influenced the young Khayyam and unknowingly music became a part of his existence. Khayyam was the middle son of one of the brothers of the family. "I was lucky enough to be born in a well-off family. The literary atmosphere in my house helped me to develop my sense of music and good literature," he says. Regular discussions and debates was a way of life since his elder brothers had a good collection of books and records. Though they did influence him to an extent, Khayyam turned out to be the black sheep of the family since he was not interested in studies at all. His weekly trips to the nearest district Jalandhar with his elder brother and the regular visits to watch biscofes (as cinema was called during the time) ensured that. "We would watch about five films and then return back to Rahon. The films fascinated me and I had this burning desire to be

an actor," recalls Khayyam. The desire goaded him enough to run away to Delhi to his paternal uncle's house, an act that he regrets till date. Of course, his parents were informed of his whereabouts soon after, but he was not sent back home. The weekly trips to watch bioscopes did not cease. "When I did not have money, I would watch whatever little I could through the gaping holes in the black curtains. Soon after, Chachaji noted my lack interest in studies and asked me what I wanted to do. I promptly asked him to admit me to a bioscope. I did not even know that films were made in Bombay and Lahore at the time," says Khayyam. He quit school in the Fifth standard.

Knowledge of music was a pre-requisite to act in movies those days. Khayyam learnt music from well-known gurus Pandit Hasanlal Bhagatram and Pandit Amarnath. After five years and a lot of "basic education of life," as he puts it, it was time to try out his luck in films. A brief stint with a theatre group during the time of the World War II saw a 15-year-old Khayyam performing roles which were well-appreciated. But that was not his basic aim.

The next stop was Lahore. Khayyam gathered enough courage to drag a friend to famous composer Chishti's music room where he was rehearsing on a piano. During the long wait, Khayyam was mentally noting the music pieces Chishti was composing. The music composer forgot one of the pieces and Khayyam was quick enough to point out the exact tune that he had composed. It was enough for Chishti to hire Khayyam on a no-pay, food plus accommodation basis immediately. After three-four months, Khayyam went to meet his elder brother who was furious to know that he was working for free. All the pent up anger against him was released and Khayyam was guilty enough to take heed of his advice. "The very next day, I went and joined the Army. I realised that my brother was right. I couldn't have continued like that forever," he reminisces.

The fervour of being in the Army dissipated after three years and Khayyam was back to realise his ambition. "I will always be indebted to the Army for imbibing discipline and dedication in me. The motto that one should not hesitate to sacrifice and one should cross all hurdles to reach the final goal was well entrenched in all of us," says Khayyam. It was again Chishtibaba who was Khayyam's saviour and took him back on the old terms. B.R. Chopra was a regular at Chishti's place because as Chishti was composing the music for his film Chandni Chowk. After a few months, Chopra happened to be present on pay day and noticed that Khayyam was not being paid his dues. He enquired with Chishti who explained that he had an understanding with Khayyam because he already had two other assistants working with him. Nevertheless, Chopra immediately arranged for his payment and before Khayyam could realise what had happened, he had Rs 125 in his hands, his first pay. "I will remain indebted to Choprasaab for my first pay and to Chishtisaab, who was a gem of a person," says Khayyam humbly. January 1947 saw Khayyam in Mumbai with his friend Rahman Verma. But fate had other plans in store for him. He sought the blessing of his gurus who listened to his tunes and liked them. The first song that he composed was for Nargis Art Concern's film Romeo And Juliet written by Faiz Ahmed Faiz. The song was *Dono jahan teri mohabbat me haarke, wo jaa raha hai koi shabe gham guzaar ke* sung by Zohra Balewadi. The next few films had Khayyam sharing credits with

other music directors. His first film as a solo music composer Biwi had the hit song, Akele me woh ghabrate to honge, mitake mujhe pachtate to honge. A simple tune with meaningful lyrics ensured that. Jaddanbai was impressed with his music and put in a word to Chandulal Shah with "Iski umar par mat jao, gaane suno." A chain of recommendations from Anwar Husain and Ziasaab plus his talent got him his first real break, Footpath. Songs like Shaame gham ki kasam and Kaisa jadoo daala re balma had the industry raving and people would insist on listening to the songs again and again. His subsequent films Lala Rukh and Shagun again had hit songs. His song Tum apna ranjo gham (Shagun) sung by his wife Jagjit Kaur was a rage. Khayyam has been lucky enough to compose songs to lyrics penned by great poets like Ali Sardar Jaffri, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Kaifi Azmi, Jaanesar Akhtar, Daag Dehlvi, Mir Taki Mir, Aatish, Makhdoom Moiuddin and Bashaar Nawaaz.

Khayyam has an interesting incident to recollect about the song, Woh subah kabhi to ayegi in Phir Subah Hogi sung by Asha Bhosle and Mukesh. "Ashaji is known for her frank opinions and observations. As soon as the recording was over, she came over to me and said, 'Khayyamsaab apki subah ho gayi.' True to her words, the film was the turning point for me. After that, there was no looking back," recalls Khayyam. The film industry has always given him his due after that. It was Khayyam who refused a lot of films in the Sixties mainly because he was being offered the same kind of films as Phir Subah Hogi. Aakhri Khat and Mohabbat Isko Kehte Hain were among the few films he composed for during that time. Non-filmi albums with Mohammad Rafi, Talat Mehmood and other artists kept him busy. Devotional songs and bhajans were very popular then. Tere bharose nandlala, Shyam se neha lagaye, Pao padoo tere were hits.

There was one regret though. "Most of my films were successful, the music was praised a lot, but none of the films crossed the jubilee mark. Kabhi Kabhie gave me that," says Khayyam. The songs Kabhi kabhi mere dil me khayal aata hai, Tere chehre se nazar nahi hat-ti nazaare hum kya dekhe and Main pal do pal ka shayar hoon were a rage and the films were jubilees in 1976. A spate of films followed with successful music like Trishul, Noorie, Sawaal, Khandaan, Thodi Si Bewafai, Ahista Ahista and Bazaar.

A challenge came in the form of Umrao Jaan. "It was a difficult job in the sense that Pakeezah was made earlier with the same subject. Ghulam Mohammed had given brilliant music for the film," confesses Khayyam. Another difficulty was that all the folk tunes and ghazals from Faizabad (where Umrao Jaan stayed) and Lucknow were already utilised in Hindi films. Khayyam made his job easier by reading history and trying to explore Umrao Jaan's personality. "Umrao Jaan was a great poetess and dancer and she was extremely beautiful, so much so that she had kings and nawabs falling at her feet," says Khayyam.

Khayyam is perhaps the only composer who has given Asha Bhosle good songs throughout her career. About choosing her to render the songs for Umrao Jaan, he says, "We have had a long association. I had confidence in Ashaji and she did a wonderful job," he says. As expected, both Asha and Khayyam won the National award for the film. Surprisingly, Razia Sultan which flopped miserably was another film that had Khayyam at his best with songs like Ae dil-e-nadan and

Jalta hai badan. The film's music was so successful that cassettes of the songs were pirated even before the music release of the film. Unfortunately, the film did not do well. But, Khayyam has no regrets. He is very happy with whatever the industry has offered him. As for the allegations that he is moody and unreasonable, all he that he says is, "I did not want to compromise on my principles and today I am happy that I didn't. My wife Jagjit has been supportive and she always smiled through all the financial troubles we had. I would have given in to the pressure otherwise."

Did he compose all those soulful songs keeping her in mind? He says, "The first time I saw her, I knew she was my dream woman and wished to God that she be mine, which she did eventually. She has been the force driving me all these years. Yes, she has been a true ardhagini and responsible for the compositions."

RMIM Archive Article "180".

Khurshid Anwar

Posted by: surjit.singh@windmill.com (Surjit Singh)
Source: various

Khurshid Anwar - Music Director of Parwaana
A Brief Life Story

He started his career as the Producer-in-charge of the music division of the All India Radio. His first film was the Panjabi film "Kudmai" released in 1941. Actors in this film were Jagdish Sethi, Waasti, Jeewan, Radharani, Ram Avatar etc. His first Hindi film was "Ishara" (1943), lyrics by D. N. Madhok. Popular songs from this movie are
Panghat pe muraliya baje - Surayya
Shabnam kyon neer bahaye - Gauhar Sultana
Dil deke dagha nahin dena - Vatsala Kumathekar

Some of his other Hindi films are
Parakh - 1944 (with Saraswati Devi)
Yateem - 1945 (with K. Dutta)
Aaj Aur Kal - 1947
Pagdandi - 1947
Parwaana - 1947

which was the last movie in which K. L. Saigal acted, as a married man who falls in love with Surayya, the other woman. Baby Khursheed, later known as Shyama had a small role as sister. The movie is available from Atlantic Video, Dallas. One song has been cut from the movie: it is "Sayyan ne ungali marori re" by Rajkumari.

Singaar - 1949

He got a "Best Music Director" award, my sources are silent on from whom. Four songs can still be heard:

Dil aane ke dhang niral hain - Surinder Kaur
Chanda re mein teri gawahi - Surinder Kaur
Naya nainon mein rang - Surayya
Wo din kidhar gaye - Surayya

Nishaana - 1950

had songs by Geeta Roy (Dutt) and Shamshad

Neelampari - 1952

had the popular

Jab tak chamken chand sitare - Geeta and G. M. Durrani

Raat chandani kare ishare - Geeta

After partition, he went to Pakistan like many other good people we know. Some of his Pakistani movies are

Ghoongat

Chingari

Koyal

Shauhar

Heer Ranjha

Intezar,

which had the popular Noor Jahan numbers

Jis din se piya dil le gaye (Qateel Shifai)
Ghazab kiya tere wade pe (Daag Dehalawi ?)
He got the awards called the "Hyderali Award" and the "Pride of Performance Award" from the Pakistani government in 1979.
Died on October 30, 1984 at Lahore, age 70.

Some excerpts from Vish Krishnan's article on Noorjehan:-
Another master classicist was Khurshid Anwar, who did very few pre-Partition movies for Bombay cinema (notable are NISHANA, an Ashok Kumar-Madhubala-Geeta Bali starrer of 1950, and SINGAAR, and 1949 musical treat starring Madhubala and Suraiyya). From the '50s, I recall 3 Noor Jehan songs by Khurshid Anwar, and they are all cast in a classical mould. The Miyan Ki Todi rendition of "Jis Din Se Piya Dil Le Gaye, Dukh De Gaye" perhaps does not match up to our standards of virus-free and domesticated classical singing, but it has its place. And to top it, the Jaijaiwanti song "Dil Ka Diya Jalaaya Toone" is a must-have. And then in a style that almost completely describes the latter-day Noor Jehan, she sings Khurshid Anwar's wonderful Tilak Shyam composition
Saagar Roye, Leheren Shor Machaayen,
Yaad Piya Ki Aaye, Naina Bhar Aaye

RMIM Archive Article "13".

C. Ramchandra - A Feature

Posted by: "Rajan P. Parrikar" (parrikar@mimicad.Colorado.EDU)
 Source: G.N.Joshi's "Down Melody Lane" pp. 80-86

 C. Ramchandra
 by
 G.N. Joshi

One day in 1947, a debonair young man, about six feet tall and well built, walked into my cabin. I did not know him and hence looked at him questioningly. He said, 'Joshi Saheb, you won't know me, but I have known you for over 12 years and I have been waiting for a chance to meet you. Today I have come to your studio for a film recording and therefore I came straight to meet you. I come originally from Ahmednagar district, but since I spent my childhood and some years of my youth in Vidarbha, I feel I belong to Vidarbha.'

When he mentioned that he belonged to Vidarbha, I felt immediate closeness to him. He said further, 'I listened to your record Dole He Julami Gade for the first time in Nagpur: I liked it so much that I played it again and again 27 times in quick succession. Then again, you had once come to perform at the Somalvar School in the city, and the crowd was so huge that there was hardly any space to sit. For over four hours I sat, crushed in the crowd, listening to you. Since that time I have been longing to meet you and at last the chance has come. I have entered the film world recently as a music director and I need your blessings.' He introduced himself - 'My name is Ramchandra Chitalkar and I am today recording songs from my picture Shehnai.

I wished him good luck and he went away to the studio for rehearsals. Recording songs from films was, for the most part, a monotonous affair. It usually took more than two hours to record one song. The duration of one side of a record in our studio was only 3 minutes and 20 seconds. Some film songs were either longer or shorter than required. Therefore, it was often necessary to cut the lengthy songs or lengthen the short ones, hence the singer and the orchestra had to spend a long time in our studios.

Mr. Ramchandra Chitalkar started his rehearsal, and partly because he hailed from Nagpur I felt an interest in him. So I went to the studio to see for myself how this young man would conduct the music. To rehearse an orchestra comprised of more than a dozen musicians is not an easy job. Every instrument needs to be perfectly tuned and played according to the notation of the song. The passages which accompany the singing and the passages that form musical interludes have to be played at different volumes. The music director, who is the conductor, has to get from his troupe a perfectly tuned support for the vocalist. I have seen many music directors who behaved like cattle-drivers. Musicians are artists and as such they need to be handled with care, like fragile glass. To get the best results, they must be kept in good cheer all along. Ramchandra appeared to me to be on excellent

terms with his team of players. This was evident from the cheerful atmosphere in the studio, and immediately made a very favourable impression on me. Though he was friendly and genial, he was also a strict disciplinarian. This became clear when he admonished some of the players for their lapses.

In those days playback singing was unheard of. Even unmusical heroes and heroines like Devika Rani, Motilal, Savita Banerji, Leela Chitnis and Ashok Kumar came before our microphones a number of times. (We were thankfully spared the ordeal of recording actors like Dara Singh or actresses like the fearless Nadia.) Songs had to be rehearsed till they were as flawless as possible, so that we did not have to waste a lot of wax discs. Ramchandra realized this and always prepared his musicians perfectly. Therefore we did not have to repeat recordings unnecessarily. A music director has to approve the recording, keeping in mind the singer's voice and ability to sing. Hence it was always desirable to okay a performance which was, by and large, up to a certain standard. Expert singers like Lata Mangeshkar did not need a lot of rehearsing. (When the song *Jaa ri jaa ri o kari badariya* was recorded by Lata it was done after just one rehearsal and a single take.)

After our first meeting we developed a very close relationship and consequently I had some intimate glimpses into the life of Ramchandra. Some incidents would be of interest to the readers. The words of the song *Dhire se aaja* from *Albela* were given to Ramchandra by poet Rajendrakrishna at 4 in the afternoon, one day. The recording was to be done in a studio at Andheri the same evening. Ramchandra set out in his car from Dadar. With one hand on the steering wheel and the other holding the sheet of verses, he attempted to put a tune to the words. Surprisingly, by the time he reached the studio at Andheri, he had created a tune which was later found to be so suitable and perfect that the song was recorded on schedule without any alteration, and became an all time hit.

Ramchandra took great care to see that the tune of a song suited the scene and situation in the picture. A song from *Parchhai* (*Mohabbat hi na jo samaze*) which was sung by Talat Mehmood was to be filmed. Ramchandra and his musicians arrived in the studio for the filming. To his consternation Ramchandra found a very lavish set that was completely unsuitable for the tune he had given to the song. Ramchandra brought this to the notice of Mr. V. Shantaram, the producer, and requested that the shooting be cancelled that day. This meant a lot of expense to the producer. But Ramchandra convinced him that the contrast between the setting already erected and the tune of the song would not go down well with the audience. Shantarambapu had implicit faith in Ramchandra and he agreed that the recording be postponed. After a week or so, the same song, with a new tune by Ramchandra, was recorded and it was a terrific hit.

Some producers, though completely ignorant of music, are in the habit of giving advice to the music director just to assert their authority. Ramchandra told me how he dealt with one such producer. While working in *Filmistan*, he was told to compose a tune for a song. After studying the situation and the scene, Ramchandra

made up a suitable tune and, when ready, he played it to the producer for his approval. The producer said, 'It's good but it needs to be changed like this here, there, and again here.' 'Very well,' said Ramchandra, 'I will come back in a week, with another tune.' The next time, Ramchandra played the same tune without making any alteration. 'That's much better,' said the producer. Just see what a difference the changes I suggested have made. If you try again it will be more effective.' Ramchandra said, 'I will see what I can do.' After a week or so he again played the original tune to the producer. The producer, looking very pleased, said, 'Oh, very good! This is just what I wanted.' He did not realize that Ramchandra had made a fool of him.

A few years later Ramchandra Chitalkar took another name - C. Ramchandra. This created some confusion. Ramchandra first assumed this new name in the pictures in the South for which he directed the music. His close friends in Bombay always call him 'Anna'. A very senior actor, just to tease him and incite him to give better results, said to him, 'Just look at that fellow C. Ramchandra from Madras. He is really very talented, why don't you try to do something like him?' Anna saheb gave a sly smile but made no comment. One can imagine the surprise and shame the actor must have felt when he learnt that Ramchandra Chitalkar and C. Ramchandra were one and the same person!

On the other hand there were a few producers who had such faith in his abilities that they never interfered with his work. S. M. Naidu, the South Indian producer who shot his films in Coimbatore, engaged C. Ramchandra to compose the music for his picture Azad. The recording for all the ten songs was done by Ramchandra in Bombay, and on completion the entire set of songs was packed up and sent to Mr. Naidu. Mr. Naidu accepted the recordings without question, and it must be said to the credit of C Ramchandra, that all the songs became very popular.

Ramchandra reached very imposing heights. As many as 26 of the pictures for which he scored music celebrated silver jubilees, and three even achieved the golden jubilee. Ramchandra's magnificent achievement is made all the more noteworthy by the fact that, although a Maharashtrian, he won unique laurels in Hindi films.

When he was only 17 years old, he entered the cinema world in Kolhapur. Prior to this, he had wanted to work in the C.I.D. The thought of being a secret police agent and detecting crime by moving about in disguise fascinated him. His impressive physique made him very suitable for such a career, but he soon discovered that it was extremely difficult to get work as a detective. He gave up the idea, and to satisfy his love for disguises, he entered the film world.

Thanks to his impressive appearance, he was given the role of hero in his very first film. The film however was a complete flop. The hero of this film consoled himself after this failure, by appearing as a mere extra in the next film. Ramchandra was absolutely determined to stay on and make his fortune in the movies. He therefore migrated to Bombay where he decided to try his luck in a different line. He was a very good harmonium player. Sohrab Modi took him into his music department, and from

then on Ramchandra's musical genius found outlets. As opportunities came his way, he very successfully experimented with many novel ideas in film music. He was the first music director to introduce Western music into and also use Western instruments for Indian songs. The tune of Mai hun ek khalasi which he wrote for the film Sargam was based on the rock 'n' roll style. This song and another one from the picture Shehnai - Ana meri jaan, meri jaan, Sunday ke Sunday - became thunderingly popular. One has only to remember some of the haunting tunes created by him to realize his musical genius and fantastic creative ability.

Oh chand jaha o jaye from Sharda, Mohabat aisi dhadakan hai from Anarkali, Kitana badal gaya insan from Nastik, Kaise jawu main jamuna ke tir, - all these and many more speak volumes for his versatile ability as a music director.

Anna, besides being an artist, was also a patriot. During the last 30 years, whenever India was threatened by invasion, he always volunteered and visited the front lines of our army to cheer up our Jawans. During the Sino-Indian war of 1962, he gave the nation the very tragic (but extremely patriotic) song, Ai mere vatan ke logo. This song moved Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to tears and it continues likewise to move thousands of our countrymen. Although past 60, he stood proudly erect, always discovering new horizons for his art. He travelled extensively abroad, and won for himself a very large number of fans in U.K. and America. He had a peculiarly endearing style of singing. He was an ardent devotee of Sai Baba of Shirdi and therefore often sang religious songs in Baba's praise. (He named his bungalow after Sai Baba). For some inexplicable reason film producers dropped him some years ago and therefore the present generation has heard very little of this great musician. By casting him away, the film producers not only suffered a great loss themselves, but they deprived the public of most delightful and unique music. His sad demise early in January 1982 was a great and irreparable loss to modern music. He will be remembered fondly for many long years.

Rajan Parrikar

RMIM Archive Article "16".

Naushad Ali - A Sketch of the Master

Posted by: "Rajan P. Parrikar" (parrikar@mimicad.Colorado.EDU)

Source: G.N. Joshi's "Down Melody Lane",

Music Maestro Naushad Ali

by

G.N. Joshi

pp. 74-80

Naushad, one of the most popular and outstanding music composers in the cine-world, ranks high amongst those who have displayed rare skill and imagination in the use of western musical instruments for the presentation of Indian tunes in films. In his compositions he has drawn liberally from the treasure of Indian folk music.

Born at Lucknow on 25th December 1925, he was attracted to music even as a child. Like any normal parent, his father had great ambitions for his son, and desired that he should achieve high academic qualifications, befitting the status of the family. But Naushad's infatuation for music always diverted him from the classroom to the music hall. Those were the days of silent movies. During the screening of the picture, back-ground music was provided by a live band of musicians. The leader, a harmonium player, with the complementary support of the others - usually a clarinet player and a percussionist, would play impromptu music, suitable to the situation on the screen. This helped to heighten the interest and effect of the scene on the viewers. The percussionist would play, besides a pair of tablas, a dholak, a drum, cymbals, castanets, or a tambourine. He would change the rhythmic pattern, to suit the tempo of the varied music, and the mood and the situation in the picture.

There was a cinema theatre near Naushad's house. Laddan Khan, the leader of the band, was a proficient harmonium player. He was gifted with great imaginative and creative talents. The music he produced at the daily shows in the theatre was so arresting that young Naushad could not resist the temptation of going to the theatre frequently to listen to it. Laddan Khan could not but notice the keen and rapturous interest of the young lad, and he took Naushad under his wing. Thus were aroused, fashioned and chiselled the creative instincts of the future maestro.

Naushad's father tried his best to wean him away from music, using threats and even physical torture. One night Naushad returned from the theatre to find that his father had closed and bolted the door of the house. Those who are familiar with the severe wintry cold nights in North India, can well imagine the plight of the young boy, barred from entering the house. The next morning, he was found lying huddled up at the doorstep. Even this did not have the desired effect, and, Naushad's father gave him an ultimatum - he should either give up music or leave the house.

Naushad opted for the latter course and joined a dramatic company in a theatre at Golgunj in Lucknow.

The period of training under Laddan Khan had been very-rewarding. Naushad not only found himself capable of working independently

as a music composer, but he also developed the acute sense which enabled him to pick rare musical jewels from the folk tradition of Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Saurashtra during the company's sojourns in those regions. The dramatic company broke up while in Saurashtra and once again Naushad was literally thrown on the streets. But his persistence and immeasurable self-confidence guided him to the city of Bombay, where he decided to use his talents to seek his fortune. He did not know a soul in the large metropolis except one Abdul Alim Nami, who had been their neighbour in Lucknow, and who was a teacher in a school in Colaba. Mr. Nami offered Naushad a home but expressed his inability to help him find work. The film industry, which was then thriving, was his only hope. Most film studios were located in the Dadar area. In those days, one could travel one way by tram from Colaba to Dadar for just 2 annas, but after a few days, finding himself unable to spare even such a paltry amount, Naushad actually had to walk the distance. He would approach the managers or producers of different studios and give them demonstrations of his proficiency in playing the harmonium. Day after day he would walk back sadly disappointed, hungry and thirsty, with blisters on his feet. His self-confidence and indomitable willpower, however, would not allow him to accept Mr. Nami's offer of sending him back to his father. A kindly shop-keeper, doing business at Dadar T.T., took pity on the young, struggling Naushad and allowed him to stay at his shop during the nights. This saved him the bother of walking to and from Colaba. The whole day he would spend visiting the various film companies, and towards evening, tired and disappointed he would come to the shop to rest his tired body. For many days he lived on tea and bread alone, and slept on the pavement outside the shop. It was difficult to get sleep on an empty stomach. The noise and bustle of the passing traffic and the glittering lights of the Broadway cinema opposite, added to his discomfort. This crossed his mind. During the rainy season he had to shift his mat to the tiny space underneath the staircase of the shop. After days of tribulation and hard effort, he was accepted as a harmonium player on the music staff of the Ranjit film company.

Ranjit was then a factory of film production. Several films were produced simultaneously. Consequently a number of aspiring and talented persons thronged the studio. Beautiful girls, handsome boys, vied for the coveted roles of heroines, heroes, or villains and were even willing to work as extras, to start with. Budding music directors and musicians stood in queues with their instruments, waiting for a chance to be interviewed. Naushad, though on the staff, was a mere harmonium player. His creative urge egged him on to try his luck as a music maker. Mr. D. N. Madhok, the well known song writer of yesteryear, was busy with his picture Kanchan. Naushad requested him to listen to his tunes for the picture. Mr. Madhok was very pleasantly surprised to find them not only strikingly fresh and new, but ideally suited to the situations in his picture. He took Naushad for an audition to Sardar Chandulal and Goharbai - the joint owners of Ranjit Company. Naushad sat down in a corner amongst others who had come for the same purpose.

Chandulal Shah was also a big stock broker. Sitting in his office, he used to carry out his share transactions over the telephone. A newcomer was sitting ready with a harmonium, awaiting a signal from the seth to begin his audition. The seth was busy - with one phone to his ear and another by his side with his hand resting on it. Sethji signalled to the musician to begin. The young aspirant began to play his composition - suddenly there was a loud buzz on the other phone. This disturbed the player - he paused, looking at the phone and the seth. Chandulalji put down the phone in his left hand and picked up the other, shouting a loud 'Hello' into the mouthpiece, at the same time signalling to the poor composer to continue with his music. The poor man had to go on and on, while Sethji was striking loud and huge bargains over the phone.

Naushad was aghast at this mockery of an audition, and he quietly walked out of the room, completely disappointed. He refused to be auditioned in this manner and requested Mr. Madhok to allow him to record his tunes for trial. Mr. Madhok with his considerable influence, obtained Chandulalji's consent for this.

With great enthusiasm, Naushad started rehearsals of his tunes with fellow musicians. Naushad was not only a newcomer - a mere harmonium player - but he had also a very frail constitution and unimpressive personality. There were several very senior musicians who were expert instrumentalists. They resented having to practise under Naushad's baton and refused to cooperate. A disillusioned Naushad resigned from his new-found job in protest and walked out of Ranjit with a resolve never to enter its gates again (a vow he has kept even to this day). Mr. Madhok, though disappointed, did not lose his faith in Naushad's creative talent. On his recommendation, Naushad not only got a job in Prakash Studio, but was also assigned to provide music for a forthcoming picture. The music of Premnagar launched this young music maker on a career that was to be a long and dazzling one. Luminous gems from the rich treasure of Indian folk music were presented by Naushad in gorgeous modern styles.

Lavishly decorated and played by a large orchestra of Indian and Western instruments, the simple folk tunes took millions of urban and rural music lovers by storm. Picture after picture succeeded at the box office. The lilting tunes from Dillagi, Baiju Bawra, Aan, Anmol Ghadi, Didar, Babul, Ratan, Mughal-e-Azam, Mother India and many other films delighted millions. The sun of success began to shine with rare brilliancy upon Naushad and he was acknowledged as a genius in the world of film music.

Fame and fortune now began to chase Naushad Ali. His name figured prominently in film circles. He was introduced to the famous producer-director Mehboob Khan, who asked Naushad to write the music score for his Aan. An interesting incident throws significant light on Naushad's nature. It was the day when Jawan hai mohabbat hasin hai zamana - the song that broke all previous records of popularity - was scheduled to be recorded. After a rehearsal Mehboob Khan expressed his disapproval and suggested a few changes. Naushad was extremely angry at this but he did not show it. He postponed the recording to the following week. In the meantime, during a take in the studio, when Mehboob Khan was

peering through the camera, Naushad who was standing by, asked Mehboob's permission to have a look. After looking through the camera lens Naushad suggested a few changes in the arrangement of the sets, in the same authoritative way in which Mehboob Khan had suggested changes in the music. This was an outright insult to the genius of the great director. Resenting this meddling, Mehboob Khan pushed Naushad aside and said, 'What do you understand of photography? This is not your province, you mind your own business.'

Naushad Ali apologized with folded hands, and then said in a very submissive manner, 'Just as photography is not my province, music is not yours. I ventured to speak as I did only in the hope that you would realize this.'

Mehboob Khan was a very clever and able director. He was also one who always correctly evaluated the talents of persons in his employment. Although he showed outward annoyance at the tactics used by Naushad to register his protest against interference in his music, Mehboob Khan inwardly appreciated Naushad's bold spirit and his standing up for his own rights. Thereafter Naushad was left to himself and Mehboob Khan did not interfere ever again in his music direction.

Naushad Ali, who once slept like a beggar on a footpath, now lives in his own imposing mansion on the sea face, at Bandra, the fashionable suburb of Bombay. It was sheer coincidence that the silver jubilee function of the musical film Baiju Bawra was at the Broadway theatre, opposite which Naushad had at one time been obliged to sleep on the pavement. The distributors had arranged a fitting jubilee reception for Naushad and the producer, Vijay Bhatt. Naushad arrived at the theatre in his own shining limousine, accompanied by Mr. Bhatt and others. During the interval he was showered with garlands and bouquets. Naushad came out onto the balcony, with thick rose garlands around his neck, and stood staring across the road at the pavement which had, at one time, been his resting place. Tears gathered in his eyes. When questioned by Mr. Vijay Bhatt, he replied, 'There was a period in my life when, from that footpath, I used to gaze at this very balcony, and wonder if these glittering lights would ever shine for me. Today I am the centre of this brilliantly lit function, but it took 16 years, years of intense struggle to cross over from that footpath to this one. The tears in my eyes in those days, were tears of complete despondency and helplessness. The tears today are tears of fulfilment, and I am grateful to Allah for this.'

(A paragraph or two devoted to Naushad's interest in hunting deleted)

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Rajan Parrikar

RMIM Archive Article "41".

Naushad: Composer steeped in classical idiom

Posted by: Gopal N Kondagunta (gkondagu@magnus.acs.ohio-state.edu)

Source: The Hindu

Author: Girija Rajendran

Composer steeped in classical idiom

Girija Rajendran

for The Hindu

Naushad brought a remarkable finesse to the art of composing music. He firmly believes that all tradition, all modernity is within the ambit and scope of the Hindustani music tradition.

It was Naushad calling after 'Sankarabharanam' had been shown on the network as the National Award winner for Best Music. "I have absorbed every note of the film's music as scored by K.V. Mahadevan," said Naushad. "My, what a thematic score, what fidelity to our classical tradition! Please give me Mahadevan's address. I would like to send him a telegram straightaway, congratulating him on an award most deservedly won."

What a spontaneous praise from the Hindustani to the Carnatic school! As Naushad turned 70 in December 1988, I recall his telling me: "Our six basic raags are Deepak, Megh, Hindol, Shri, Bhairav and Malkauns. These, our six citadels, were assailed at various times, in the last 50 years, by the foxtrot, the waltz, the cha-cha-cha, the rumba-samba, the rock-n'-roll and disco.

Please note that such westernised song-modes have come and gone but Deepak, Megh, Hindol, Shri, Bhairav and Malkauns still survive. They have survived through my 70 years and they will still be there when I am gone. All tradition, all modernity in our music is within the ambit of these six basic raags."

Naushad proves the point afresh with his score for "Awaaz De Kahaan Hai", a youth film in which this vintage composer moves from Pahadi to Tilang to Bhairavi to Pilu with aplomb and aptitude. The only change is that, in 1990, Anuradha Paudwal has taken the place of Lata Mangeshkar in Naushad's recording room. The switch comes at a time when yet another year has passed without Naushad Ali's being bestowed with the Padma Bhushan. "When they have already honoured those whom I have groomed (like Lata) with the Padma Bhushan, I take it that in the process, they have honoured me also," says Naushad with typical Lucknavi polish. Time and time again have they offered Naushad the Padma Shri. Time and again he refused. And now, when Lata Mangeshkar logically wins the Dada Saheb Phalke Award only after Naushad, the sad fact is that she no longer sings for this trendsetter composer. For Naushad has always insisted that the true composer is the master, not the slave of public taste.

It is a taste for the better class of music that Naushad has sedulously cultivated in the public, through the 50 years he has scored for films starting with 'Prem Nagar' (1940). Naushad lives for music. And his music live in our mind and heart. Lata may no longer be singing for Naushad, but her numbers for this ace composer will always echo in our ears. "Tod diya dil mera" in Pahadi ("Andaz"), 'Jo main jaanti bisrat hai saiyyan' in Maand ("Sha-

bab"), 'Jaane waale se mulaqaat na hone paayi' in Yaman ('Amar'), 'More Saiyanji uttarenge paar ho' in Pilu ('Uran Khatola'), 'Tere Pyaar mein dildaar' in Bihag ('Mere Mehboob'), 'Mohe Panghat pe nandal' in Gaara ('Mughal-e-Azam'), paas aao' in Bhairavi ('Sunghursh'), 'Mere jeevan saathi' in Tilang ('Saathi') - you name the raag and Naushad has wrapped Lata in it.

Virtuostic articulation

Only, with Lata, there came an interruption in the mellifluous presentation. But never with Mohammed Rafi. To the end, Rafi remained the hub of Naushad's music, articulating its nuances with a virtuosity there is no matching. To wit, 'Suhaani raat dhal chuki' in Pahadi ('Dulari'), 'Meri kahani bhoole wali' in Tilang ('Deedar'), 'Insaan bano insaan bano' in Gujari Todi ('Baiju Bawra'), 'Mehlon mein rahne waale' in Sahana ('Shabab'), 'Zindagi aaj mere naam se' in Jaijaiwanti ('Son of India'), 'Koi Saagar dil ko behlaata nahin' in Kalavati ('Dil Diya Dard Liya') and, of course, 'Madhuban mein radhika naachi re' in Hamir ('Kohinoor').

By the Kohinoor stage, Naushad, audio-visually was so indelibly identified with Dilip Kumar that it was suggested that this superstar had become a mental crutch for him. Just to prove his detractors wrong, Naushad did 'Mere Mehboob' with the newest superstar Rajendra Kumar, and was as effective on the piano on this actor, through Rafi's through Mukesh's 'Tu kahe agar' in "Andaz". Naushad has upheld his Dilip Kumar connection in valid creative terms. "My association with Dilip Kumar sprang essentially from the fact that this thespian brought the same dedication to his craft as I did to my art. To ensure that this dedication never got diluted, I have always worked on only one film at a time - exactly as Dilip Kumar had done. That some of Dilip Kumar's important films with me failed in the 1964-68 phase was no fault of his or mine. Both of us, in keeping with our temperament, had given nothing less than our very best to these films too.

Yet, having reaped the windfall of being associated with this megastar, Naushad did find himself swept by the backlash, when the big slide came in the career of Dilip Kumar with "Dil Diya Dard Liya", "Aadmi" and "Sunghursh". This was when, in a moment of uncertainty, Naushad made the mistake of yielding to the parrot cry that 'he should change his style.' He went western in his orchestration of "Saathi" (Hindi version of "Paalum Pazhamum") even while preserving his Indian foundation in the film's tunes. The outcome was that Naushad fell between two stools as "Saathi" failed in the star custody of Vyjayanthimala and Rajendra Kumar. This saw Naushad hurriedly 'return to base', arguing that his best composition in "Saathi", 'Main to pyaar se tere piya' was in his pet Bhairavi and this was the tune with which the film's viewers had instinctually tuned.

The truth, of course, was that Naushad, after nearly three decades in films, had (by 1968) become too steeped in our classical idiom to look upon modes western as anything but hollow. Naushad is not against Western music as such, having been inspired by the best of Beethoven and Mozart in his formative years. But his point is, "If we must borrow, why must it always be the worst, rather

than the best, of the West?"

Naushad's strident insistence on the 'Hindustani parampara', in a field in which the yardstick of a composer's utility is his flexibility, led to the conclusion that he had lost ground precisely because he shed his resilience. But Naushad counters this with the argument: "From 'Baiju Bawra' onwards you will find my music rooted in the soil. I have been pilloried for thus going classical. But what my critics overlook is that if Lata's 'Mohe bhool gaye sanwariya' is in Bhairav and Rafi's 'Insaaf ka Mandir hai' is in Bhairavi, it is in the people's Bhairav, the people's Bhairavi. When no fewer than 25 of my films have attained silver jubilee status when nine of them celebrated golden jubilees and two of them diamond jubilees, it is idle to suggest that I do not know the pulse of the people.

"It is always easier to lower the public taste than to raise it. Give the people only hybrid music, as you are doing today, and you leave them with no choice. On the other hand, base your music on our raags and raaginis and see how the very same people warm to it. This where the art of crafting a tune comes in, for what is it new we are giving? Everything is there already, it is merely the style of presentation, that I have always prided myself."

Shamshad Begum, this composer's main female artiste before Lata took over, once revealingly told me that in case of Naushad, she never came to know what the interlude piece or the orchestral arrangement was, until she went into the recording room, "Naushad Saab merely repeatedly rehearsed the tune with me. But finally, when we went in to record, everything was not only ready, but it was already superbly harmonised. It was almost as if I had merely to sing into the gaps!"

This perfection in presentation is what sets apart Naushad's tunes for Shamshad like 'Baadal aaya jhoom ke' ("Shahjahan"), 'Yeh afsana nahin zaalim' ("Dard"), 'Taqdeer bani ban kar bigdi' ("Mela) and 'Chod babul ka ghar' (Babul) When Shamshad Begum held her first nite as late as 1970, Naushad made it a point to go on to the stage and acknowledge: "In such success as this humble one attained, Shamshad Begum has had a big hand."

"Yet the same Naushad turned from me to Lata!" points out Shamshad, who rendered with Lata, 'Dar na mohabbat kar le' for this composer in "Andaz". Naushad's own explanation for this changeover: "It happens in a fast-changing field like films. If Lata now came to replace Shamshad, once Shamshad had come to displace Zohra in my composing esteem. This at a time when, in the film 'Mela' in which Shamshad was my main singer, Zohra too had left her own impress with 'Phir aah dil se nikli'."

The vital point to note in Naushad's repertoire is, not who supplanted whom, but that he is the only composer for whom both the legendary K.L.Saigal and Noorjehan have sung. It was a touching moment in 1981 after a gap of 33 years and Naushad wielded the baton to her Pahadi strains of 'Awaaz de kahaan hai'. As Noorjehan's vibrance filled the Shanmukhananda auditorium, her co-singer in this "Anmol Ghadi" duet, the no less legendary Surendra, found himself seated in front of her in the audience. It is a memory of Noorjehan's "extraordinarily bright voice" that

sees Naushad's latest film named "Awaaz De Kahaan Hai". The film's music proves that Dada Burman was not the only one to retain his composing impetus at 70- plus. "It is my final wish", says Naushad "to see that I have some role to play in restoring Indian music to Indian films."

This gentle giant's musicianship is still intact and he is undeterred by the charge that classical music has become something of a hang-up with him. "How can I buy the line that our own tradition is no longer suited to our own films?" Naushad asks. "Tell me, why do the songs that I and composers of my era created still live in the public imagination? It is because those songs have their grounding in the Hindustani tradition. For "Andaz" numbers like 'Hum aaj kahin', 'Toote na dil toote na', and 'Jhoom jhoom ke naacho aaj', Mukesh must have come 25-30 times to my house to rehearse each song. And Rafi, how can I forget the fact that he was never so busy as not to be able to come and rehearse my song again and again?"

"There was then a deep commitment to music on the part of the singer and the composer alike. And that is why the music then made lingers in your mind to this day. Tell me how many songs heard lately in our films can you recall? No, the soul is missing from the music we get today. I had, don't forget to compress, into the three minutes of a 78 rpm record the Bageshri I got Saigal to render as 'Chaahe barbaad karegi' in "Shahjehan". Saigal was born to sing, yet he was prepared to give me as many rehearsals as I wanted before the final recording.

"A song is not just composed, it is moulded. And never in my life have I composed a song without the film's screenplay in hand. Unless you thus get a feel of the theme in its total interplay, how can the song blend into the fabric of the narrative? Today, we have the technology, but somewhere we have forgotten the technique! The entire music of Roptara Studios, employing coarse blankets to shut off the 'tinny' echo! Yet what technical perfection we achieved in numbers ranging from 'Mohabbat ki jhooti kahani pe royee' in Darbari Kaanada, to 'Bekas pe karam kijiye' in Kedar to 'Jab raat hai aesi matwaali' in Jaijaiwanti to 'Khuda nigehbaan ho tumhara' in Yaman. These tunes, they preserve the purity of our raags, yet are they less appealing for that?"

His conviction is almost an obsession with Naushad. And who can blame him, looking to the classical heights he scaled in a popular medium like films in his heyday. He may have lost his vital spark later. His classicism, at some point, may even have cramped his style as a freewheeler composer. But while he held sway, Naushad Ali brought a remarkable finesse to the art of composition.

That is why his impact is identifiably his own to this day. After half a century in cinema during which his singers have varied from Zohra to Anuradha, Naushad is a symbol of the best in film music.

"I owe everything I am to music." says Naushad. And to his music we owe some of our own cherished moments, moments frozen in our minds as representatives of an era when melody was queen because the composer was king.

RMIM Archive Article "44".

NAUSHAD: Quest for Better Music Continues

Efforts of: Samiuddin Mohammed (sm0e@lehigh.edu)

Source: India Journal

An article on the melody king, NAUSHAD, taken from "India Journal". It delineates the tough path which the maestro had to cross before meeting success. Traces a lot of events in Naushad's life and his musical career. Makes an interesting reading.

*****NAUSHAD: Quest for Better Music Continues*****

Naushad Ali, the man who has given the music world hundreds of songs to hum, celebrated his 75th birthday on Dec 25. Currently visiting his daughters in California, he took time off to talk to Ansuja Chhabria and reminisce about the music industry and his life.

It all started in Lucknow in 1937. Forced to make a choice he walked out of his parents' home in search of his destiny into the uncertain world of Hindi film industry in Bombay. Penniless but with his feet firmly rooted in Hindustani classical music, he toiled to take-off and what a take-off it was! The flight that started in 1940, with "Premnagar" took him to unparalleled heights, where he still soars at the top after fifty years.

Naushad Ali was born in Lucknow in 1919, in an orthodox religious minded family, which did not regard music as a respectful career. His parents were against his learning music, which he nevertheless did secretly associating with the "Ustads" of Lucknow. He spent a lot of his time doing their chores and absorbing music by just staying around them.

When his "Ustad" presented him a harmonium, his father was so angered that he had it thrown away, and made strict rules for Naushad: He had to be home before 9 PM everyday or else he would not be allowed inside, and neither would he be fed. Naushad very often would get so engrossed in his music sessions, that he spent many nights outside his home on the patio, below the stars, on an empty stomach. Strictures only had the reverse effect on Naushad. He drifted more and more towards his love for music. Ultimately the day came, when he was confronted by his father, "Either you leave your music or this house, the choice is yours." Naushad replied, "Aap ka ghar aap ko mubarak ho, mujhe mera sangeet de deejije."

At the tender age of seventeen, Naushad left home to go to Ahmedabad where he stayed with some acquaintances who forced him to go back and paid for his fare home.

Fate had other plans for him. He ultimately landed in Bombay in 1937, where his pocket was picked - he lost all the money he had! Penniless - he slept on the pavements of Dadar, and ultimately got to know of a family friend - Prof. Nami, who gave him shelter. Naushad had his dinner with their family, but had not money. So he walked from Colaba to Dadar each morning in search of a job at the studios, and wearily walked back every day - a distance of more than 20 km. Not once did he mention to Prof. Nami or his family about his dire economic condition.

A month or so later, a money order of Rs. 15 came in his name

from a friend and he had to spill the beans - that he was absolutely penniless. Prof. Nami was shocked and inquired "How long have you been doing this ? Why didn't you ask me for some money- if you needed some. What will your friend and family think, that I am so inconsiderate." At this, Naushad replied "No Sir, you have showered me with your obligations. I do not want to lower myself in your eyes by asking you for money."

Naushad cherishes fond memories of Prof. Nami and the tremendous help and encouragement he provided at a crucial juncture.

It was a long arduous struggle. He got odd jobs at the studios, moved to Dadar into a small single room with some friends opposite Broadway and when the Bombay humidity and heat got too much, which was almost 10 months of the year, he and his friends came out and slept on the pavement to get fresh air and watch the crowds at Broadway theater. Below the starry nights, many times he prayed to Allah for strength to carry on and hoped that the darkness in his life would be replaced by the lights that shone across the street.

Things gradually got better. He got his first steady job at Rs. 40 a month in a studio in Chembur. Chembur was a large underdeveloped swampy area with no amenities at the time. He used to carry plain bread with him for lunch and survive through the day, walking from Kurla station to Chembur and back. He worked long hours and studied under prominent musicians like Mushtaq Hussain, Ustad Jhande Khan, Khemchand Praksash and sharpened his skills. Lady luck finally smiled upon him. In 1940, he got his first independent assignment for "Premnagar" at Rs. 300 a month, produced by Mohan Bhavnani who gave him a break, with D.N. Madhok's reference whom he regards as his mentor. He then joined Prakash Films on a full time basis and then went to Kardar productions where he directed music for "Nai Duniya" which was highly successful and was subsequently followed by films like "Sharda", "Diwana", "Dulari", etc. His career improved continuously and he was highly successful and respected in the industry but his priority was never money, he always believed in making music which the public appreciated.

At this juncture the film industry was getting the first influence of western instruments, introduced by Pankaj Mullick, R.C. Bohra and Biswas. On the other hand, Sharadchandra's novel "Devdas" was picturized with a powerful emotional performance by K. Saigal. The impact of this movie with its social theme, and melodious classical music created a wave so great that it set a trend of music dominated films, the time when Ravindra Sangeet was at its peak and it signified the essence of all music. Then came a change with "Pancholi" with its fast paced folk music from Punjab, which took the film industry by storm. In this context Naushad introduced the "Dholak" in the famous movie "Ratan" from Uttar Pradesh's folk music which he had grown up with. It was an overnight success, and he was acclaimed and honoured for his novel ideas in the industry and by the government.

On the family front, things had smoothed out, and his parents had arranged his marriage. When he reached Lucknow to marry the girl his mother had chosen and whom he had never seen, his mother cautioned him about his profession, and advised him not to men-

tion it in front of his "in laws" who were told that he was a professional tailor, as they too looked down upon a music career. Naushad chuckles at the memory of his sitting on the traditional Ghodi, dressed up as a groom, the bands playing all the tunes he had composed, as they were the superhit songs of the times. His father-in-law was annoyed at the bandplayers for playing trashy film music and asked them to stop, since it was a tradition to play pure classical shehnai for auspicious occasions. Little did he know that his to be son-in-law was the composer of what he called trash, but which was acclaimed all over India by the masses.

After marriage things worked out fine with wife Aliya Khatoon who supported him 100% and was always a pillar of strength. They were blessed with ten children, six girls and four boys, whom she brought up and left him free of domestic responsibilities and allowing him to concentrate on music career. He even confessed that he called his children by their pet names and had to think twice to remember their real names.

So oblivious was he as what was happening around him that he remembers once when he was in the midst of some composition and some water drops fell on him and his group. He looked up to see plastering and paint workers doing his home. His wife was managing the show, handling the contractors, overseeing the job done with an umbrella in her hand bearing the summer heat. He was unaware of everything composing music for the epic movie "Baiju Bawra" which went on to make waves.

At the jubilee function when he stood and looked across the street, there were tears in his eyes. When everyone inquired about it, he commented, "I just was down memory lane. It has been a long time - 16 years to cross the distance from that pavement to this pavement of the road". Life had brought him to a juncture from the pavement to his own home "Aashiana". From then on there was no looking back, Naushad has moved from popularity to being a legend today!

Naushad has always given classical music its due place and has created his own style of melodious memorable music. He is normally lost in his own thoughts while creating a song or tune and for days together he would think about it even while eating, walking and sleeping. Many of his memorable songs have been inspirations in his dreams like "Dharti ko aakaash pukare...aana hi hoga". He attributes this to the grace of God who has gifted him with this unique talent. He is religious and this gets reflected in his music which is warm and heart touching.

His feeling about the trend in the film industry are mixed. He regrets that movies today no longer convey a message of love, respect, tolerance and peace for which India has been famous. India is the only country in the world which has sheltered and embraced religions from all over the world. He regrets to see that this same India has been continuously broken and divided on the basis of religion.

Today the film industry is dictated by whims and fancies of stars, unlike yesteryears when the story was the focus around which everything revolved. The music and songs were created as per the scene and story. Today mass production, deadlines and

star dates have sucked out the creativity of the industry. Still there is hope he says. There is a massive womens movement and mass social movement to ban vulgarity and violence in films. The government has taken a stand to enforce stiff regulations for censorship. The present censorship board consists of fifty percent women. Naushad has always taken an active stand for al these moves and hopes for a clean entertainment. He proved his point with "Pajeeza" (Pakeezah ??) where a social theme, melodious music and a clean movie created historical records both on artistic and box office fronts.

Today Naushad is selective about his work, he produced and composed for the historical T.V. serial "Tipu Sultan". Last year he produced a clean love story "Teri Payal Mere Geet" which is based on classical Indian music and has received various music awards. His present project is "Guddu", a modern cotemporary story. He is presently working ont he TV serial "Akbar the Great" for which 14 episodes are already telecast. His dream project if "Taansen" a TV serial he has proposed to Doordarshan and is awaiting approval. "Taansen" is the story about the magic of music, how Taansen and Swami Haridas created music which could work wonders - light up candles, bring rains, cure the sick, spiritually lift up people and bring goodwill.

Music, the universal language has always been artistically developed in India he says. "Today there are no more artists who can play the Jaltarang, Tarshenai, Tablatarang, Sarod, Naraka, Ishraaj, Sajanda and other traditional instruments. Unless we support these artists and encourage them, we will only be able to see these instruments in museums", he added.

His advice to Indians, especially the young generation is "Be proud to be Indians, don't ape the west blindly and don't feel inferior to anybody. India is a great country with traditions and cultures the world has aspired for, the need today is to keep our traditions and cultures alive."

When questioned about his most challenging, memorable song, he replied, "I am still to write that, I am searching for the song I will call memorable!" And so the Great Quest continues....

RMIM Archive Article "357".

Mughal-e-Music Naushad

Posted by: ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org (Ashok)

Source: Filmfare Jul 97

Author: Sabir Masani

Mughal-e-Music: Naushad

As told to Sabir Masani

Eighty eight years (*) ago, on December 25, I was born in Lucknow. Music was ingrained in me from childhood. As a kid, I would visit the annual fair at the Deva Sharif in Barabanki... all the great qawwals and musicians of those days would perform before the devotees. There, I met a flute player from Bareilly. His tunes still reverberate in my memory. From morning till night, I would sit by his feet, listening to his wondrous melodies.

My interest in music evolved under the guidance of Ustad Baban Khan and Ustad Yusuf Khan. But my father was extremely orthodox. He felt that our Muslim community wouldn't appreciate the fact that his son had taken up music to earn a livelihood. I remember it was the day of Divali when my abba berated me and said that either I choose music or the house. Without hesitating for a minute, I said, "Aapko aap ka ghar mubarak, hume apna sangeet." I turned my back on my father and left for Bombay.

SILENT ERA

I used to watch silent films at the Royal theatre in Lucknow. Theatre owners would hire a team of musicians to play the tabla, harmonium, sitar and violin. The musicians would watch the film first, make notes, finalise the scales required. When the show began in the evening, they would sit in front of the screen and play music for the scenes. This was a great way to be entertained and learn music at the same time. It made me grasp the nuances required in composing a film's background music score.

THE BOMBAY EXPERIENCE

I reached Bombay in 1937. Initially, I stayed with an acquaintance from Lucknow at Colaba. After a while, I shifted to Dadar opposite the Broadway theatre. I would sleep on the footpath. This suited me fine. Otherwise I would have had to walk in the hot sun to Dadar in search of work at the studios. My perseverance paid. I started assisting music director Ustad Jhande Khan who was at the peak of his success those days. I was paid a monthly salary of Rs 40. The producer was a Russian... he had set up a studio at Chembur, which was an extremely desolate place in those days. It wasn't accessible by bus or train. As it happened, all our hard work was in vain. The film didn't see the light of the day.

Again I was unemployed. Every day seemed longer than a year. Finally, I landed in Ranjit Studio, where I assisted Khemchand for the film Kanchan. But it was painful working at Ranjit. The musicians were haughty and indisciplined... they wouldn't take instructions from an assistant director.

So I left Ranjit, in disgust, swearing to myself that I would never return. After that I assisted various music directors on the films made by eminent directors like A.R. Kardar and P.N. Madhok. In 1941, I became a full-fledged music director with Prem Nagar. The story was

set in Kutch. I did a lot of research into the folk music of the area.

TECHNICAL GLITCHES

Recordings were done in quiet parks and gardens after midnight. Because the studios did not have sound-proof recording rooms. In the gardens, there would be no echo and disturbances, unlike the studios where the sound reverberated because of the tin roofs.

Incidentally, the echo effect used by me in Ratan was achieved through a very crude but effective technique. I'd kept a microphone in a toilet which had ceramic tiles all over. Then I played the music... so the sound reverberated against those tiles, producing an echo effect.

OVERLAPPING TECHNIQUE

I used this special technique in films like Uran Khatola and Amar. We would record the voice of a particular artiste on a scale of 90... then we would record his voice on 70... then 50... and so on. After the complete recording, we would play it for the scene and the impact it created was terrific.

In the early '40s, only a single mike was used for the singers as well as musicians. The microphone called 'Fedler Tone' had to be heated on the fire before it could start. A violinist would first come to the mike, play his piece, move out, then the singer would sing his lines, then the tabla player would play his piece...

All this was very tedious, but it gave us immense pleasure because we were always trying to be technically innovative.

BAIJU BAWRA

In 1953, Baiju Bawra was released at the Broadway theatre in Dadar.

It was a big hit.

And to think the proprietors of Prakash Pictures were thinking of closing shop. They had come to my house... they asked me to come with them to touch the keys of the studio with my hands since I was also a member of their company. They said that the studio has to be locked up since it had suffered a financial loss. I felt very sad. I asked them if they could make just one more effort to survive.

They had nothing to lose. They agreed, and I gave them the subject of Baiju Bawra. They wanted to sign Dilip Kumar and Nargis. But I was adamant. I said the film's highlights would be its story, music and lyrics. It shouldn't be overshadowed by stars. Fresh faces would be more appropriate. So Bharat Bhushan was finalised to play the part of Baiju Bawra. For the heroine, I contacted Ali Baksh (father of Meena Kumari) who was thrilled. It was Meena Kumari's first big break.

On the day of the premiere at Broadway, the producers asked me how I felt now that the public had loved the picture. Tears rolled down my cheeks. I looked on the other side of the footpath where I used to sleep. I said, "Us footpath se yahan aane tak 16 saal lag gaye."

AAN

I created a symphony for Aan on stage with a hundred musicians. I had a special tent... made of blankets... on the surface, I laid out coir carpets, so that the sound wouldn't echo.

The final recording was done in London. We worked day in and day out for three months. We were under enormous pressure when we received news that the Liberty cinema in Bombay would open with this film. People slept for days outside the theatre to book tickets in advance.

My symphony was widely appreciated in Britain, it was played on BBC. Orson Welles who was busy with his Othello also happened to see

the rushes of Aan and loved the music.

MUGHAL-E-AZAM

I had used a hundred chorus singers for the first time for the song Mohabbat zindabad, this music composition was one of my best. But sadly, my music for Mughal-e-Azam wasn't considered worthy of an award by the Filmfare editor. He told me that it was too refined and classical. So he gave his casting vote for Taxi Driver (**), because it had music which, he said, was more filmi.

RELATIONSHIP WITH DILIP KUMAR

I recommended Dilip Kumar for films like Andaz and Mela. I composed the music for several of his films. Later, some producers preferred to take on other musicians. I specifically told Dilip Kumar, "Never recommend my name! Let the music director be signed at the producer's discretion."

TODAY'S MUSIC

I feel lost. Film-makers don't work hard on their lyrics or music... for them music is business. They want quickie stuff with sex appeal. I sometimes wonder whether they know what sex is. For them, it's just a piece of flesh. Moreover, today's musicians do not know the s of sargam and yet they're on top of the charts.

The deterioration started in the early '80s. The Western music has been aped to such an extent that there is decadence all around us. Lyrics like, Main to raste se jaa raha tha, bhel puri kha raha tha are hits, but that doesn't mean they are more valuable than Ghalib's poetry.

Perhaps all this is a passing phase. Maybe melody will return some day.

IMPORTANCE OF RADIO

Radio was a strong force during my time and influenced the masses considerably. But I always felt that programmes like Binaca Geetmala had their prejudices and biases. Now the same thing is going on in the countdown programmes on television. It is very wrong to judge the merit of a song by its position on the charts.

VICTIMISATION OF MUSLIMS

Because of Partition, several film-makers and artistes migrated to Pakistan. Some of those who had established themselves remained here... and weren't victimised as such.

But newcomers were victimised and deprived. Meetings held by some prominent artists, film-makers and journalists who were anti-Muslims. This was unfortunate. In a profession which thrives on creativity, the only religion is art.

SINGERS OF THAT ERA

I worked with K.L. Saigal on his last film Shah Jahan. It was very painful to see such a remarkable talent fall prey to alcohol. He would drink peg after peg on the sets, almost as many pegs as the retakes he gave. If he gave ten takes, he would end up drinking ten pegs... even though he was suffering from cirrhosis of the liver.

Once the industrialist, Panipat Singhania, visited the studio where Saigal was recording and offered him a sum of Rs 25,000 to sing at a get-together. Saigal agreed because the money was tempting.

Soon after, a coolie came up to him and said that he and his family were great fans of his. If he could grace their daughter's wedding... it was on the same day as Mr Singhania's party... they would be delighted. After a moment's thought, Saigal gave them the nod and went

to their house in Bachubhai Ki Wadi. He didn't go to Singhanian's get-together. You don't make singers like him anymore.

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(**) There is an error here. In the Filmfare fraud, Mughal-E-Azam lost out to 'Dil Apna Aur Preet Parai'. It couldn't have been 'Taxi Driver', which was 5-6 years earlier. The movies cheated out by 'Taxi Driver' were perhaps 'Shabab' and 'Nastik'. Of course, 'DAAPP' barely rates a mention among the soundtracks of 1960, but my honors for the year go, not to 'MeA', but to 'Barsaat Ki Raat.'

(*) If Naushad turns 88 this year, his birth year must be 1909. It makes him Anil Biswas's senior by 5 years and nearly a decade older than C. Ramchandra. Does that sound right? The BFI Encyclopaedia gives the year as 1919, making Naushad 5 years younger than AB and the same cohort as (actually, a year younger than) CR. Sounds more plausible to me.

Ashok

RMIM Archive Article "358".

Naushad Academy

Posted by: nasrudin@glue.umd.edu (Faez Nasrudin Kaiser)

Source: The Hindu, Apr 3

The Naushad Academy of Hindustani Sangeet is here. It is the last dream of a musician with a mind fighting, against odds, to keep alive 'Hindustaniat' in the music made in Hindi cinema. Nor is Naushad confining his vision merely to improving the value- debased quality of music one gets in films today. The idea in setting up a Naushad Academy, at such an advanced stage in this last Mughal's career, is to open up opportunities for budding vocalists and instrumentalists seeking to perform with a certain fidelity to the Hindustani heritage. Come Christmas and Naushad will be 80. He came to films, as a piano player in Sohrab Modi's Minerva Movietone, around 1938. "On a wage of Rs. 40 a month, a princely sum those days" Naushad is at pains to stress. Naushad has, thus, stayed the course for 60 years.

During those six decades in which he has fortified his position as a bastion of tradition, Naushad has written the musical score for 74 films (64 of them Hindi), all along concentrating on quality rather than numbers. His music-graph displays three dubbed films in Tamil and one original score for a Malayalam movie. Naushad, more recently, tried his composing hand at three TV serials: 'The Sword of Tipu Sultan,' 'Akbar The Great' and 'Sargam'. "Aathvan Sur" (Eighth Note) is the title of a book written by him. His quest for a chaste classical idiom continues.

Of his 64 Hindi films, as many as three touched the diamond- jubilee mark ('Rattan,' 'Baiju Bawra' and 'Mughal-e-Azam'). It is a career studded, further, with seven golden jubilee offerings: 'Mela,' 'Andaz,' 'Deedar,' 'Aan,' 'Mother India,' 'Ganga Jumuna,' and 'Ram Aur Shyam.' And there have been no fewer than 25 silver- jubilee hits against his name, their titles too numerous to mention here.

"But all that is in the past," says this charismatic personality who lends such dignity, with his grip on Urdu 'shairi,' to any function he graces. It is the fact that Naushad is as much a poet as a composer that is the true secret of his success. This mood musician has lost count of the awards bestowed upon him. But he certainly cherishes the Dadasaheb Phalke and Padma Bhushan, one coming to him in 1982, the other in 1992. Then there was, in 1993, the Awadh Ratna award, putting the stamp on Naushad as a distinguished son of Lucknow, his birthplace. Yet another award (this time from the Madhya Pradesh government) that Naushad treasures is the one 'For Popularising Indian Music Outside India.' This is what Naushad considers to be his signal achievement - "not because it is my music that came to be so noticed outside India too, but because my style of scoring, I firmly believe, represents a fast-snapping link with the Hindustani parampara. Abroad, even now," goes on Naushad, "I find young people to be very much interested, even involved, in the finer points of Hindustani music. And I feel fulfilled when such young people come up to me, abroad, to tell me that the music created by me had played some part in kindling their interest in our 'raags' and 'raaginis'. By contrast, it is sad that there should be so little Indianness in the music being heard in our films today. What is truly disturbing is that this has

begun to happen in the South too. Yet, I believe it to be a passing phase. This is not the first time alien modes are invading Hindustani cine sangeet. It happened midway through the Fifties too - at a time when I had just begun work on `Mughal-e-Azam'."

As Naushad made that observation, I was seated with him in his Ashiana bungalow, located in the Carter Road area of Mumbai's Bandra suburb. Naushad feelingly recalled that it was in his then new Ashiana home that he had composed his first song - for K. Asif's `Mughal-e-Azam': the climax number going, on Madhubala, as `Khuda nighbhaan ho tumhara.'

``Now that is in Yaman," says Naushad. ``You say it is Kalyani in the Carnatic scale. Carnatic or Hindustani, the base of healthy cine sangeet has to be classical for it to have a lasting value, like the tunes done in my era have. Only the other day, HMV's Vijay Kishore Dubey and I were participating in a TV programme. And Dubey revealed, for all India to hear, that, to this day, it is our vintage music that HMV sells the most. The royalty cheques I still receive for my music of that era tells its own story here."

``But why is it that our vintage music still sells the most?" asks Naushad rhetorically. ``Simply because it is music rooted in tradition. It is the inspiration and sustenance provided by this rich tradition that prompted me to create what I still consider to be my lifetime-best score, on Madhubala in ``Mughal-e-Azam." I recall, we happened to resume work on that epic film after a gap of five years or so. This was when K. Asif came to my house and put a wad of notes in front of me. I instinctively lifted that bundle and flung it in the air! Not because the money was not welcome, it was a fortune those days. But then Asif and I, we had grown up together, struggled together, subsisting, at times, on a single cup of tea, shared between us, in an Irani restaurant by the side of the Broadway cinema in the Dadar part of Bombay. Here, on the footpath, is where I slept then, dreaming of a Broadway release for my film one day. And it happened, too. My ``Baiju Bawra" was released at the same Broadway, early in the Fifties!

``Oh, so many good things went my way, for which I feel grateful to Allah," goes on Naushad. ``But let me round off the point I made about Asif. My objection, in essence, was to Asif's making `pre-payment' for my restarting work on ``Mughal-e-Azam," simply because I had grown in stature by then. He had only to pass the word and I would have instantly re-commenced work on ``Mughal-e-Azam." After that, I did not take, and Asif dare not pay, a rupee, until the film's score, complete with background music, was finished.

``I mention all this," adds Naushad, ``just to underscore the basis of trust on which enduring music was created. That I later came to be overlooked for a major magazine award in the case of ``Mughal-e-Azam" was something that hurt at the time (1960-61). But nothing, just nothing, hurts any more, except this systematic denigration of our cultural mores by our music-makers.

``What a joy it was to groom Mohammed Rafi and Lata Mangeshkar for the songs that they so memorably put forth for me. What devotion to duty on the part of playback performers then - Mukesh making some 23 trips to my Bandra home, from the other end of town, for rehearsing the songs of ``Andaz." Coming to my far-off suburban home by bus and going back by bus - no car, no luxury, only commitment. Their fixity

of purpose was such that it encouraged me to experiment in being the first to separate, in the recording room, the voice of the singer and the orchestra.

“Oh, but there I go again, claiming to be the first to have done something! Was I really the first? What indeed has been my contribution except to give a fresh form and format to our set music? Wasn't all the music I made, all the music others made, already there? That is why I remain unimpressed by the criticism certain fellow composers have offered of my music - that I always took a ‘taiyyar bandish’ and remoulded it for my tune. What is wrong about that, if done innovatively and inventively, I ask? Is the ‘bandish’ in question not a part of our valued music? On the contrary, I feel proud to state that I fell back, with consistently popular success, on this, our cherished musical legacy. There is only one composer: Allah. Call him Allah, call him Bhagvan, He makes the music you hear.”

It is his broad secular outlook, while remaining a devout Muslim, that has won for Naushad's music the widely abiding following he has. His Lucknow background gave Naushad a rare grip on the Hindu scriptures. This he blended with the best in Urdu poetic lore to create a treasure-trove of tunes that makes his oeuvre so distinctive in Hindustani cine sangeet. Naushad belongs to his era with aura and authority. Ask Naushad about his being the first to charge a lakh of rupees, for a film, as early as at the turn of the half-century and this composer just shrugs off the point. “There were so many music-makers more talented than I am,” he remarks, “didn't I say Allah has been kind to me?”

Even as word came from Pakistan about Dilip Kumar's being created a ‘Lal-i-Imtiaz’, there appeared, in the papers, an item to the effect that ‘Jugnu’ Noorjehan was ill all over again. To think that Naushad is the only composer living for whom both Noorjehan and K. L. Saigal sang. Naushad says that, if he worked in so many films with Dilip Kumar, it was because the thespian's commitment matched his.

At 78, Naushad is the spry embodiment of all that is ‘rememberable’ in Hindustani cine sangeet. The Naushad Academy of Hindustani Sangeet comes as a fitting reminder of this compleat composer's stand-out contribution to raising classical awareness in a field in which the meretricious generally triumphs over the meritorious.

RMIM Archive Article "265".

Nostalgia : O.P.Nayyar

Source: Filmfare

Author: Anuradha Choudhary

O.P.Nayyar - Nothing but the truth

By: Anuradha Choudhary

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Tracking down the elusive maestro-turned-homeopath-doctor

The voice at the other end says crisply, "Yes, I'm O.P. Nayyar."

I can barely believe that at long last, I've tracked down the elusive composer whose music has brought so much cheer in our lives. For nearly six months, all inquiries about his whereabouts had drawn a blank. It would have been easier to find a needle in a haystack.

And then he appeared on a TV programme. So I resolved to do a Hercule Poirot on the missing maestro. I put the clues together and there he was, speaking to me right at this moment.

"Are you still there?" the voice asks as I prepare to do my journalistic number.

"Yes sir, we'd like to do an interview with you," I state hesitantly.

"You should know that I don't do interviews. I don't trust journalists. They've always backstabbed me by misquoting me," the voice reprimands me.

Unstymied, I try again. I can't give up now... just when I've traced him to a hotel in Juhu. I cajole him gently. He gives in but only after extracting a promise that I won't misquote him. I assure him that he needn't worry.

The next day, I tap at his hotel room door. And I'm face to face with history. Here's the legend who was responsible for such unforgettable songs as *Ello main hari piya* (Aar Paar), *Kahin pe nigahen kahin pe nishana* (C.I.D), *Maang ke saath tumhara* (Naya Daur), *Aaiye meherban baithiye jaanejaan* (Howrah Bridge), *Zara holle holle challo more sajna* (Sawan Ki Ghata), *Chain se humko kabhi* (Pran Jaye Par Vachan Na Jaye)...

The trademark hat is in place. He's taller than I'd expected and exceptionally striking looking. His eyes radiate the kind of warmth which immediately puts me at ease.

We are seated and I narrate the ordeal I had to go through to find him. He laughs full-throatedly and explains that he's been out of bounds because he no longer lives in his four-room flat at Marine Drive. He's been estranged from his family for about eight years. He has even switched his profession. Now, he practises homeopathy, travelling to the far-flung corners to heal patients.

"I'm a living legend. This country will remember me after I die"

Apart from third degree cancer and T.B., I've cured all other illnesses," he states casually. "Because of my chosen profession, I'm always on the move. Whenever I'm in Mumbai, I always stay at this hotel. Not many people know about this.

" He tells me that I can ask him any question under the sun and

he would answer frankly. There's so much to quiz him about but I don't know where to begin. I'm like a child who doesn't know what to pick from a chocolate box.

I make a random choice and ask him about how and why he entered the movies. Without a pause, he rewinds to the halcyon pre-Partition days in Lahore when, he laughs, a peg of whisky would cost a mere eight annas.

In 1944, Onkar Prasad Nayyar was all of 18. Studies didn't interest him. Instead women were his fascination and music his passion. So he dropped out of college to dabble in music. His first compositions-Pritam aan milo and Kaun nagar tera door thikana-were sung by his friend C.H. Atma. When he took these to HMV, the recording company, promptly released the songs on its least popular label, Regal.

"Those days, the company used to have three labels-Regal, Columbia and HMV," the man of the music reminisces. "I was paid Rs 40, a fairly princely sum in those days for two songs. But nothing much came out of the venture. Then in 1946 I started teaching music at a school in Patiala. But teaching wasn't really my cup of tea. So I gave it up."

Following Partition, the Nayyars shifted base from Lahore to Amritsar. After trying out few odd jobs, in 1949, O.P. armed with dreams, boarded a train to Mumbai...

Here he met producer-director Krishan Kewal who was making Kaneez. Ghulam Haider and Hansraj Behl were the film's music directors. "But the background music of the film was composed by O.P. Nayyar," he says proudly. "I was paid Rs 1000. I thought I'd made it but I was sadly mistaken. I couldn't find work for days. So I returned to Amritsar, I started teaching once again. I had resigned myself to a life of anonymity."

Fortuitously, O.P. met his school friend classmate (S.N. Bhatia, proprietor of a chemist shop in Lahore) who had close connections with producer Dalsukhan Pancholi, the major domo of the Punjab film industry. But Pancholi wasn't impressed immediately. "He took one look at me and threw me out," the maestro smiles with unconcealed irony.

In 1951, Pancholi released Nagina starring Nutan and Nasir Khan. The songs in the film were sung by C.H. Atma. The film was released at the Regal theatre in Delhi.

O.P. Nayyar narrates, "See, how destiny works. At the theatre, Pancholi met my friend Bhatia in the cloakroom. Bhatia complained that though he'd recommended C.H. Atma and me to Pancholi, he'd only selected the singer... and that he'd missed out on a promising composer.

"Pancholi immediately asked to see me. Bhatia sent me a telegram to come down to Delhi immediately. That also happened to be the day of my marriage, incidentally. I reached Delhi and Pancholi had already signed me as the music director of his next film Aasman... even though he'd had a successful partnership with Shanker-Jaikishan."

"I firmly believe that R.D. Burman gave his best compositions to Lata Mangeshkar and not to Asha Bhosle"

Followed P.L. Santoshi's Chham Chhama Chham and Guru Dutt's Baaz.

"I was excited," O.P. rewinds. "Santoshi dropped Naushad to

accommodate me... while Guru Dutt who never worked with anyone but S.D. Burman opted for me. The stories of all my first three films were in some way related to the sky... and all three of them were super-flops. I literally fell from the skies. Needless to say, I was shown the door again."

Dejected, O.P. wanted to pack his bags and leave for Amritsar. He went to Guru Dutt for a pending payment of Rs 3000. "I had no money to even feed my family. But Guru Dutt refused to pay me. He said he was broke. I told him to sell his possessions to pay me my dues. He was furious at the very suggestion and told me to leave. But producer K.K. Kapoor of Kardar Productions intervened. He advised him to sign me for Aar Paar as compensation for my dues. Guru Dutt agreed and also paid me Rs 2000 as advance."

Aar Paar was a winner. O.P. Nayyar became a household name. Today, he narrates an anecdote about the days of making music for Guru Dutt. When he'd composed Babuji dheere chalna, the actor-producer-director liked the mukhda but wanted drastic changes in the antara.

"I told him to change the situation and I'd change the tune,"

O.P. says. "But he was adamant. So after a week, I took the very same tune to him and told him that I'd made the necessary changes. He heard it and said it was perfect. Really Guru Dutt could be stupid at times.

"One day, while shooting for Mr and Mrs 55, he called me and asked me whether I liked the picturisation of a song. I told him I didn't like the camera angles. He asked me, 'What do you know about the camera anyway?' And I asked him, 'What do you know about music?' After that day, he stopped interfering with my music."

In a career spanning 25 years, O.P.Nayyar composed an entire treasury of memorable melodies. "But I'm an illiterate in music," he says, almost startling me out of my chair. "I can't even read the notations or the basic alphabets of music. When I composed Phir wohi dil laya hoon, my friend Ustad Amir Khan was so taken in by the song that he refused to believe that I hadn't learnt music formally. He said it was impossible to put together a song like that one without knowing music... I guess whatever I composed was God's gift to me."

Music circles have always wondered why O.P.Nayyar didn't use the voice of Lata Mangeshkar... not even once. "I was successful without Lata's voice," he tells me proudly, adding, "I have no doubts that Lata is a great artiste. I've never had any problems with her. And that's the truth. It's just that her thin, thread-like voice wasn't suitable for my compositions. Shamshad Begum, Geeta Dutt and Asha Bhosle were my kind of singers. They made my songs come alive."

"Since I was emotionally involved with Asha Bhosle, I neglected Geeta Dutt. I deeply regret that"

Clearly Asha Bhosle was his trump card. Together they created magic. In an association spanning 70 films, they scaled new heights in music.

"I moulded Asha's voice and gave her style and respectability," he states without mincing any words. "Till then, composers had considered her fit only for cabaret numbers. I fought with film-

makers for her. When B.R. Chopra signed me for Naya Daur, he insisted that I should take Lata Mangeshkar. I refused point blank. I stood my ground and told him that it was either Asha and me or Lata Mangeshkar. He decided on Asha and me.

"But mind you, I'm not saying this to take credit for Asha's success. She is truly a very gifted singer. I couldn't have done much if she didn't have the talent. "

At this point, I ask a thorny question... Isn't it true that he sorely neglected Geeta Dutt in her later years in favour of Asha Bhosle? Candidly, he replies, "You see, at that time Asha and I were emotionally involved. Asha objected to my working with other singers. She made me promise that I wouldn't work with anyone else but her. Since I was involved with her, I agreed. I deeply regret the fact that I neglected Geeta. But there were certain songs which only Asha could have sung."

Discussing his relationship with Asha Bhosle, he states categorically that Asha was his grand amour... the love of his life. "They say when a woman loves, she loves with her soul... and when she hates someone she becomes a chandi. The same was true of Asha too. When she sang for me she'd put her heart and soul into it," he says gently.

According to film lore, the relationship between the composer and his singer came to an abrupt end. Apparently, Asha Bhosle walked out. In turn, he replaced her with singer Krishna Kalle. O.P. clarifies this story though. He says, "Asha didn't leave me. I left her. Since I'm a very good astrologer, I knew in advance that I was reaching the end of my career. I also knew that if I didn't leave then, I would be kicked out. Besides there were personal differences between us. I also realised that one should never get involved with a career-oriented woman. You'll always remain her second love. She'll throw you out before she leaves her career.

"Chain se humko kabhi was the last song that Asha sang for me. She even won the Filmfare award for it. But she didn't go to receive the award. She probably felt that I deserved the award.... and not her. One thing that I can say about the Mangeshkar sisters is that though they were truly great artistes, they've never had any schooling or breeding. So they've suffered from complexes. When I took Krishna Kalle, Asha couldn't bear it. That was the last I saw of her."

"Music can never be cheap, it's the lyrics and the song picturisations that have become vulgar"

Yet he still reveres Asha Bhosle, describing her lovingly as, "A good mother, a great artiste and a wonderful human being... It's the mean world which taught her how to be cunning. She wasn't like that when I first met her. But all said and done, I must say that she hasn't been an ungrateful person...."

Asha Bhosle moved on to form an alliance with R.D. Burman. I'm curious to know what he thought of Panchamda and his music. "R.D. Burman," O.P. emphasises, "was one of the best music directors we've ever had. His fusion of Indian and western music was beautiful. But I firmly believe that he gave his best compositions to Lata Mangeshkar and not to Asha."

O.P. Nayyar is honest enough to agree that his own decline

coincided with his separation from Asha Bhosle. Singers like Krishna Kalle, Vani Jairam and Dilraj Kaur couldn't sustain his flagging career.

"But this was destined to happen," he points out. "The girls were not to be blamed. I worked on Asha for 15 years, whereas these girls were with me at most for one or two films. I'm sure I could have worked wonders with them too. But what would have been the point? I knew my bad period had begun... so I left the industry." He also admits that he was very arrogant. "But never ungrateful!" he exclaims. And by way of proof, informs me that he never forgot his debt to Dalsukhan Pancholi. Though the producer had dropped him after Aasman, the maestro during his days of success composed music for him again. He even did C.I.D, Mr And Mrs 55 and Baharen Phir Bhi Aayegi on the terms, conditions and remuneration offered by Guru Dutt.

"I've always believed that if you're ungrateful to your mentor, then you're ungrateful to God," O.P. says firmly. "Yes, I was arrogant because I cashed in on the producers who cashed in on my popularity. And why not? I was the only music director whose name was enough to sell a film. Secondly, I could never tolerate indiscipline. I threw out sarangi player Ram Narayan, sitar player Rais Khan and flute player Hari Prasad Chaurasia whenever they'd turn up late for my recordings. I'd tell them that their musical instruments were meaningless without my melodies.

"I even threw out Mohammed Rafi when he turned up late for a recording. Instead, I used Mahendra Kapoor's voice in Love And Murder. I can proudly say that not a single producer ever paid overtime for my recordings. Today, I hear producers are paying 18-20 hours of overtime. That's disgusting!"

On the other hand, there was a time when the music business was far more streamlined. Neither was there any unhealthy competition between the music directors. O.P.Nayyar would walk straight into Shankar-Jaikishen's room and ask them about their new songs. The list of stalwarts he admires is long... mistily he recalls the names. R.C. Dural, Punkaj Mullick, Khemchand Prakash, Shyam Sunder, Ghulam Haider, Anil Biswas, Sajjad Hussain, K.L. Sehgal, C. Ramachandra, Roshan, Madan Mohan, S.D. Burman, Vasant Dev, Naushad and Chitragupta. "That was the golden era of music. We had the best music directors, the best lyricists and the best singers. Each one of us believed in giving his best. But I'm afraid those days will never return," he says nostalgically.

He doesn't hear music anymore. Today's films mainly revolve around crime and violence. "Yet music can never be cheap," he rationalises. "How can the *saat sur* be cheap? It's the lyrics and the song picturisations that have become vulgar." Of A.R. Rahman, he says, "I've heard of his name but to be honest I haven't heard his music."

"How could I accept the Lata Mangeshkar Award? I've never worked with her"

Touch upon his attempt to make a comeback (in vain), he states that he accepted Nischay and Zid only because of the pleas of producers Bappi Sonie and Pranlal Mehta. "But the films were so bad... the direction was so poor that even my songs couldn't help them. I didn't fail, the films failed. Now I've realised that the

best thing is to withdraw completely from the music scene. Recently, Javed Akhtar approached me to make an album... he even offered me my price but I refused.

I bring up the topic of the Lata Mangeskhar award which he refused to accept. "Firstly, awards are always named after dead people and she's alive," he asserts. "Secondly, I've never worked with her. Thirdly, it was a singer's award to a composer. I'd have gladly accepted the award if it was a composer's award to me.

"The representative who came to inform me about the award prostrated in front of me. He said that the ministers don't even leave Rs 10,000 and I was rejecting Rs 1 lakh. When he kept on and on, I silenced him by telling him the truth-I don't need the money."

Time is running out, I have plenty more to ask... and know. But he has several appointments to keep.

So I wind up by asking him if he has any concluding words for me. Staring me straight in the eye, he says, "I've been a philosopher and thinker all my life. I've lived my life my way. I'm very proud of my work. I believe that I'm a living legend... Mark my words, this country will remember me after I die. O.P. Nayyar will live through his music."

RMIM Archive Article "220".

Music director: Adi Narayana Rao

Posted by: Sreenivas Paruchuri

Author: Sreenivas Paruchuri

(There are many Indian music directors who have worked only in a few films. Yet very few have managed to leave such a unique signature on Indian film music as P. Adinarayana Rao has. Consider the fact that in a long career spanning over three and a half decades he scored music for less than thirty films. And it is a no mean accomplishment to capture the hearts of Hindi film audience with just two films. 25th January marks his (6th) death anniversary of this great master who gave us such gems as "anaarkali", "suvarNa sundari" and "bhakta tukaaram"

Regards, -Sreenivas)

Adinarayana Rao was born in 1915 in Kakinada (some sources place his year of birth in 1918, in Vijayawada). He was introduced to the stage at a very young age of six, playing the role of "naarada" in the play: "Savitri" under Rajarajeswari Naatya Mandali's baton. He went on to study classical music under Patrayani Sitarama Sastry, a prominent personality of those days, in Saluru, a major center for music in the early decades of this century. Later he completed his matriculation from Kakinada. At age 12, with an impressive talent to play many instruments, and literary interests, he started working as a music composer and a play writer.

He was highly popular in Kakinada theatre circles and was affectionately called "abbaayi gaaru", a name which he retained even after entering films. "Veedhi Gaayakulu", "Black Market", "Vasanta sena" were some of his plays. Starting his career at Burmah Shell Amateurs Troupe, he blossomed in to a big artist at the well-known, now almost forgotten, Young Mens Happy Club, which had given famous artistes like Gandikota Jagannatham, S.V. Ranga Rao, Relangi Venkata Ramayya, Anjali Devi to Telugu Cinema/stage. It was here that he met his future wife, Anjali, who was under his tutelage and later went on to become a leading actress of the Indian silver screen.

His first attempt to join the film field was in 1941. Chittur V. Nagayya, the legendary actor, director and music composer was ruling the Telugu film field supreme with his compositions in films like "vandEmaataram" (1939), "sumangaLi" (1940), "dEvata" (1941). Highly influenced and mesmerized by his music, Adinarayana Rao wanted to work under the maestro. He was introduced to Nagayya by film star A. S. Giri (of sumangaLi fame). He was asked to come after 1-2 months, but somehow he did n't go to Madras and remained away from film field till mid-40s.

The following composition by him written for the play: "Veedhi Gaayakulu" in 1944, shows his admiration and respect for Nagayya: naagayya naTanalO naaNyamerungaka

Saigal naTanakai sambhramEla

It is in veteran film maker B V Ramanandam's, "varudhini" (1946) he got his first break in films. The opportunity came through S.V. Ranga Rao, nephew of Ramanandam and a YMHC member (inciden-

tally this was the debut film for Rangarao too). Although he was initially assigned to write lyrics and compose music, professional differences led to the abrupt ending of the project after recording just two songs, and he returned to Kakinada.

Later he worked for a couple of films writing lyrics and/or composing music, which include C. Pullayya's (another native of Kakinada), the highly successful, "Gollabhama" (1947, co-MD: Dinakara Rao), in which Anjali made her debut. The songs/verses from Gollabhama are a real delight to hear; chandamaama andamaina, priyatamaa!, bhoopati jampitin, valapu teniyalu, etc. They are in my opinion ahead of their time in terms of pace (can be compared to the ones from 60s! It would be of great interest to me to know, who composed which song).

Its through "palleToori pilla" (1950), a film based on Sheridan's play: "Pijjaro", he became a full-fledged music director, thanks to his friend B A Subba Rao, who was making his directorial debut and went on to make a highly successful career. His adaptation of Spanish tunes - "dheera kampanaa" - with superb orchestration, and usage of Telugu folk melodies set new trends. Songs like: chiTapaTa chinukula duppaTi taDisenu, Saanta vanTi pilla lEdOyi (young Pithapuram Nageswara Rao singing this beautifully) were treats to music lovers. His next venture; "tilOttama" (1951) was a disappointment. Its music reached very few people since it was neither a commercial success at box-office nor were the songs released on records.

In 1949 he founded "Aswini Pictures" with Akkineni Nageswara Rao and makeup artist K. Gopala Rao, producing "maayalamaari" (1951, Tamil: Mayakkaari). Though it ran for 100 days, the music was only a moderate success. So was "annadaata" (1954), made on the same banner. He wrote some lyrics for "palletoori pilla" and "annadaata" too. "annadaata" also heralded the beginning of the successful team with himself, ANR & Anjali (in lead cast) and Director Vedantam Raghavayya, which continued unbroken for more than a decade.

In 1951 he separated from Aswini banner and founded his own production house; "Anjali Pictures" making "paradESi" (1953, Tamil: Poongottai, with songs like: pilichindi kaluva puvvu - jikki, nEnenduku raavaali - Jikki, Pithapuram, etc.) under the direction of L. V. Prasad. The superb compositions in big budget "anaarkali" (1955) and "suvarNna sundari" (1957) that followed under this banner brought him tremendous recognition. Volumes can be written on these two great musicals. Though a couple of tunes were partly based on Ramachandra Chitalkar's tunes from Hindi version of "Anarkaali" (1953) rest showed his enormous creative talents. The rest showed his enormous creative talents. The song "raajasekharaa nee pai moju teera leduraa" still lingers on every one's tongue. So are: kalise nelaraaju kaluva chelini - Ghanta-sala, Jikki, sOjaa raajakumari - A. M. Rajah.

Suvarna Sundari was the high point in his career. It was a blockbuster hit running to full houses at all the places it was released for over 6 months. Described as the "Bible to box-office laws" by film critics, it showed the way to later day "formula" filmmakers. It had all the elements, in proper dosage, to attract all sections of film goers. "piluvakuraa alugakuraa,

haayihaayigaa aamani saage, bommalammaa bommalu, Eraa manapaaTi dheerulevvaruraa" remain ever-green hits. The raagamaalika set to four Hindusthani Ragas made him very popular and won him many awards and recognition all over India! Some critics unfairly accused him of plagiarising "piluvakuraa" and "haayi haayigaa" tunes from Vasant Desai's _milan hon kaise_ ("Dhwaan" 1953) and Anil Biswas's _ritu aaya, ritu jaaya_ ("Hamdard" 1953) respectively. But there is very little truth in that. No one can deny the creative prowess in his works.

Riding high on the success, he embarked on his second Hindi production: "Phoolon Ki Sej" (1964), based on Gulshan Nanda's novel: "andheri biran", with big starrng. It turned out to be his last hindi film. This film virtually lead the couple to ruins, losing whatever they earned over 17 years. It was a major setback especially at a time when Anjali was considering her retirement from the films after acting in 100 films. Even melodious songs like: aa tu jaraa dil mein (Lata, Mukhesh), abhin jaa rasiya (Lata, Manna), pyar ko madhur madhur (Asha, Rafi), taronki aankhon ka (Lata) could not stop the disaster.

It took nearly a decade for the next 'big' hit from Adinarayanarao's house; "bhakta tukaram" (1973), portraying the life-story of saint-composer Tukaram. This is yet another gem from the master with memorable songs like: ghanaa ghana sundaraa - Ghantasala, poojaku vELaayeraa - P. Susila, unnaavaa asalunnaavaa - Ghantasala, sari sari vagalu telisera - P.Susila etc. "alluuri seetaraama raaju" (1974), the life-story of revolutionary freedom-fighter, followed soon, making his name well-known to the next generation of Telugus, gaining fame to both the producer/actor Krishna and Adinarayana rao himself. The whole audience waited along with the heroine for seetaramaraju while she was singing "vastaaDu naa rOju" (P. Susila). SriSri's "telugu veera levara deeksha booni saagaraa" was immortalised by his tune and has become a classic patriotic song. He never worked for any other production houses in the later period, except for film actor Krishna's productions.

His creation "mahaakavi kshEtrayya" (1978) is a testimony to his quest for perfection and authenticity. He travelled through the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh, along with well known Telugu poet, historian and film-writer Arudra, interviewing several dEvadaasis, who have been singing kshEtrayya padam-s for centuries. Unfortunately such thorough fieldwork, and compositions like: ashTa vidha naayika varNana, Sreepati sutu baariki (Ramakrishna), chedero naa saamiki (swapna sundari, famous danseuse) could not guarantee the film's commercial success.

Certainly we can not forget his other films like; "adutta vittu penn" (1959, Tamil, with P B Sreenivas's solo "Vaadaada malar"), "Runaanubandham" (1960, "andamain baava aavu paala kova", "nindu punnami nela"), "swarNa manjari" (1962, madhuramaina guru deevana - Nagayya, P. Susila, raavE naa praNaya roopiNi - Ghantasala), "satee sakkubayi" (1966, ranga rangaa rangayanandi - Ghantasala). The last one was also dubbed in to Marathi as "sakhu ali pandarpura" (1969), winning critical accliams in Maharashtra too. "ammakOsam" (1971), "agni pareeksha" (1970, (konDapai ninDugaa koluvunna maa talli kanakadurga - Ghantasala), "kalyaaNa man-

Dapam" (1971), "pedda koDuku" (1973), "kannavaari yillu" (1978) are his other films.

Apart from his own compositions he left his imprint on the music field indirectly too. Later highly successful music directors; Totakura Venkata Raju (a.k.a T V Raju), Satyam and Lakshmikant-Pyarelal duo (Phoolonki Sej) worked as his assistants.

An "unusual influence of Hindusthani classical music and Marathi Natya Sangeet" on Telugu film music is attributed to him. Early Marathi (and Parsi) touring drama troupes left their indelible mark on Telugu stage by the end of 19th century. It is a no surprise since Adinarayanarao who followed the music styles keenly and heard the music of legendary artists of Telugu stage like Tungala Chalapati Rao, K. Raghuramayya, Jonnavittula Seshagiri Rao, C.S.R. Anjaneyulu, et al grasped these styles as well.

His exposure to classical music and stage music from early years at Saluru and Vijayanagaram certainly helped him in better understanding of Hindustani music. Well known music critic V.A.K. Rangarao credits Adinrayana Rao for introducing Hindustani music in contemporary flavour and simplified orchestration, and thereby impressing both laymen audience as well cognoscenti. It is this music that survives him enthraling all the music lovers.

RMIM Archive Article "221".

Anil Biswas

Posted by: ADhareshwar@worldbank.org (Ashok)

Source: Cinema Vision

Author: Anil Biswas

Cinema Vision India was a quarterly journal started by Siddharth Kak in 1982, which proclaimed itself to be "India's first professional Cinema quarterly." It lasted three years. The quality of articles was very uneven and often it printed articles that had already appeared elsewhere. It is, nevertheless, a good source for many insightful accounts. In its brief life span, it did devote a couple of issues to music in films. Over a period of time, I propose to post articles from these issues on RMIM.

The first two articles I am posting are related; they are both about Anil Biswas. The first is by way of a brief autobiographical piece, as written up by an interviewer, and the second is written by a friend of his from the days of his imprisonment. Both are from a 1983 issue, called "Mortal Men: Immortal Melodies". The name comes from a function organized by the journal in 1982 in Bombay as a tribute to the pioneering music directors, lyricists, and singers.

Ashok

MY JOURNEY INTO THE WORLD OF MUSIC

By Anil Biswas

[The article first appeared in 'Madhuri', Dec. 29, 1967 and is attributed to Dr. Shyam Parmar. It was reprinted in 'Saurabh' annual issue 1977. This version appeared in 'Cinema Vision India', Vol. II, No. II, 1983, pp. 57-59. As you will see, various anachronisms are there. For example, Mukesh is referred to as 'late', but the reference to East Pakistan has been left unchanged. There is also a break in the narrative flow in a few places; I wonder if textual matter has been lost across versions.]

I was born on the 7th of July, 1914, at Barisal which is now in East Pakistan. Whenever I think of my childhood I naturally remember my mother. Ours was a very poor family and during this difficult time my mother encouraged my artistic leanings. My mother was musically inclined by nature.

It seems I could sing when I was four years old. People have seen me playing the tabla when I was five or six years old, and at ten, I could act well. Those days I would take part in dramas. When I was older I was often requested to sing at music concerts - and I would sing where seasoned artists would perform. I composed my own songs, and the listeners would be surprised to hear my new songs at these concerts.

At this time, I was in the Matric class. A wave of patriotism swept the country and there was not a single boy of my age in Bengal who was not willing to sacrifice his life for his country. My desire to see my country attain freedom was responsible for my becoming associated with a revolutionary party.

But it was because of this association that I had to face many difficulties, and a simple boy like me ended up making and throwing bombs! There were the usual results which go along with such a life- my studies were interrupted. I went to jail six times during my childhood. My friends in jail were Niren Ghosh, a communist member of the Rajya Sabha, and the Principal of the Shastriya degree college in Bina (M.P.), Satyavrata Ghosh. Many of my friends died in jail.

During this period, I escaped in disguise to Calcutta from Barisal. The year was 1930. My father had passed away. I left home with five rupees in my pocket. I bought a ticket for 17 paise and came by steamer to Jokati and from there to Hularhat. There I stayed on the veranda of the local post office for three days. I got a job as a coolie-cum-servant and managed to reach Khulna, from where I travelled to Calcutta by train. I was in bad shape. I knew nobody in Calcutta except my childhood friend Pannalal Ghosh. Panna was shocked to see me. His elder sister took charge of the situation and asked me to stay in her house. I stayed only four days with Panna's brother-in-law, Lalit Chandra Roy. I started life once again in Calcutta. I started washing dishes in a hotel. At the same time I kept looking out for other jobs. A magician called Manoranjan Sarkar used to come for his meals to this hotel and I became friendly with him. One day he heard me singing to myself and asked me to accompany him to a music concert. We went to the residence of Rai Bahadur Agornath, a big officer in the Education Department, who was an exponent of music. There were many other people there, among them Kavi Jeetendranath Bagchi and J.N. Ghosh, who was the owner of the Megaphone Gramophone Company. Sarkar told them I could sing well. On being asked to sing, I at once prayed to numerous _devataas_ and started singing _shyama sangeet_ in a clear, unsophisticated voice. My song was appreciated by all the elders there. When I look back today, I feel it was that day I gained the knack to gauge the mood of a _mehfil_! I ate a good meal after many days. Rai Bahadur Agornath asked me to stay at his place and teach his grandchildren.

Every night I had to sing religious songs for him. However, I soon got tired of this pattern of life. I did not like being a guest-and being served good food all the time. I left after eight days as I got a job to teach music to the daughter of Dr. Pasupati Mitra for five rupees a month.

I was soon to realize the consequences of being a member of a revolutionary party. One day the police came to look for me at Pannalal Ghosh's brother-in-law's house. They also came to the residence of Advocate Mahendra Ghosh where I was staying and teaching his six children. I was arrested and sent to Elisium Row jail.

I suffered for four months-the beating was, of course, a routine affair. The police could not find any evidence against me. Their treatment of me was so strange that it became difficult to distinguish between friends and enemies. Suddenly, they would turn violent against me.

When I was released, I was asked by the police to become a spy

and give information about freedom fighters. As I was jobless, I agreed and gave them false information; however, this could not go on for very long. I could not fool them.

Those days, Kazi Nazrul Islam used to work in the Megaphone Gramophone Company as a lyricist and music director. It is because of his efforts that _thumris_ and _ghazals_ influenced Bengali music. This influence opened the way to experiments which were applauded by Rabindranath Tagore too.

I approached Kazida for a job as the police had found out that I was a 'fake spy' and I had no other means of livelihood. I had been influenced by Kazida right from childhood.

In spite of his encouragement, I found it difficult to come up.

In the same Company, there was somebody who prevented my records from becoming popular. I learnt _ghazals_ from Manju Sahib who was happy about my singing. However, these records never saw the light of day. This is a very sad fact.

At this time, Nitayi Motilal, who was related to Baval Rajvansh, heard my songs. Nitayida was one of the good music directors associated with Rangmanch. He gave me a job with the Rang Mahal theatre. Even today this theatre is in existence. In the forties, it had a revolving stage! Shri Satu Sen was the director of the plays. While working as assistant director to Nitayida, I composed music for quite a few dramas. I sang, danced, and acted in the plays. You will be surprised to hear that my salary was only Rs. 40 a month. While at the Gramophone Company, I was paid five rupees for the lyrics and five for composing the music. I worked for three years at the Rang Mahal. This was the time I learnt the proper use of music and how to reach the people with it.

My life in Calcutta was to undergo a change. I was becoming popular. One day I happened to meet the film director Hiren Bose. Hirenda showed an interest in me and asked me whether I would like to work in films. He made it very clear that if I was, I would have to leave Calcutta. Till today I don't know why I was ready to, because I was staying comfortably there. I did not spend too much time thinking about it, and agreed. The year was 1934. I remember Hirenda agreed to pay me Rs. 150 a month.

In Bombay, I signed a contract with Kumar Movietone. I brought four instrumentalists with me from Calcutta—all four could read musical notations well. The foundations of my belief in the importance of the orchestra were laid then. In many of my compositions, I have made good use of orchestra music. Right from then I have been attracted to the use of elements of Western music which I felt were akin to the spirit of Indian music, and I used them unhesitatingly in my compositions. I did this so my music would have a wider impact. Whatever songs I composed at this time, I used instrumental music very effectively. It's true that before coming to Bombay, many of my Bengali songs had already become very popular. I was very involved in my work and I valued my self-respect.

One day, I quarreled with V.M. Vyas of Kumar Movietone and this resulted in my being jobless again. In the difficult days that followed, I did any kind of work. I persistently went

round the film companies. Finally I landed a job with Eastern Art Company.

Shri Premankur Athorthy who produced 'Yahudi Ki Ladki' in 1933 and Shri Daryani heard my music. I composed the song "tere poojan ko bhagwaan bana man mandir alishan" for the film 'Bharat Ki Beti,' 1935. I gained popular recognition because of this song. The songs for 'Bal Hatya' and 'Khoon-i-nahak' were composed around the same time. 'Dharam Ki Devi' was made under the banner of Eastern Arts with Sardar Akhtar and Kumar who had become famous in New Theatres' productions-in this film, for the first time my name appeared independently on the silver screen!

I composed music for many films at Eastern Arts-'Pratima', 'Prem Murti', 'Sher Ka Panja' in 1936 and 'Bulldog' and 'Gentleman Daku' in 1937. I got established in the film industry. I benefited as a Bengali-at that time, because New Theatres was very prominent in the film industry, every Bengali was considered an artist!

In 1936 I got my first big break. I joined Sagar Movietone and their 'Jagirdar', 1937, made my music popular all over India. After this film, Mehboob and I worked as a team.

At this time, Hiren Bose thought of making 'Maha Geet', an experimental film. This was the story of a scientist who attempts to recall the voices of dead people from Infinite Space. In this film, playback singing was introduced for the first time in the Bombay film industry.

I also formed an orchestra of 12 musicians. Such a large orchestra was considered extraordinary by the film industry.

I feel the years from 1937 to 1940 were vital years for the Indian film industry. Ranjit began to invite music experts from Calcutta. Bombay Talkies had been established. Other companies sprang up-a kind of competitiveness emerged, which was very necessary. New techniques were being explored.

I often think of the problems we had composing songs. The same song had to be picturized on different sets. At outdoor shootings it was very difficult to maintain the correct pitch and rhythm of the voice. When I felt like, I often sang in my films. However, I stopped singing when one of the singers told me that he would be jobless if I sang myself!

I was very fond of make-up. One day I enacted the role of a blind singer. You will not believe me, but the orchestra, the camera, and the microphone had to walk with me along the road as I sang!

Just as I became famous, I began to think of resigning from Sagar Movietone. On Shri Chimanlal Desai's insistence, I stayed on till 1939. Later, Sagar Movietone and Film City amalgamated and became National Studio.

My favourites till today are the songs from 'Vatan (1938)', 'Ek Hi Rasta 1939)', 'Alibaba (1940)', 'Bahen (1941)', and 'Roti (1942)'. Sometimes when I am alone I recall the tunes of "kyoN ham ne diya dil" (sung by Sitara, lyrics by Wajahat Mirza, from 'Vatan') and "kahe karta der baraati" (sung by Anil Biswas and chorus, lyrics by Dr. Safdar Aah, from 'Aurat').

In 1942, I joined Bombay Talkies. The songs from 'Basant' became very popular. I composed the music and the late Pannalal Ghosh supervised the orchestra. 'Kismet' ran for three years in Calcutta at the Roxy. Every song in the film was a hit.

I composed many songs for Bombay Talkies. Even today I'm proud of films like 'Hamari Baat (1943)', 'Char Ankhen (1944)', 'Jwar Bhata (1944)', and 'Milan (1946)'. The late Mukesh shot to fame with 'Pehli Nazar (1945)'-it was not a Bombay Talkies production-and with 'dil jalta hai to jalne de' ('Aan*'). Lata Mangeshkar is the discovery of all three of us-Ghulam Haider, Khemchand Prakash, and myself.

 * Note from Ashok: No idea what is meant here!

 In 1947 I left Bombay Talkies. India attained independence-and I too decided to become independent. I could try out new ideas; I decided to compose music for films of my choice.

I do know how many films I have composed music for (**). By 1952 I began to feel film music had passed from the hands of artists with experience to those of business-minded people. To try and save the situation, I produced five films myself-but public taste had deteriorated and I was bitterly disappointed with the state we'd been reduced to.

 ** Note: Don't know why this sentence is here!

 I think a great deal about Indian film music. From 1952 to 1957 I went abroad four times and my horizons widened further. I have travelled to many countries. Once with a cultural organization, once with a peace mission; the third time was in 1957 to compose music for the Indo-Russian production, 'Pardesi'.

These trips abroad made me realize that our music directors, in comparison to those of other countries, have less sense of responsibility. We need expansion and experimentation in the field of musical instruments. By using instruments of a certain standard, we can obtain better sound range and tone colour. Some we may have to borrow from the West-but the musical ideas must be our own. The use of quality instruments will open up a range of possibilities for the orchestra. As far as film music is concerned, we have all the necessary material-but it must be put to good use.

In conclusion, I will add that I have borrowed many tunes from folk music. And as to whether the credit for the use of Rabin-dra Sangeet and classical music in Hindi films should to me or not-I don't spend time thinking about it.

RMIM Archive Article "222".

Anil Biswas

Posted by: ADhareshwar@worldbank.org (Ashok)

Source: Cinema Vision

Author: Satyavrata Ghosh

REMINISCENCES OF A FRIEND FROM PRISON

By Professor Satyavrata Ghosh

[From 'Cinema Vision India', Vol. II, No. II, 1983, pp. 54-56. In the journal, this article appeared ahead of the piece by Anil Biswas. I, having read them in that order, feel that it is better to reverse it! Note that the author is referred to by Anil Biswas in his piece. Also of interest is the contrast between what he thought were Anil Biswas's views on 'Indianness in music' and the much more nuanced view in maestro's own words.]

Music is not my forte, but the readers will refuse to accept me if I don't touch upon Anil Biswas's music. He has been known as a great 'music maker' in Indian films. But that was years ago, back in the thirties, forties, and the fifties. He started with Sagar Movietones in 1935 and his last film was Motilal's 'Chhoti Chhoti Baaten'. There is a small incident about its release. Motilal owed him some money for the picture. When, however, it was released he wrote to Anil to come and collect it. When he arrived from Delhi, to rejoice in the release of the film, he was destined only to join the funeral. Motilal had suddenly died giving all his friends and admirers the slip. On Anil, an emotional (sic) man otherwise, the incident left an indelible impression, conveying a lesson of life, the transitoriness of all our possessions, life being the most precious of them.

When I think of Anil and music together, my mind goes back in time by about 52 years to 1930 and to the barracks of Barisal jail. The country was on fire because of the Congress Movement of Civil Disobedience. It was more so in Bengal, after the first successful armed uprising, the Chittagong Armoury raid, and its aftermath. We were both in jail as undertrials for picketing. Though already initiated into the revolutionary movement, we were in jail as Congress satyagrahis. That was the peculiarity of Bengal politics. Most of the revolutionaries, I may say, from Netaji downwards, used the Congress as the camouflage for their secret activities.

Jail was 'wonderful.' Hundreds of young men were bundled into the barracks. 'Breakfast' was _labsi_ (even the omniscient God does not know what variety of porridge it was) and what followed as lunch and dinner would repel even an omnivorous being. The bed, including the pillow, was made of cement (there were no 'trusts' and no scarcity those days) with an old and worn-out blanket as the only cover.

Locked up in the evening, we would jump about, though

not in enjoyment, for we did not know anyway else to fight the mosquitoes. The British Lion was an easier opponent! As we could not sleep, music was the only pastime and Anil was our natural leader. By natural, I mean that he had the natural (actually inherited) talent for it. His mother was a religious singer of no mean eminence. That's probably why Anil and his sister, Parul Ghosh (wife of Pannalal Ghosh, the flute maestro) have been such well-known names in the world of film music. His songs in jail, however, were limited in range:

laathi-maar bhaangre taala

jaato sab bandi shaala

(Kick and break the iron locks of all the prison houses)! It was appropriate and also inspiring.

In a few weeks again we breathed the free air of the outside world but I was soon arrested under the Bengal Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1930. Anil proved a step cleverer. He ran away from the clutches of the Law. (We, however, used to call it a Lawless Law).

Meanwhile, we the associates of his early political days, were left behind in Bengal to languish in British jail for an indefinite period, almost throughout the thirties. We were released only in 1938 as a result of a general amnesty of all detenus. Anil, on the other hand, entered into new bondage by marrying Mehrunissa (Ashalata Biswas, a well-known actress of her times and a bewitching beauty). Anil was well-established while we were struggling for a footing in life.

Those days were difficult. Even with topping the list in the M.A. exam, I could not get a job, not even in a private firm. One of us, the most outstanding, Shreemanta Bhattacharya, died of malnutrition. Niren Ghosh, now an important C.P.M. member of Lok Sabha and a brilliant scholar (whose academic career was cut short by arrest), could not make both ends meet and sought lifelong refuge in communism. Anil's success was our satisfaction and it appeared more enchanting from a distance (Barisal, our home town, and Bombay are about 1500 miles apart).

It was 1946. I was in Jaat College, Rohtak and was one day reading the Tribune. In the advertisement column, I suddenly came across the name of Anil Biswas and read that he was staying at some hotel in Lahore. He was on a tour recruiting singers for films. I got hold of his address and dropped him a postcard. The reply did not take long in coming. I 'discovered' my long-lost friend and decided to start for Bombay (little knowing then that some day I would become a Bombayite.)

India had the last political upheaval on the day of my journey. The R.I.N Ratings rose in revolt on 18th February in Bombay. There was curfew in the city when I arrived but I knew nothing about it in the train. Anil, however, came to V.T. to receive me, literally passing through bullets which were being scattered all round. Tommies on trucks were using innocent Indians looking out of windows for target-practice.

Anyway, we reached his Tulsi Villa residence on the seaside at Dadar. We talked and talked to make up the gap of sixteen long

years. The curfew outside was a blessing in disguise. He could not move out on his professional work. After dinner, every night, we used to walk to the shore nearby and he would, almost in monologue, speak out of his heart and his mind. It was a sort of autobiographical outpouring. They could be narrated in the first person, but I choose to use the third.

In Calcutta he was hardly independent and could not leave much of his own imprint on music. Yet, he introduced some novel features, Bangla _dhol_ in a _Tarja_ song, and the East Bengal dialect in a play called 'Parivartan'. He was himself a _dhak-dhole-khol-tabla_ player from an early age.

In music he has been versatile-he mastered _khayal_, _thumri_, _dadra_. He specialized in _ghazals_, folk songs, and _padabali kirtans_ of the Vaishnavite Bengal. He has also written a book in Bengali on the _ghazal_, the first of its kind. It is in the press now and will very soon see the light of day.

It is well to remind readers here that Anil's earlier career was never carved out for music. He should have been an active revolutionary, at the most, a singer of inspiring patriotic songs. But music was in his blood. And he was destined to be successful.

Anil has been of the earliest to establish a distinctive school. His classical and folk-songs had a pure Indian flavour. He was a pioneer in introducing orchestral music to Bombay's film world. He leaned heavily on his Indian inheritance, classical and folk, even on Tagore's music. But in their presentation one could easily discern the imprint of his personality. He once made an attempt to produce a film which would contain all types of Indian tunes. It was 'Hamdard', a story of a blind musician. It had _khayal_, _thumri_, _qawwali_, _bhajan_, _geet_, and also _Rabindra Sangeet_. The four _khayals_ depicting the four seasons are remembered even today-"ritu aaye, ritu jaaye". He always felt that Indian music could fulfil the demands of any cinematic situation for years to come. He was, therefore, averse to the attempt, in some quarters, to borrow the exotic appeal of Western music. It was not just plagiarism, it was outright imitation.

The preference of some directors for borrowed music on the one hand and the persuasive efforts of some high officials on the other, ultimately induced Anil to try new pastures, to change his medium from film to the radio, with a free hand in creating a National Orchestra (an idea that Anil had very close to his heart since his tour abroad, particularly to the Soviet Union), and also to improve the quality of light Hindustani music.

I was sceptical about it. By that time I was a Principal of a Government College and knew the way official work is done. But he had the zeal of a new convert. I very soon discovered his disillusionment whenever I used to stay with him in Delhi. There was only one (personal) good out of the evil of his frustration. He was disgusted with office routine so much that he used to be my 'driver' during his office hours, playing 'truant' as he (also we) used to do in our school days. To

met the demands of our revolutionary duty we used to miss classes without any compunction.

With three extensions to his contractual tenure of government service he had some day to retire. Later, he became an Advisor for Music at the prestigious (politically Left-inclined) Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi. His status was that of a Professor and he used to `boast' that he was the only Matri-culate University Professor in India. Probably there have been others also.

But Anil cannot sit idle. He used to run classes in music for socialites in Delhi. He also accepted the responsibility of looking after the production of gramophone records for a Calcutta-based company in its north India zone. He began life with a recording company and ended his career with it. His principles stood in the way of his acceptance of suggestions from untrained people and also of prostituting the purity of music for profit. He stood steadfastly by pure Indian music, whether in films or on discs. It cost him not a meagre amount in terms of money, about Rs. 50,000 a year. Earlier, he had performed a similar feat by sacrificing a film career (even though at a low ebb then) for a Government job. To most men, fame and fortune are stronger temptation-but not to Anil.

Anil Biswas is a `vegetable' now. He is a `has-been' and does not crave for anything more. He has had more than `his share of glory and gift'. He has `no ambition either'. All the words within inverted commas are his own.

But this has actually meant an absence of enterprise, an escape. Otherwise, he could have plunged into action again in the International Year of the Child and could have organized children's choir groups in Delhi schools, which the country badly needs. It is shocking and sickening to listen to our school children singing the anthem. They don't even know the _Saraswati Vandana_, let alone sing it correctly. What a contrast with Western countries where such things are not only better organized but done in a way that is inspiring. Anil could also organize and bring out gramophone records or cassettes of patriotic songs of India with which he began his musical career in jail (if I can put it that way).

He owes it to his own talent. Society also owes it to him to pull him out of his present lethargy (a state of `vegetation', to quote him) and utilize his immense experience and musical gifts (if not genius) in the A.I.R., T.V., films and other media of mass interest. That will probably be the best culmination of a colourful career for a boy born in poor surroundings in a cottage at far-off Barisal in 1914, who rose to the highest pinnacle of popularity and success.

RMIM Archive Article "223".

Meeting with Anil Biswas

Posted by: Kalyan (kalyank@sybase.com)

Author: Kalyan Kolachala (Dec 9 1996)

Finally the workload has eased off for me to be able to write the long delayed report of my meeting with Anil Biswas. Because of the delay I might not remember a lot of the details. All that I remember later will be mailed later. I've also mailed a copy of the report to Atul Gupta, who was with me at the meeting, so that he could make additions/corrections.

Once again thanks to Malini for getting Anil Biswas' phone number that started off the whole thing. I called him up to set up an appointment and he agreed to meet me on the 10th of Nov. On reaching Delhi I called him up and he remembered the appointment (and surprisingly my name) but he mentioned it was Diwali and he had guests etc and so it would be impossible to meet me. I asked him about the 11th and he said at most he could give me 15 minutes as he would be busy on 11th as well. And here was the worse part. He said he won't tell me to leave after 15 minutes and I should leave on my own. He specified 9:30 AM as the time. It sounded great. 15 min. was better than nothing. It however meant that I had to stay one more day in Delhi. The IA flight to Raipur had been cancelled and I had other things to do so I decided to stay one more day.

For my part I had prepared by reading articles by Vish and Ashok and listening to all of his songs that I could get hold of. I had a list of questions of my own and those of others. Snehal had mailed me a list of about 50 questions. And there was a gift - the commemorative cassette on "Rare classical songs from films" from the RMIMmeet in the west coast. Thanks to Chetan for mailing me the cassette despite the short notice. Besides making a nice gift it also gave me an opportunity to talk about RMIM and the following he has in it. I went to his place with Atul, ex-colleague, friend, RJGK partner and my host in Delhi.

Enough of peripheral stuff and onto the main topic. I had noted the address wrong leading to a delay of about 15 min in reaching his place. In a way my time was over! In any case after running around in south ex for a while I was there standing in front of the great man.

Despite his age (82 years) he is still in fine form. His voice is clear and crisp. He remarked that I had already run out of my time and he let us in. He regretted he couldn't give us more time as he was involved in too many things. We introduced ourselves and talked in brief about RMIM, the websites, email discussions and the following and regard we have for him in RMIM. He is aware of the internet etc so it wasn't difficult explaining all that.

He seems fully in touch with the present and leads an active life. Having demonstrated to him that I represent a number of RMIMers and that we are fairly knowledgeable about his music (my homework came in handy) I retreated into the background and let him reminisce. This approach was somewhat forced as I had run out of my time and any hopes of an extended conversation rested on

talking on topics that interested him. Thus I dropped the question and answer idea and it was more of a chat where he was doing most of the talking. I was dropping in topics whenever I had the chance to. Fortunately after a while he got animated enough and the meeting lasted about an hour and a half and at the end he regretted he couldn't give us more time. Following are some of notes from the meeting in no particular order. I'll add more info when I remember it. Some of the notes are my paraphrasing of what he told me or my inferences from what he talked. Sorry for the disconnected narrative. Also due to the delay some of the details are hazy and added to it a deterioration in my skills in framing even simple sentences.

- He mentioned that he was the seniormost person alive in the music industry. He felt that at 82 he may not have much time left so he wants to share all the memories. (This was while talking about his memoirs to be published soon and repeated a number of times while talking of fans meeting him etc).

- I started off in Hindi and he has a faint Bangla accent. When it was clear that he's more comfortable in English I switched over to English. His English is very good. As mentioned earlier his voice is very good, clear and crisp. You can see that he was a singer once.

- In the beginning I mentioned that in addition to his excellent music we regard him highly for his pioneering work in the industry (such as the first orchestra, first playback etc) and also being the mentor of several MDs and singers. I hoped he would talk about the mentoring but he simply nodded to it and didn't add to it. Since it wasn't a question and answer format I didn't push further. He did reminisce about the "pioneering part". In that context he also talked of his close friendship with SD Burman and Sehgal. Those days he was the composer and SDB and KLS were singers. Those days Meena Kapoor was a small girl and used to play in Sehgal's lap. That suggests AB's acquaintance with Meena Kapoor was earlier than we thought.

- He is in touch with what's happening around both in contemporary music as well as with personalities from the past. Also he hasn't been really forgotten. He has people meeting him and he goes to lots of events/functions as the chief guest etc. He leads a fairly active life and he mentioned he has a fairly hectic schedule. Both he and Meena Kapoor no longer sing, Meena Kapoor stopped only recently. He has a very clear memory of his films/songs and the music of that era and he corrected me a couple of times. I guess one reason he stays in Delhi (despite the pollution etc) is because he still leads an active life. He mentioned that he doesn't spend the winters in Delhi as he can't stand the cold.

- Meena Kapoor was out with some relatives (AFAIR) so we couldn't meet her.

- Probably the most important info I got was about his autobiography/memoirs that is going to be published soon. I mentioned about Vish's articles and his interest in a biography and asked him if any such thing has been published. He then talked about the book being written by Sharad Dutt. It isn't really an autobiography - he said "I can't dare to do that. In an autobiog-

raphy you have to be truthful about everything you did and I can't report everything honestly". The words aren't exactly his. He mentioned it'll be in an "as told to" format. He mentioned that there have already been about 40 sessions and the author is compiling the info from the 40 odd tapes. He mentioned that some more sessions are needed and that keeps him very busy. Details of the book: Author: Sharad Dutt, Publisher: Saaranish - owned by Mr Mohan Gupta. Title: "Ritu aaye, ritu jaaye". A Manna song I think in one of his films. He mentioned he alongwith Manna Dey was invited to a function somewhere in Maharashtra (Pune?) and some schoolchildren sang this song on stage in what was a moving performance.

Sharad Dutt is also the producer/director of some serial in door-darshan. He is a big fan of Anilda and Hindi music. Anilda mentioned that Sharad Dutt corrects him whenever something he mentions is wrong or reminds him if he cannot remember a name/song etc. So we should expect a fairly exhaustive and in-depth book. Atul said he'll try to get in touch with Sharad Dutt and find out more.

- Anilda is a mild-mannered and an intense man. He mentioned that he leads a simple life. He mentioned that he doesn't worry too much and think ill of others and that is one of the reasons he's in good health even today. He mentioned he had an operation on his lungs(?) and has some other minor problems.

- Looking at his house and the location (South Extension II) it's clear that he's doing well. The living room was neat and mostly empty except for a sofa set, two paintings and a clock. Which reminds me - he was looking at the clock every now and then. When he went in for a short while, Atul mentioned that maybe he wanted us to leave as he might have other things to do. When he was back I mentioned that and told him that though I very much wanted to talk to him for hours but I didn't want him from other things. He said he could spend some more time with us and he would let us know when it was time.

- That was a relief. I mentioned I had some questions and started off with the one on Rafi. Why did he have so few songs with Rafi? I mentioned the films as Heer, Sanskaar and Beqasoor, the list courtesy Snehal. He corrected me saying that as far as he remembers it's only Heer. The Rafi songs in Beqasoor are by Hansraj Behl. (the Beqasoor CD credits a Rafi/GM Durrani duet to AB). As for not using Rafi he said it was simply because he didn't suit his style.

- While on this I asked him about his work with other MD's like Beqasoor with Hansraj Behl. While on this I used the term "Co-MD". He felt very strongly about that and said he never co-MDed with any MD like SJ combination etc. There were two instances he said of his having shared a film with another MD, one each with HB and CR. In both the cases he left the film midway because of differences with the producer and the other MD took over. The only case of partnership with somebody was in the case of Pardesi with the MD on the Russian side, who had been an assistant of Tchaikovsky (sp?) or something like that. While on that he mentioned his only sources of inspiration have been Indian classical music and folk music of India. He mentioned that early on in his

career he had toured India and learned a lot about folk music. He added he hadn't even remotely copied from anybody in India or abroad.

- I mentioned I like his songs with Suraiya in Gajre, Jeet, Do sitare, waris etc a lot. He talked about Suraiya and said though she's a reclusive person she makes it a point to meet him whenever he's in Bombay.

- I mentioned it must have been great working Qazi Nazrul Islam and asked him if he had any met Gurudev Tagore. He didn't talk much about Qazi Nazrul but he talked about his relationship with Tagore. He mentioned that he was fortunate to have touched Gurudev's feet and being blessed by him. He mentioned that he had composed music for Gurudev's work in a format that wasn't done earlier (here he used some terms and references in classical music that I did not understand and do not remember). Gurudev was very pleased with his work, thought highly of him and underlined some of the lines from Anilda's work. Anilda mentioned that a copy of that would be used in the inside cover of the book to be published.

- I asked him about his work after leaving Hindi films. He said though "Choti choti baatein" was released in 1965, work was completed in 1963 and that was the year he joined AIR and shifted to Delhi. In addition to Hum Log he mentioned two other serials Baisakhi and "Phir wohi talaash" by Lekh Tandon. He said there were some more but that he left many of those serials midway because of interference from the producers.

- He mentioned that he keeps getting a lot of fan mail both from India and abroad and requests for autographed photograph. I added that this was great because it was inspite of HMV not releasing most of his songs and that we fans can only access most of his songs by recording from friends or video cassettes. He regretted that HMV had most of Hindi film music heritage and was letting it die. He said RPG and others' nowadays are interested in crores and old and rare music has no place in their scheme of things. I mentioned that presence of Sanjeev Kohli might help things. He informed me that because of what Sanjeev was doing he has been banished to London to an ineffective position. He mentioned the first thing SK did on joining HMV was release the CD titled "Evergreen Anil Biswas" and mailed him a complimentary copy. Anilda is also in touch with many others like Harminder Singh "Hamraaz" and recently released a volume of the "Geet Kosh" at a function.

- I told him about the RMIM meets and our meeting with Pt. Batish. He said "Oh S.D Batish! Do you know that I discovered him!" He went on to discuss the "Laadli" song. He didn't know Pt. SDB was in the US. I updated him briefly about Pt. SDB and the institute. Anilda mentioned he had been in the US sometime back and had been in LA among other places. He said he would be willing to come of the US if there would be a musical function/event/competetion etc and if he were invited. More on this later.

- He mentioned that he was the guest in the final of "TVS Sa re ga ma". It is to be telecast sometime in April. He was very impressed with the one he judged the winner (someone named San-

jeev, could it be Sanjeev Rambhadran?). The show was specially recorded in Delhi (instead of Bombay) so as to have Anilda.

While on that he said he was very much impressed with singing talent available nowadays. He mentioned that in his days (I guess he meant early days) film industry wasn't considered respectable and he had to make do with the likes of Amirbai and Shamshad Begum. He said if he had access to talent as is available today he could have produced much better music.

- You might have noticed that there isn't that much of info in the report so far, not many specific answers. One reason is that Anilda spent a significant part of the chat talking in an abstract and philosophical manner, talking less about specifics and looking back at the bigger picture. While all that he said was great stuff it is difficult to report and is best to listen to him in his own words. My big regret is that I didn't record the conversation. On hindsight I feel he would have agreed to it.

- He talked at length about his contribution but mostly in general terms. He mentioned that people like Naushad, OPN etc have called him their gurus. He mentioned that in a function where lots of legends of Marathi music had assembled, legends like Sudhir Phadke, Datta G (who he mentioned gave Lata her first song) etc while on stage referred to him as their guru.

- While on OPN he called O.P. Nayyar the "Proudest man in the industry". He said "Lata didn't sing for him and despite that look what he achieved." I wish Vish was there. He felt OPN calling him his guru is an honour for him as their styles are very different.

That's pretty much what I remember at the moment. Both I and Atul had a photograph taken with him and before leaving touched his feet and took his blessings. He again regretted that he couldn't give us more time. There was too much left unasked and undiscussed but I guess that was to be expected in such a short meeting with someone who has contributed so much to Hindi film music.

For those interested in writing to him or asking him questions his address is K 11-12, South extension II, New Delhi.

One thing he alluded to repeatedly was that he would come to the US if he was invited for some function/event etc. Wouldn't it be great to have the great man with us for a few days? And it wouldn't be all that expensive. Most people I've talked to feel it's impractical. I hope not. There are so many functions organized all around the year by Indian organizations and Anilda is fairly well known so I feel something might come through.

Stranger things have happened.

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During the chat I voiced Vish's opinion that "Raahi" was his best and most original effort. He agreed with that and fondly remembered some of the songs including the holi song "Holi khele nand-lala" and the sequence when the English girl got coloured. I mentioned about the extensive collection of his music that Vish and others have. I also referred to some rare photographs. I talked about the one where many great MD's have assembled at Anilda's place and also the one where Lata was in Anilda's kitchen. He remembered the latter and mentioned that in that picture he was cooking during the lunch time. He mentioned that Lata

had been through tough times and used to have lunch at his place in her early days. He also talked about "Anokha pyaar" and how Lata had recorded some songs for the LP versions and Meena Kapoor for the film version. I mentioned that the CD has both versions. He mentioned that he was the head of the Music Directors Association till he left the industry.

Overall he was modest about his achievements and that was one reason I couldn't get much specific info about his music. I would speak highly about his achievement or some aspect of his music and he really wouldn't respond to it. But he spoke with great pride of what the other MD's thought of him. I guess praise from one's peers is the highest honor for an artist.

There have been some encouraging responses to the idea of inviting Anil Biswas to the US. Let me elaborate on what was discussed. It all came up when I referred that his fans would love to meet him and to that he said he would come to the US if he were invited. Wouldn't it be great to have Anilda with us for a few days. Here is a man who been active in the industry for about 3 decades (mid 30's to mid 60's), did a lot of pioneering work, been mentor to a number of great MD's and singers and above all gave us great music. In addition he is very articulate and has a vivid memory of those days. And he's among a few of the musical legends we have left.

One possibility I envision (however impractical it may be) is that of a grand RMIM meet (of RMIMers from all over US) spanning more than a day with Anil Biswas as the chief guest. It could be preferably in a long weekend. The main expense is plane tickets for two. I hope it's not dismissed as "irrational exuberance" :)
Kalyan

RMIM Archive Article "224".

Anilda- first among equals

Posted by: subraman@cs.umn.edu

Source: <http://www.indiaxs.com>

Author: (Lata Khubchandani?)

Anilda - First Among Equals

(Author: Lata Khubchandani?)

Anil Biswas - an ageless, matchless, unforgettable, crusader for music with values

In 1914 - in a Global environment of strife and hatred triggered off by the First World War - there emerged a child of harmony and melody in Barisal, East Bengal (now Bangla Desh): Anil Biswas.

The only aspect that the little boy imbibed from the 1914 environment of conflict was the spirit of a revolutionary, and grew up to compose ageless, matchless and unforgettable melody.

In fact, it would be no exaggeration to call him a crusader for music with values.

In 1930 young Anil moved to Calcutta and soon attained recognition as an actor, singer and music director. He was associated with the then well-known Rang Mahal Theatre. In 1934, he moved to Bombay at the behest of famous director of yester-years Hiren Bose. Full of ideas and enthusiasm he was shocked and disheartened, to confront the prevailing practice in Hindi film music of literally converting on celluloid a total imitation of the manner of talking, singing and dancing as on the stage. The talented composer from Barisal was taken aback by the casual and mechanical manner in film-making. His convictions were that the film should not be a stage replica. He could fathom the intrinsic values and promise that films held for a multi-dimensional revelation of the wide range of human emotions in a true to life manner.

The revolutionary in Anil Biswas came to the fore and he set about to give Hindi film music a new definition - a true to life character. He believed in deriving inspiration from India's rich musical heritage and his efforts contributed greatly in ushering in the Golden Era in Hindi film music. Unlike the trend in those days, Biswas firmly believed in following the correct and logical sequence of composing music from lyrics and not vice-versa.

From 1935 - when he composed music for the film Dharam ki Devi - right upto 1965, for 30 years, Anilda (as he is popularly known as) conjured up music compositions of outstanding quality in terms of variety, melody and lyrical harmony. He was the music director for well-known studios like Sagar Movietone and Bombay Talkies, many of whose films were hits due to Anilda's rich musical inputs in terms of background scores and lilting tunes.

One such film, Kismet, of Bombay Talkies ran for over three years - a record which was broken only by Sholay in the '70s. The immortal song Papihaare - sung by Anilda's sister Parul Ghosh (wife of the renowned flute player Pannalal Ghosh) was from Kismet. As also the patriotic song - the first of its kind - Door

hato ai duniyaa waalo.

Anilda's compositions have embellished over a hundred films including, among others Aurat, Hamari Baat, Basant, Kismet, Jwar Bhata, Pehli Nazar, Milan, Anokha Pyar, Gajre, Girls School, Arzoo, Badi Bahan, Tarana, Do Raha, Humdard, Waris, Farar, Pardesi, Angulimal, Sautela Bhai and Choti Choti Baaten.

Some of his evergreen immortal compositions are: Papihaare and Main kiski laaj nibhaaun (sung by his sister Parul Ghosh); Door papiha bola (by Suraiya); Raahi matwaale (duet by Talat & Suraiya); Tumhaare bulaaneko (Lata); Seene mein sulagate (Talat & Lata); Aa muhabbat ki basti (duet by Kishore & Lata); Zamaane kaa dastoor (duet by Mukesh & Lata); Bar bar tum soch rahi ho (Duet by Shankar Das Gupta & Lata); Ghar ghar mein diwali (Amir Bai); Door hato ai duniya waalo (Chorus); Naachare mayura (Manna De), Pee bina sunaa re (Manna De and Lata); Ab tere siva koun mera (Amir Bai); Dheere, dheere aare baadal dheere and Rasiyaare, man basiyare and Yaad rakhana ai chand taro (Meena Kapoor).

From 1963 to '65 Anilda became the Director of the National Orchestra for All India Radio, and from 1965 he was Chief Producer of Light Hindustani music. His significant contribution has been the title score for one of the first soap popular Hindi serial Hum Log and the popular song Hum hongee kaamyab. Eminent voices whom Anilda introduced were Mukesh and Talat Mehmood (erstwhile Tapan Kumar). He is perhaps the only music director of his times who introduced new voices - particularly singing stars like Ashok Kumar, Sardar Akhtar, Sitara Devi, Leela Chitnis, Nalini Jaywant and Meena Kumari (then Baby Meena). Some of the outstanding singers who sung for him were Talat Mehmood, Manna De, Mukesh, Lata, Suraiya, Amir Bai Karnataki, Parul Ghosh, Kishore Kumar, and Shankar Das Gupta and his dedicated inspiring life-mate Meena Kapoor.

Another significant dimension introduced by Anil Biswas in his role as an enlightened, knowledgeable and innovative music director was his emphasis on the development of a "voice culture" by his singers. This called for a smooth rendering unaffected by any distortions due to "breathing" and relevant emotional nuances most appropriate to the lyric. Anilda never set the 'cart before the horse' - his musical compositions were based on lyrics and never vice-versa.

Anilda's knowledge and perspective of the richness and importance of the Ghazal as an exquisite melodious persona of human emotions is reflected in the book Ghazaler Rong (Ghazal's colour).

The most recent honour conferred on Anilda recently is by the Government of India, Ministry of Cultural Affairs. He has been made 'National Fellow Emeritus'.

RMIM Archive Article "225".

Anil Biswas - some questions

Posted by: Kalyan Kolachala

Author: Vish Krishnan (vishk@visigenic.com)

Good deal. I am sure you will have enough challenges using up the time at your disposal in the most interesting, enlightening, optimal value-add, entertaining etc etc way. Let me try and make it a little worse for you by adding a million of my own questions.

About 18 months back, I had started writing about the little big man of Indian music, but now that has become one of several abandoned projects. Be that as it may, even as Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Co have documented the master's work, their approach has been somewhat high level.

The following is just a very quick summary of what I can remember sitting here at work on what is turning out to be a rather slow Monday. Let us see how this evolves. The items herein are somewhat triggered by my own curiosities about an age gone by. So, onto a quick summary.

Anil Biswas (that is the real name) was born on July 7 1914 in the little town of Barisal (now in Bangladesh). Father (Jagadish Chandra Biswas) was probably a government employee, not very high profile. The youngster showed tremendous talent at the tender age of 4. It was his mother's idea to put him through serious musical training. Don't know about his gurus, but the classical and folk influence in his work is clear. I won't belabour that point. Like SO many of our Hindi movie composers, the master was an accomplished tabla player (Dattaram, Sailesh Mukherji, SD Batis, Vasant Desai??) and singer. Hardly a single neighbourhood music show went by without featuring the youngster's talents. Through his childhood and early teen years, the little man worked with amateur theatre groups - and freedom fighters. It is no longer on record how many times he went to jail or how many tortures he was subjected to.

After his father died (1930??), the teenager came over to what is now India. It was probably a steamer ride up the Poddo (Padma). With probably less than Rs. 5 in his pocket (a rather princely sum in those days, I imagine, but still ..), the 16-year old parked himself at the Hullaarhaat Post Office, slept on the floor of the Post Office hall, worked as a coolie, earned enough money to buy himself a ticket to Calcutta, and then one day, landed up at Pannalal Ghosh's house. Would he not remember that? This is not at all unlike Naushad Ali's description of sleeping out on the streets of Dadar (Bombay).

Now why did he actually leave Barisal? Was it a family situation? I am not suggesting you ask these questions, but I will remain curious. And where was sister Parul at this time? Back in Barisal? Was it his involvement with the freedom movement that forced him to disappear?

Now, was Pannalal Ghosh's family known to the Biswas's ? Or was it just another one of these chance findings? At any rate, I am convinced that Anil Da and Dr. Ghosh (how old was he then?) hit

it off well. A few years later, the flutemeister would realize his ambition for doing movie music, and this emaciated but resolute 16-year old would play a part in it.

More than a 1000 miles away, Ardeshir Irani was getting ready to make history with AALAM AARA. He had unknowingly retained as an extra, among a horde of other non-entities, a little village runaway from Billimoria, Gujarat. I am sure regional affiliations had played a part here, but when Irani was putting out his quota of silents like MEWAAR NO MAWAALI (1927), he did not see 20-year old Ramjaankhaan Mehboob Khaan to be of any consequence to the movie industry, or to anything else for that matter. But things were to change, slowly. Irani disappeared from the scene, slowly and gracefully. Several of his students moved on into talkie studios chiefly Sagar Movietone (and another one whose name I cannot recall). Mehboob Khan tagged along, this time for more than bit parts. He had his eyes set on more glorious pursuits.

In 1930, a 16-year old Anil Biswas got his first assignment waiting tables (probably not even that - bus boy was more the likely job) at some local "mishti" and chaa stall. It was here that he met a magician who was well connected into the Dept of Education (some Rai Bahadur Agornath ???), and through that contact, found himself a slot in the concert circuit. I can just see him holding the listeners spellbound. What kind of singing was that? Bengali folk? Rabindra Sangeet? Nazrul Geet? After all, here is where Anil Da also met Kazi Nazrul Islam, and that connection got him Rs. 5 on a piecemeal basis for lyrics and music. The employer: the Megaphone Company of Calcutta. Wouldn't it be fun to just sit there and listen to Anil Da talk about those times and those grand people!

Soon thereafter, Anil Da became a full-time employee of Rangmahal theatre where he was IT. He became identified with singing, lyrics, music, orchestration, acting, dialogues - all of it. That is how he spent 1931-34. Perhaps his dream job it was. Worth exploring, definitely.

Even with its proximity to New Theatres', the Rangmahal stint offered no documented opportunity for Anil Da to work with his Tollygunge neighbours. Or did it? It almost seems as though the two were independently working on similar projects. Orchestration was Pankaj Mullick's favourite research area, and Anil Da is credited with the creation of what may regarded as the first true Indian orchestra (12 pieces ? Grand !). One would have liked to have at least one KL Saigal song composed by Anil Da. Once he came away to Bombay, the New Theatres' world became a bit distant.

In the end, it was moviemaker Hiren Bose (how does he connect into the New Theatres scheme?) who urged the 20 year old to move on to Bombay, and get a real job! All credit to visionary financier Ram Daryani whose Eastern Art productions became the next stop for this phenomenon from Barisal. I think the song "tere poojan ko bhagwaan banaa man mandir aalishaan" was the one that propelled the singer/composer into headlines. Movie: BHAARAT KI BETI. Probably a Ram Daryani production - not sure. Does Anil Da have a recording of it? Will he sing it just once? Just for

old times' sake?

At this time, Sagar Movietone was fading away (again, I don't have the chronology right), and was due for a merger with National Studios, an upcoming group of studio employers. Ram Daryani, money-man and talent scout, was very highly respected for his discerning eye. He was also very well connected.

And all of a sudden, Anil Biswas was working for a major production studio (National/ Sagar) under the watchful and supportive tutelage of Ashok Ghosh and Pransukh Nayak, the composer duo that was to National/Sagar what Tembe/Bhole/Phulambrikar were to Kolhapur Cinetone and Prabhat, and what Mullick/Boral/Bhattacharya were to New Theatres.

A hard-working and violently ambitious Mehboob Khan was also on the payroll assisting directors and others on and off-stage.

So now we have assistant composer and handy-man Anil Biswas working not far away from assistant director and handy-man Mehboob Khan, both motivated by the exact same goal in abstraction. Some day, they would be at the helm of things. Perhaps Anil Da's goal had a gentle, well-rounded sophistication to it, and by contrast, perhaps Mehboob's brash and uncouth ambition unflinchingly stepped on others as necessary. What did the two have in common? What drew them and kept them together? What in heaven's name? Anil Da must have adored the "mawaali", a term he affectionately directed at Mehboob every time the director addressed him as "bangaali". Otherwise, how does one explain this friendship and one of the strongest professional associations known in the history of Indian cinema?

Now I don't remember this very well. The first couple of movies were the work of Ashok Ghosh and Mr Nayak (Manmohan?? etc), but Anil Da's first headline venture was (someone help me here) DHARM KI DEVI??? Something like that. And not too long thereafter, Mehboob came along with his first solo assignment (was that Manmohan?). The interesting movie here is JAAGIRDAAR, the first Mehboob movie to feature Anil Da's music. And off they went. Together, Anil Da and Mehboob launched some big names. Surendranath (BA LLB) was all at sea with Bombay cinema, and they gave him every opportunity to build a nest. Others, perhaps not top-notch singers, but still making an impact, were Bibbo, Manju, Arun Kumar, Wahidan Bai (Nimmi's mother), Jyoti (Wahidan's sister who later started her own studio called Jyoti Pictures) and a host of names not shown here, all thrived under this sanguine partnership that was still a good 4-5 years away from summary termination. What were those days like?

The best was yet to come. Other, much better performers, like Sardar Akhtar (later Mehboob Khan's wife), a beautiful star Nalini Jaywant by name, Akhtaribai Faizabaadi (later Begum Akhtar) perhaps all sang their first movie song for the same partnership. Wasn't this the Golden Era! Does it get better? Where have the likes of AURAT, ROTI and BAHEN gone?

In 1941-42, freelancers' disease caught the Bombay movie industry in its grip. A few other events took place too. National was shaky, Devika Rani was losing interest in things Indian, and Saraswati Devi was packing her bags (leaving a few job opportunities open at the risk-ridden Bombay Talkie), Mehboob would simply

not work any longer for anyone but himself, and Master Haider had already defined the Hindi movie song for us. Competition was at its height, and the fundamental recipe for box-office successes tacitly accepted music as its key ingredient. Playback singing was on. Suraiyya made sure of that.

Mehboob asked the bangaali to join him in his new production venture (Mehboob Studios), and was shocked at the answer. Anil Da (politely, I am sure) declined. Why? At any rate, the master movie director was slighted, and never raised the question again. He struggled to find his musical base through NAJMA, TAQDEER, and HUMAAYUN. He had to go through Rafique Ghaznavi and Ghulam Haider to get to his nirvana.

For Anil Da, it was now Bombay Talkie. He is probably less shy now about who really did the music for BASANT, a movie credited to brother-in-law Pannalal Ghosh. Great movie, great songs. In particular, did 9-year old Mumtaz Jehan Begum know at that time that she was not going to be a singer after all? Who composed and conducted those 2 beautiful songs for BASANT? Later, did Madhu Bala ever discuss the BASANT items with Anil Da? Those 2 songs are a collector's item now.

KISMAT is unparalleled in the history of box-office cinema. How does the maestro remember Amirbai Karnataki?

And all along, was he watching the Ghulam Haider revolution? Did he ever have an opportunity to work with Noorjehan? When was the first time he heard about, and heard this diminutive rage called Lata Dinanath Mangeshkar?

Here is where the master turned truly freelance. Although he did a few more movies with Bombay Talkie (JWAAR BHAATA, MILAN aka NAUKAA DOOBI, a Tagore story), he was now available to the industry at large. PEHLI NAZAR is one example of a musical success outside the Bombay Talkie scheme (I am not sure who the production company is).

Also interesting is the musical work he has done with Ashalata Biswas, his first wife. How many songs has she sung? I know there is at least one duet with Lata.

I guess it was just another normal day with nature doing its thing when Bikram Kapoor, a character actor from the Bombay Talkie group, went to visit Ninu Majumdar (a strong composer who was also assistant to Anil Da) took his daughter Meena Kapoor along, and that was that.

Where and how did the two meet?

When and how did he meet Lata Mangeshkar? What did he teach her, and in turn, what kind of inspiration did she become for his music? What, in his opinion, are his best Lata songs? And about Asha, she did dominate one of his movies (SANSKAAR??). Was that different, somehow?

The post-1948 Lata age, while never well-enough documented, is at least discussed a lot. But what is not discussed much is the maestro's partnership with K.A. Abbas, starting with RAAHI. My list of favourites puts RAAHI way up on top (if not at the top).

In fact, I would suggest that it is distinctly more honest than MADHUMATI in its Assamiya presentation. Other than Hemant, Lata and Meena Kapoor, is it not Ira Majumdar and then Anil Da himself singing? I suppose Ira Majumdar is related to assistant music

director Ninu Majumdar. I am also sure Meena Kapoor will remember "chaand so gayaa, taare so gaye", a most wonderful lullaby, with nostalgic affection.

Then there is the songless MUNNA, and yet again, PARDESI. Knowing fully well that Anil Da did not have an opportunity to work with Noorjehan, it is all the more fortuitous that when the melody queen returned to India for the 2-day concert event at Bombay's Shanmukhananda Hall (Feb 10/11 1982), Meena Kapoor was one of the guest singers. A good friend of mine was at the hall, and according to him, while Lata brought the ceiling down with "aayega aane waala" and Noorjehan took care of the rest by her latter-day singing of JUGNU and ANMOL GHADI, it was Meena Kapoor's "rasiyaa re man basiyaa re" that brought tears to the discerning listener's eyes. If she is there, you have to ask her about that. These were the gems of the KA Abbas-Anil Biswas partnership. And finally, CHAAR DIL CHAAR RAAHEIN had her singing the savagely sophisticated "kabhi to sudh letaa jaa". Even Meena Kumari, normally choreographically challenged, comes alive with Meena Kapoor's singing.

Through the '50s, the master had his share of box-office headlines. It is so easy to get non-mainstream with people like Anil Da. But even the better knowns e.g. TARAANA, AARZOO, AARAAM etc were great music providers.

How many movies did he do under the pen-name "Haribhai"? Then he has some partnerships - Chitalkar and Hansraj Behl come to mind. In general, which composers stand out in his mind as great music makers? And how can I resist asking about his view of Sir Salil Chowdhury's work? Did they ever collaborate on any project? ANGULIMAAL is way up there too. Whatever happened to Meena Kapoor's "moray chanchal nainaa", one of two times the maestro adapted Rabindra Sangeet for Hindi movie purposes? Are there others? This one is better known to Rabindra Sangeet listeners as "madhu gandhe bharaa...". The other one, as I recall, is "raahi matwaale". Which brings us to all sorts of questions about Suraiyya, and her work in GAJRE, JEET, WAARIS all from the previous couple of decades.

Has he adapted any of Kazi Nazrul Islam's work? I don't recall anything offhand, but SD Burman borrowed quite a bit ("ghaayal hiraniyaa", "main albeli" (BUZDIL), "jaane kyaa toone kahi" etc) as did Sir Salil ("roj akeli aaye"). Of all Hindi movie composers, Anil Da was probably the closest to the great poet and patriot?

And what about Bengali movies? It is not entirely surprising, but even so, how did it come to be that he drifted almost completely away from Bengali cinema? Perhaps there were less than 5 in his Bengali repertoire. Even that many? We should probably find out.

The 10 odd movies in the '60s were ALL remarkable, without exception. I shouldn't say ALL. Haven't ever heard any songs from HUMEIN KHELNE DO or RAJU AUR GANGAARAAM. But LUCKY NUMBER, THE RETURN OF MR SUPERMAN and one other all had wonderful music and singing (particularly by Meena Kapoor). Even here, as the Lata-featured movies like SAUTELA BHAII and CHHOTI CHHOTI BAATEIN became more popular (not by much though), Anil Da's other entries

for the '60s were lost, hopefully not forever.

It has been more than 30 years since he left Bombay cinema. He was quite busy until the mid-'80s. I don't believe his work has been well documented. Any non-film releases ? Meena Kapoor has surely got some cassettes out. And what about his work with the Indian Films Division, or Doordarshan (besides HUM LOG)?

In July 1994, it was announced that the maestro would be awarded the Lata Mangeshkar award for the year. He must have come down to Indore in December the same year. Perhaps Meena Kapoor was up there on stage at the Rabindra Naatya Graha. Perhaps she sang.

The grandmaster laid the foundation of orchestration in Indian movies, mentored an entire generation of master composers, helped guide Lata's voice into the dulcet tone that one uses to define good singing, and God alone knows what else.

Have a great time.

cheers vish

RMIM Archive Article "324".

Anil Biswas and Meena Kapoor

Posted by: Neha Desai

Source: indiavs.com

Author: Lata Khubchandani

LOVE MAKES THEIR WORLD GO ROUND

By Lata Khubchandani

Anil Biswas and Meena Kapoor need only love to cement their relationship .

ANIL Biswas and Meena Kapoor would probably never have come together if he wasn't a composer and she a singer. But come together they did. Even though, after they met, music was never the focal point of their relationship.

Biswas, a pioneer in playback singing, with R. C. Boral and Pankaj Mullick, is one of the greatest composers the Hindi film industry has ever known. However, as is often the case, life was never easy for this gifted man. His first marriage was a disaster. And he shunned the world, preferring to lose himself in music.

Till Meena came into his life and changed his entire perspective, even though she was over two decades younger. Even today, Biswas says, simply, "I only live by her love."

Their marriage created quite a furore in the '50s. "How could it not?" asks Meena today. "We are 20 years apart and he was once married. When I first met him, he was like an uncle. I didn't dream I'd be his wife one day. Even my parents called him Anilda!"

Looking back over four decades, Biswas says, "It was Pannalal Ghosh, my brother-in-law, who asked me to listen to Meena's voice. I sent for her, but her father came instead, bringing with him some of Meena's recorded songs. He said, 'My daughter is very shy. She won't come.' " Meena corroborates, "I never auditioned for my first song. Besides, I was already an established playback singer. I'd sung as many as 62 songs for other composers before I ever sang for him. So, why would I have had to audition for him?"

Biswas heard her recorded song from 'Khel' - "Tod gaye hain, tod gaye, armaan bhara dil tod gaye". And called her for rehearsals. At the time, he was composing for 'Anokha Pyaar'. "While recording, he instructed recordist, Robin Chatterjee 'mike in the mouse' - their code for a placing the mike very close to a singer's mouth, especially if she had soft voice.

"Now, since Anil had never heard me sing and realised I was shy, he assumed I had a very soft voice. So, when I started singing, Robin Chatterjee yelled, "Anil'da', you are going to spoil my equipment!" I had a very bold voice."

That was the start of an affair that would stun the film industry.

Says Meena, "I was 13 when I met Anil. He had already separated from his wife before I came into his life."

Biswas adds: "I was passing through a rough phase in my life. She was sympathetic and we became close. I was very attracted to her - to the point of setting out to woo her. And I won her!"

Smiling, Meena continues: "It took me a long time to fall for Anil, but once I did there was no looking back. My parents were aghast - they couldn't come to terms with our age difference. More so, because

I was more or less engaged to a boy from a rich tree planters' family in Assam. But I refused to go ahead with that. I was so sure of my feelings for Anil that I told this prospective groom about him. The poor fellow heard me out and said, 'You are so honest, telling me all this yourself. I don't mind. I'll still marry you.' When I realised that honesty wasn't going to work, I walked out of the house and started living with Anil."

Strangely enough, after she met Biswas, Meena's career started heading downhill. "When people realised we were having an affair, they slowly stopped calling. And after we got married, they just assumed he would never let me sing for others!"

Not that Meena minded. In fact, she loved playing the role of housewife so much, her musical career took a back seat.

"I'd never been ambitious. Personally, I'd never taken my music seriously or made a move to further my career. It was my father who loved my singing and wanted me to excel. After marriage, for the first time, I had a house of my own. This was a novelty because, as an only daughter, I'd never been allowed to enter the kitchen. Now, it became more important that I learn to make 'halwa' than sing.

"People accused Anil of ruining my career, but it was I who wasn't interested. When he got the offer from Delhi to join the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, he asked me if I wanted to go. At the time, my songs 'Rasiya re, man basiya re' and 'Kuchh aur zamaana kehta hain' were very popular. And composers had begun offering work again. But I preferred moving to Delhi. Many people tried to dissuade me, saying my career would be completely wiped out. I didn't care." Biswas, of course, couldn't help but be touched by such devotion. He coaxed her to take up the offers that came her way, but Meena was adamant.

She has never regretted her aborted career. "I was so attached to him that, for me, being away from him was more of a punishment." Today, their relationship is somewhat filial. Meena has retained a 'little girl' quality that must have enchanted her husband when he first met her. "When we fight, I just can't sustain it for too long. Finally, I tell him, 'I'll apologise later. For now, you make up with me!'"

Says Biswas: "She grew up in front of me; her devotion to me has been complete. I needed her love. I'd been through the most horrible 'maya' of ugliness. For me, she was like a lotus in the filth that I'd been through. I once wrote to her, 'You are - I was. We couldn't meet. My past is going to be your future.'

"I was attracted to her simplicity. My feelings for her grew so much, they devoured me. When I proposed to her, her response was: 'Is there even a five per cent chance of your going back to your wife? If there is, I won't enter your life. If not, I'd like to share it.'"

Meena says, affectionately, "What I like best about Anil is his capacity to make people feel special. He needs looking after, like a child does."

"I only wish she didn't have this great capacity for anxiety," worries Biswas. "She gets tense very easily and spoils her health. She takes sudden likes and dislikes for people, and goes overboard with her emotions."

Meena Kapoor smiles with the confidence of a woman who has never been through a moment's insecurity in her married life. "I don't think he has loved anybody the way he loves me. And I'm saying this about someone who's been a very romantic man in his heyday!" she says.

Biswas is a contented man - having got a companion of his choice. As for Meena, she gets to play the infatuated wife, the little daughter and the affectionate mother - roles that keep her very busy. Today, their lives revolve around each other. All else comes a poor second.

RMIM Archive Article "226".

Shanker Tribute Part - 1

Posted by: Hemant Parikh (parikh@xtra.co.nz)

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Source: various - Screen, Raju Bharatan

Tribute to Immortal Shanker Posted by Hemant Parikh 4th May 1997.

Shanker: He was the total Musician

Raju Bharatan met Shanker at a special piano demonstration for him in the composer's room . Later Shanker took him to his Famous music room at Mahalakshmi, where this total composer, with the aid of certain musicians, recreated the whole art of SJ's scoring. From the tape of that memorably live soiree emerges this personalised piece on Shanker on the occasion of the master composer's seventh death anniversary, falling on April 26. Articles Compiled By Hemant Parikh. From Screen, 29 April, 1994.

He had invited me to his seaface home he was in his cosy music room there. He was at the piano, the man who composed Geet gaata hoon main gungunata hoan main for Kishore Kumar to put over On Vinod Mehra in "Lal Patthar". Right now, he was evoking from the piano his "Sangam" notes of Dost dost na raha. He was, another seven-letter name for sangeet. He was the numero uno of the Shanker-Jaikishan duo.

Jaikishan's ocean-view home was just a mile away on the Marine Drive front. There was Jaikishan's left hand that naturally went to the piano. Here it was Shanker's right hand that naturally went to the piano. Imagine Shanker's right hand on the piano and Jaikishan's left hand on the piano and have the entire format of our popular you music at your finger-tips!

Shanker had been dogmatic on one point that he would demonstrate the art and craft of composition to me only on the piano. "How much of the real composer in me can you possibly get to savour on the harmonium?" Shanker had asked. "Mind you, I myself played the harmonium in SJ's Yeh na thi hamari kismat in "Main Nashe Mein Hoon". Even so the harmonium re-mains a limited instrument where it comes to unfolding your art. On the piano, by con-trast , can zoom with my notes. Here, let me demonstrate how by playing one of my pet compositions. . .

And Shanker proceeded to play finesse and flair from "Yahudi", Yeh mera diwana pan hai. When I sing it as Yeh mera diwana pan hai, what I mean is Sangeet mera deewana pan -hai! explained Shanker. "In fact, I was lolling in that cot there and gazing at the ceiling when the idea came to me in a flash. Swiftly getting up, I came to this piano here and those first notes as Yeh mera deewana pan hai. They were dummy words, of course, but Shailendra said they were fine, they fitted the situation pat, when he later came to write-to-tune. I had completed the tune on the piano with my own Mukesh in mind, that's why I was put out when it was suggested it should be Talat Mehmood for Dilip Kumar playing "Yahudi".

"In vain did I press my point, for the consensus was in favour of

Talat. Only I new how I had given the tune shape and substance with Mukesh's vocals in mind. In the end, seeing I was not satisfied, it was decided the whole thing would be a toss-up. My joy new no bounds as the spin of the coin favoured Mukesh. But now Dilip Kumar playing "Yahudi" was unhappy he had set heart on Talat. I had nothing against Talat, it was just that I had composed the number for Mukesh. So I earnestly requested Dilip Kumar to come to the song s recording next afternoon, but only after one, when we would be ready from the take Dilip Kumar wanted to come earlier but, I was quietly insistent, for only I knew how besura Mukesh could sound at the rehearsal stage!

By the time Dilip Kumar came at 1.30, we were set and raring to go. And the resonance with which Mukesh came over in Yeh mera diwana pan hai made Dilip Kumar come over and embrace me. It was One of the most fulfilling moments in my life."

Now I had Shanker talking, but he had laid down this condition that I would not probe whose tune it was: Jaikishan's or his. I tried a subtle approach to overcome this SJ barrier. "Fine, you have told me how you won over Dilip Kumar" I said, "but what about the time you had a job convincing Raj Kapoor about the theme-song of "Shree 420"?"

The very vigour which Shanker, at this point, descended on the piano was a give-away as to who had composed Mera joota hai Janani.

"Sounds wonderful now it's proved a hit on Raj Kapoor in "Shree 420", noted Shank-er, "but what a struggle I had here, Mera joota hai Janani is in Bhairavi, here let me show you how. I make a point of its being in Bhairavi because it's the fashion to attribute this raag in SJ's repertoire to Jai. Oh, Jai too composed some wonderful tunes in Bhaira-vi, I concede that, but in the end it remained a shared legacy. "But we were on how Mera joota hai Janani came to be composed. As was my practice, I had prepared five tunes for the theme-song situation. I had already struck an equation with Raj Kapoor in the matter of creating theme-songs. So I was quite confident my very first tune would be okayed."

"It was the theme-song of "Shree 420", so I had given it everything in my composing armour. I played my first tune, no response whatsoever from Raj Kapoor. I played my second tune, again no response. Third time lucky I had to be, I reasoned, as I played my next tune, again no reaction from Raj Kapoor! I was in a cold sweat now, this was the first time a theme-song tune was going to the fourth stage. And I well knew that two inferior tunes of the lot formed numbers four and five! Add to that the fact that I was a total mental blank that day after those five tunes, having put every bit I had into the selections. "It was with great hesitation, therefore, I played my fourth tune as.."

And here Shanker turned to the piano to add: "This is how I played that fourth tune to Raj Saab(Imagine listening Mera joota hai Janani): Dunder-dunder-dunder-dunder dunder-dunder-dunder-dunder dunder-dun-der-dunder-dunder dunder-dunder -dunder-dunder dunder-dunder -dunder-dunder ... And Raj Saab pounced on it, saying it was exactly what he wanted! That crooked smile of Raj Saab's as I wiped my brow I will remember for life."

"Why? I asked. "If those fourth and fifth tunes, too, had failed,

would Raj Kapoor have asked Jaikishan to play the theme-song?. "No, way" said Shanker, "the theme-song at RK, with SJ, was my responsibility, so the reason I wiped brow was for something totally different. The point is, not Jai, but I would have had to produce five fresh theme-tunes next day! Produce from where? I had exhausted my stock that day itself, since I reserved nothing but the best for Raj Kapoor. Don't take me literally, of course. I would have come up with five more fresh tunes next day, I am merely trying to communicate to you perplexed state of mind when that third tune, too, stood rejected."

"Maybe the first three tunes were rejected because they were not in Bhairavi", I suggested. "They weren't in Bhairavi, come to think of it. But the total musician never thinks of the raag while composing. He plays in Sur and raag just flows. So I can't go along with you on the point that Mera joota hai Japani, as it finally emerged, because it was in Bhairavi. I maintain that my first three tunes were good, very good. But then I only looked at the tune Raaj Saab had an exact visual idea of what he wanted. And he just seized that fourth tune from my custody the moment I struck the right note, as he audio-visualised it".

"What about Ramaiyya vastavaiyya? I asked, nothing Shanker had momentarily forgotten all about not identifying a tune as his. "Oh, Ramaiyya vastavaiyya, that's an interesting question. For, after the Mera joota hai Japani theme song, the most important situation in "Shree 420" was Ramaiyya vastavaiyya. How graphically Raj Saab had told me that situation to me! The tune he told me, had to have a sweep and a cadence like nothing heard in an RK movie before. The tune, Raaj Saab had told me must bring the Bombay baste to vibrant life. Only towards its end, he added, would Mukesh be joining in -we now know Raj Kapoor chipped in with Maine dil tujh ko diya, but, at that point, even the tune was not ready, leave alone the words.

Incidentally, I always prepared the tune first and then got words written by Shailendra. Letting the poet write the song first, I had discovered, led to his penning the song-lyrics in the same monotonous metre. No, I don't agree this, my reverse style of tuning, placed a limitation on Shailendra's poetry. The Ramaiyya vastavaiyya tune came first, yet did Shailendra's poetry suffer in any way? No! the words for me represented the portrait, the tune the frame. Once the framework was ready in the form of my tune, the portrait, the song-lyric, could always be fitted in, exactly to size."

It is a job keeping Shanker on the sound track you want, the man knows so much he wanders most interestingly, mind you -from one musical crescendo to another. Gently bring him back to Ramaiyya vastavaiyya, asking which of his five tunes clicked here.

"Ha, you have me back where you want me, Raju," laughed Shanker. Ramaiyya vastavaiyya came to be tuned immediately after Mera joota hai Japani. Let me be honest and admit that I, normally full of confidence, was nervous here. After all, Mera joota hai Japani came through the hard way, so who new what lay in store. "Therefore" revealed Shanker (turning instantly to the piano), "as a naturalised Andhra I put my own dummy words and played the first tune like this to Raj Saab: Ramaiyya vastavaiyya ramaiyya

vasta-vaiyya. And, lo and behold, that very first tune, which I had played with my dummy Telugu words of Ramaiyya vastavaiyya was instantly picked up by Raj Saab!

"My faith in my composing ability stood restored. For Ramaiyya vastavaiyya was a far more difficult situation to compose for than Mera joota hai Japani. In Mera joota hai Japani, you could be freewheeling, Raj Saab or the screen would take care of the rest. In Ramaiyya vastavaiyya, the key turn in the story -line had to emerge from my tune. Yet I got it right the first time, so I had reason to feel proud.

"I thought I knew Raj Saab's mind well by the time I came to compose Mera joota hai Japani, it turned out I didn't. I had doubts about my insights in to Raaj Saab's mind in the case of Ramaiyya vastavaiyya, it turned out my doubts were misplaced. May I add that, like in the case of Yeh mera diwana pan hai, Shailendra preferred to retain my dum-my punchline of Ramaiyya vastavaiyya. "But it makes no sense," I pointed out. "It will when you see it on the screen," said Raj Saab seated by Shailendra's side.

"How come Ramaiyya vastavaiyya too, is in Bhairavi?" I asked. Shanker looked stumped. But recovered to note: "Yaar, take it as a sign that I know my Bhairavi as well as Jai did. But seriously, the tune comes first, the raag after.

"Even in the case of the tune you played as soon as I entered this room?" I asked, "The tune you were playing on this piano as I entered was Dost dost na raha, Isn't that, too, in Bhairavi? I give up", said Shanker, "you are the first patrakar to pin me down on this raag matter. All I can say is SJ always looked upon Bhairavi as a sada-suhaagan raag. Our idea was to create a style of Bhairavi totally different from the Bhairavi of Nauhad. Judge how we changed the entire pattern of Bhairavi in films with Mohabbat ki dastaan and Suno chhoti si gudiya ki lambi kahani. But aren't those two tunes from "Mayurpankh" and "Seema" the Bhairavi of Jaikishan? I queried mischievously.

"There's no such thing as a Shanker Bhairavi or a Jaikishan Bhairavi", retorted Shanker, retaining his cool, "there's only an SJ Bhairavi. "I have put him on the defensive, which is the last thing I want, so I say, leadingly, "Shanker Saab, who but you could have orchestrated Pyar hua ikraar hua (in "Shree 420") and Sub kuchch seekha hum ne (in "Anari"). Whether you care to admit or not it is easy for a musically trained ear to spot out your instrumentation, your orchestration as more ornate, as more rich, in style and content alike. To my ears, Shanker, and Shanker alone, could have orchestrated Jaao re jogi tum jaao re the way it came over in "Amrapali" on Vyjayanthimala."

Jaao re jogi tum jaao re was some tune, wasn't it? "reminisced Shanker, "Dance music is the toughest to orchestrate, the integration has to be split-second here. Yes, I rejoice in the style of orchestration I brought to Pyaar hua ikraar hua, Sub kuchch seekha hum ne and Jaao re jogi tum jaao re. As for Vyjayanthimala in , "Amrapali" from the beginning the arrangement was that I would do the dance section of SJ' s music. I took it on since I was a dancer myself."

"In Krishna Kutty's troupe, wasn't it?" I said, If I remember

right, There was a toda, Vyjayanthimala, as the heroine of "Patrani", disputed. Whereupon you assumed perform-ing attire and danced it out on the sets to show her how it could be done.

"True?" said Shanker, "But that's not to say I taught an accomplished dancer like Vyjayanthimala something, I merely showed her how it had to be done for my music."

"This business of showing performers how to do their jobs, weren't you taking on too much, was it not resented?" I asked.

"But why should it be resented?" enquired Shanker, "Remember, something resented only when the person showing you how does not know the job. And I new music and dance inside out, so I could tell them exactly what to do. But for this knowledge and background, you just couldn't have got what you call SJ's distinctive orchestral integration. I myself play the Piano, the Dholak, the Tabla, the Accordion and of course, the Harmonium."

"That's why, whether the instrumentalist be Shivkumar Sharma, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Ramnarain or Rais Khan, he has to play exactly what I want for precisely the length I want. They are very good players in their chosen field, that's why they are being paid extra well to play. But to play exactly what I want. Nobody dictates to me. If a composer knows his job, nobody can dictate to him."

Did Shanker then not know his job after Jaikishan died? Why was he not able to dictate like in his prime?

He was not able to dictate because the first thing filmmakers did, upon Jaikishan's death, was to withdraw the 60-piece orchestra facility SJ had always commanded. And minus this big orchestra, Shanker was a musician with his hands tied behind his back.

There were 17 SJ releases in the year 1971, in which Jaikishan died. Out of this, 12 films were released by September 12, 1971, the day Jaikishan died. They were flops for the major part, so Jaikishan had to carry the can for their fate as much as Shanker. But then Jaikishan was no more, only Shanker lived on to see the remaining five films, too, fail in 1971. This was the signal for producers to withdraw the multipiece orchestra facility from Shanker. Sharp-speaking, Shanker had not made too many friends in the industry. So they hit him where and when it hurt most.

It was a pathetic sight to see Shanker reduced to using the musician as a "surrogate" to give birth, in his 1972 "Seema" avatar to something like Jab bhi yeh dil udaas hota hai jaane kaun aas paas hota hai. The tune proved one point - that Shanker could capture the old SJ magic only if given the spot aid of the multipiece orchestra that was, by 1971, part of his compositional mindset.

In one and only one film was Shanker accorded this multipiece facility without reserve after Jaikishan's passing - in Manoj Kumar's "Sanyasi". Sohanlal Kanwar, as an old faithful, reposed full faith in the man and Shanker lived up to his promise made to me that, one day, he would do a full theme in Bhairavi to explose the myth of who had mastery over this raag.

I was there as Lata Mangeshkar was brought back into Shanker's "Sanyasi" re-cording room by Mukesh for Sun bal brahmachari main hoon kanya kunwari. It was a superbly crafted tune and Shanker,

taking time off from the middle, came over to whisper to me, wait and watch how I do it again, this time all by myself!"

The "Sanyasi" theme-song, Chal sanyasi mandir mein, was a stunner, lending Hema Malini a new seductive allure altogether. And has there been a better parody of the bhajan than Baali umariya bhajan karun kaise. Recall, too, the catchy motif of Yeh hai Geeta ka gyan. The well-integrated score of "Sanyasi", masterfully orchestrated, was proof positive that Shanker still had it in him. All he needed was a comprehending filmmaker.

Raj Kapoor could have assumed that comprehending role afresh when he broke with Laxmikant-Pyarelal after, "Prem Rog". The way for Raj Kapoor to hit LP at that 1982 "Prem Rog" point, was to bring SJ back into RK, in the persona of Shanker. Indeed, when Raj Kapoor first dropped Shanker in favour of Laxmikant-Pyarelal for "Bobby", Shanker, naive as they come, had no idea he was out of RK. There was one more big RK film on the anvil and Shanker's belief was he would be doing that film! Hence his spirited rejoinder: "Let LP come into RK, now Raj Saab will know on the spot whose work is better."

Note here that Hasrat Jaipuri in 1994 Interview clearly stated that: "Some tunes of RK's late "Bobby" and "Prem Rog" were tuned by SJ at their private sittings. It was only Raj Kapoor to remember those SJ type tunes and LP used it" and became Hit thanks to SJ.

Even after losing out on "Bobby," the man was the picture of confidence. His musical grip, Shanker knew, was intact, so he felt he needed to fear no one. He lost bounce only when told that R.D.Burman, not he, was to do "Dharam Karam". To be told that this "Dharam Karam" theme of Randhir Kapoor needed a younger style of music associated with RD, was the crowning insult to Shanker. Any score by SJ and RK has always been a joint endeavour with Raj Kapoor calling the shots. To be told now therefore that, in effect, SJ's tunes for Randhir Kapoor's "Kal Aaj Aur Kal" tunes, like Bhanwre ki gunjan hai mera dil, Aap yahaan aaye kis liye, Jab hum hange saat saal ke and Tik tik tik tik chaltei jaaye ghadi, were not trendy enough for the "Kal Aaj Aur Kal" youth theme of Randhir Kapoor was a wrench. After that, Shanker was never the same ebullient RK music man again, though he kept saying, "I still believe Raj Saab will send for me one day."

That one day never came, but the day came (April 26, 1987) when Raj Kapoor materialised an Doordarshan to pay his Shraddhanjali tribute to Shanker. There were tears in Raj's eyes. But those tears remained perched on the eyelids. Those tears refused to come down because they were tears of remorse. Remorse for the man who had helped Raj Kapoor set RK on its musical feet with the able aid of a protege called Jaikishan Panchal. Shanker Singh had left his native Punjab to settle in Andhra so as to be able to create Ramaiyya yastayaiyya for Raj Kapoor. And Raj Kapoor has jettisoned Shanker when he needs RK's psychological back-up most. Maybe Raj Kapoor was not quite his own master after the gigantic losses piled up by, "Mera Naam Joker" and "Kal Aaj Aur Kal". But that could not mitigate Raj's sense of guilt in this tele-moment of traumatic thanksgiving to Shanker. Those penitent tears finally dropped from Raj Kapoor's eyelids. Those tears were for

Raj Kapoor, perhaps, a pearly reminder, of the elaborate dream sequence Shanker had composed for "Mera Naam Joker", a dream sequence to beat the "Awaara" dream sequence. A dream sequence that had failed to become a screen reality because, by that "Mera Naam Joker" stage, Raj Kapoor had run out of the resources needed to picturise it.

Shanker's one wish was that I should accompany him to his Famous music hall at Mahalakshmi for him to recreate for me the aura of that "Mera Naam Joker" dream sequence. That day, too, never came. I could get only an inkling of that dream- sequence number from the way Shanker played it on that peerless piano. And what he played was clinching evidence of the fact that here was the total musician in action. Here was a man who believed that only if he wore a kurta could he create something like Sapnon ki suhani duniyo ko for Dilip Kumar in "Shikast", only if he wore a suit could he create something like Dost dost na raha for Raj Kapoor's "Sangam"!

He was a peculiar man, tart of tongue, but soft at heart. Even while being very strict with his musicians, he had the knack of carrying them with him by obtaining for them very generous payment from producers. It was this straight rapport with his musicians that was denied to Shanker when the industry cut his orchestral strength. It was like severing his umbilical cord.

"Shanker-Jaikishani" sangeet died the day the industry tried to dictate to Shanker. Shanker was effective only so long as he was dictating the strength of his orchestra and thereby calling the tune. The total musician was thus a total misfit in the end. As Shanker shuffled off his mortal coil leaving all his nine Filmfare Best Music Director awards behind, Na haathi na ghoda hai wahaan paidal hi jaana hai became his self-composed epitaph .
Shankarabharanam QUIZ

The Carnatic Shankarabharanam approximates closest to the Hindustani Bhilawal. And it was in the Bhilawal that Shanker composed Ichak daana beechak daana for "Shree 420". In Yamani Bhilawal to be precise. Wherever the score was predominantly classical, as in "Pooja" and "Basant Bahaar", Shanker's was the dominant composing hand Jaikishan's grip was essentially Hindustani, Shanker's was Hindustani and Carnatic. This gave Shanker an added advantage, especially in scoring dance music. Let us, in this light, look at 10 classical numbers identifiably composed by Shanker and venture to pick out the raag in which they have been scored.

- 1) It was a Carnatic raag widely employed in Hindustani music that Shanker picked up to tune Yaad na jaaye beete dinon ki on Rajendra Kumar in "Dil Ek Mandir", bringing to full circle the triangular romance of Rajendra Kumar, Meena Kumari and Raaj Kumar. Name that Carnatic raag in which Mohammad Rafi comes so feelingly over as Yaad na jaaye beete dinon ki. Kirvani
- 2) Padmini is the 'peachy' picture of Southern dancing beauty as she moves on twinkle toes to put across Jhanana jhan jhanake apni paayal in "Aashiq": It is a dance tune which has Padmini articulating Shanker's composing mastery in all its orchestral integrity. Which is the raag in which Shanker calls the steps on Padmini in Jhanana jhan jhanake apni paayal? Shankara
- 3) What were the steps Padmini could take that Vyjayantimala

could not match on the screen: "Patrani" Vyjayantimala was almost totally in the compositional hands of Shanker in the film of that name, co-starring her with Pradeep Kumar Shanker was particularly proud of the fluidity of movement he achieved on Vyjayantimala in Kabhi to aa kabhi to aa kabhi to aa Sapnon mein aake chale jaane wale. Which is the raag? Bhairavi

4) Bharat Bhooshan's Nimmi co-starrer, "Basant Bahaar" was originally assigned to Anil Biswas, but its producer-hero had reluctantly to settle for Shanker-Jaikishan under distributor pressure. Whereupon Shanker took it upon himself to demonstrate to Bharat Bhooshan that SJ's hold on our classical tradition was no less firm than that of Anil Biswas. The "Basant Bahaar" score largely masterminded by Shanker ranks as an all-time Hindi film classic. Shanker mixed Pilu with Bhairavi surpassingly cleverly in Rafi's Badi der bhayi badi der bhayi. But it was one pure raag by Shanker in that transcendental climax number of Rafi for Bharat Bhooshan: Duniya na bhaye mohe ab to bula le. Identify the raag. Todi

5) Shanker's approach to tuning was such that he could not help flaunting his musical knowledge. Next to Bhairavi, he favoured Darbari. Shanker went on record on Radio Ceylon as saying he needed the sombre notes of Darbari to create something as profound as Tu pyaar ka saagar hai for Manna Dey on Balraj Sahni in "Seema". In the Same "Seema", Shanker was ultra mellow in that all-time classical piece he composed for Lata to vivify Nutan: Manmohana bade jhote. Which is that raag? Jaijaiwanti

6) From the sublime to the rip-roaring Manna Dey and chorus blues-chaser: Lapak jhapak tu aa re badarva. Bhudo Advani's Sar ki khet, is a "Boot Polish" memory that can never fade. The songs for "Boot Polish" had to be done in a tearing hurry, so this quizmaster asked Shanker how he had hit upon the Lapak jhapak tune. "Woh to kuchch halka-phulka bana diya tha", said Shanker dismissively. But that halka-phulka Lapak jhapak number was in the same sonorous raag as Ustad Amir Khan's Jhanak jhanak payal baaje. In which raag did Manna Dey materialise on Bhudo Advani in Lapak jhapak tu aa re badarva? Adana

7) It was Raj Kapoor who handpicked Bhairavi as SJ's modernised counter to Naushad, starting with "Barsaat" itself. Indeed, five of SJ's 10 songs in "Barsaat" are in Bhairavi. To wit, Barsaat mein, Mujhe kisi se pyaar ho gaya, Ab mera kaun sahara, Chod gaye baalam and Main zindaagi mein hardam rota hi raha hoon. The last-named number by Rafi sounded a hangover of Husnlal -Bhagatram, only because Shanker had been that composing duos assistant. Likewise, the raag employed by Shanker in composing for Lata, Meri aankhon mein bus gaya koyi re was of Husnlal-Bhagatram. In which raag did Meri aankhon mein bus gaya koyi re come over on Nargis in "Barsaat"? Pahadi

8) How well Jaikishan had learnt the classical ropes from Shanker became manifest as he came up with Jhanak jhanak tori baje payaliya for Manna Dey in "Mere Huzoor". This one was in the same raag as Shanker's Mujhe tum se kuchch bhi na chahiye for Mukesh on Raj Kapoor in "Kanhaiya". Going even further back to Raj Kapoor's, "Awara", we had in the same Mukesh's voice in the same raag, Hum tujh se mohabbat kar ke sanam. Moving from Jaikishan's

Jhanak jhanak tori to Shanker's Mujhe tumse kuchch bhi to the same Shanker's Hum tujh se mohabbat kar ke sanam, can you pick out the raag in which the three tunes unfold? Darbari Kaanada
 9) Can't Lokendra Sharma at Vividh Bharati do something to see that one of the finest lullabies by Lata, composed by Shanker for Amiya Chakraborty's "Kathputli" So jaa re so jaa mere raaj so jaa, is heard more often? It reveals Shanker, orchestrally flamboyant most of the time to be soft as a whisper. It is a Lata lullaby to treasure. In which raag does Lata render So jaa re so jaa in "Kathputli"? Chandranandan

10) Finally, a duet composed by Shanker: Asha-Manna Dey's Re man sur mein gaa from "Lal Patthar". This one was chosen by the Sur Singar Samsad as the best classical song of the year 1971 and this quizmaster faced no end of flak for being a convener party to the selection. The truth is, the judges were evenly divided, so we had finally to abide by the verdict of Sur-Singar's technical adviser, the legendary G.N Joshi. And Joshi was clear in his mind that Shanker (or whoever) had struck the most authentic classical notes in Asha-Manna's Re man sur mein gaa. Identify the raag. Yaman

RMIM Archive Article "227".

Shanker Tribute Part - 2

Posted by: Hemant Parikh (parikh@xtra.co.nz)

Author: Hemant Parikh

Source: various - Screen, Raju Bharatan

Some Strange Sparks

So much passion for Hindi film music is rarely seen - not in our time, at least. We have heard of Hindi film song specialists, of Hindi film song critics, of Hindi film song researchers but an amazing and unabashed and passionate lover of Hindi film songs like this man, Suhaas Khandke, we have rarely seen. He has no pretensions of being a man with great knowledge about Hindi film songs but he is thrilled to be known as a lover of good Hindi film songs ("most songs today are sheer trash or a mere rehash of all the good songs of the good old days"), an actor, has been a filmmaker, is totally dedicated to acting now but his first love, his only passion, continues to be the great Hindi film songs of the great past. Suhaas is a walking-talking encyclopedia on Hindi film songs. He has all the answers to all the questions you always wanted to ask about all those great directors, all those great lyri-cists, and their great music. He knows Hindi film songs on his finger-tips, on his tongue-tip, literally.

He knows almost everything about every music direc-tor's body of work. On the occasion of the seventh death anniversary (April 26) of music director Shank-er (of the all-time great duo of Shanker-Jaikishan) Suhaas throws some rare light on the work, on the songs of Shanker, a genius for generations to come. Take it from Suhaas Khandke, the man who knows, who loves Hindi film songs...

It is an open secret by now, that both Shanker and Jaikishan worked inde-pendently of each other. Both com-posed and arranged their own songs separately. After the initial couple of years Shanker tuned Shailendra's songs and Jaikishan tuned Hasrat Jaipuri's songs only, with very few exceptions, the most noteworthy of which are, Shailendra's Oh basanti pawan pagal and Mera naam Raju from "Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai" and Jeevan ke do rahe par from "Choti Si Mulakat" tuned by Jaikishan and Hasrat's Jab ishq kahin kho jata hai from "Arzoo", Taron se pyare from "Deewana", Kaise Samjhaoon from "Suraj" and Dekha babu ched ka maza from "Shararat", tuned by Shanker.

Both were complete music direc-tors, having mastered every aspect of music. I have my favourite list of 250 songs of each of the duo. April 26 happens to be the seventh death anniversary of Shanker. In honour of the musical genius, I chronologically present 100 of my favourite songs of Shanker Singh Raisingh Suryavanshi, of Shanker-Jaikishan fame.

- 1) Aa jao tadapte hain arman 'Aawara' - 1951
- 2) Tere bina aag yeh chandni 'Aawara' - 1951
- 3) Aai mere dil kahin aur chal 'Daag' - -1952

- 4) Raja ki aayegi baaraat 'Aah' - 1953
- 5) Tu pyaar ka saagar hai 'Seema' - 1955
- 6) Mera juta hai Japani 'Shree 420' - 1955
- 7) Pyar huwa ekraar huwa 'Shree 420' - 1955
- 8) Sur na saje kya gooon main - 'Basant Bahaar' - 1956
- 9) Nain mile chain kahan 'Basant Bahaar' - 1956
- 10) Yeh raat bhigi bhigi 'Chori Chori' - 1956
- 11) Jahan main jati hoon wahin 'Chori Chori' - 1956
- 12) Aaja ke intezaar mein 'Halaku' - 1956
- 13) Dil ka na karna aitbar 'Halaku' - - 1956;
- 14) Nakhrewali 'New Delhi' - -1956
- 15) Bol re kathputli 'Kathputli' - 1957
- 16) Yeh mera diwanapan - 'Yahudi' - 1958
- 17) Tera jana dil ke armanon ka 'Anari' - 1959
- 18) Kisi ki muskarahton pe 'Anari' - 1959
- 19) Sab kuch seekha humne 'Anari' - 1959
- 20) Dil ki nazar se 'Anari' - 1-1959'
- 21) Bhaiyya mere rakhi ke - 'Choti Bahen' - 1959
- 22) Bagon main baharon mein 'Choti Bahen' - 1959
- 23) Ruk ja oh jane wali 'Kanhaiya' - 1959
- 24) Yaad aayee aadhi raat ko 'Kanhaiya' - 1959
- 25) Kahe jhoom jhoom raat yeh 'Love Marriage' - -1959
- 26) Mujh ko yaaron maaf karna 'Main Nashe Main Hoon' - 1959
- 27) Ajeeb dastan hai yeh 'Dil Apna Aur Preet Parayee' - 1960
- 28) Dil apna aur preet parayee 'Dil Apna Preet Para-ye'e' - 1960
- 29) Mera dil ab tera 'Dil Apna Preet Parayee' - 1960
- 30) Matwali naar thumak thumak 'Ek Phool Choor Kaante' - 1960
- 31) Aa ab laut chale 'Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai' - 1960
- 32) Kya hua yeh mujhe 'Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai' - 1960
- 33) Hoton pe sachhai rahti hai 'Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai' - 1960
- 34) Hai aag hamare seene mein 'Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai' -1960
- 35) Begani shaadi mein 'Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai' - 1960
- 36) Ja ja ja mere bachpan 'Junglee' - 1961
- 37) Tum to dil ke taar chedkar 'Roop Ki Rani Choron Ka Raja' -1961
- 38) Yeh to kaho khon ho tum 'Aashiq' - 1962
- 39) Mehtaab tera chehra 'Aashiq' - 1962
- 40) Lo aayee milan ki raat 'Aashiq' - 1962
- 41) Tum jo hamare 'Aashiq' - 1962
- 42) Cheda mere dil ne 'Asli Naqli' - 1962
- 43) Kal ki daulat - 'Asli Naqli' - 1962
- 44) Tera mera pyar amar 'Asli Naqli' - 1962
- 45) Dil tera diwana hai 'Dil Tera Diwana' - 1962
- 46) Mujhe kitna pyar hai 'Dil Tera Diwana' - 1962
- 47) Bol meri taqdeer mein 'Hariyali Aur Raasta' - 1962
- 48) Teri yaad dil se 'Hariyali Aur Raasta' - 1962
- 49) Laakhon tare aasman mein 'Hariyali Aur Raasta' - 1962
- 50) Main chali main chali 'Professor' - 1962
- 51) Khulli palak mein 'Professor' - 1962
- 52) Choti si yeh duniya 'Rongoli' - 1962
- 53) Yaad na jaaye 'Dil Ek Mandir' - 1963 .
- 54) Juhi ki kali neri 'Dil Ek Mandir' - 1963
- 55) Ruk jaa raat taheer jaa re 'Dil Ek Mandir' - 1963
- 56) Tum hi ho mere 'Ek Dil Sou Afsane' -1963

- 57) Manre toohi bataa 'Hum-rahi' - 1963
- 58) Bahar banke woh muskuraye 'Apne Huwe Paraye' - -1964
- 59) Apne huwe paraye 'Apne Huwe Paraye' - 1964
- 60) Aa gale lag jaa 'April Fool' - 1964
- 61) Oh sanam tere ho gaye 'Aayee Milan Ki Bela' - 1964
- 62) Aaj kal mein dhal gaya 'Beti Bete' - 1964
- 63) Jane wale zara hoshiyar 'Raj Kumar' - 1964
- 64) Aajo aayee bohar 'Raj Kumar' - 1964
- 65) Dilruba dil pe tu 'Raj Kumar' - 1964
- 66) Har dil jo pyar karega 'Sangam' - 1964
- 67) Dost dost na raha 'Sangam' - 1964
- 68) Oh mere sanam 'Sangam' - 1964
- 69) Hum ne jafa na seekhi 'Zindagi' - -1964
- 70) Muskura laadle muskura 'Zindagi' - 1964
- 71) Hum kaale hain to kya hua 'Gumnaam' - 1965
- 72) Lal chadi maidan khadi 'Jaanwar' - 1965
- 73) Tumhe yaad karte karte 'Amrapali' - 1966
- 74) Tadap yeh din raat 'Amrapali' -1966
- 75) Jao re jogi tum 'Amrapali' -1966
- 76) Tumhari kasam tum bahut yaad 'Gaban' - 1966
- 77) Aajoa re aa zara aa 'Love In Tokyo' - 1966
- 78) Kaise samjhaon 'Suraj' - 1966
- 79) Sajjan re jhoot mat bolo 'Teesri Kasam' - -1966
- 80) Hai gazab kahin tara - 'Teesri Kasam' - 1966
- 81) Aa...abhi jaa 'Teesri Kasam' - 1966
- 82) Raat ke humsafar 'An Evening In Paris' -1967
- 83) Joshe jawani haayre 'Around The World' - 1967
- 84) Dil laga kar aapse 'Around The World' - 1967
- 85) Taaron se pyare 'Deewana' - 1967
- 86) Panchi re oh panchi 'Hare Kanch Ki Chudiyani' - 1967
- 87) Dhani chunri pahen 'Hare Kanch Ki Chudiyani' - 1967
- 88) Savere wali gadi se 'Laa Saheb' - 1967
- 89) Dil ki girah khol do 'Raat Aur Din' - 1967
- 90) Jeena hum ko raas na aaya 'Raat Aur Din' - 1967
- 91) Maim gaooon tum so jao 'Brahmachari' - -1968
- 92) Mere tumhare beech me ab to 'Jhuk Gaya Aasman' - 1968
- 93) Nazar mein bijlee 'Prince' - 1969
- 94) Jeena yahan marna yahan 'Mera Naam Joker' - 1970
- 95) Kehta hai joker 'Mera Naam Joker' - 1970
- 96) Sub se bada nadaan wohi hai 'Pehchan' - 1970
- 97) Haina bolo bolo 'Andaz' - 1971
- 98) Chum chum baaje re payaliya 'Jaane Anjaane' - -1971
- 99) Geet gata hun main 'Lal Patthar' - 1971
- 100) Thoda ruk jayegi to tera 'Patanga' - 1971

Suhaas Khandke

Shanker

Born: Punjab

Setteled in Hydrebad (Andhra Pradesh)

Died 26th April 1986

Assisted Husnlal Bhagatram

- He Played Accordion, Harmonium, Piano, Sitar, Dholak & Tabla

- Shanker Jaikishan were made for each other many of their films

Silver Jubilee. They were highest Paid Music Directors. Till 1964

they charged upto Rs. 3 Lakhs per film, In 1964 for the film

"Arzoo" they were paid Rs. 5 Lakhs.

Best Music Director Filmfare awards won by Shanker Jaikishan

1956 - Chori Chori

1959 - Anari

1960 - Dil Apna Aur Preet Parayi

1962 - Proffesor

1966 - Suraj

1968 - Brahamchari

They Scored Hat-trick by winning three awards in a row.

1970 - Pechaan

1971 - Mera Naam Joker

1972 - Be-Imaan

Tribute to Immortal Shanker Posted by Hemant Parikh 4th May 1997.

RMIM Archive Article "116".

The unparalleled talent of Sajjad

Posted by: apn@cs.buffalo.edu (Ajay P Nerurkar)

Source: Times of India

Author: Radha Rajadhyaksha

Arrogant, stubborn, idiosyncratic, all these adjectives fit Sajjad Hussain remarkably well, but so did another - gifted. This obituary piece, culled from the pages of the Times of India, tells the story of a man who wouldn't compromise his art for the sake of his career. On a more mundane note, it also places his age at death at a more reasonable 79 years and reveals the fact that "Yeh hawa yeh raat yeh chandani" required 17 re-takes before being approved. I wonder how Talat's teetering voice stood the strain.

-

Ajay

The unsung genius

- Radha Rajadhyaksha

They could be apocryphal or they could be true, but two anecdotes about the late Sajjad Hussain are now virtually part of Hindi film music lore. One: how, during a recording, he called out tartly to Lata Mangeshkar struggling at the mike with one of his intricate compositions, "Yeh Naushad miyan ka gaana nahin hai, aap ko mehnat karni padegi." Two: how at a music directors' meet, eschewing the customary diplomacy of that era, he walked up to Madan Mohan and demanded belligerently, "What do you mean by stealing my song?" ("Yeh hawa yeh raat yeh chandani" from his 'Sangdil' had just found a new avatar as "Tujhe kya sunaon main dilruba" in Madan Mohan's 'Aakhri Dao'.)

These two hallmarks of Sajjad's identity - his penchant for complex, many-layered compositions and his singularly forthright nature - stuck to him like a second skin throughout his life. And they combined in a rather unfortunate manner to diminish the potential brilliance of a career that could have ranked among the most celebrated.

It was not the intricacy of his compositions that put Sajjad at a disadvantage - he worked, after all, in an era that belonged to music directors with erudition and firm classical foundations. Where he lost out was in his handling of producers and directors, sometimes musical illiterates, who sought to simplify or alter his tunes - his contemporaries dealt with such "suggestions" rather more tactfully than Sajjad, who would immediately [get] up and walk out of the film. "He was an extremely talented man, very knowledgeable about music, but his temperament was his undoing," says Naushad. "Even if someone made a minor suggestion, he'd turn on him and say, 'What do you know about music?' He fought with almost everyone. Because of this, he sat at home most of his life and wasted his talent. But the body of work he has produced, small as it might be, ranks among the best in Hindi film music." Music historian Raju Bharatan, whose interaction with Sajjad goes back a long way, has a somewhat different insight into the man.

"It's true he wouldn't let musically unqualified people interfere with his work, but the popular perception of him being stubborn is not right," he says. "Sajjad had a rational explanation for every action of his. You had to know him to recognise his tremendous erudition, the fact that he was far superior to every other music director in the industry."

This erudition, the cornerstone of Sajjad's work, is recalled affectionately by Naushad. "He took pride in his ustaadi," he says. "He'd tell the producer, the same time he did create simple, yet extraordinary, compositions - for example, "Yeh kaisi ajab daastan ho gayi hai" from 'Rustom Sohraab'."

Indeed, as far as Sajjad's formidable talent goes, there are no two opinions. Madan Mohan, when confronted with the charge of plagiarism, reportedly told him, "I take pride in the fact that I lifted your tune, not that of some second- or third-rater." Anil Biswas, himself hailed as a creative genius, declared in an interview that Sajjad was the only original composer in Hindi films. "All of us, including myself, turned to some source for inspiration," he said. "This, Sajjad never needed to do. Each note of the music he composed was his own."

Sajjad's rather chequered career began in 1944 with Shaukar Husain Rizvi's favoured over those of Bux - indeed, his "Badnaam mohabbat kaun kare, dil ko ruswa kaun kare", rendered by Noorjehan, is remembered to this day by connoisseurs. His range was noteworthy - if the music of 'Dost' had the "Punjabiati" that Rizvi demanded, Sajjad could also come up with lilting Arabic melodies as in 'Rustom Sohraab' or classical Hindustani tunes. All this from a man whose only formal training in music was a stint on the sitar under his father.

Sajjad's talent was only matched by his almost compulsive perfectionism. He was perhaps the only music director who had no assistants and did everything himself, from the initial tuning of the lyrics to the orchestration. "He would even write down the bols for the tabla player," says his son Nasir Ahmed. "It was not like he'd begin the song and accept any theka the tabalchi chose to strike; everything had to be done according to his dictates."

"He was very particular," recalls Lata Mangeshkar, who was known to be almost apprehensive of a Sajjad recording. "If even a minor instrument went slightly out of sur, he'd stop the whole recording and begin again." This perfectionism necessitated 17 re-takes for "Yeh hawa yeh raat yeh chandani", but Sajjad still remained unsatisfied with an interlude piece in the song - played by a sitar and a sarangi maestro who are among the top names in classical music today. "Till the day he died, whenever he heard the piece he'd sigh, "They didn't play it like I told them to," recalls his son amusedly.

This perfectionism extended to his own scores as well. "Sajjad is the only composer I know who used to rethink his own work," says Bharatan, "and that is a measure of growth. For instance, he used to say that Lata's "Aaj mere naseeb mein" from 'Hulchul' was his best work, but later began to feel it could have been much better. He'd also dismiss his compositions like "Phir tumhari yaad ayi ay sanam" and "Dil mein sama gaye sajan" out of hand. "They're perfectly ordinary compositions," he told me. "Why are

you making such a big deal of them ?"

If Sajjad was known primarily for his film scores, there was also another facet to his art - he was an accomplished albeit self-taught mandolin player who could stun even purists with his ability to play Hindustani classical music on this rather uninspiring western instrument. His performances at concerts alongside the biggest names in classical music spurred rave reviews, and connoisseurs would be agog at his ability to coax the meend, for instance, out of the instrument of play entire ragas with the help of the tuning key. "In the hands of Ustad Sajjad Husain," said a review of a Madras concert in 1982, "the mandolin bore the halo of a Ravi Shankar sitar or [an] Ali Akbar sarod. His playing is that of a mighty maestro."

The genius of the man, however, was destined to remain unsung. His uncompromising nature and marked indifference to material comforts pushed him further and further into oblivion. But even in the last years of his life, he retained his imperial pride - Lata Mangeshkar, the one person in the film industry he was very close to, recalls how, when she offered to arrange his mandolin concerts, he retorted, "If you want to hear the mandolin, I'll come and play for you at home, but I don't want you arranging anything for me."

On July 21, the 79-year-old composer breathed his last. The leit-motif of his lifetime, isolation, cast its shadow over his death too, when, with the notable exception of Khayyam and Pankaj Udhas, nobody else from the film industry bothered to turn up to pay him their last respects. "It hurt," admits his son, "but what is far more important is that to the last day of his life, my father was happy. There was no bitterness, no regrets. He could have been hugely successful, made piles of money, but the only thing he wanted was to be acknowledged as a great musician, and to live life on his own terms. And I think he achieved that."

RMIM Archive Article "372".

Vasant Desai - 1

Posted by: Veena S Nayak (vnayak@acsu.buffalo.edu)

Source: SIRC publications

Author: Suresh Chandvankar

Friends,

Beauty and integrity is a rare combination of traits in the world of film music. As film-making changed its character from being an expression of creative and artistic impulses to a business venture driven by profit motives, so did the qualities that make for a "successful" music director. The ability to deliver music that is inextricably linked to the film situation or do justice to the lyrics gave way to expertise in the bait-n-hook approach: sell the songs so that they come in to see the movie. In such a milieu, the "winners" were the ones who could capture the charts, grab the sales and bag the Filmfare awards. "Keeping up with the times" has become a much-touted virtue in a film composer. I believe it is a euphemism for mediocrity and compromise (the two usually go hand-in-hand): those who change their tune with this and that trend usually have no musical truths or ideals of their own.

It is the quality of uncompromising idealism combined with the manifest beauty of his compositions that endears Vasant Desai to me. He had a musical vision which remained intact to the very end of his life. His ideals, increasingly anachronistic in the quickie era, must surely have cost him in terms of awards and ratings, but one heard nary a word of bitterness from him. As for his music, it speaks for itself. Readers need no introduction to his grasp of classical Hindustani and folk traditions, the innovative use of instruments and his adeptness at the choral element. I have yet to go back to one of his compositions and not find something new in there.

The two-part posting on Vasant Desai was originally intended as a tribute to the composer on his death anniversary (Dec 22), but I was unable to put it up on time due to various reasons. The loss of timeliness, however, has brought substantive gain in content: since then I have obtained the tapes of a listening session on Vasant Desai held by the Society of Indian Record Collectors in Bombay in 1995. His nephew, Vikas Desai, spoke extensively on the composer at that session; Part II will present his reminiscences.

Part I is a translation of an article which appeared in the Marathi newspaper, Maharashtra Times, dated 25th March 1995. Thanks are due to Ajay Nerurkar: my endless queries about Marathi words must have been an irritating disturbance to his meditations on complexity theory, but he was ever patient and obliging.

Veena

.....
TYAANCHA SUR, TYAANCHA TAAL.....

(His SUR, His Taal)

By Suresh Chandvankar

He had a fondness for exercise and was endowed with a strong, muscular physique. It is almost twenty years since music director Vasant Desai expired in a shocking accident. However, his compositions continue to be cherished favourites of music lovers even today.

Vasantrao was born in 1912 in the village of Sonawade which was in the Kudal taluk of Sawantwadi (now known as Sindhudurg). His father passed away when he was eight years old; Vasantrao and his elder brother were raised by their mother. His maternal grandfather was a keertankaar. The oves and bhajans that he heard from his mother and grandfather had a deep, lasting effect on Vasantrao's impressionable mind.

For his education, Vasantrao stayed with his paternal grandfather who was also lived in Kudal taluk. Here he was exposed to the dashAvatari plays wherein he played bit roles and saved enough money to buy an old harmonium. From that point onward, a permanent bond was established between him and the notes of the harmonium.

In 1927, at the age of eighteen, Vasantrao left Kudal and came to Kolhapur. In those days, Kolhapur was in all respects 'Kalapur'. There he met V. Shantaram and entered the acting department of his newly-formed Prabhat Company. He had to work without pay for an entire year, but by working on all the varied aspects film-making, he gained invaluable experience which proved useful throughout the rest of his life.

Vasantrao had a penchant for physical training, acting and music. His build was such as befits a wrestler. He also displayed his acting skills by performing various roles. But finally, it was as a music director that he found his niche. When Prabhat moved to Pune, Vasantrao went along with the Company. In view of Vasantrao's passion for music and his expertise on various musical instruments, Govindrao Tembe took him on as an assistant. Vasantrao worked with Master Vinayak who was also an assistant to Govindrao. In addition, he got the opportunity to sing in the chorus song, "Jai Jai Rajadhiraj" in the film "Ayodhyecha Raja".

In the latter part of the Prabhat phase, he worked as an assistant to Master Krishnarao and Keshavrao Bhole. He played a significant role in composing the numerous hit songs of Prabhat talkies and their background scores. Under the tutelage and guidance of these three great music directors, the composer in Vasant Desai began to evolve. Due to the varied nature of the themes of Prabhat films, he also got trained in diverse forms of music.

FIRST OPPORTUNITY

It was around 1940 in Bombay that Vasantrao got his first break in independent music direction with J.B.H Wadia's film 'Shobha'. After V. Shantaram came to Bombay, Vasant Desai was entrusted the responsibility of composing music for films under the Rajkamal banner. At the very mention of

these movies, their songs begin to play in one's mind. The songs sung by Jayashree in his very first film 'Shakuntala' became runaway hits.

His music in films other than those produced by Rajkamal also became very popular. Master Vinayak's 'Subhadra' (1946) and 'Mandir' (1948), Sohrab Modi's 'Narasimha Avtaar' (1949), 'Sheesh Mahal' (1950) and 'Jhansi Ki Rani' (1953), Paul Zill's 'Hindustan Hamara' (1958) and Vijay Bhatt's 'Goonj Uthi Shehnai' (1959) came to be known for his music. The background score in Sunil Dutt's songless 'Yaaden'(1964) gave the film a unique effect... In 'Guddi' he opened up the field of Hindi playback singing to a new voice, Vani Jairam.

[.. Was the Lata solo 'Dekha hai sapna koi' edited out of the film? - V ..]

Through his manifold compositions, Vasantrya provided music in the field of Marathi stage as well. He has composed for almost ten Marathi dramas and twenty Marathi films. The titles which immediately come to mind are the plays 'Panditrao Jagannath', 'Jai Jai Gaurishankar', 'Dev Deenaghari DhAvala', 'Saubhadra' and the films 'SaakharpuDa', 'Hee Maajhi Lakshmi', 'Kanchanganga' and 'Shyaamchi Aayi'.

In the last fifteen years of his life, Vasantrya was completely involved in his enterprise of 'Chorus Songs'. 'Ek sUr, ek taal' was its central idea. He achieved the feat of making thousands/lakhs of ordinary people sing in unison. The idea for this endeavour took seed in a trivial incident. In 1950, Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had organized a baithak in Delhi. At the gathering, a government official contemptuously remarked on the ineptitude of Indian school-children: two of them could not sing even the national anthem in one sUr and one taal, he said. Vasantrya heard this but said nothing. The music director in him was roused. He vowed then and there that he would make not just two, but thousands and lakhs of children and youths sing in one sUr and one taal.

He didn't stop with a mere vow; painstaking efforts were expended to implement the idea. He researched similar projects undertaken in foreign countries and began to teach group-singing of 'Jana Gana Mana' in several high schools of Bombay. One day, Dassera, a lakh children sang in harmony at Shivaji Park; Pandit Nehru was present at that programme and was visibly moved on hearing the chorus songs.

The project received considerable support from the Maharashtra Government. An office for the project 'Ek sUr Ek Taal' was instituted in two rooms at Ravindra Natya Mandir (* in Bombay *). Two or three camps were organised each month. The ideas of teaching and singing patriotic songs and chorus songs began to gain momentum. They elicited the cooperation of newcomers as well as veterans in music: BaaL Deshpande, Sharad Jambhekar, Prabhakar Nagvekar, Vasantrya Achrekar, Jaiwant Kulkarni, Somnath Parab, etc. The undertaking also began to widen in scope to areas outside

Bombay and Vasantryao became totally immersed in this work.
JINKU KIN.VA MARU

1962 dawned. During the Chinese aggression, he requested the poet, G.D. MaadguLkar for a new patriotic song. MaadguLkar was on his way to Pune just then. "You and your patriotic songs", teased Ga-di-ma [.. as G.D. MaadguLkar is affectionately known in Maharashtra - V ..] as he boarded the train. However, he wrote the song in transit and mailed it from Lonavala railway station before proceeding on to Pune. Vasantryao had the song rendered by one lakh children - 'Jinku kin.va maru':

'MaNuskichya shatru sange, | With the enemies of humanity
yuddh aamche suru, | our war has begun;
jinku kin.va maru'. | victory or death!

Until the very end of his life, Vasantryao remained active in this enterprise. Subsequently, 'Vasant Sur Prathish'Than' was established and chorus-singing became widespread in schools. Vasantryao was honoured with a Padmashree. The State Government of Maharashtra bestowed upon him the title of 'SanmAneeya Sangeet Digidarshak'. He was also a member of the Maharashtra Vidhan Parishad.

In his personal life, Vasantryao was intensely devout and of a religious bent of mind. He would spend considerable time on his daily worship and prayers. He frequently visited the holy Aalandi to worship JyAneshwar's shrine and would sing bhajans in the temple.

Vasantryao's cheerful and smiling countenance is seen in various photographs; likewise, the 'gajra' tied around his wrist reveals the 'rasik' in his nature.

AN UNFORTUNATE DAY

22nd December 1975 was the last day of Vasantryao's life. He was working until late evening at the HMV recording studios. Those were the days of Emergency and he had just finished recording a song on the Prime Minister's 20-point programme and some related speeches by Chief Minister Shankarrao Chavan and government official P.K. Sawant. Accompanied by HMV executive Shri Kashinath Jaiswal, he returned to his residence on Peddar Road. On seeing the elevator with both its doors open, Jaiswal got suspicious and said, "Something seems to be wrong with it. Let's walk the stairs slowly". But Vasantryao was tired. Saying "let's see", he stepped into the elevator and before either of them realised what was happening, the machine started and the calamitous accident occurred.

In this sudden and unexpected manner, Vasantryao passed away. However his film compositions and chorus songs are immortal and will continue to inspire generations to come.

There were a couple of errors in the first post made by me on Vasant Desai. Thanks to Aruna Donde for bringing them to my attention. - Veena

The article said:

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> music in the field of Marathi stage as well. He has

> composed for almost ten Marathi dramas and twenty Marathi
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I am reproducing the relevant part of Aruna's email:

1. The play Saubhadra was written by Annasaheb Kirloskar and was first performed on stage in 1886. As far as I know, there has not been any other play by that name in Marathi theatre. Incredible music BTW. There was also a movie made, perhaps in early 60's on the Saubhadra theme, starring Chandrakant, Seema etc., Vasanttrao may have composed the music for the movie but not for the play.
 2. The name of the Vidyadhar Gokhale play is PanditRaj Jagannath, a story of Sanskrit poet Jagannath, who composed Ganga Lahari during Akbar's period and was awarded the title PanditRaj. Bhalchandra Pendharkar was in the Jagannath role and Mama Pendse in the Badshah role. Faboulous music. Songs: Nayan Tuze Jadugar, Madanachi Manjiri, Jaya Gange Bhagirathi etc.
- Aruna.
-

RMIM Archive Article "373".

Vasant Desai - 2

Posted by: Veena S Nayak (vnayak@acsu.buffalo.edu)

Source: SIRC publications

Author: Vikas Desai

Friends,

Here is the second part of the tribute to Vasant Desai. As mentioned in Part I, it presents the talk given by Vasant Desai's nephew, Mr. Vikas Desai, at a listening session in memory of the composer. The programme was held in Bombay by the Society of Indian Record Collectors on 26th March 1995. Readers may remember Mr. Vikas Desai as the co-director (along with Aruna) of films such as 'Shaque' and 'GeherAye'. Vasant Desai and his nephew used to share a residence.

I apologise for the long gap between the two parts of the post: I had severely underestimated the editorial effort required in producing a cohesive transcript of an informal listening session.

Veena

PS: The material presented here is not in the same order as spoken during the program. To maximise readability, I have grouped together anecdotes and comments based on the idea they were intended to convey. Wherever necessary, clarificatory comments have been provided using [* ... *].
The wee hours of the morning - around 3:30-4:00 am. A four-year old boy sleeps while his mother awakens. Having bathed, she starts singing her prayers ('ovees'). Her song filters into his subconscious. It is his introduction to music, this song in his mother's voice, and it enters his very soul. Today, one can choose any of Vasant Desai's compositions and what will strike you immediately is its quality of love. "My song is hummed even in the kitchens; my song has entered the home", he used to say. It was because they embodied 'vAtsalya'.

.....
As a boy, he loved the circus and wanted to join it. Many a late night was spent watching the dashAvatari plays in neighbouring villages. He even became part of a drama company, but gave it up when he found that he was expected to play female roles. Then came the desire to enter films: he grew his hair and went to Kolhapur to live with his uncle who introduced him to V. Shantaram. Vasant Desai was made office-boy at Prabhat Company. On his way home from work in the evenings, he had to walk past the Deval Club near Rajaram College in Kolhapur. In those days, Deval Club was frequented by musical luminaries who did their riyaaaz there at night. Vasantrao (now 14-15 years old) would stand outside and listen. One evening, Deval invited him in. The musicians (such as Faiyyaz Khan, Alam Khan, etc) would say to him: "Kya kar raha hai? Ja paan le aa". Thus, for 2-3 months he fetched paan. Next, they said, "Le yeh tAnpurA

chhed", or "chal sUr lagA". And they taught him how to do so.

Ghulam Haider used to live and work in the neighborhood. He was an expert in povAda (*); Vasantrao learnt it from him. He also learnt from Inayat Khan and the Dagar brothers. [* PovAda is a traditional folk-music form in Maharashtra *] The spirit of inquiry remained strong throughout his life; he never stopped learning. G.D. MaadguLkar once said to him (on his constant striving), "Vasantrao, you are mad", to which he replied, "It is this madness which keeps me alive and fresh". With respect to music, his attitude always was: I am still young; I have not arrived and am still searching.

.....
 He was not paid a salary at Prabhat and hence had no money. In the first two years, his total income was Rs 7. Shahir Amar Shaikh said to him, "Desai, if you do sit-ups every morning; we'll give you a free glass of milk daily from the Company." So, for that free milk, Vasantrao got into the habit of physical training.

.....*
 He was friendly with everyone, but his buddies were few. Master Vinayak was one of them. When the latter produced 'Chhaya' (1936) in Bombay, he wanted Vasant Desai to compose the songs. But Vasantrao was with Shantaram (in Pune) at that time and under the rules of the studio system prevalent in those days, could not work for another banner. So he would take the 6:00 pm train from Pune, reach Bombay at 9:00, record at HMV, board the 3:00 am train back to Pune and report for work at Prabhat by 9:00 am. Since he slept on the train, Vasantrao with a pillow tucked under his arm became a familiar sight.

Vasant Desai's name does not appear in the credits of 'Chhaya'. The music director was Keshavrao BhoLe, who was like a guru to Vasant Desai. Hence the latter was careful never to mention that some songs were actually composed by himself. Many years later, Keshavrao BhoLe, in his book 'Maazha Sangeet', revealed this fact and also that two songs from 'Sant GyAneshwar' (1940; official MD was KB) were composed by Desai.

Thus, while Vasant Desai's first film as a music director was 'Shobha' (1940), he began composing for films at least four years earlier.

.....
 In those days, song recording was in its nascent stages: the singer, chorus and instrumentalists all had to share one mike. At Rajkamal Studios (in Parel, Bombay), the film shooting would take place during the day, the nights being reserved for recording the music as the surroundings were quieter. The pervasive feeling among composers of the time was that they must push for technical progress.

.....*
 Film composers are different from their non-film counterparts. The former has a movie, a director, a script, picturization and a character with a particular emotion. To

all these, he must do justice. Vasantao firmly believed that a music director composes not for himself, but for the film. He would constantly say to me, "You, as an individual, are not important". I would argue and point out, "Look where you are today (due to your attitude) and look where S.D. Burman, Shankar-Jaikishan, etc. are". He would merely smile in response.

.....
 Music is an aural art form but its effect is visual: it creates a picture in the mind's eye. The mark of a true composer is that he weaves an image with his music and effectively conveys the emotions embodied in the words. We have had very few of such music directors; nowadays, there are barely a couple of them. To be sure, there are many who make a lot of money and have scaled the heights of success, but they are mostly tunesmiths. The genuine article is a rarity.

Vasantao used to be extremely conscious of the visuals for which he was providing music. I used to accompany him to the background-music sessions. He would give me a detailed narration about the instruments that he would use for each scene and action of the characters and why he chose them. I remember how he agonized over the title credits of "ShyAmchi Aayee": the choice of instruments for the moment when "Katha: SAne Guruji" appeared on screen was a source of great anxiety to him.

[* SAne Guruji was leading educationist and social reformer in Maharashtra; he was held in high esteem for his qualities of service and simple living *]

"How can I play a violin or a tabla for his name; that would drag him down". For a while he toyed with the idea of displaying the name sans music, but then he felt that even that would be an injustice to SAne Guruji. Eventually, he hit upon a novel idea: when his name flashed on the screen, one hears only the mooing of a cow.

Vasantao was adept at composing in a manner that brought out the meaning of the lyrics. For example, in the song 'Tere sur aur mere geet' from 'Goonj Uthi ShehenAyi', consider how he has dragged the word 'khee.nchke':

Mujhko agar bhool jAoge tum
 mujhse agar door jAoge tum
 meri mohobbat mein tAsir hai
 to khee.nchke~ mere pas aaoge tum.

He would frequently ask me, 'Which comes first: shabd or sUr?' The latter comes first for the tunesmiths, but for the sangeetkAr, the words come first.

.....
 Vasantao used to constantly experiment with music. To an extent, this was necessitated by the fact that almost every film from Prabhat and Rajkamal banners dealt with a novel theme or story. Accordingly, Vasantao had to come up with something new in their music. In 'Parbat Pe Apna Dera' (1946), the echo effect was used for the first time in a song, and it was done without the use of technological aids.

'Dr. Kotnis Ki Amar Kahani' was a film with a Chinese setting; so Vasantryao studied Chinese music for two years. The song, 'Nai Dulhan' from this movie is based on a Chinese folk song. For 'Jhanak Jhanak Paayal Baaje', he travelled for almost two months: in Kashi, he met a santoor player, Shiv Kumar Sharma and invited him to Bombay. In Banaras, he did the same with tabla player Shanta Prasad who agreed to come to Bombay but insisted that he would stay for only one day. When the rehearsal for 'Ab to saajan ghar aa ja' began, Shata Prasad realised the amount of effort that would be needed for the project; he ended up staying for two and a half months.

.....*

An appreciation of Vasant Desai's oeuvre is incomplete if one does not listen to the songs he composed for the 'Ek sUr ek taal' venture. During the war, he would teach those chorus songs in the mills (in Bombay) at night, despite the curfews. Such was his enthusiasm and spirit that within 30 minutes, he could teach 2000 children to sing a mukhdA in unison.

.....*

Another of his favourite posers was, "Which comes first: the song or the visuals?" Vasantryao had worked on almost all aspects of filmmaking. As an office boy for V.Shantaram, he was assigned tasks such as holding light relectors, loading cameras, etc. For 'DharmAtmA', he performed eight functions; in all other films, he fulfilled at least three or four roles on the sets. At nights, V. Shantaram would ask him to help with the editing. Vasantryao used to aver: "I may be a music director, but basically I am a filmmaker as I am fully involved in the film, its script, lyrics, etc."

.....

The accompanying orchestra was the most distinguishing feature of Vasantryao's songs: recall any of them and you will, without fail, also recollect its orchestrisation. The introduction, mukhdA, iterludes and antarAs were one integrated whole and not separate pieces glued together. His songs are not merely songs; each one has Vasant Desai's soul poured into it. "My song belongs to the film. I do not compose for Binaca Geetmala, I compose for my director, for my film".

.....

Vasantryao was an excellent poet and singer too. He has written many songs in Marathi. He used to sing regularly in baithaks held at Sialkot and Lahore. Nazakat and Salamat Ali would perform, followed by Vasantryao; Kumar Gandharva sang later in the day. Of course, Vasantryao never mentioned this to me; I came to know of it through Kumar Gandharva and Nazakat and Salamat Ali.

.....*

When Hitchcock's films were released, his viewers were very impressed with the murder scenes; a young boy watching those scenes today will declare with bored deprecation, "I have seen this before!". Similarly in "Do Aankhen Barah Haath",

there is a scene where the heroine breaks her bangles in anguish over her beloved's death. It was a novel idea at that time; since then every other movie has had the heroine perform that action. These examples explain why the songs composed by Vasant Desai in the 1940s, especially those beginning with 'Sheesh Mahal', sound so familiar when you listen to them today: it is because they were frequently imitated by others in the 50s and 60s.

It is, therefore, extremely important to trace the chronological development of an artist's body of work; to know *when* he produced what he produced.

.....
 In 1947, Rajkamal produced a film based on the life of the famous folk-poet of Maharashtra, Ram Joshi. It was originally a play written in by G.D. MaadguLkar who read it to Lahiri Haider (a poet from Kolhapur). Haider liked it and suggested to Baburao PendhArkar that it would make a good subject for a movie. PendhArkar gave it to V. Shantaram who decided to produce it. The script was written by MaadguLkar and Sitaram Laad. Vasantrao expended a lot of effort for the music. He travelled all over Maharashtra; forty tamAsha [* tamAsha lAvani *] artists were selected and invited to sing at Rajkamal. Their work provided the basis for the songs in the film.

Of the songs in 'Ram Joshi', the one that became most famous is 'HatA tatAne paTA'. It does not sound like a film song as it deviated from the typical framework of introductory music, mukhdA, interlude music, antarA and so on. The lyrics are rattled off in an uninterrupted sequence. Vasantrao gave prime importance to two factors while composing: the scene and the singer. 'HatA tatAne paTA' was to be sung by Jairam Shiledar, a forceful singer from Marathi theatre. Moreover, the film situation has the protagonist Ram Joshi engaged in a fight with someone; so the song is not musical expression, but rather a vehement challenge where he could not pause for the music. Hence there was neither introductory nor interlude music. A complicating factor was that in those days there were no cut-and-join techniques in recording; the entire song had to be recorded in one go. The lack of interludes meant that Shiledar would have no room to breathe in between lines. Vasantrao solved that problem by having a chorus repeating key phrases after the main singer.

.....*
 The films 'Ram Joshi' and 'Amar BhoopaLi' must be viewed on the same canvas. Both had the same theme: a respected and talented poet [* Amar BhoopaLi was about HonAji BaLa *] joins the tamAsha, is regarded with contempt by society, but gains redemption by means of an honourable act. Both were set in rural Maharashtra and both dealt with lAvaNi. But the music scored by Vasantrao for the two films is TOTALLY different.

He was passionate about searching for the right music: "I must find the right pitch for the character" was his constant refrain. For Ram Joshi, the sUr fell into place

immediately with the following lines penned by the poet;
they gave him insight into the character of Ram Joshi:

hatA tatAne patA
rangvooN jatA dharishi ka shiri
maTHAchi uTHA THEv kA tari.

'Ram Joshi' and its songs became highly popular. When Vasant was assigned 'Amar BhoopaLi', he felt that he faced a tremendous responsibility: he had to do equal justice to HonAji BaLa. Six to eight months were spent in research, but he still could not find "HonAji's sUr"; "I have not understood HonAji, I have not seen him." He became quite distressed and worried and did not know what to do next. Finally he went to Poona and sat by HonAji's samAdhi for a long time. He visited HonAji's house and was told by the family that the poet's tAnpurA was still lying upstairs. From that tAnpurA, Vasant finally put his finger on HonAji's pitch and all songs got composed after that day: 'GhansyAm sundarA', 'sAngA mukund kuNi haa pAhiLA', 'Latpat latpat', 'Ghadi ghadi manmohanA' and so on. One can hear the shAnt ras that flows in these songs.

.....*

We used to tease him often: "Vasant, is hafte bhi aapka geet choti par nahin aaya". He would retort: arre harkat nAhi re; mee gelyA nantar pannAs varsHan.ni gaaNi laava, maajhi lAgteel ki nAhi bagha!" ("It does not matter; fifty years after I am gone and you are listening to songs, see whether mine get played or not!")
Today, it has been twenty years.

.....*

It is said that every song of Vasant Desai is a bandish based on some classical raga. I say, leave the raga aside; it matters more that his songs make an impression on our innermost selves. He took pride in that fact: "My songs have entered the kitchen, they are not on Binaca Geetmala. I am not at the top, but my songs will endure".

.....*

I had a huge stack of 78 RPM records of Vasant's music. About twelve years ago, HMV persistently requested me to lend them to the company as they were interested in "bringing back Vasant's music". As per their instructions, I meticulously cleaned the records with linseed oil, turpentine, etc and handed them over to HMV. I never saw them again. Every three months or so, I call them to pursue the matter: nobody even knows where those records are.

.....*

Vasant greatly admired Pankaj Mallick as a composer. He would frequently make me listen to 'Ab main kaah karoon, kit jaaon': "look how well the emotions, lyrics and music come together", he would say. About ten days ago, Tushar Bhatia (MD of Andaz Apna Apna) narrated the following incident which brought tears to my eyes: Bhatia had gone to Pankaj Mallick's house and requested his daughter to let him make copies of Mallick's music. After he had gone through the

entire stack, he noticed about 6-7 records stored separately in a corner. When Bhatia enquired about them, his daughter replied, "Woh Dada ke nahin hain"; they were Pankaj Mallick's favourite songs. Bhatia looked through them: nestled among records of Rabindra Sangeet and some other songs was an EP of 'GhanashyAm sundarA'.

.....
There were a couple of errors in the first post made by me on Vasant Desai. Thanks to Aruna Donde for bringing them to my attention.

The article said:

> Through his manifold compositions, Vasantrya provided
> music in the field of Marathi stage as well. He has
> composed for almost ten Marathi dramas and twenty Marathi
> films. The titles which immediately come to mind are the
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> Deenaghari DhAvala', 'Saubhadra' and the films
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> 'Shyaamchi Aayi'.]

I am reproducing the relevant part of Aruna's email:

1. The play Saubhadra was written by Annasaheb Kirloskar and was first performed on stage in 1886. As far as I know, there has not been any other play by that name in Marathi theatre. Incredible music BTW. There was also a movie made, perhaps in early 60's on the Saubhadra theme, starring Chandrakant, Seema etc., Vasantrya may have composed the music for the movie but not for the play.

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Aruna.

RMIM Archive Article "126".

Created a vibrant musical language - Salil Chowdhury

Author: A. R. Chari

Source: The Hindu, Sept 15 1995

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 - Salil Chowdhury: Created a vibrant musical language -
 by
 A.R.Chari

The passing away of Salil Chowdhury marks the end of a glorious era in Hindi and Bengali music. A tribute to the maestro.

Salil Chowdhury who passed away a few days ago was a legend in the World of Indian music. He was lyricist, composer, singer, storyteller, scriptwriter and director all rolled into one.

His music spanned Bengali modern songs and Hindi film music essentially though he did score music for Malayalam films (like "Chemeen"), a number of Tamil films and composed music for songs in important Indian languages. According to Naushad Ali, the music maestro, Salil's greatest quality was that he had an individuality all his own. He imparted an unmistakable stamp to his music which any discerning listener could easily identify.

It was Salilda, as he was affectionately called, who pioneered the synthesis of two distinct schools of music Western Classical music, characterised by movement and harmony on the one hand and the rich and vast storehouse of Indian Classical and folk music on the other. This synthesis of two streams of music evolved into varied strains of fascinating and haunting melodies. Enmeshing the harmonic chords and counter-melodies of Western Classical music with that of the pure note of Indian music, Salilda created a new vibrant musical language.

Starting his career with such sensational and memorable Bengali songs like "Kono ek gayer badhu" and "Palki chaley" and then on to "Runner", "Pathey ebar namo shathi" and "Dhitang Dhitang Bole", he moved over to Bombay to score music for Bimal Roy's "Do Bigha Zameen" and other runaway musical successes like "Madhumati", "Jagte Raho", "Chaya" and "Anand" to name a few. Songs like "Suhana safar hai", "Dil dhadak dhadak se" and "Kahin door jab din dhal jaye" still evoke nostalgia.

Two songs from the same film "Madhumati" having the same melodic pattern (or raag) but conveying two different and opposite moods- "Ghadi ghadi mera dil dhadke" and "Aajare pardesi, mai to kabse khadi ispar" speak volumes about the composer's creative genius.

Another example of the versatility of Salilda was his deep understanding of the roots of various forms of music in his adaptation of the famous Russian folk song "Cossack Patrol" to create "Mousam Beeta Jaye" in "Do Bigha Zameen".

Ustad Bade Gulam Ali Khan was very impressed with the song "O Sajana" (from the film "Parakh" sung by Lata Mangeshkar) which

he considered one of the best songs he had ever heard.

Salil Chowdhury was an active member of Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and was responsible for the setting up of the Bombay Youth Choir in the late fifties alongwith Ruma Ganguly and Shailendra, the then famous lyricist of Bombay. Singers like Lata, Rafi, Manna Dey and Mukesh used to sing chorus songs in the choir.

With today's instant film music bodily lifted from pop, rock, jazz and the like, the passing away of Salil Chowdhury, who represented the last of the vanishing tribe of dedicated composers, marks the end of a glorious era in Hindi and Bengali music.

RMIM Archive Article "127".

Salil Chaudhary

Posted by: hariharn@tucson.Princeton.EDU (Ramesh Hariharan)

Source: ?? (taken from Jayesh Singh's home page.)

Author: ??

 Salil Chaudhary

Salil Chaudhary was born on 19th November 1923 in Sonarpur, District 24 Parganas. His father, Gyanendra Chaudhary was a doctor with a passion for music. His elder brother Nikhil Chaudhary was the director of an orchestra called "Milan Parishad" hence Salil was exposed to musical instruments and instrumental arrangements from a very early age.

Salil's favourite instrument was the flute, which featured prominently in his subsequent work. He was trained on the piano and violin and hence from an early age was introduced to western classical as well as traditional North Indian classical musics, and a fusion of the two became his distinguishing trademark. While at university in Calcutta, Salil was exposed to the rising tide of Indian nationalism and protest against British rule, as well as the rural mass movements that were being led by Communist groups in the villages of Bengal. Having first made his mark writing for student conventions (including "Bicharpati Tomar Bichar" in 1943, and "Dheu Uthchhe Kara Tutchhe" in 1944 for the Quit India Movement, both of which songs were banned).

He was a founding member of the Gana Natya Sangh or Indian Peoples Theatre Association (IPTA), where he composed innumerable songs under the grouping "Ghum Bhangar Gaan". Among these included musical accompaniments to famous poems, such as Sukanta Bhattacharya's "Abak Prithibi" and "Runner". Other famous "mass songs" (ganasangit) from this period include "Hei Samalo" written for the Tebagha Andolan (1948), "Amaar Pratibader Bhasha" (1950) and many translations of mass songs from around the world, particularly the Soviet Union. He was also, with Ruma Guha Thakurta, a founder of the Calcutta Youth Choir, which travelled in its early years around the villages of Bengal with the IPTA to sing Salil Chaudhary's songs.

In the 1950s, Salil, having created a completely new style of music through fusion of east and west, established himself as the leading composer of "adhunik" (popular) music in Calcutta. He was the leading playback song writer in Tollygunj, from where he was taken to Bombay by Munshi Premkumar. Salil, though continuing to write for Bengali films, was based in Bombay for 2 decades subsequently, with prominent films including Jagte Raho/Ek Din Ratre (1957), Madhumati (1958) and Kabuliwala (1960).

He returned to Calcutta in the 1970s, and continued writing modern Bengali songs, leading a revival movement with songs which were quickly popularised such as "Surer Jharna" and "Teler Shishi". His wife, Sabita Chaudhary, and his daughter, Antara Chaudhary, are also prominent in Calcutta today. Salil's contemporary work is predominantly for the popular Bengali theatre form

"Jatra" and he continues to write songs for each year's puja releases. Published collections of his work include "Prantar Gaan" and "Salil Chaudharyr Gaan".

RMIM Archive Article "128".

Salil Chowdhury - an obituary

Posted by: sambit@gandalf.rutgers.edu (Sambit Basu)

Author: Sambit Basu

Source: various

Salil Chowdhury - an obituary

by

Sambit Basu

Salil Chowdhury, as a musical personality, is my favourite. The informations for this article were gathered over a period of about 10 years. It's not possible for me to acknowledge to all the sources, because I don't have their copies and I don't remember them explicitly. But of late, two articles gave me some information:

1. Bangla Gana-sangeet-er dhara - Sudhir Chakrabarty 2. An article by Manab Mitra on Salil Chowdhury (Thanks to Sudipto Chottopadhyay for providing me with a copy of the article).

Regards,

Sambit

Salil Chowdhury was born on 19th November, 1923 in a village called Sonarpur in Bengal. His father was a doctor by profession but was very much into music. Salil's elder brother Nikhil Chowdhury had his own orchestra name "Milan Parishad". Also, Salil's family had a good collection of gramophone records of Western Symphonies. Salil Chowdhury was brought up in this musical atmosphere.

Salil spent a part of his early life in North East India's mountainous state of Assam, where he gathered his appreciation for folks (one may recall here that the tune of the song "chhota sa ghar hoga" sung by Kishore Kumar or its Bengali version "ak je chhilo raja" sung by Antara Chowdhury was an improvisation of a Nepalese folk tune). Also he spent a good number of his formative years in rural Bengal where, apart from going deep into Bengali folk music, he polished himself as an accomplished flutist.

Salil Chowdhury came to Calcutta for his College studies. That was a time of extreme political unrest. On one way it was the Indian National Congress led anti-British movement, and on the other the left-oriented anti-fascist movement. And the international arena was clouded heavily by the on-going second World War. The platform for the left-oriented intellectuals for their anti-fascist activities was the Indian People's Theater Association or IPTA. Salil joined IPTA as a flute player.

In IPTA he directly came in contact with Binoy Ray, Sudhi Pradhan, Jyotirindra Moitra and indirectly with Ravishankar et al. This is the time when Salil started maturing as a professional musician and a social commentator. IPTA movement gave rise to a new genre of Bengali songs called "Gana-Sangeet" or "People's Song".

Slowly Salil started writing and composing songs for IPTA. In

that he was influenced by Binoy Ray, Jyotirindra Moitra, Hemanga Biswas et al. But very soon he created his own niche and became one of the musical stalwarts of IPTA. His penetration in leftist intellectual and cultural circle was by no means easy. According to Salil himself, IPTA was very reluctant in recognizing Salil's talent; but eventually they had to acknowledge his genius because of the pressure of people's demand.

During the later days Salil became very lonely in IPTA. There was a major difference of opinion about the form of his songs within IPTA, Hemanga Biswas being the main critic of Salil's songs. Then the communist party directed Salil to "pass" his songs through a committee before he makes them public. And Salil revolted. He was tagged as "anti-party", "US-spy" and he quit IPTA. By that time Salil's mentors also virtually had left IPTA.

Salil went on writing and composing Bengali modern songs, which he had been doing since his association with IPTA. Even he quit IPTA, he continued to write and compose "socially committed" songs along with the mainstream modern songs. During his IPTA days, Salil and Hemanta Mukhopadhaya made a good combination, and now this combination started producing long-lasting modern songs.

About this time Salil got an offer from Bombay movie industry, primarily as a music director, but also as a story and screenplay writer. There also Salil, very soon, made his own niche among the well known composers like Anil Biswas, Naushad, Sachin Dev Burman, Madan Mohan, Shankar Jaykishan.

Madhumati was a big bang in hindi film-music industry. And after that he continued producing good numbers for next 20-odd years. But in Hindi film music Salil never became the number one composer. He was always considered as a very good composer who composes off-bit music. Among the performers he was known as a extremely knowledgeable perfectionist who composes highly difficult tunes.

Salil's Bombay music-life turned out to be very educating for him and for Bengali music. During this period two major things happened - Salil's extensive experimentation with music arrangement and orchestration and his musical association with Lata Mangeshkar.

Although he was always fascinated with the scope of proper orchestration for Bengali songs, he didn't get chances to meet people who actually had some first hand experience of arranging a big orchestral piece. Also Bengali music never had enough money to afford whatever instrument Salil wanted to use and experiment with. Bombay gave him that opportunity.

During these days Salil was accused of plagiarism and rightly so. He lifted tunes from Mozart's symphony, from Hungarian martial song, from Nepalese folk song, from Tagore's song and even from "Happy Birthday to You" for a Bengali song. He surely put lot of originality in those, but the truth remains that a plagiarism is a plagiarism.

During his Bombay stay another major work Salil did was to form Bombay Choir with the help of Ruma Ganguly (Guha Thakurata). Salil has been often referred to as the father of Indian choral music. Composing the choral part of a song was always his forte and point scored over other prime music directors - be it in the

form of the main melody or as the vocal refrain.

Parallely Salil went on composing Bengali songs, and probably during this time he contributed more to the Bengali music than any other musical personality of post-Tagore era.

During this time he composed "Surer jhorna" - first Indian song to use harmonized singing, "Ujjal ak jhNaak payra" accompanied by an orchestral prelude resembling highly sophisticated Western symphony, "Amar dubaili re, bhasaili re" (for film "Ganga") - resembling a real bhatiyali (Bengal's boatmen's song), but used Piano as the background instrument, "Ichchha kore porandaare gaamchha diya" (from the same film) with a touch a rural humor, "Jhanana jhanana baaje" - based on raga Kalavati, and the list goes on.

In 1970s Salil returned to Calcutta, primarily because Bombay film industry took a sharp turn from the days of Naushad, SD Burman, Salil Chowdhury when the changed public taste forced Salil to retire from Hindi film music.

Salil Chowdhury came back to Calcutta with a project of starting a new sound studio. He founded Center for Music Research - CMR with a studio named Sound On Sound. He devoted last 15 years of his life to experiment with sound recording, and its application on music and occasionally composing Bengali songs. But any significant achievement in the field of sound recording compared to his achievements in music composition is yet to be heard.

He wished to write a full-length opera in Bengali. Of late he composed music for a film named "Vivekananda". Just before his death, Hrishikesh Mukherjee decided to make a film (or may be a television serial) based on Salil's story named "Dressing Table", for which he agreed to manage the music. The project remains unfinished as of today.

Salil Chowdhury died in September, 1995 in Calcutta. Arguably Bengal's greatest composer after Rabindranath Tagore and Dwijendralal Ray died when the Hindi Film music is in the hand of untrained mediocre and Bengali music...

RMIM Archive Article "129".

Salil Chowdhury: A Biography

Posted by: Ashok (ADhareshwar@WorldBank.org)

Source: Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema

Published by British Film Institute and Oxford University Press, 1994

Author: Ashish Rajadhyaksha and Paul Willemen (Editors)

Salil Choudhury - A Biography

Salil Choudhury (b. 1925)

Self-trained composer and music director. Active among peasantry in '24 Parganas' District, Bengal. Did music for IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association) plays and musical squads performing in Bengali countryside, calling for cultural internationalism as opposed to an emphasis on regional folk traditions (cf entry on Bhupen Hazarika; also Chowdhury's "Modern Bengali Music in Crisis," 1951). His influences-in songs that have remained enduring favourites with left cultural groups all over India-include Mozart, Hans Eisler and contemporary Latin American forms. Ghatak, in Komal Gandhar, and Mrinal Sen, in Akaler Sandhaney, used his music to typify the spirit of 40s Bengali agitational theatre movements, which he also extended to cover other genres, like Zia Sarhadi's Awaaz and Tarafdar's Ganga. Entered films with Satyen Bose. First major hit was Bimal Roy's Do Bigha Zameen, based on a story by himself, with full-blooded choral compositions celebrating peasant vitality (monsoon song 'hariyala sawan'), a form still most associated with him. Went on to score the pathbreaking soundtrack of Bimal Roy's Madhumati. Also did notable work for Hrishikesh Mukherjee films, e.g., his debut Musafir and the 70s hit Anand.

The only front-line Hindi composer to work in several languages: Assamese (the experimental Aparajeya by the Chaturanga collective), Kannada (A.M. Samiulla's films, including Samshayaphala, Onde Roopa Eradu Guna, etc., and Balu Mahendra's debut Kokila), Tamil (Doorathu Idhi Muzhakkam) and Telugu (Chairman Chalamayya). Most spectacular work outside Bengali and Hindi is, however, for Ramu Kariat, scoring several hits in his breakthrough Chemmeen, followed by Ezhu Rathrikal.

(Salil's Filmography is present in a separate article. Check the automailer list for more details).

RMIM Archive Article "182".

On Salil Choudhry: The Sound of Silence

Posted by: Ashok (ADhareshwar@WorldBank.Org)

Source: Filmfare Oct 95

Author: Sathya Saran

 Salil Choudhry
 The Sound of Silence
 (By Sathya Saran. Filmfare, October '95)

I was still in frilly frocks and pigtails when love blossomed. 'Madhumati' made it happen. Its songs were an awakening... I was possessed by music. Of course, there earlier flings with music. Shankar-Jaikishan's tunes for 'Shri 420' -especially "Mera joota hai jani... and all that. But this was an obsession.

And I wasn't alone. The songs had seized different generations- even my mother, whose aversion to film songs was almost pathological. But a softness suffused her eyes when the songs of 'Madhumati' hummed from the radio.

And then, I saw the film. Singing every number loud and clear in the hall, much to the embarrassment of my teenaged cousin, I decided that love, and being in love, was the most divine of emotions.

It was years later, when names began to matter, that I realized that Salil Choudhury was the man behind the music... mine was no childish infatuation. Years later, I was to scour the shops of Connaught Place, seeking the EP of 'Anand.' And the songs of 'Rajnigandha' and 'Chhoti Si Baat' were to be on the top 10 of my personal hit parade.

And now Salil Choudhury is dead. Just weeks after I was supposed to meet him, on his visit to Bombay where I would realize a long-cherished dream of hearing the poet-composer unravel his new dreams.

The composer was a dreamer who could spin poetry and music in one composite tapestry. Melody was his main implement; often he'd write his own lyrics in Bengali, compose a tune and only then fit in someone else's lyrics-even if that meant erasing his own.

His music was a blend of the western classical (he grew up on Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart, and a bit of Chopin), folk ditties, and a smattering of the Indian classical. Yet, except for straight adaptations like "Itana na mujhse tu pyar badha" (Chhaya) culled from Mozart's 41st* symphony or "Raaton ke saaye ghane" (Annadata) culled from Chopin, Salil Choudhury rarely let his influences show.

His roots were in Bengal and in IPTA (Indian Peoples Theatre Association), the progressive theatre movement which he actively supported throughout the 1940s. During his years in Bombay, he never forgot his debt to Bengali musical tradition, returning every year to Calcutta to compose songs for Lata Mangeshkar and Hemant Kumar for the puja season.

Salil Choudhury would say of Hemant Kumar, "If God ever decided

to sing, he would do so in the voice of Hemant Kumar."

Hemantda first met Salil Choudhury when the latter was part of a four-member group which sang numbers with strong communist leanings. Musical they were but with a limited appeal.

Soon after, Salil Choudhury approached him with several fiery compositions. Hemant Kumar felt that all of them were too stridently militant except for a half-finished tune about a young girl who died in the Bengal famine. The partnership with Hemantda was on.

There was no looking back for Salil Choudhury. His songs were a rage, blared forth from loudspeakers especially during the pujas. As the composer's fame spread beyond Calcutta, Bombay and Bimal Roy's 'Do Bigha Zameen' beckoned. The communist petrel turned a softer socialist, evident in "Dharti kahe pukar ke" scored for the film.

Other offers followed. By the end of the '50s, Salil Choudhury was a Bombaywallah. His songs spanned all moods from the hopelessness which filters through Talat Mehmood's "Raat ne kya kya (Ek Gaon Ki Kahani)" to the hope-infused "Jago Mohan pyaare (Jagte Raho)."

And then there was 'Madhumati.' It was Bimal Roy again, recapturing through Salil Choudhury the essence of the melody of Bengal. This time, Salil was inspired by the verdant hillsides of Assam... where as a child he had roamed with his forest-officer father... and where now Bimal Roy would shoot his love story with a supernatural twist.

Over the years, the sights and sounds of nature had been the muse for Salil Choudhury. When the songs of 'Madhumati' were composed, the tweeting of birds, the flight of an eagle, and the patter of rain seemed to seep into the melody.

'Madhumati' fetched Salil Choudhury his first Filmfare Award in 1958. Though he could have ridden the crest of the wave of success, the musician went literally into hiding. His communist activities had come home to haunt him... he had become a hunted man.

Eventually, Bimal Roy's assistant, Hrishikesh Mukherjee, who was making his debut as a director with 'Musafir,' signed Salil Chowdhury. Salil's score for the film was in harmony with the soft, romantic, hesitant, episodic mood of the film. Another first was scored by 'Musafir.' It was under Salil's baton that Dilip Kumar sang his first song in tandem with Lata Mangeshkar. A year later, Salil Choudhury struck out a new path-he composed the background score for BR Chopra's courtroom drama 'Kanoon.' The film was totally devoid of songs. Yet the music almost made the audience forget the lack of vocals.

As the years rolled, Salil Choudhury composed background music for B Copra's 'Ittefaq' and Yogesh Saxena's 'Plot No. 5.' Gulzar used his background score in 'Achanak'... one of the pieces was to later evolve into a full-fledged song for Gulzar's 'Mere Apne.' Later, Salil composed the background score for the poet-director's 'Mausam.'

A story goes that the tune of "O sajna (Parakh)" was sparked one rainy evening. The composer was listening to the swish of his car wipers when he was seized by inspiration. He worked out the

lyrics in Bengali and offered the finished piece to Bimal Roy. When it was eventually recorded Shailendra penned the lyrics in Hindi and Lata Mangeshkar rendered the playback. He took a gamble with the music of 'Annadata.' The song "Guzar jaaye din din din"... used a scale progression as a method... here was a marked departure from the accepted norms in film music. It was a difficult number which the composer wanted Kishore Kumar to sing because "Only he could give it 90 percent of its credibility." It's said that even Kishore Kumar was stymied; the song was recorded after 18 takes. Came the 1970s and Salil Choudhury disappeared from Bombay's music scene. Perhaps because melody was out and noise was in. It was after a long break that he reappeared with the score for the serial 'Kurukshetra' aired on Zee TV. He also composed the background score for Shakti Samanta's 'Ahankaar.' He was toying with other projects when illness claimed him. A blood clot in his brain stemmed his comeback; he had to go in for surgery. All was well. The prayers of thousands of his fans and the loving ministrations of his wife Sabita and his daughters helped nurse him back to recovery. And then tragedy struck. Even as he was listening to his daughter, Antara, singing at home, a fever took hold of him. He had to be rushed back to hospital. A deadly infection had overcome him in his convalescence. His sons from America rallied around. There was a constant vigil at the nursing home in Alipore where he lay battling for his life. A specialist was called in from Bombay. But it was no use... death stilled the musician forever. His music will live on. There must be many like me who will never let the memory dim, of the moment when on hearing "Dil tadap tadap ke keh raha," they discovered the emotion called love.

 [Note: * Should be Mozart's symphony 40.]
 Ashok

RMIM Archive Article "208".

Salil - a short biography

Posted by: pradeep@watson.ibm.com (Pradeep Dubey)

Author: Vish Krishnan and Pradeep Dubey

A Short Biography of Sir Salil

You have already seen a few bio sketches describing the maestro's life and work. Although it is hard to say enough about the impact this genius has had on Indian cinema and music, we will defer our written tribute to a later date.

For now, here are some suggested changes to details regarding Sir Salil's early years.

Salil Choudhury was born in 1925 in Assam. He came down to Sonarpur, District 24-Parganas, West Bengal, in 1931, and he was 6 years old then. His uncle (mother's brother) lived there, and that is where the youngster spent a few years.

College started around 1942, a great time to be in Calcutta. The Bengal famine was at its worst. The members of the INA were already on the wanted-dead-or-alive list, and patriotic Bengali songs were popular in every street corner. Sir Salil joined Bangabaasi college. He mostly followed the evolution of radical and socialistic organizations through the East.

His father, Gyanendra Chaudhary an ICS officer, had a passion for music. His elder brother Nikhil Chaudhary, a doctor, was the director of an orchestra called "Milan Parishad" hence Salil was exposed to musical instruments and instrumental arrangements from a very early age.

Salil's favourite instrument was the flute, which featured prominently in his subsequent work. He was trained on the piano and violin and hence from an early age was introduced to western classical as well as traditional North Indian classical musics, and a fusion of the two became his distinguishing trademark.

We will definitely add more to this tribute, possibly as part of the ANSWERS post.

Vish Krishnan would further like to add the following information regarding the last few days of Salil:

August_1:

Admitted to Woodlands Nursing Home (kidney malfunction)
South Calcutta (Southern Avenue, I think - not sure)
Went on and stayed on dialysis for a month. Was ready to come back home.

Sept_1:

Suffered a serious brain haemorrhage, went into a coma, and never recovered. Spent the next 3 days in the emergency room. Before the coma, stayed in a conscious state through the immense pain.

Sept_4:

Died late Monday night (Sept 4) at the nursing home.
Family and some really close friends were at hand.
Mrinal Sen was one.

Survived by wife and 4 children (2 sons and 2 daughters). I only know Antara's name as one of the children.

RMIM Archive Article "209".

Gulzar on Salil Choudhury

Posted by: nitin@cs.washington.edu (Nitin Sharma)

Source: Indian Express (Sep 5th 1996)

An ode to Salil Chowdhury
Nelson Pereira

MUMBAI, September 4: Gulzar pays rich tributes on the great composer's first death anniversary :

Today, on Salil Chowdhury's first death anniversary, I cannot but help reminisce about his greatness. Salilda, as he was fondly called, was a genius of a composer and used to cleverly make use of Russian symphonies to create melody, which many present-day composers cannot even think of doing. He was the first man in the Hindi film industry to juxtapose fusion music with Hindustani ragas.

One such example where he used Russian symphonies to great effect was in the Rajesh Khanna-Amitabh starrer Anand. I still remember the songs of this film which became a rage in the early '70s when this film was released. And since I wrote the lyrics, I know the effort that went into nurturing every song. Before composing the mukhda of each song, he used to sit with me and meticulously discuss the finer points of it. For him composing was an art. Like for instance, the song Kahi door jab din dhal jaye in Anand had to convey the pathos of a cancer patient's psyche. And Salilda wanted his tunes to convey the pain and the trauma. Then in a different frame of mind, he had to convey the hero's bid to maintain a romantic front in spite of death staring him in his face, and Mene tere liye hi saat rang ke sapne chune was born. Mukesh did a wonderful job in the film, even Manna Dey was exceptional in his Zindagi kaisi hai paheli picturised on Rajesh Khanna.

His suggestions even when I was in the midst of writing a mukhda were always brilliant and I used to welcome them because I knew the genius of this great man. Besides, never for a moment did he let me feel that I was junior to him. He always treated me as an equal, which did my confidence a world of good.

Being a poet as well, he was well aware of the nuances of each line and its effect on the listener. I also wrote lyrics for his other films like Prem Patra, Kabuliwallah and Pinjre ke panchi, a film which he directed as well. He also teamed up successfully with other lyricists like Yogesh.

He was a socially very conscious man and an active member of the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). His friend circle had people like Sardar Jafri, A K Hangal and Dina Pathak who had a great influence on his thinking. IPTA in those days was a training ground for upcoming actors. In fact, these were the people who groomed the great Sanjeev Kumar. I salute the spirit and magnanimity of Salilda. May his tribe grow.

RMIM Archive Article "376".

Salil interview - part 1

Posted by: Chandrashekhar (shekhar@emirates.net.ae)

Source: Khaleej Times

Author: Chandrashekhar (shekhar@emirates.net.ae)

The Great Salil...1

Dear RMIMers

My thanks to Pradeep Dubey for having incited me to reproduce this article, which was published in Dubai's "Khaleej Times" on 19 November 1992, the maestro's 67th birthday. It came about as a result of an informal chat that I had two months earlier in his modest flat in Andheri in Bombay. I scribbled notes as he spoke during the interview, but had to transcribe it as though told to me in the first person because that's how the editor wanted it. I'd like to think that there are no errors, because Salil himself asked to see the proofs for verification before it got into print. I found him warm and communicative, with an impeccable command of English. I'd appreciate your comments...

Regards, Shekhar

EARLY LIFE

I was born in Assam in 1925. My father, who was a doctor, had an enormous collection of both Indian and Western classical music, so the works of Beethoven, Mozart and the like were familiar to me right from childhood. Like my father, my elder brother was a good musician and classical singer, but more actively so. He had formed an orchestra called Milan Parishad, was a versatile instrumentalist, and had played for many silent films. Being always in this environment of music, I couldn't help being similarly influenced!

As I grew up, I began to write as well, and churned out many patriotic songs in Bengali and Hindi, during the days of our freedom struggle. These songs are popular even to this day. However, my brother was equally firm that my education should not be neglected. Thus, I took my BA in English, and subsequently did my MA in Bengali. BOMBAY, BIMAL ROY AND "DO BIGHA ZAMEEN" Hrishikesh Mukherji had always been a good friend, right from our very early days in Calcutta, where he and Mrinal Sen worked as laboratory assistants at New Theatres. At that time Bimal Roy was looking for a script for his next venture. I was introduced to him by Hrishikesh, and later the script was approved. When Bimal said that negotiations were underway with Anil Biswas to compose the music, Hrishikesh was quick to point out that music was, in fact, my forte! Bimal appeared sceptical about entrusting a rank newcomer with the script as well as the music for what was to be his maiden production venture. Fortunately for me, an informal evening had

already been organised where I sang and played on the harmonium, and this convinced Bimal that I was good enough! Thus, I made my debut with "Do Bigha Zameen".

BACKGROUND MUSIC

You've asked me why I have done so many background music scores for the songless films that crop up from time to time. This requires a certain degree of skill in timing the length of the footage with the duration of the piece to be recorded. I had established some sort of reputation for this soon after I had begun composing regularly in Bombay.

I remember once there was a knock on my door at about 2 am and I found Bimal Roy, Hrishikesh and S.D. Burman standing on my doorstep, the latter wearing a worried expression. Sachinda had been signed up for Bimal's "Devdas", but apparently Bimal had not been happy with his background music for the climactic reels of the film. So, at short notice early the next morning, I was compelled to compose and record four reel's worth of music for the ending of "Devdas", uncredited, as our relationships were very cordial.

TUNES AND LYRICS

Although I had a firm grounding in classical music, I was, and am of the opinion that music should be free, unconventional, and unpredictable in its flow. That's why I've never adhered firmly to any arohana and avarohana, or allowed them to restrict me in my composition. Sometimes this could get too tricky for singers. Did you know that one Rafi-Lata duet needed more than 12 takes, because Rafi couldn't get a grip on the erratic scale changes of a particular line? ("Maya"s "Tasveer teri dil mein").

I've worked with many lyricists but Shailendra was always my favourite. We made a perfect team, and he's written some of my best songs. Being unorthodox in approach, and not wanting to compose for a pre-written lyric, my tunes would invariably be composed first, and then Shailendra would write the words accordingly.

(Tomorrow - Salil on singers, the brief association with Raj Kapoor, and recording the unique "Lagi nahin choote ram" with Dilip Kumar)

RMIM Archive Article "377".

Salil interview - part 2

Posted by: Chandrashekhar (shekhar@emirates.net.ae)

Source: Khaleej Times

Author: Chandrashekhar (shekhar@emirates.net.ae)

On Lata Mangeshkar: She is the true phenomenon. Perhaps it may be several hundred centuries before we come across such a talent again! If I knew that Lata was scheduled to sing my composition, I would go all out to make it as complex as possible. It was like a challenge, at the same time like a game between us - but she never failed to rise to the occasion, and she would even suggest complex variations of her own.

Mukesh: Mukesh was my favourite singer. His octave range was limited - I tried not to give him any note above the second D after middle C - and his ability to sing lines with 'murkis' restricted. But he could sing with a mood and pathos that was unique.

Manna Dey: I have used Manna in my compositions right from "Do Bigha Zameen". While his ability to sing romantic melodies is rather limited, he was brilliant in singing classical songs, especially those with a touch of comedy. One of my favourites is his rendition of "Ek samay par do barsaaten" from "Jhoola".

Mohammed Rafi: Another versatile singer, skilled in the art of infusing happiness, pathos or comedy into a song as the situation demanded. His ability to sing songs based on rapidly changing Western scales was limited, though.

Talat Mehmood: An excellent ghazal singer, but they don't make those kind of movies anymore.

Kishore Kumar: my first film with him was "Naukri". He was the industry's all-rounder, and a clown even in the recording room. Once, while I explained a song to him, Kishore, who had been standing, first leaned against the wall, then sat on a chair, and finally slumped on to the floor as the intricacy of the melody sank in! The next morning he said he had a dream in which he fled, screaming, "I can't do it! It's too difficult!" While I supposedly chased him with a stick, saying, "Oh yes you will!" And so he did. That song was "Guzar jaye din din" from "Annadata".

On Raj Kapoor: Raj was a very dear friend of mine. I came to know him well when we met in Moscow for a film festival. He then signed me up for "Jaagte Raho", and the music was well received. We had decided to do another film together, but ultimately he had to bow to strong protests from the pro-Shankar-Jaikishan lobby.

Dilip Kumar: Dilip's only song for a Hindi film was my composition. It was a thumri, "Lagi nahin choote", to be recorded with Lata Mangeshkar. He was in such dread of recording a duet with the formidable Lata, that he wanted to back out. Lata's repeated assurances that he was singing well did nothing to boost his confidence. The final take came about only after he had downed three brandies in quick succession. Actually I think he has a pleasant light voice well suited for a thumri. But Dilip swore never to repeat the experience.

(Tomorrow: Salil picks his ten best, the Salil filmography of his Hindi films, and assorted Salil-ana)

RMIM Archive Article "378".

Salil interview - part 3

Posted by: Chandrashekhar (shekhar@emirates.net.ae)

Source: Khaleej Times

Author: Chandrashekhar (shekhar@emirates.net.ae)

When asked to choose his ten best compositions, Salil didn't seem to have to think long before drawing up a list. Yet his fans may have their own lists! Anyway, here it is - and mind you, they are in random order:

1. Aaja ri aa nindiya ("Do Bigha Zameen")
2. Mausam beeta jae ("Do Bigha Zameen")
3. Aha rhim jhim ke ye pyare pyare ("Usne Kaha Tha")
4. Itna na mujhse tu pyar badha ("Chhaya")
5. Raat ne kya kya khwab dikhae ("Ek Gaon Ki Kahani")
6. Saathire...tujh bin jiya udaas re ("Poonam Ki Raat")
7. Aaja re pardesi ("Madhumati")
8. Bichhua ("Madhumati")
9. Koi hota jisko apna ("Mere Apne")
10. Kahin door jab din dhal jae ("Anand")

THE SALIL FILMOGRAPHY

RMIMers, please note that this is a list of Salil's Hindi films only. 'BGM' refers to films (usually songless) for which Salil scored only the background music. I hope that the list is complete but am open to correction/addition.

1953 Do Bigha Zameen (also written)

1954 Naukri

Biraj Bahu

1955 Amaanat

Tangewali

1956 Aawaaz

Jaagte Raho

Parivaar

1957 Apradhi Kaun

Ek Gaon Ki Kahani

Zamana

Musafir

Lal Batti

1958 Madhumati

1960 Usne Kaha Tha

Kanoon (BGM)

Jawaahar

Parakh

Honeymoon

1961 Char Diwari

Chhaya

Kabuliwala

Maya

Mem Didi

Sapan Suhane

1962 Half Ticket

Jhoola

Prem Patra
 1963 Chand Aur Suraj
 Poonam Ki Raat
 1966 Netaji Subhashchandra Bose
 Pinjre Ke Panchi (also directed)
 1969 Ittefaq (BGM)
 Sara Aakash
 1970 Anand
 1971 Gehra Raaz (Salil scored two songs, and Raj Ravinder the other two)
 Mere Apne
 1972 Annadata
 Anokha Daan
 Anokha Milan
 Mere Bhaiyya
 Subse Bada Sukh
 1974 Rajnigandha
 1975 Chhotisi Baat
 Sangat
 1976 Jeevan Jyoti
 Mrigyaa
 Udanchoo
 1977 Minoo
 1979 Jeena Yahan
 1980 Chemmeen Lehren
 Chiruthaa (BGM)
 Naani Maa
 Room No. 203
 Anand Mahal (unreleased)
 1981 Agni Pareeksha
 Plot No. 5
 1982 Dil Ka Saathi Dil
 1984 Kanoon Kya Karega
 1988 Trishagni
 1989 Aakhri Badla
 Kamala Ki Maut (BGM)
 1990 Triyatri

 At the time of speaking to him (October 1992) he had plans to compose the music for a tele-serial on Buddha being produced by Phani Mazumdar, and for Basu Chatterji's new film, which was to have been another light romantic comedy on the lines of "Rajnigandha" and "Chhotisi Baat".

Some other snippets from the interview which were considered being of too 'specialized trivia' interest to newspaper readers:

Salil acknowledged that Zindagi hai kya, sun meri jaan, from "Maya" was based on Chaplin's "Limelight" theme. I asked him whether Hame yaad kabhi tum kar lena from "Anokha Daan" was a revamp of "Chhaya"'s "Itna na mujhse" (it certainly sounds that way) but he didn't agree.

Marzi hai tumhari, from "Mere Bhaiyya" has some extraordinarily intricate harmonium pieces, and I asked him who the player was. Apparently the hired harmonium player could not produce the required result, so Salil himself played it!

Salil's wife Sabitha was the one who remembered that it was an obscure singer from IPTA named Shaila Belle who provided the female voice at

the end of "Chhota sa ghar hoga" from "Naukri", and not Usha Mangeshkar as HMV would have us believe. Sabitha ruefully said that her 'anataara' of Champavati tu aaja ("Annadata") appeared only in the film, but was axed in most issued record versions. Her favourite among her own songs was Chaand kabhi tha bahon mein, from "Sapan Suhane". Salil filled in the information that it was Nirmalendu Choudhury who sang "Biraj Bahu"'s Maajhi re. He spoke at some length about singer Dwijen Mukherji, who died in poverty. The subject cropped up when I asked him a question about Dwijen's duet with Lata in "Maya" - Phir ek baar kaho - which is so tortuous in its melody that it almost appears discordant.

I asked him about "Mem Didi", and the beautiful alternating melodies of Lata with a chorus in "Bachpan o bachpan". Sadly, he couldn't recollect anything about "Mem Didi", except that one song had a dog's bark in it!

Salil had kept himself busy by running a fully equipped professional recording studio in Calcutta, in addition to doing some hand-picked assignments for films. He was keen to perform in Dubai. I told him Lata Mangeshkar had a concert scheduled later that year, and he exclaimed. "Not now, then! The effect of her show will last a long time. Perhaps after six months or so". Sadly, it didn't work out, because his plan was to form a very small band essentially consisting only of his wife Sabitha, his daughter Anatara and himself, with all three singing to pre-recorded music, karaoke style. Promoters were not interested, and later, on his request, I got the Bengali Association president to get in touch with him. As far as I know, the Bengali programme didn't work out either. Last year, sitarist Jairam Acharya who was in Dubai on a private visit, played glowing tribute to the maestro. Acharya was the man who played the classic introductory sitar piece in "Parakh"'s "O sajna, barkha bahar aayi".

Well, that's it, RMIMers. Salil is no more, but his legacy is unique - listen to not just the evergreen numbers, but try to discover his rare ones. "Prem Patra" is my personal favourite.

Regards, Shekhar

RMIM Archive Article "379".

Salil - phenomenon in Bengali music - part 1

Posted by: Sambit Basu sambit@agniroth.com

Source: Sangeet Natak, Jan-Mar 1989

Author: Suman Chatterjee (Manab Mitra)

This article was published in "Sangeet Natak" magazine, Jan-March 1989 issue. The article discusses Salil Chowdhury's work mostly in reference to Bengali music.

Sambit

About the author:

Manab Mitra is the penname of Suman Chatterjee. Suman had a pretty long preparation in Hindustani classical music and in songs of Rabindranath. He had also been a very close and active follower of Bengali modern songs. In early 70s, after cutting two discs of Rabindrasangeet he abandoned his music career to go abroad. As a radio-journalist he worked in France, USA and Germany. While staying abroad Suman took formal lessons in Western music - classical guitar and piano. In late 80s he gave up journalism, returned to Calcutta to try his career in Bengali music. His first cassette in 1992 gave him immense popularity and Bengali music a much needed change. He works as lyricist, composer, arranger and singer of his songs. Suman probably is the most discussed personality in Bengali cultural scenario in last couple of decades.

Salil Chowdhury: A Phenomenon in Modern Bengali Music

- Manab Mitra

(Part 1)

As a child in British India, he heard the working people's nocturnal songs in tea-garden in Assam, where his father was employed. And it was there that his father played on an old gramophone discs of European classical music left behind by a homebound philharmonic British colleague. The combination of these early memories must have left a deep impression on a child who later became Salil Chowdhury. His father sent him later to his relatives in Bengal where young Salil started growing up in the rural milieu. He took up the bamboo flute, an instrument essential to Bengali folk music as the Dotara or the Ektara. Salil was soon on his way to becoming a self-styled flutist - an identity his later compositions and modes of instrumentation were to bear witness to for a long time to come.

Extensive formal lessons in music, in the traditional senses, were not for him. His music lessons were essentially those accorded to him by his surroundings - the environment of Bengal where music grows like nature itself, myriad in its manifestations. He has always been, by and large, an autodidact and a collector of elements of music from all around. And he learned. Young Salil Chowdhury learned his lessons not only from the music people make, but also from the life people live or have to live and then make music because of or in spite of it.

It is impossible to consider Salil Chowdhury's growth in music without taking into account his social and political engagements, his personality as a socio-cultural activist shaped in the 1940s. Music was Salil's expression. But it was his social and political environment that motivated him to express himself in words and music, in songs.

Barely beyond his teens, Salil Chowdhury faced the turmoils of the 40s: the final phase of the struggle for India's independence, the impact of the second world war, especially its economic impact on the rural population of Bengal - the famine with all its ugly variations, the relief work and the organizational activities of the Communist Party of India.

By the time Salil Chowdhury was initiated to Marxist ideas and was going to college in Calcutta, he had already begun writing songs. His very early songs, though simple in structure, reveal a keen sense of the social situation of the rural population, especially the peasants and sharecroppers, exploited to the bone by the ruling classes. This young song-writer's journey to the left-wing political and cultural circles of Calcutta was that of a rural Bengali youth, bubbling with creative vigour, trying to make his way into the urban intellectual stronghold of the great metropolis. This entry was by no means easy and was not always rewarded with welcoming gestures. But the leaders of the Indian People's Theatre Association and the leading cultural activists must have recognized the great talent of this young man from Changripota (now Subhashgram in the 24 Parganas, West Bengal), and he did receive their encouragement.

In a relatively short time, Salil Chowdhury became a key figure in the left-wing cultural milieu where, in the 40s, IPTA reigned supreme. He was asked to compose suitable songs and perform them with his group of singers and musicians at all major gathering and conventions. And Salil did have a song to fit any occasion, any important issue. These songs were directly politically motivated.

There had been politically motivated songs in Bengal long before Salil Chowdhury appeared on the scene. In urban Bengal they started taking shape in the 19th century and culminated in the compositions of Rabindranath Tagore and Dwijendralal Roy. Historically, Tagore and Roy were also the important initiators of a new genre of songs - the modern Bengali song. Hence in verbal diction and musical idiom, the early, urban political songs, mostly patriotic in nature, were a part of modern Bengali song itself.

Rural Bengal also produced its own political songs, sometimes more radical in nature than their urban counterparts. In the matter of opposition to British rule, political songs originating from rural Bengal (like those of Mukundodas) were verbally more direct and poignant than the "modern" political songs emanating from Calcutta. The early decades of the 20th century saw the rise of armed struggle of certain sections of the Indian population against British imperialism. This new political force, the brave struggle and self-sacrifice of the militants, their martyrdom and the ensuing police terror, not only sharpened the political situation of a nation under foreign yoke, but gave a new impetus to political songs as well. In Bengal, Kazi Nazrul Islam's songs ushered in a new age of political expression in music. The modern Bengali political song took a sharp turn toward direct expressive of protest against and rejection of imperialism. Subversive and explosive lyrics combined with strongly accentuated rhythms and vigorous melodies with cutting ups and downs. As the Indian Marxists started organizing peasants and workers and as the progressive elements of the Indian intelligentsia consciously started looking for new modes of literary and artistic expression to embody the condition and needs of the exploited masses - and also

impart to the people, in general, a vision of liberation - a spate of new political songs came to be written. In Bengal, these songs, fruits of the left-wing cultural activism in general and essentially popular in nature, have been known as "ganasangeet" (people's songs), a term denoting not only a particular genre but a movement as well. This movement of new political songs went hand in hand with the IPTA movement which was sending far-reaching throbs of refreshingly youthful creativity throughout India in the 40s and 50s.

When Salil Chowdhury arrived on the scene with his own compositions, he was already a product of the afore-described history, with IPTA as his historic platform. It would be ungrateful not to mention in the context of IPTA and its activism in new political music in Bengal the names of Jyotirindra Moitra, Binoy Roy, Haripada Kushari and Hemanga Biswas. With their own contributions to the stream of political songs, they were Salil Chowdhury's mentors. Their compositions were, more or less, examples that were readily available to Salil Chowdhury as he became a part of the movement. Another thing that IPTA offered Salil Chowdhury was its series of conferences which took place in different parts of India. In a certain interview Salil Chowdhury has recalled that these IPTA conferences were somewhat like open universities where so many interesting things could be picked up. Musicians from all over India came and performed at these gatherings and Salil, the innate collector and learner, would be listening hard, taking in elements of the endless varieties of subcontinental music, certain phrases of which he would cheerfully adapt to his own needs in his compositions. An example: the opening movement of his famous political song "Manbona e bondhone, manbona e srinkhole" is an adaptation of a tune Salil Chowdhury heard in Andhra Pradesh. Like his great predecessor, Rabindranath, Salil has utilized, in his long career of in music, a broad range of musical influences from disparate sources, modifying them, reshaping them and thus making them his own. In one of his most-remembered early protest songs, "Bicharpoti tomar bichar korbe jara", a song against the brutality of British justice in its judgement of Indian freedom-fighters, Salil Chowdhury took as his leitmotiv a popular Bengali "kirtan" tune, traditionally devotional in character, and laced it with an openly political text, transforming an old melody of devotion into a statement of explosive protest and anger. It is interesting to note that this same "kirtan" motif had been adapted in a song by Rabindranath for a completely different purpose. In his song, "Bhenge mor ghorer chabi", Rabindranath used the intimate and personal aspect of the traditional tune. Many years later, Ustad Vilayat khan, in his Sitar improvisation on the same tune, cashed in on the same aspect again. But Salil Chowdhury impregnated the melody line with political message, replaced the soft intimate contours with sharp edges - and a new song with a new identity was born from the womb of the old. The soft intimacy of a folk melody was suddenly transformed into the battle cry of the oppressed people. With this one treatment of a traditional tune Salil chronicled the changes that occur in the attitudes of a people toward its past and present and also those that necessarily take place in the body of music due to changed social circumstances. "Bicharpoti" still remains one of the most famous agitprop songs both in West Bengal and in Bangladesh.

Between 1945 and 1950 Salil Chowdhury composed some of his most

important political songs. They were important both in their political impact and in their textual, tonal and structural novelty which proclaimed this young composer's uniqueness. The lyrics were clear, unequivocally direct and consistent in their themes. Moreover, Salil's lyrics manifested a significant poetic skill. Seldom before had a Bengali lyricist addressed the burning issues of his times in songs written with such an acute sense of immediacy, powerful imagery, and such a wealth of vocabulary.

But all these powerful lyrics would have been a waste, had it not been for the structures of the songs. Salil Chowdhury's song structures and his unique mode of phrasing words, melodies and rhythm patterns probably constitute the key to understanding his uniqueness. These are the most significant characteristics that set him apart as a composer from most of his contemporaries.

As a composer of modern Bengali songs in the 40s and the 50s, Salil Chowdhury had to face the formidable challenge embodied in the works of his great forerunners: Rabindranath Tagore, Dwijendralal Roy, Kazi Nazrul Islam and Himangshu Dutta. The first three were composers as well as lyricists, while Himangshu Dutta was only a composer. These four composers and lyricists had explored, with a great number and variety of songs, countless modes of musical expression, and had created idioms and patterns unknown before their times. They had experimented with almost all musical elements and materials, available far and near, and had shown a broadness of mind and boldness of spirit that remain unique in the history of modern music and that of "song" in general. Bengali folk music, Hindustani ragas, south Indian modalities, European music - both classical and popular - anything and everything was welcome to them as long as the raw material contributed to the making of a new song. In modern Bengali song between the late 19th century and the end of 40s, the East had already met West, long before such a term became fashionable in the culture industry in the early 70s. The nascent spirit of modern India had discovered itself in terms of its own endless wealth of music and had reached out for distant shores in search of newer musical experiences, thus enriching its own. Rabindranath, in a conversation with Dilip Kumar Roy, the eminent son of Dwijendralal Roy, had already spelt out the ultimate challenge of new Bengali music:

Should we then await the verdict of a special tribunal to find out what belongs to the Bengalis and what does not? Listen, if European music has flavoured your father's songs, what's so wrong about it? Blind imitation would be wrong, but not assimilation. Europe has been our neighbour for some two hundred years now. Well, are we stones or barbarians that we should turn down its gifts?

RMIM Archive Article "380".

Salil - phenomenon in Bengali music - part 2

Posted by: Sambit Basu sambit@agniroth.com

Source: Sangeet Natak, Jan-Mar 1989

Author: Suman Chatterjee (Manab Mitra)

Salil Chowdhury: A Phenomenon in Modern Bengali Music

- Manab Mitra

(Part 2)

In the 40s, Salil Chowdhury had the historic advantage of having such courageous pioneers in experimental music behind him. But it was the image of those same pioneers that must have stood before him, posing a great challenge to a young composer who had to prove his merit or accept the unsavoury epithet of a minor composer.

The most interesting feature of Salil Chowdhury's compositions in the 40s and early 50s is that he refused to follow any definite pattern or to be confined in any category which others could call "typically Salil". Every composition he made revealed a new face of the composer. He reintroduced rhythm variation in the body of a single song, a technique first introduced in modern Bengali song by Rabindranath, but virtually left unexplored by the other major composers after him. Salil Chowdhury departed from the accepted norms of modern Bengali song structure by writing complex phrases of a single movement which unfolded itself sometimes over several lines of the lyric. This was a revolutionary innovation indeed, since the prevailing tendency had been to conform to the pattern of having one melody line, or at the most two, for a unit of lyric lines constituting each segment of the song. In Salil's compositions, musical information in terms of application of notes, their combinations and movements, acquired a totally new dimension. The way in which he phrased and scanned his melody lines along with the inner movements of the rhythms he chose, vigorously syncopated them and relentlessly explored the possibilities of tonal expressions, permanently changed the face of modern Bengali song. Constant experiments with song structures have always been Salil's preoccupation - a characteristic that sets him conspicuously apart from almost all other Indian composers in the post-Tagore era. Great artists create problems for themselves and then look for elegant solutions. This was exactly what Salil Chowdhury did. Most of his songs contain a plethora of melodious problems he created for himself, as though challenging his own capacities, problem he then solved with just a few strokes of a deft hand busy carving out new patterns of progress in music. Each of his songs, written and composed in the 40s and 50s, is a separate experience in itself.

But probably the most striking experience in modern Indian songs had to wait until Salil Chowdhury put to tune a long poem by Satyendranath Dutta and a few others by Sukanta Bhattacharya. Here, he had the historic challenge of making songs out of poems which were never meant to become songs in the first place. "Palkir gan" and "Runner", to name just two, became two separate studies in modern composition. Rabindranath, that impossible wizard who was constantly minting so many first-of-their-kind in modern Indian music, did make a masterly debut in putting long poems to tune. But Salil Chowdhury's

compositions contained different information altogether. They were utterly unknown experiences not only in terms of lyric but - more importantly for composition - in terms of structural modalities. The important difference was in the presence of a variety of inner musical themes, sometimes quite disparate in their tonal information, within the outer boundary of the central motif. Even the intelligent rhythm and tempo variations, a musical delight in themselves, accompanying the shifts in imagery and moods of these poems, pale in front of the stupendous array of tonal motifs and themes which arrive, establish themselves, and then smoothly dissolve into another, thus gradually revealing a total panorama of tone pictures and colours, bound together in sovereign cohesion. The degree of Salil Chowdhury's musical imagination and his authority over his tools and materials becomes equally apparent when one considers that he undertook, in both these songs, several extremely complex feats of tonic changes ("kharaj paribartan"). Tonic change, a regular and important feature of European music and widely ignored in Hindustani classical music, though the provisions are there, had already been experimented with in modern Bengali songs by Rabindranath Tagore, Dwijendralal Roy and Himangshu Dutta, albeit on a rather limited scale. But in Salil Chowdhury's compositions, tonic changes occurred in considerably wider and much more intricate applications, imparting the delightful effect of a chain of songs within a song. His compositional treatment of Sukanta's poem "Runner" may well be compared to a serious symphony, though on a much more limited scale, owing to the fact that he was composing a song and not an orchestral piece.

Elements of orchestral composition were very much there in his songs, especially in those which did not use the idioms of folk music. And it was just a matter of time for Salil Chowdhury to use real orchestral back-up on a larger scale. In composing the instrumental parts, the preludes and interludes as well as accompaniment, he started showing much unique imaginativeness as he did in his songs. And it was a "total producer" of modern songs - as lyricist, composer, as well as orchestral arranger - that Salil Chowdhury emerged as the most important figure in the post-Tagore Bengal. This unity of the three very important capacities is, in fact, highly noteworthy. Since the '30s, the production of modern songs in Bengal, especially in the culture industry, has been marked by a division of labor. The lyricist and the composer have not necessarily been the same person. With the passage of time, the divided responsibilities have tended to become the rule rather than the exception. The introduction of the orchestra in recording brought in its wake another personality that was previously unknown - the arranger. Systematic practice of this division of labour, an historic product of the capitalist mode of song production in the culture industry, has consolidated all over India the typical constellation of three personalities to a song: the lyricist, the composer, and the arranger. Salil Chowdhury had to give up his lyricist identity when he started working for the film industry in Bombay and in South India primarily for reasons of language. But in Bengali songs - apart from those in which he collaborated with other Indian composers like Hridaynath Mangeshkar - he has, by and large, maintained his three-in-one identity which is exceptional in contemporary popular music in India.

It is true that back-up orchestra had been used in India long before

Salil Chowdhury came on the scene. But most of the pre-Salil orchestra work in Bengali songs on gramophone disks was simple accompaniment or, at best, a kind of instrumental respite. In some exceptional cases the accompanying orchestra did display a richness of sound, but very seldom did it have any statement to make of its own. In Salil Chowdhury's work of orchestra achieved its much needed liberation. He accorded the accompanying instruments the status of voices capable of making statements qualify or modify those made by human voice. He started "voicing" his instruments. This did not, of course, happen overnight, but it did happen soon enough after the Gramophone company started recording Salil Chowdhury's songs. Should one listen to the recorded versions of his songs chronologically, one could easily trace the growth of his thoughts and work in instrumentation and orchestration. His early discs impart a sense of economy regarding instrumental back-up. But despite the quantitative thinness of the accompaniment, a qualitative difference can be noticed. It can be clearly seen that, economy notwithstanding, the instruments are trying to "say" something on their own. They are neither repeating, nor are they just embellishing it. Rather, they are supplementing the melody of the song with related or independent lines of melody. This gives the disc versions of Salil Chowdhury's songs a dramatic dimension that was absent before.

One of the salient features of Salil Chowdhury's instrumentation has always been his own way of using rhythms, percussion, and percussive instruments. He clearly defines the rhythms and the rhythmic thrusts of his songs with instruments, sometimes a whole group of instruments, more suited to the purpose than just a Tabla which had been, for a long time, the standard rhythm instrument used in the production of modern Bengali songs. His innovative application of percussions other than the obligatory Tabla in the early 50s was not only a welcome relief but a pioneering work as well. Moreover, he sharpened and enhanced the edge of the rhythm by using the piano which, in many of his early recordings, played rhythmic chords, accentuating the percussiveness of the accompaniment. In one of his songs in the late 50s or early 60s, "Surer ei jhorna", Salil used a group strings as percussive accompaniment - an experiment which was surely the first of its kind in the subcontinent. In that same song he introduced, for the first time too, the technique of a dialogue between the lead singer and the accompanying chorus. He had already done successful experiments in harmonized choral singing before, but this particular song, in its recorded form, was a different matter altogether. Here the chorus is a harmonized vocal back-up as well as a separate entity by itself. In the second movement of the song, the "antara", there is a sudden reversal of roles. It is the chorus that takes the lead while the lead voice replies and resolves the tension resulting from the inversion of the voice set-up. This was, again, a major experimental departure from the traditional and accepted norms of vocal arrangement in which the lead voice asserted its leading role throughout the song with the chorus condemned to a marginal existence. As the vocal dialogue goes on in "Surer ei jhorna", a single accordion supplies yet another line of continuous run, adding a third dimension to the tonal picture. If one puts all these elements and factors together, one gets to know the mind of a composer who has constantly been trying to reshape his work and heighten the dramatic impact of his songs.

----- About the author: -----

Manab Mitra is the penname of Suman Chatterjee. Suman had a pretty long preparation in Hindustani classical music and in songs of Rabindranath. He had also been a very close and active follower of Bengali modern songs. In early 70s, after cutting two discs of Rabindrasangeet he abandoned his music career to go abroad. As a radio-journalist he worked in France, USA and Germany. While staying abroad Suman took formal lessons in Western music - classical guitar and piano. In late 80s he gave up journalism, returned to Calcutta to try his career in Bengali music. His first cassette in 1992 gave him immense popularity and Bengali music a much needed change. He works as lyricist, composer, arranger and singer of his songs. Suman probably is the most discussed personality in Bengali cultural scenario in last couple of decades.

RMIM Archive Article "381".

Salil - phenomenon in Bengali music - part 3

Posted by: Sambit Basu sambit@agniroth.com

Source: Sangeet Natak, Jan-Mar 1989

Author: Suman Chatterjee (Manab Mitra)

Salil Chowdhury: A Phenomenon in Modern Bengali Music

- Manab Mitra

(Part 3)

By shifting his place of work from Calcutta to Bombay in the 50s, Salil Chowdhury also moved out of phase of direct political statement in song. It would, however, be wrong to assume that his lyrics took leave of left-wing politics or social concerns. Moreover, despite the preponderance of political lyrics, Salil had also written songs in which politics was not the principal motivation. And it was this type of lyricism that tended to prevail in his work from the 60s. Along with the changing dimensions of his lyrics, there came newer dimensions of his music. His exposure to wider horizons and varied experiences in the large film world of Bombay and later south India brought fresh challenges which he met by expanding and sharpening his compositional capacities. This was the period in which Salil Chowdhury's modes of composition and orchestration became more influenced by Western classical music, on the one hand, and Hindustani "ragas" on the other. It is interesting to note the growth of a young composer who came from rural Bengal with a flute in his hand, leaning heavily on folk music in the beginning. That young man traveled a long way to become almost a classicist, using wide and deep strings and horns with movements strongly resembling those of a classical Western orchestra and, at the same time, composing nostalgic tunes in Bageshri and Kalavati as well. Salil Chowdhury's treatment of and compositions in several "ragas" are as remarkable and as uniquely his own as his experiments with Western classical music. But, as observed before, Salil methodically refused to follow any convenient line of action. He refused to be satisfied with any definite mode of musical expression. His occasional flirtations with Mozart, his experiments with the relative minor and major scales which have been so important an impact on modern Indian music, his adaptations of the melodies of "Soviet land so dear to every toiler" or even "Happy birthday to day", which he reworked into quite a serious song, "Klan name go", his encounters with west Indian rhythms like Lavern, his deep attachment to the nostalgic tone colors of Champ, his sudden composition in Hamsadhwani in Ektal - nothing in particular can define him.

The compositional variety Salil Chowdhury has shown in music has tended to surpass his lyric art with the passage of time. His lyrics have sometimes betrayed, despite the strong overall appeal of his songs, an unfortunate inconsistency of language. In written Bengali, the so called "chaste form" ("sadhu bhasha") of verb declination has been effectively discarded long ago. The living everyday language, the language of contemporary literature and that of the media, are generally free from all traces of archaic forms. From the 50s, the tendency has been towards adoption of colloquialism and this has rapidly grown stronger with time. But in modern Bengali songs the

lyrics has somehow retained, though not always, a linguistic archaism for a painfully long time. Some lyricists have, of course, tried to avoid the inertia of archaism as much as possible, especially since the 60s. But due to the absence of any strong tradition of music criticism and rather uncritical public acceptance, archaic forms and worn-out phrases have survived in the modern Bengali lyric with an alarming tenacity. It is not at all uncommon to find colloquialism sitting right next to a devastating archaism - something which would never be forgiven in Bengali literature. This persistent archaism and its annoying coexistence with colloquialism is not only illogical but absurd, especially when encountered in a contemporary and urban musical idiom, with modern orchestration and all. It is rather disturbing that even in the late 70s and early 80s, examples of such contradictions could be found scattered in some of Salil Chowdhury's songs. The fact that this self-contradictory mixture of archaism and modernism has always been present in a lot of modern Bengali songs cannot justify the appearance of such anachronism in the lyrics of a composer like Salil Chowdhury who has otherwise changed and revolutionized the modern Bengali song.

However, from the 60s right up to the 80s, when most of the recorded modern Bengali songs revealed a surprising indifference to the society out of which they grew, Salil Chowdhury's lyrics offered, from time to time, perceptible indications of social awareness and concern. His songs and lyrics never failed to address important social issues and maladies which almost all other established lyricists of our times have methodically excluded from their work. One of the most remarkable examples is a song recorded by his daughter, Antara, in the 70s. In that song, a little girl asks her mother to tell her a different story - and not one that starts with the customary "Once upon a time there was a king and a queen..." She keeps asking her mother, with a child's innocence, questions which are essentially explosive. Questions about social injustice, the evils of a society divided into haves and have-nots, which may well appear strange and unreasonable to children. Salil Chowdhury, wrote this song, essentially critical and political in nature, from a child's point of view - an attempt which no other established Bengali lyricist is known to have made.

Composing songs for children is another exemplary aspect of Salil Chowdhury's contribution to our music. In the 70s and in early 80s he composed a series of songs for children, imbued with a wonderful sense of fun, highly interesting lyrics, melodies and orchestral work. In fact from the 70s and increasingly, in the early 80s, Salil Chowdhury's instrumentation underwent some evident reorientation. The classicist tended to go pop. The instrumental idiom of the then popular Western music, which has created a new international soundscape with electronic and synthesized sounds, found increasing application in Salil Chowdhury's work. This, added to the audibly enhanced role of chord progression, sent new vibrations through his music. In fact, this is probably a feature which has greatly influenced contemporary Bengali modern music in general. Always in love with movement, Salil has recorded a collection of his old political songs with new arrangements in the 80s. Though refreshingly experimental in character, some of the arrangements do betray the weakness of exaggeration, with the vocal overtures sometimes conjuring up the image of some philharmonic young people singing happily on

their way to a picnic rather than political protest. His application of vocal harmony in this collection, "Ghum bhangar gan" (Songs of Awakening), though displaying his sovereign authority over the techniques of harmony, do not always do justice to the purpose of these songs, should there be any.

Despite a few interesting additions, the present decade is proving to be the master's lean years. Is this a sign of fatigue? Lack of any motivation other than commercial? Has he also become a victim of the general decay pervading, of late, the entire soundscape of modern Indian music? Another question could be equally pertinent: How much can one expect of a composer who has, over several decades, generated most of the important accents in modern Bengali as well as Indian music - and for how long?

About the author: -----

Manab Mitra is the penname of Suman Chatterjee. Suman had a pretty long preparation in Hindustani classical music and in songs of Rabindranath. He had also been a very close and active follower of Bengali modern songs. In early 70s, after cutting two discs of Rabindrasangeet he abandoned his music career to go abroad. As a radio-journalist he worked in France, USA and Germany. While staying abroad Suman took formal lessons in Western music - classical guitar and piano. In late 80s he gave up journalism, returned to Calcutta to try his career in Bengali music. His first cassette in 1992 gave him immense popularity and Bengali music a much needed change. He works as lyricist, composer, arranger and singer of his songs. Suman probably is the most discussed personality in Bengali cultural scenario in last couple of decades.

RMIM Archive Article "211".

Hemant Kumar

Posted by: Satish Subramanian (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

Author: Satish Subramanian (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

Hemant Kumar

"Can't decide if he impressed me more as a good singer, or better as a music director or by just being a good human," wondered Kaifi Azmi when asked to describe Hemant Kumar.

"Maybe a combination of all three aspects is what made Hemant, Hemant," he later added.

Hemant Kumar was born in Varanasi and later moved to Calcutta. He started his singing career (on radio) in the late 30s. His first recorded Bengali (non-film) album was in 1937. His first song as a singer in movies was in a Bengali film film, "Nimai Sanyasi" released in 1940. He started singing in Hindi films in 1944.

Surjit Singh, in his series, wrote about Hemant's first few songs:

HEMANT

sang his first songs for a hindii movie in 1944 for MD Amarnaath in the movie Iraadaa, produced by Indrapurii Studios, Calcutta. He sang two solos, "phir muhabbat ke pyaam aane lage", and, "aaraam se jo raate.n kaaTe.n vo ashq bahaanaa kyaa jaane.n" written by Aziiz Kaashmiirii, and a duet with Raadhaaraanii, "nit nit ke ruuThane vaale saajan, tum diip bano".

Hemant was a great fan of Pankaj Mullick, and he was his idol. Bela Mukherjee (Hemant's wife) commented that Hemant was so fond of Pankaj Mullick's singing that he used to stand outside Mullick's house in Calcutta just to listen to Pankaj Mullick sing.

The other major influences on his music were from the Bengali folk, and Rabindra Sangeet.

His first movie as a music director in Bengali was in the year 1947. He was introduced as a music director in Hindi films by director Hemen Gupta in the film "Anand Math" (Filmistan, 1952), which had tunes for traditional songs, like "jai jagdeesha hare" (Geet Gobind), and the patriotic song "vande maataaram sujalam suphalam" (Bankim Chandra Chatterjee).

The patriotic tunes continued in "Jagriti", with "de di hamen azaadi binaa khaDg binaa Dhaal", (which was an adaptation of the Noorjehan-Naushad hit "kya mil gaya bhagwan tumhein dil ko dukha ke"), and "ham laae hain toofaan se kashti nikaal ke" (Rafi) and "aao bachchon tumhe dikhaae.n jhaaNki hindustaan ki" (Pradeep).

Vish Krishnan when talking about Hemant's earlier accomplishments and his connection with Hemen Gupta, wrote:

In the late '40s, after doing his first 2 solo MD

assignments for the movies PURBARAAG and ABHIYAATRI, he

just happened to meet the liberal IPTA crowd. The Indian People's Theatres association attracted only the very best.

Director Hemen Gupta made 3 IPTA movies in the late '40s or early '50s period starting with BHULI NAI, and going on with "1942" (a Bengal famine story), and then the Bankim Chandra adaptation ANAND MATH. All 3 movies are credited to Hemanta.

Before a series of movies at Filmistan (Anandmath, Jagriti, Nagin, Samrat, Shart) which launched his career as music director in Hindi films, he had already given music for quite a few films in Bengali.

Hemant, as a music director, made it big in Hindi films with his huge hit "Nagin". This was the movie that introduced electronic synthesized music in films. As most people know, the famous "been" music before the song "tan dole mera man dole" was synthesized and is credits to Hemant's assistants Kalyanji and Ravi. (It is a completely different matter that the lyrics refer to a "bansuri" and not a "been". This also happened in another of Hemant's movies "Kohra", in the song "kahe bajaya tu ne paapi bansuriya" by Asha and Mahendra Kapoor).

Coming to his singing and various singers, Salil is supposed to have said that "If God were to sing, he would do so in Hemant's voice." For Lata, Hemant's voice always reminded her of a sadhu/saint. It is probably this awe/reverence that reflects in her voice when she sang with Hemant. It is as if there is a student-guru relationship, with Hemant sounding majestic, and Lata seemingly a step behind Hemant. This was not just in the songs where Hemant was the music director, but in general in most of their duets, like, "Chandan ka palna reshama ki Dori" (Naushad), "Jaag dard-e-ishq jaag" (C.Ramchandra), "Chhuppa lo yun dil mein pyaar mera" (Roshan), "Nain so nain naahi milaa" (Vasant Desai), "Yaad kiya dil ne kahaan ho tum" (SJ), "Neend na mujhko aaye" (Kalyanji). The Hemant-Lata duets rank right next to Asha-Rafi duets for me.

Lata has been the predominant female voice in Hemant's films. The other female singers who have had their share of good songs with him were Geeta Dutt ("piya aiso joya mein samai gayo re", "na jao saiyaan chudaake baiyaan", "na ye chaand hoga") and Asha ("bheegi bheegi fazaa sun sun", "bhanvra baDa nadaan hain"). Geeta probably has an edge in the duets section.

His daughter Ranu Mukherjee sang for him her first song "naani teri morni ko mor le gayi, baaki jo bachata kaale chor le gaya". According to Ranu she got to sing this song quite by accident. One day when Ranu was playing outside their house, Hemant and Shailendra (both were neighbours) called her and asked her to sing a song that they had just made. As the song's recording was urgent, they made her rehearse the song in the car as they drove down to the studio! Apparently, it is still one of her favourite songs. While Hemant sang most of his songs himself, he did give

some nice compositions for some of his contemporary male singers. Rafi was used on and off in many of his movies (Jagriti, Miss Mary, Do Dil etc).

For Talat, Hemant created some wonderful tunes in the movie "Bahu". The Talat-Geeta duets "thandi hawaon mein tere hi baahon mein", and "dekho dekhoji balam aise birha ka gham mera nanha sa jiya tadpana na" surely rank high in the list of popular songs of Talat.

He gave Kishore the opportunity to sing the sensitive romantic duet "aaj mujhe kuchh kahana hai" (Sahir; Kishore with Sudha Malhotra) in the movie "Girl Friend". In "Miss Mary", Kishore had one of his craziest songs that others can only dream of singing - "gaana na aaya, bajaana na aaya, dilbar ko apna banana na aaya". Then with Gulzar, he gave Kishore the evergreen songs "havaaon pe likh do havaaon ke naam, ham anjaan pardesiyon ka salaam" (Do Dooni Char) and "vo shaam kuchh ajeeb thi ye shaam bhi ajeeb hai" (Khamoshi).

The three Ms - Mukesh, Manna Dey, Mahendra Kapoor - are almost nonexistent in Hemant's films. Mahendra Kapoor made an appearance in "Kohra". Mukesh did sing for him later on in "Us Raat Ke Baad", but nothing much other than that? Don't know much about Hemant's earlier or not-easily-available creations to comment more.

He has worked with almost all the top lyricists of his time. Some of them are Rajinder Krishan (Nagin), S. H. Bihari (Shart), Kaifi Azmi (Kohra), Shakeel Badayuni (Sahib Biwi aur Ghulam), Shailendra (Chand), Gulzar (Khamoshi), Majrooh Sultanpuri (Ek Hi Raasta), Sahir Ludhianvi (Girl Friend), Pradeep (Jagriti), and Prem Dhawan (Maa Beta). Even though some of these associations were limited to a single movie, they were nevertheless memorable. Kaifi Azmi, who has had a better share of movies with Hemant, said that Hemant's tunes always did justice to his lyrics. A sentiment which probably is shared by all the other lyricists too.

He didn't fade out like some MDs after the Golden Era, he just opted to leave Hindi films in the early 70s. Moushmi Chatterjee (Hemant's daughter-in-law, and whose first film "Ballika Bodhu" in Bengali had music by Hemant), who was very close to Hemant, said her only regret was that he left Bombay when he had so much more to offer. Listening to some of his last few songs in Hindi films, one has to agree with her. Hemant Kumar was as endearing in "tum pukaar lo" as he was in "ye raat ye chandni phir kahaan", and the pathos in "ya dil ki suno duniya waalon" was no less than the one seen in "jaane wo kaise log the jinke pyaar ko pyaar mila."

According to Moushmi during the making of "Khamoshi" he was not very comfortable and was beginning to get very lonely. She considers the song "ya dil ki suno duniya waalon" (Kaifi Azmi; "Anupama") as accurately describing the mood of Hemant at that time.

ya dil ki suno duniya waalon, ya mujhko abhi chhup rahne do
main gam ko khushi kaise kehduin jo kehte hain unhe kehne do
kya dard kisika lega koi, itna to kisi me dard nahin
behte hue aasun aur bahen, ab aisi tassali rehne do

He along with S.D.Burman and Salil Choudhury are the three MDs who are often quoted as the trio who migrated to Bombay from Bengal and made it big (and also blamed for neglecting Bengali film music). While S.D.Burman flourished till the very end in Hindi films, Salil went on to find new pastures in South. But Hemant returned to Calcutta and continued to give music in Bengali films. He did come back to Hindi films in the late 70s to give music to a couple of Moushmi Chatterjee starrers ("Love in Canada" and "Do Ladke Donon Kadke").

He left us around 5 or 6 years ago. Last credited for the title song of Hrishikesh Mukherjee's tele-serial "Talaash" (Moushmi Chatterjee, Alok Nath). The song, sung by Suresh Wadkar, "jeevan ik talaash hai", had the same tune as "tum pukaar lo" from "Khamoshi".

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satish

RMIM Archive Article "199".

Madan Mohan Kohli

Posted by: Hemant Parikh (parikh@ibm.net)

Author: Hemant Parikh

Source: various

Madan Mohan Kohli

Madan Mohan was only 51 when he passed away, having created a trove of Lata tunes for us to treasure. And Madan Mohan was something more than the ghazal. He brought, to a litany of Lata tunes, a classical touch of his own. Some of these tunes are capsuled here in this anniversary tribute by Raju Bharatan. (Screen July 15, 1994) Madan Mohan died in the year 1974, when Laila Majnu half complete was left to finish by Jaidev.

Come July 14, 1994 and we enter our 20th year without Madan Mohan, With Lata Mangeshkar. With Woh chup rahen to mere dil ke daag jalte hain. "Madan bahut hi surile the", Lata is on 'I Remember' record as saying. "Achcha sur lagata tha!" C. Ramchandra's verdict on Madan Mohan clinches Lata's comment. Lata is on further record as saying she was coming to grips with the murkis in that surpassingly lovely "Mera Saaya" number, Nainon mein badra chhaye to go on Sadhana, when Madan Mohan heard certain musicians going off key and lost his cool. "Besuraa bajate ho, sur ke saath beimaani karte ho, sharam nahin aati!" he shouted at those errant musicians. This was in tune with what recordist Mangesh Desai had once told me : "There is no composer more difficult to please at a recording than Madan Mohan. He takes the life out of you".

He took the life out of them because he staked his reputation on a composition like Naino mein badra chaaye. The unalloyed sweetness Madan achieved here in Lata's voice is something rare in his repertory. Sweetness in Lata's voice, Madan knew, was something easily achieved. That sweetness would owe its entire entity to Lata's unique singing persona. But it was never enough that there was enough of only Lata in a Madan tune. There had also to be enough of Madan! That is way you did not always find Madan Mohan settling for you Lata's sweetness alone. The tune had additionally to have something that Lata could unfold under the bountiful baton of Madan Mohan and Madan Mohan alone. Like what was unfolded on "Jahanara" Mala Sinha's Woh chup rahen to mere dil ke daag jalte hain.

"Ghazal Ka Shehzadaa' is what Lata called Madan To write on Madan Mohan's ghazals, there fore, would be the done thing. C Ramchandra had a baton point when I identified Madan Mohan as the uncrowned king of the ghazal. C. Ramchandra said: "What do you mean Madan was only good at composing ghazals? Madan was good at every single thing he composed. It's a popular misconception that he was only good at ghazals. He was once my assistant, so I had a total insight into his potential. Madan's light com-positions have the same

individualistic quality as his serious songs. What's more, I don't think any one of us had his knack of picking the right instruments for the right song".

C. Ramchandra himself was a taskmaster in the choice of the right instrument, so that this was no ordinary tribute. I therefore take C. Ramchandra at his word- that Madan was good at every thing he composed and turn the focus on his peerless classicism while tuning a variety of songs. Take Nainon mein badra chhaye itself. It could be in Dhaani or in Bhimpalasi, depending upon how you choose to interpret it while it could be in either raag, the beauty of Madan's classical composition lay in the fact that he never seemed obsessed with the raag. The raag just flowed from his tune. Nainon mein badra chaye is a Classic which with the film "Mera Saaya" was a classic for Sadhana-Sunil Dutt starter. The filming in Udeypur's lake palace had the classical Rajasthani feeling, and the melody of nature feeling and lyric of the emotional feeling Sunil suffered after losing Sadhana. Only Madan's great understanding of situation had helped him to come up with "Mera Saaya" tunes.

Naushad wore his Bhairavi as a badge when he composed something like Do hanson ka joda bichhad gayo re to go on Vyjayanthimala in "Ganga Jamuna". Madan Mohan, by contrast, had the gift of being able to make the raag sound secondary as he came over, in the same Bhairavi, on "Anpadh" Mala Sinha as: Hai isi mein pyaar ki aabroo. This Lataised Bhairavi was something Naushad personally identified on TV as a dimension of the raag's exploitation he envied. Shankar summed up Madan Mohan's specialist talent in this direction tellingly when he noted: "Jis mosiqaar ko sur ka gyaan hota hai woh sur mein bajaa hi leta hai". That is why it is point less to wonder whether Madan Mohan intended Nainon mein bad-ra chaye to go in Bhimpalasi or in Dhaani. Madan always played in sur and the tune came to him in a flash. Lata was there to do the rest. After that, he left it to you to decide whether the raag was Bhimpalasi or Dhaani. If it is a Madan Bhairavi to match Hai isi mein pyaar ki aabroo you want, you have it, from the same Lata, In "Dekh Kabira Roya", as 'Tu pyaar kare ya thukraaye. The remarkable thing about Lata's rendition here is you never find Madan Mohan striving for the Bhairavi effect, it just comes naturally. Here is where Madan Mohan was totally different from the Punjab school of composers dominating our film music in the late 1940's and early 1950's. Even O.P. Nayyar, for all his sheen of modernity, came with an overlay of Pilu. But not once could you scent the dehati Punjabi at work in a Madan Mohan composition.

I do not say this in a derogatory light. It is my considered view that the Punjab school produced some of the finest music in our films. But always you got the impression that it was music literally rooted in the Punjab soil. Here is where Madan Mohan was diametrically different. He was the artistic aristocrat at work. The son of Rai Bahadur Chuni Lal, the Filmistan chief, at work. Madan Mohan's best music

belonged to the drawing room, That is why Madan had problems consistently equating with the masses. He was essentially a composer for the classes.

His classicism sprang spontaneously from the station in life to which he belonged. He was one of those men who had to make a thorough study of whatever he took up. I did not meet Madan Mohan merely in the music room. I encountered him ever so often, at a cricket match, a badminton match, a tennis match. And I was not allowed to discuss music when we met at such venues. All discussion had mandatorily to be on the game in progress! Madan could discuss the finer points of cricket, tennis and badminton with the same precision as the finer points of Lata's vocals in Hum pyaar mein jalne waalon ko ("Jailor"). Madan Mohan had a finely honed mind. And that not only on music. He was a man of taste in every sense of the word.

That is why no female singer existed for him beyond Lata "the nearest thing to vocal perfection I have known". It is this vocal perfection you find in play as you hear, in peerless Pilu, Lata's Maine raang li aaj chunariya, going on Nutan in "Dulhan Ek Raat Ki". Without straining in any way, Madan here manages to get his Pilu across. Madan had this knack of putting the raag across in a vocal language that even the simpleton could follow. While tuning for the simpleton, Madan retained the purity of the raag more than did most composers.

Even when employing a raag rarely used in films, Madan could do so with telling results - as we saw in the way he exploited, in Lata's voice, Komal Asavari in the "Anpadh" solo: Woh dekho jala ghar kisi ka. The better - known Madan classic in Lata's voice from "Anpadh" is, of course, the Yaman solo on Mala Sinha: Jiya le gayo ji mora sanwariya. But is this Lata solo by Madan not a clever repeat? Was the original by Lata not even more captivating? Oh yes, it was, its Jaltarang effect in Yaman can never be forgotten as it came over in a "Bahana" strain of Jaa re badra bairi jaa rejaa re.

To one man, and one man alone, goes the credit for popularising Jaa re badra bairi jaa re jaa re some three years before the film came. That man is Gopal Sharma. Gopal Sharma at Radio Ceylon, fascinated by the Madan tune, missed no opportunity to play this euphonious Lata solo in Yaman. As the man who initiated the 'Sargam' programme over Radio Ceylon, I asked Gopal Sharma, years later, whether he knew Jaa re bairi ja re to be in Yaman Gopal Sharma, with commendable frankness, admitted that he knew no Yaman or any raag, for that matter, he just loved the tune, so he played it! Thank you from a legion of listeners, Gopal Sharma, your legendary Radio Ceylon reputation derives from the fact that, to the end, you remained first a listener, only then an announcer.

Truth is, I knew nothing about raags either those days! Like in the case of Gopal Sharma, Tu jahaan jahaan chalega mera saaya saath hoga appealed to me merely as the theme song of

"Mera Saaya" ghosted by Lata. It is only now I can pick it out as Nand. Here is yet another raag rarely heard in films, yet note how arrestingly Madan Mohan has explored Nand on a now a Sadhna looking a dream. now shattering the dream! On which raag was based the Madan Mohan tune handpicked by Lata as one of her ten bests on the occasion of her silver jubilee? My reference is to the Lata solo placed on Anita Guha in "Chacha Zindabad": Bairan neend na aaye rnohe bairan neend na aaye. This one is in Kaafi, isn't it, Lataji what made you prefer it to, say, that "Dekh Kabira Roya" stunner in Ahir Bhairav. Meri veena tum bin roye. Is it Lata's tone or Madan's tune you pick out here! I take it there must have been purely personal reasons for Lata's Kaafi choice of Bairan neend na aaye mohe less, it is not that I love Meri veena tum bin roye more!

If after Kaafi and Ahir Bhairav, it is in Khamaj you seek to savour Lata and Madan, you are welcome to take your choice from Meri aankhon se koyi neend liye jaata hai ("Pooja Ke Phool"), Khanak gayo haay bairi kangana ("Rishte Naate") and Aap ki baaten kahen ya apna afaana kahen ("Dil Ki Raahen"). The choice here is from Lata, Lata, Lata and Madan, Madan, Madan! My own pick is Meri aankhon se koyi on Mala Sinha, as bringing out the mood musician in Madan Mohan.

Every composer had a favourite raag, Madan had none. Look at the flair and imagination with which he scored for a theme in mime like Chetan Anand's "Heer Ranjha". Sachin Dev Burman paid Madan Mohan the ultimate tribute when he told me he himself could not have scored "Heer Ranjha" with half the felicity Madan Mohan did. Which tune in the film, I asked Dada Burman, had he liked best, revealingly Dada Burman replied that you could judge "Heer Ranjha" only in the totality of its score, not by a single tune. Not even by Do dil toote do dil haare, so touchnigly interpreted in Maand by Lata on Priya Rajvansh?

Do dil toote is distinctly Maand, but Lata's "Jahanara" heart stopper, Haal-e-dil yun unhen sunaya gaya aankh hi ko zabaan banaya gaya, is in Sur Malhar or in Mian Ki Malhar? Once again, depends upon how you choose to hear it. It is this perfection to hear, this sensitivity to discern, that you needed to develop to attune to the subtleties and nuances of Madan Mohan's Lata tuning. It has taken me the best part of 35 years to try and develop this perception, this sensitivity.

But, even now, I am still learning from the repertoire of Lata and Madan. Even now I can only tell that Unko yeh shikayat hai from "Adalat" is in Maalgunji, Baiyyan na dharo from "Dastak" is in Charukeshi, I have not yet developed the perception and the sensitivity to prefer the one definitively over the other.

And I hope I never develop such sensitivity and perception. For I feel I was much happier when I could insinctually appreciate a Lata Madan composition for what it was - a Lata Madan composi-tion. How I crave for a re-gifting to me of the elfin innocence with which I took in, during my

impressionable youth, such Lata-Madan gems as Dukhiyare naina dhoondhe piya ko ("Nirmohi"), Sitaron se poochchon nazon se poochchon ("Dhoon"), Chaand madham hai aasmaan chup hai ("Railway Platform"), Mukh mod na lena saajana ("Ashiana"), Meri aankhon ki neend le gaya ("Madhosh"). Woh jo milte the kabhi ("Akeli Mat Jaiyo"), Tum ho saath raat bhi haseen hai ("Mohar"), Preetam meri duniya mein ("Ads"), Maane na maane na haaye balam pardesiya ("Jagir"), Nainon mein pyaar dole dil ka qaraar dole ("Sheroo"), Ajab hai yeh duniya ab zindagi hai ("Naya Aadmi"), Chal diya mera dil tod ke ("Fifty Fifty"), Sapne mein sajan se do baaten ("Gateway of India") and Chain nahin aaye ("Samundar").

Madan Mohan was still a struggling composer when he created these tunes. And it is when you are struggling that you really create. Later, at least in the 1970's, I felt Madan Mohan became rather stylised. In other words, he was, I felt, composing to live up to his reputation as the 'Ghazal King'. I feel this cramped his style in the matter of being a freewheeler composer - a must for films.

But this is a matter of opinion. What is not a matter of opinion is that Madan Mohan, from early in life, was a 'Baghi' with a compos-ing cause. A 'Baghi' whose Lata oeuvre abides in our minds and hearts as Hamare baad ab mehfil mein afsaane baiyan honge/ Bahaaren hum ko dhoondhengi magger hum tum judder honghi....

This article is based on Lata Manatees, so offcourse it was Lata's shade and it is in this shade Madan became really popular. But the fact is that what ever Madan Mohan composed was Univerasal, some singers which are Big Names did even sing thier best songs under Madan Mohan. Here I must say that one has to turn to, HMV Music Cassettes and their Treasures. I mean Anmol Ratan and Golden Collection Cassettes.

These tapes have been compiled by Sanjeev Kohli, son of Madan Mohan and Senior Marketing Consultant of HMV. Sanjeev has put together some of the best songs of each singers, music directors and not to miss Lata Mangeshkar's Shradhanjali. In this day and age of 1994 with big competition from other cassette companies HMV has challenged with the grate Old Is Gold treasures of Hindi Film Songs and with it the Memory, History and Love for Indian Music.

Mohammad Rafi Sings for Madan Mohan, Anmol Ratan
 Aakhri geet mohabbat ka, Film: Neel Aakash (1965)
 Aap ke pehloo mein aakar ro diye, Film: Mera Saaya (1966)
 Basti basti parbat parbat, Film: Railway Platform (1965)
 Ek haseen shaam ko dil, Film: Dulhan Ek Raat Ki (1966)
 Ek kali muskarayee, Film: Ek Kali Muskarayee (1968)
 Kisi ki yaad mein duniya ko, Film: Jahan Ara (1964)
 Main nigahen tere chehre se, Film: Aap Ki Parchaiyan (1964)
 Mein yeh sochkar, Film: Haqeeqat (1964)
 Mere pyaar mein, Film: Suhagan (1964)
 Rang aur noor ki baarat, Film: Ghazal (1964)
 Saawan ke mahine mein, Film : Sharaabi (1965)
 Tere dar pe aaya hoon, Film: Laila Majnu (1976)

Teri aankho ke siwa, Film : Chiraag (1969)
 Tujhe kya sunaon, Film: Aakhri Dao (1958)
 Tum jo mil gaye ho, Film: Hanste Jakham (1973)
 Tumhari zulfon ke saayen mein, Film : Naunihal(1967)
 Yeh duniya yeh mehfil, Film: Heer Ranjha(1970)
 Yehi hai tammana, Film: Aap Ki Parchaiyan (1964)
 Yoon rootho na haseena, Film : Neend Hamari Kwaab Tumhare (1960)
 All Time Greats Mohammed Rafi sings for Madan Mohan (Vol 1-2)
 Among the finest songs of Mohammed Rafi are those tuned by music director Madan Mohan. Besides rendering with felicity the favourite "ghazal" oriented songs of the maestro, the singer has also harnessed his melodious voice, trained in classical music and versatile to sing with rare appeal the composer's melody rich numbers of various types. In a two cassette compilation HMV offered some time ago a selection of Madan Mohan songs sung by Mohammed Rafi for various films released in fifties six-ties and the seventies. The flow of melody that characterise the composer's offerings is evident in the very first number the sad reflective Tujhe kya sunaon main dilruba, tere samne hai mera hal written by Majrooh Sultanpuri for "Aakhri Dao"(1958). The next is a ballad like song on life Basti basti parbat parbat gata jaye banjara written by Sahir Ludhianvi for "Railway Platform"(1955), Sunil dutt's debut making film (the song, however, was picturised on co-artiste Manmohan Krishna). This is followed by a lilting, somewhat gay number, the Rajendra Krishna - written Zameense hamen aasman par from "Adalat" (1958) which Rafi sings with Asha Bhonsle and chorus. Then comes the brisk-paced romantic song Yehi hai tamanna tere ghar ke samne meri jan jaye written by Raja Mehdi Ali Khan for "Aap Ki Parchhaiyan" (1964). This is followed by two moving Kaifi Azmi -written numbers from the war film, "Haqeeqat" (1964). They are the plaintive, "ghazal"-oriented Main yeh sochkar which is set in the plaintive "raag Darbari Kanada" and the heart rending call to countrymen by dying jawan Kar chale hum fida jano tan sathiyon, ab tumhare havale watan sathiyon sung with great feeling by Rafi in an emotion- charged voice. Because of some technical defect the song gets abruptly cut. On the flipside, there are capti-vating "ghazal" oriented romantic numbers like the Rajendra Krish-na - written (he has one more number) and tenderly rendered Mujhe le chalo from "Sharabi" (1965), the Sahir Ludhianvi written heart-warming number Rang aur noor ki baraat kise pesh karoon from "Ghazal" (1964), Hasrat Jaipuri written (he has two more numbers), the titillating Tu mere saamne hai, teri zhulfen hai khuli from "Suhagan" (1964) and Raja Mehdi Ali Khan's Aakhri geet mohabbat ka sunalon to chalo from "Neela Aakash" (1965). The second cassette has some striking numbers, which are a tribute to the creative genius of the composer as well as to the singing versatility of the play-back star. A real gem among them is the Majrooh Sultanpuri -written Tumse kahoon ek baat, halke halke halke from "Dastak" (1970). It is part

humming, part whispering and part crooning, all of which has rendered with captivating grace and grate feeling through voice-modulation. As for the composer, he has given audio perspective to a tender, heart-warming romantic scene. Then there are such numbers as Kaifi Azmi's Meri awaz suno pyar ka raaj suno with haunting tune and musical embellishment, and from "Naunihal" (1970) the gay; joyous songs Ek haseen sham ko dil mera kho gaya written by Raja Mehdi Ali Khan for "Dulhan Raat Ki" (1966) and Yun rootho na haseena written by Rajendra Krishna for "Neend Hamari Khwab Tumhare"(1960). The Majrooh-written "ghazal" oriented number set in swinging waltz, Teri ankhon ke siwa duniya mein rakha kya hai from "Chirag"(1969), the Kaifi Azmi written song of intense love, conveyed both by the composer through his score and by the singer through his charged voice Tum jo mil gaye ho to yeh lagta hai ke jahan mil gaya is from "Haste Zakhm" (1973) and the Sahir written "qawwali" type -number Tere daar pe aaya hoon, kooch kar ke jawoonga, jholi bhar ke jaaonga ya mar ke jawoonga from "Laila Majnu"(1976).

Geeta Dutt sings Aye dil mujhe bata de form "Bhai Bhai" only one hit Geeta number.

Ten Classic Picks

1) In an article this quizmaster ghosted for O.P.

Nayyar in Film-fare, that composer was insistent that it should be mentioned that he "borrowed" Rafi-Manna Dey's. Tu hai mera prem devta in "Kalpana" from Madan Mohan's Lata-Manna dey duet, Preetam daras dikhaao, in 'Chacha Zindaba'. In which raag are these two duets?

Lalit

2) A highly popular Asha-Rafi duet on Mala Sinha- Dhar-mendra in "Neela Akash", as tuned by Madan Mohan, was Aap ko pyaar chhupane ki buri aadat hai In which raag?

Des

3) Usha Mangeshkar went along with Manna Dey in Madan Mohan duet from "Dil Ki Raahen" : Apne suron mein mere suron ko mila lo, Know the raag? Maanj Khamaj

4) How visually over powering was the effect of the darbar scene in which, in front of Mala Sinha, who is the picture of melancholy, Minu Mumtaz and Aruna Irani put over that class Madan Mohan duet : Jab jab tumhen bhulaya tum aur yaad aaye. Name the raag in Madan wrapped the tune. Gaara

5) No less creative was Madan Mohan in that fantasised duet filmed on Mala Sinha and Bharat Bhooshan in the same "Jahanara":- Baad muddat ke yeh ghadi aayee aap aaye to zindagi aayee. Both Suman and Rafi are in terrific voice here. In which raag. Chhayant

6) One of the more diverting sequences in the Hrishikesh Mukherjee movie starring Rajesh Khanna as "Bawarchi"- was the Manna Dey -Lakshmi Shankar- -Nirmala Devi- Haridranath Chhatopadhyay humdinger: Bhor aahi gaya andhiyaara. Identify the raag used by Madan Mohan here. Alaya Bhilawal

7) And now on to the triumvirate of Dilip Kumar, Raj

Kapoor and Dev Anand. If it was in Jaunpuri that S.D. Burman composed . Jaayen to jaayen kahaan for Dev Anand in "Taxi Driver", if it was to Bhairavi that Shaker tuned Ai mere dil kahin aur chal for Dilip Kumar in "Daag", in which raag did Madan Mohan. in "Ashiana", set Main paagal mera manva paagal for Raj Kapoor?
Kedar

8) What a pity "Dekh Kabira Roya" was a sput flop. It had, in black and white, a music score to match the one, in colour, by Madan Mohan in "Jahanara". Man-na Dey's Kaun aaya mere man ke dwaare on Anoop kumar in "Dekh Kabira Roya" rates as a classic to this day. There was no end of confusion about whether Madan Mohan had scored Kaun aaya in Bageshri or in Rajeshri. This quizmaster took the point to Manna Dey himself. In which of the two raags did Manna Dey identify Kaun aya to be ? Rageshri

9) Manna Dey was also asked, in same breath, to figure out why his Bairan ho gayi raina from the same "Dekh Kabira Roya" did not at all prove popular compared to Kaun aaya. " If I knew the reason why", said Manna Dey. "wouldn't I have sung Bairan ho gayi, too in the style in which I knew it would be popular!" In which raag had Madan Mohan cast Bairan ho gayi raina for Manna dey? Jaijaiwanti

10) We started with duets, so let us end with one. For a change, it was Asha, not Lata, who excelled in this Madan Mohan duet with Rafi in "Aakhri Daao" on Nutan and Shekhar: Humsafar saath apna chhod chale. Excelled in which raag. Gaara

Here some more addition 20 / 7 / 96 By Hemant Parikh.

*Madan Mohan 14th July, 1974 (Born - 1923). He was 51, Born in Punjab, His full Name was Madan Mohan Kohli.

His first 4 films as follows.

1. 1950 - Aankhen - Samshad Begum & Madan Mohan sang * Hamse Na Dil Lagana Musafir (Lata Mangeshkar was supposed to sing this for him in this film. Note whenever Lata did not sing for Madan Mohan or Opee Nayyar they went to ask Samshad Begum)
2. 1951 - Ada - Saawri soorat man bhaye
3. 1952 - Aashiana - Mera karara leja
4. 1953 - Baaghi - Hamare baad ab mehfil mein afsane baya honge, Baharen hum ko dhundhegi, na jane hum kahan honge.

* Beghum Akhtar loved Madan Mohan's Qadar Jane Na that she personally rang him and listened to the song for 27 mins. In the same film there was hit umber Geeta Dutt's Aye dil Mujhe Bata de.

* It was said that his composition In Anapadh .. Apki nazron ne samjha pyar ke kabil mujhe was composed by him in the lift. And Naushad had commented that he would exchange the entire repotire of his songs for this one Madan Mohan Tune.

* Naina barse rij him in Wo Kaun Thi was recorded by

Madan Mohan Him Self. When the picturisation was taking place Sadhana found it difficult to sing this number. Lata had to dub the song later when the picturisation was finished as she was sick earlier.

* His last film was Laila Majnu. The song Koi patthar se na maro was No.1 in Binaca Geetmala. Jaidev assisted him in this films. And Jaidev also Completed Laila Majnu's Music.

* His films for Chetan Anand had hit music. Eg Haqeeqat, Heer Ranjha, Hanste Zakhm & Hindustan Ki Kasam. NOTE THE LETTER "H" being common.

* And Common letter "A" films, Aankhen, Ada, Aap Ki Parchaiya, Adalat and Anpadh.

* He was known as Ghazal - King. He had never won an Best Music Director Filmfare Award. He assisted S.D.Burman in the film Do Bhai .

* Lata Mangeshkar and Mohammed Rafi remained his favourite singers. But not to forget Asha Bhonsle, Samshad Beghum, Geeta Dutt, Kishore Kumar, Talat Mahmood, Mukesh and Buhpinder sang Hit songs for him. I remember reading that Even Jagjit Singh liked his style.

* He had worked with famous Lyric writers like Raja Mehndi Ali Khan, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Rajendra Krishan, Kaifi Aazmi, Sahir Ludhianvi, Hasrat Jaipuri and Gulzar.

* His son Sanjeev Kohli is the Senior Marketing Consultant of HMV in India. He has compiled together popular albums like The Golden Collection, Anmol Ratan and Rare Gems. We should be more than thankful to this Father-Son music contributors.

My Father wrote:

Madan Mohan ji ne aise anmol get hindi film jagat ke liye banaye the jo maushiqui ki duniya ke kayam rahne tak aane wali nashal ko apne madhur suron se bahlate rahenge. Wo hai Madan Mohan Ke Geet.

My Father and Mother were always fond of him. Since I was little I have been hearing his music. I have one tape which we took to my mums village in India, and heard it every day every hour for more than a week. Then I did not realise that it was Madan Mohan's music and Lata mangeshkar is singing and today My Passion and knowledge has ever so increased. I am more than happy to share these details with Music Lovers. I have shared my information on Radio with New Zealand listeners. My listeners I talk to much and I am not effective talker (Born in Gujrat) so I have decided to stop my Radio announcement and Go to India next year and live there and learn more. I hope then I still share my information with you people.

Soon I am posting Tribute details about Geeta Dutt, Mohammed Rafi and many more. So keep reading and reply if you'd like. To Sammimudin sorry if there is any copyright rules from Screen details. But I am very good friend of Raju Bharatan (I interviewed him last year on this occasion) and he knows lots more, lets hope he has a computer and shares his infor-

mation with the rest of the World.

Hamare baad ab mehfil mein afsane baya honge, Baharen hum ko
dhundhegi, na jane hum kahan honge.

-

RMIM Archive Article "162".

Laxmikant-Pyarelal: How they make my heart sing

Posted by: verma@cs.cornell.edu (Arun Verma)

Source: Hindustan Times' Infotainment (Annual issue '95)

Author: Chandan Mitra

How many of you know a person who is an ardent fan of Laxmikant-Pyarelal. Well, here is one. This piece on LP certainly makes an interesting reading, even if you don't agree to most of the content. Blame all typos on my keyboard :)

How they Make my Heart Sing --Chandan Mitra

[Appeared on Hindustan Times' Infotainment (Annual issue '95)]
In the Calcutta of late 60s, it was unfashionable to be a Hindi Music buff. Only bustee (slum) dwellers, we were authoritatively told, purveyed 'la re lappa' music. The cognosenti from bhadrakok backgrounds despaired at the blare of 'ya ya yippi yippi' from loudspeakers at puja pandals. Bengali culture, our elders remorsefully concluded, was under threat. The new lumpenised generation had no regard for Rabindra sangeet or classical Ragas. Even as the elders sagely disapproved of our tastes, many friends violently objected to us falling prey to degenerate capitalist culture. Naxalites roamed the city's streets, plastering walls with invocations like "China's chairman is our Chairman" and blood curdling warnings of how the throats of class enemies would be systematically slit once the revolutionary masses had been around.

In a sense, then, we were the misfit generation. I recall the sheer terror experienced when a group of red-scarved young men stormed light-house cinema as we were watching the first of Dev Anand's many directorial misadventures PREM PUJARI. The screen was aglow with the magnificent swiss Alps and Dev, his head cocked in characteristic style, was singing that Unsurpassably romantic Neeraj-SD Burman composition 'Phoolon ke rang se'. The angry young men smashed everything they could lay thier hands on. They set the screen on fire and turned all of us out of the hall after reprimanding us for daring to watch a film allegedly insulting to that great fountainhead of revolutionary rectitude, China. I was sad at having to meekly obey. My protest was a quiet, private one.

Next day, I bicycled to my favorite music shop -Melody house on Rashbehari Avenue - and bought the 45 RPM EP record of PREM PUJARI. In the age of CDs, one sometime misses the gentle crackling of the shelac based 78s and the handy EPs costing Rs 6.72 and Rs 13.44 respectively. Collecting them became almost a passion. And in one's early teens, discretion wasn't the hallmark of my approach to Hindi music.

But amid my self confessed indiscretion, I grew fond of some melodies more than others. And found myself inexorably drawn towards the compositions of Laxmikant-Pyarelal.

That too wasn't quite fashionable. Bengalis who deigned to spare some thought for Bollywood compositions had a somewhat parochial

view of things. For them, Bombay's music began and ended with Sachin Dev, son Rahul, Hemant Mukherjee and Manna dey. I was a fan of them all, but somehow fell in love with the earthy appeal of folksy compositions like 'Ja re Kare Badra balam ke paas'(DHARTI KAHE PUKAR KE), Hum tum yug yug se(MILAN) or manchi chal (AAYA SAWAN JHOOM KE)

L-P were quite gaining ground in any case, steadily displacing the reigning kings Shankar-Jaikishen. Hindi music entered my life at a sad time for SJ. Their music was degenerating and they were not even on talking terms, composing music for pot-boilers like DHARTI, PREETAM and PARDE KE PEECHAY. Rafi, too was in temporary decline, overtaken by suddenly discovered magnetic charm of post-Aradhana Kishore.

What I really liked about LP was that no matter how irrelevant a movie, they never let you down on the music. It doesn't really need substantiation, certainly not for LP fans. I cite some compositions from films that bombed at box office, films that shall be remembered only for thier touching songs :

- 1) Woh jab yaad aaye PARASMANI
- 2) Tum gagan ke chandrama SATI SAVITRI
- 3) Jeevn dor tumhi sang SATI SAVITRI
- 4) Khoobsoorat Haseena MR X IN BOMBAY
- 5) Mere mehboob qayamat hogi MR X IN BOMBAY
- 6) Yeh dard bhara afsana SHREEMAN FUNTOOSH
- 7) O meri maina PYAR KIYE JA
- 8) Aayee baharon ki shaam WAPAS
- 9) Payal ki jhankar raste WAPAS
- 10) Aaiye bahar ko hum baant le TAQDEER
- 11) Jaadugar tere Naina MAN MANDIR
- 12) Mein ek raja hoon UPHAAR
- 13) Sooni re sajariya UPHAAR
- 14) Dil ki baaten dil hi jaane ROOP TERA MASTANA
- 15) Taaron mein sajke apne JAL BIN MACCHALI NRITYA BIN BIJLI
- 16) Yeh dil tum bin IZZAT
- 17) Yeh kaisa gham sajna PYASI SHAM
- 18) Yeh jeevan hai PIYA KA GHAR
- 19) Teri sason ko jo mehka BADALTEY RISHTEY

The list could be endless. LP have been around for 32 years and composed music for some 500 films. Critics say they are an assembly line, and thier tunes are ephemeral; you hum them for a few days and forget all about them. I beg to disagree. Their talent, I believe lay in the ability to compose memorable numbers throughout thier career even while composing at this stupendous pace.

Its only of late, their compositions have become totally market oriented. Having tasted the blood of chart-busting success with TEZAAB they have begun to compose only for charts. Still thier recent megahits Jhumma chumma de de (HUM) and Choli ke peeche (KHALNAYAK) are indeed magnificent numbers. And they continue to occasionally come up with startling melody like palki pe hoke sawar (KHALNAYAK).

I am convinced that there will never be anything like LP. This is not to be dismissive of awesome talent of A.R. Rahman today, or R D Burman and O P Nayyar yesterday.

They were trailblazers, pioneers, rebels. LP, on the other hand were conformists. Their simple middle class ambition was to overtake SJ. So they even worked as assistants to KA. LP may not be creative geniuses. They couldn't have produced rebellious numbers like Taarif Karoon kya uski (KASMIR KI KALI) or O haseena zulphon wali (TEESRI MANZIL) or Chingari koi bhadke (AMAR PREM) or humma humma (BOMBAY). But the consistency with the bollywood's most durable duo has entertained us, made our lives a little more enjoyable, lightened our blue moods even while capturing such mellow moments, deserves a tribute from us. When the history of popular culture in Modern India is written, LP are bound to find an honourable place in the list of those who shaped our lives through the 70s, 80s and 90s.

RMIM Archive Article "371".

Usha Khanna

Posted by: vnayak@acsu.buffalo.edu (Veena S Nayak)

Source: Savvy, Jul 97

Author: Bharati Pradhan

Female Composers: Usha Khanna

Friends,

In an attempt to liven the yawner that is Friday evening, I was poking around in my sack of goodies garnered from the streets and shops of amchi Mumbai. Out comes an old issue of Savvy, the magazine for the "liberated" woman. I learn how to make mango kheer and how to make my tresses lustrous; skills that will no doubt go a long way in my emancipation. Moreover, I get simple, practical solutions to posers that had me tossing in bed on many a sleepless night: how to make ghee last longer, how to clean tarnished brass buttons, how to give dirty bottles that clean, sparkling look and how to get rid of the malodour of boiled cabbage.

Nestling between write-ups on the Fat Club of Bombay and the dubious Broken Hearts Rehabilitation Society of Chandigarh was an interview with composer Usha Khanna. Featured under the silly title of "Beauty and Brawn", the article is written in a mawkish style that is the sine qua non of lowbrow, cheapie magazines. Be that as it may, the tete-a-tete does provide a glimpse into the world of the lone female composer of Hindi film music. One cannot help admiring her lack of coyness and false modesty, and her unapologetic admission to being untrained in music. In spite of her struggles as a female, she does not blame the lack of women in the profession to male chauvinism, but rightly identifies it as a supply-side phenomenon.

If one may be allowed to digress a little: I firmly believe that most choices made by individuals are a revealed preference despite protestations to the contrary. The lyricist who churns out puerile and pulpy verses while decrying the demand for them is no different from the affluent housewife, who, supine on her plush sofa, lamented to me that she cannot "have a career" because her husband wouldn't let her. The knee-jerk response to the lack of female composers/lyricists in Hindi film music is to blame it on male conspiracy without looking at other explanatory variables first. How many women have attempted to enter these fields? Given the attempt, why did they fail? Perhaps the more talented ones decided not to peddle their craft in the wham-bam-thankyou-ma'am world of present-day film music. Perhaps they did not have the backbone to survive. This is not to say that male chauvinism does not exist; just that it is also a scapegoat within easy reach of the mediocre woman.

Coming back to Usha, one forgives some of her trite utterances in light of the above-mentioned attributes. I do wish, however, that they had focussed more on her work rather than prattling on about her ex-husband, lack of children and other assorted irrelevancies.

Without further ado, here is Usha Khanna. (Article reproduced from the July 1997 issue of Savvy. Without permission of author Bharati Pradhan. Asterisks denote my comments).

Veena

Caveat emptor: Some male-bashing involved. Those sensitive to such

things should hop on to the next article.

Usha Khanna

"Why does the world never call a man incomplete? Why is a bachelor, a single man with no kids, never called an incomplete man? But the same world is quick to call a childless woman, an incomplete woman. Why? I have never felt incomplete." - Usha.

That could be any Usha, any buoyant single woman who demands to know why on earth she should be called incomplete.

"I do have kids, I have seven of them in fact. They're called Sa-re-ga-ma-pa-dha-ni-sa. Those are the kids around whom my life revolves."

- Usha Khanna.

That can be nobody but Usha Khanna, the music director who has delivered and served a medley of chartbusters like 'Chai pe bulaya hai'. (**** Geez, was that the best that Pradhan could pick? ****)

"When I had a long-standing professional relationship with any director, people would immediately want to know, 'Chakkar-wakkar hai kya?'. I'd ask them, 'When Laxmikant-Pyarelal do so many films with a filmmaker like J Om Prakash, or when Shanker-Jaikishen sat with Raj Kapoor in his bedroom and composed their tunes, was there any chakkar-wakkar between them?'

That quote needs no name at the end of it. It could belong only to the one female name that the Hindi film industry has recognized as a successful music director. Usha Khanna.

The only successful female music director that Mumbai has ever known, the only woman who has survived for three wholesome decades in an arena inhabited entirely by the male homo sapien.

Obviously, the success story has come with a heavy price tag.

Usha Khanna's very entry into the field began with a game of one upmanship in which she played no part.

THE BIG BREAK

"My father was a lyricist and singer, a sangeet visharad. Perhaps because he was in Gwalior, he was musically inclined. My brother and I were twins. Because my brother was a little weak, my mother kept him with her all the time while my father looked after me. As a baby, I would promptly fall asleep when my father would sing a particular note. They say that by the time I was a few months old, I was crying Sa-Re-Ga-Ma!

I was never interested in studies. My father tried to get me to learn music, but there too I paid scant attention. I am completely unlettered in music and whatever I compose is a godgiven gift, I have never been a serious student of music. But music is my very lifeblood! I was a kid when I showed a flair for composing music, it just came naturally to me. When my father wrote lyrics, I would spontaneously set them to music. Lyricist Indivar was my father's close friend and when I was barely in my teens he took my father and me to S. Mukherjee (the Filmalaya boss). S Mukherjee first heard me sing and showed no reaction to the new voice he was hearing. Then I sang for him one of my own compositions which he heard a little more keenly and wanted to hear more. After hearing a few of my songs, he asked me from which film I'd picked them up and I told him, "They are not from any film, they're songs which I have composed!"

"S Mukherjee immediately went in and fetched his wife, his son Joy Mukherjee and others and asked me to sing, 'That O.P. Nayyar' number.

I sang my own number and when they realized that I wasn't singing an O.P. Nayyar composition, but one of my own, there was great excitement. I came to know much later that there had been some friction between them and O.P. Nayyar those days and the Mukherjees who were on a 'We'll show Nayyar' trip, were thrilled to find a music director whom they could introduce as his competitor!"

And so, in the ego tussle between two big names of that period, the winner turned out to be a skirt-and-blouse clad 16-year-old who had to force herself to wear a sari with a big border and keep a huge bindi on her forehead to be taken seriously in the recording rooms. The debut that turned out to be a gold mine for everybody was the flamboyant Shammi Kapoor starrer, "Dil Deke Dekho'.

But the credit strangely went to O.P. Nayyar. How could a slip of a girl - a girl, you hear - make such hummable, eminently saleable music?

"There were rumours that O.P. Nayyar had actually composed all the tunes on my behalf," chuckles Usha, having successfully tidied over that frustrating rumour. "Okay, so in Dil Deke Dekho, I was asked to compose O.P. Nayyarish tunes. But the style was different in my next film and the one after the rumours soon died. It didn't strike anybody to wonder why on earth O.P. Nayyar would want to pass off his tunes under my name!"

To this day, the Bajaj folks use Usha's lilting 'Chodo kal ki baaten' tune from 'Hum Hindustani' for their ads.

Yet, when Usha Khanna started out early in the sixties, every attempt was made to stifle her talent with raging criticism over her cool lifting of western tunes for her numbers. But if the title tune of Dil Deke Dekho was a ripoff of 'Sugar in the Morning' (and she was expressly asked to use that tune by the makers), so were Shanker-Jaikishen's Gumnaam title notes taken straight from 'Charade'.

Everybody was Indianising western hits (the composers are at it, to this day), but Usha was specifically hauled over the coals for it.

Anything, just to deny her her place in the recording rooms?

HOW NAYYAR AND THE MUSIC WORLD WERE WON OVER

"I don't know from where I got the confidence but the first time I entered the recording rooms as a music director, I went up to all the musicians and made it clear that I was the boss of the show. I told them, 'All of you are working under me' and added that if any of them felt otherwise, they were free to leave!"

Well, that took care of the musicians. But what about the giant against whom she had been pitted? O.P. Nayyar was then at the pinnacle of his success - and arrogance.

"Luckily for me, from the day he heard me hum, 'Pyar hai to keh do yes, pyar nahin to keh do no,' he took me under his wing as his 'beti'. I'd gone to Famous Studio to attend his recording and it was he who introduced me to the musicians as 'Your new music director'. All of them had stood up and applauded!

"Of course, as a woman I had to put up with all sorts of rumours about me. People cannot digest the success of a woman in our country, that too one who was so young. We may progress in other ways but when it comes to a woman, if she returns home after midnight, it's never because she's been working hard but because she's been sinning!

"You do get hurt. After all, even if one works like a man, one has the heart of a woman. Like in the eighties there was a very nasty article

that called me a lesbian and said I was on drugs. My two brothers Prabhat and Ashok are making films, they're in this business. If I'd been upto any such thing wouldn't they have heard about it? I wanted to take action, but it was they who advised me against it. My family has always been conservative, but it has never been overly so. They always supported me and my father always said, 'They're all my sons, they're not going to be treated differently as daughters'. My sister Sandhya is a doctor.

"My father used to come with me initially, not as an escort but because he was himself so keen on music. Luckily, in this business, you don't need an escort. But a woman who acts coy will get nowhere in my line. As a music director your interaction is with men at all levels - the filmmaker, the bongo player, the tabalchi...They're all men and you hardly meet any girl except when you work with a female playback singer. In such a situation it just won't do if you make everybody around you conscious that you are a woman. I have to take their language, their jokes in my stride and that's the only way the atmosphere will be relaxed enough to work together. It doesn't mean that you get vulgar or encourage vulgarity. But if a director is not comfortable in my presence how can he narrate a situation to me for which I have to compose a song?

"I developed an I-don't-care attitude towards anything that I had to hear as a woman. Yes, people did talk about O.P. Nayyar being my godfather. But my answer was, 'Behind every successful man there's always a woman. Behind a successful woman like me too, there is a woman. And that's Goddess Saraswati. Saraswati is the godfather that I had, nobody else!'"

But why hasn't Saraswati backed any other female music director in the last three decades?

THE ONLY FEMALE COMPOSER FOR THREE DECADES

"It isn't easy being a music director," points out Usha. "Apart from talent which you must have in abundance, as a music director nothing is laid out for you. You have endless hours of sittings before a tune is okayed. Girls these days want the easy route to fame, they're after glamour and all of them want to become heroines. I was goodlooking too when I was young but I was never keen on acting. To this day, the camera scares me while the mike is my best friend!

"Composing tunes for films requires a special knack, not everybody can do it. You have to make music for the masses, music which the rickshawallah will hum. Even an eminent singer like Ghulam Ali won't be able to make music that'll have mass appeal. Or take Pandit Ravi Shanker. He's reached such heights in his field. But he'll never be allowed to stray from a set raag, he can't take a wrong note or mix his raags. Film music will not be easy for him while for someone like me who's not a perfect music director, I can play with my notes like a free bird and create any tune I wish."

This gutsy woman who has ruled in a man's world, survived despite a 13-year period when Lata Mangeshkar (who's said to make or break careers) didn't sing for her. "It was a misunderstanding created by those who didn't want me to succeed. Since I was sure that I'd had no hand in our misunderstanding, there was no question of my apologising to Lataji. Believe me, when we did work together again in 'Shama', neither of us referred to the problem and we've had a great rapport ever since. In fact, I always say that Lataji and Ashaji must've done

some great 'punya' in their last lives to be blessed with such fantastic voices."

But this sole woman in her field, didn't rely on the famous singers alone. It was Usha Khanna who discovered and gave a break to singers like Jaspal Singh, Pankaj Udhas, Anupama Deshpande, Hemlata, Vinod Rathod, Mohd. Aziz, Shabbir Kumar and Roopkumar Rathod.

(**** Didn't Jaspal Singh make his debut with Ravindra Jain's "Geet Gaata Chal"? And I thought Shabbir Kumar's first assault on us was with R.D. Burman's Betaab. Anyway, why would anyone want to take the credit for making that donkey sing? ****)

UNDENIABLY, AN ALL-CONSUMING SUCCESS STORY

But was music her only undying passion? How about other womanly passions? She was linked with lyricist Indivar which she dismisses as, "Rubbish. He was my father's friend and he used to tease my mother and say, 'I'll marry Usha'. My mother would say, 'You're like her Mama' and he'd retort, 'I'll be like her Madrasi Mama! You know uncles marry their nieces in Madras. It was that lighthearted a friendship, he was close to my family, my parents."

So, despite being endowed with the heart of a woman, didn't it ever stray or make mistakes?

MARRIAGE!

"My marriage to producer-director Sawan Kumar was my biggest mistake. He charmed me and I fell for him in a big way. I felt there could never be any man like Sawanji. But I wasn't cut out for marriage. Some husbands gamble too much or drink too much tea. My husband liked changing his women!

"But I must say I was lucky that my work never came between us, Sawanji respected my work and never gave me a rough time over it. Even after we broke up and I returned home, we continued working together. When the background score of 'Sajan Bina Suhagan' was to be done and he wondered if I'd complete it, I'd sent him a message that work is God for Usha Khanna, she'll never compromise on it. Nearly two years after our break-up, I went to his recording and on the second day, he came in and said over the mike, 'Good morning, music director saab' and I replied, 'Good morning, sir' and the whole recording room watched on astounded. He asked me to sing my piece a little more sweetly and I told him, 'Any sweeter and you'll get diabetes!' Our working relationship never suffered. Despite everything that went wrong personally, to this day, he has always called me 'Memsaab' or 'Madamji' and we don't ever wish each other ill. But marriage was not for me. I should never have got married."

Does that mean that a woman can't have a successful career and a great family life like many men do?

MR. RIGHT DIDN'T ARRIVE

"The truth is, I haven't met anyone with whom I have a fantastic tuning as a woman. I do sometimes wish I had my own family but I soon get over it. I get great happiness from my nieces and nephews.

"The problem in our country is that women can't have it cool on both fronts like the men. Because when it comes to marriage, men want a docile Sita. They all want a Sita at home although there is no Ram amongst them!"

RMIM Archive Article "329".

Bhupen Hazarika

Posted by: sdutttag@bsu.idbsu.edu (Siddhartha Dutttagupta)

Source: India Today

Author: Avirook Sen

From India Today, courtesy of Assam Net: a little low on music, but still interesting.

regards, siddhartha

.....
PROFILE: BHUPEN HAZARIKA

Melody Man-The Assamese poet's repertoire of songs is firmly anchored in his environment.

By Avirook Sen

The structural engineer in Alaska turned the heat on full blast inside his car and hummed to the strains of *Moi eti jajabor* (I am a wanderer). The road was endless, he was cold, there was no one at home to talk to. But at least, on the music system, there was Bhupen Hazarika. And listening to him sing wasn't very different from conversation. So the Assamese engineer picked up the phone and called the man in Dibrugarh: "Dada, your music is what keeps me going ..."

Says Hazarika: "I never met the man, but I knew he was warm."

From Alaska to Assam, to those who understand the several languages in which he sings - the Japanese don't, but have their own version of his humanist ballad *Manush manuseri jonyo* - Hazarika's songs could be any of several things. They could be letters from home. They could be promises of revolution. They could soothe, exhort, excite or simply entertain. But whatever they do, there's a face to it: benign, dreamy eyes under a lined brow, half covered by the trademark Nepali cap. In the North-east, everyone knows that face (and that Rs 16 cap). More than that, they acknowledge he is the humane face of a disturbed region. In May, you will see him on television, travelling through the North-east and telling people elsewhere in the country that bad news isn't all there is here. At 72, his wanderlust evidently hasn't waned. The 13-episode series for Doordarshan, *Misty Lands of Seven Sisters* - North-east India, has already taken more than a month's gruelling travel to shoot. Hazarika is still on the move.

It's been a long road. Hazarika wrote and performed the first of more than a thousand songs at the age of 10. At 13, he sang about building a new Assam and a new India. Precocious thoughts, but growing up in Tezpur, Assam, he would catch snatches of adult conversation. Eavesdropping on talk about Trotsky's murder and the Indian freedom movement between grown-ups. These were filed away in a then unadorned head and used in lyrics.

Lyrics that promised change. And raised expectations in Assam. He found out during his recent travels that if he were a weaker man, the burden of that expectation would give him a stoop: "I met a man in Nagaon this time and he broke down in front of me, saying 'You promised so much for us in your songs. You made us hope. But life has been nothing like your songs!'"

It's tough being Bhupen Hazarika in Assam. During the Assam Movement of the early '80s, Hazarika was looked upon by an entire generation of agitating students as an inspiration. His music was their sustenance.

He wrote and sang for them, drawing on the experience of singing with Paul Robeson in the US (he even went to jail briefly in America for his participation in civil rights' rallies). As he had promised in his songs, change came. But not the kind of change he, or the people, wanted.

But we're getting ahead in the story. He was trained in the arts at Banaras Hindu University where he also got his first formal lessons in music. "I recall an incident after a college function where I sang. Ghanshyam Das Birla, one of the institute's patrons, called me and gave me a Rs 50 note. He said, 'Gana mat chodna (don't stop singing)'." Maybe he sensed Hazarika was about to become a lawyer and settle in Guwahati; after all music brought in just the odd 50 rupees. But things changed.

In 1948, after a stint as a producer at All India Radio, Guwahati, Hazarika left for the US on a scholarship to study Mass Communication at Columbia University, New York. The main attraction, even then, wasn't an Ivy League education. It was the chance to slake his thirst at Greenwich Village's several watering holes for artists and performers. So he sang with American musicians, but most of all, he soaked in American folk music like a sponge. Yes, there is evidence of American folk in his own work. But he mostly sings the folk tunes of his immediate environment. This is what makes him the consensus candidate, so to speak, for the post of emissary of the North-east. There's an amazing convergence of opinion about Hazarika all around the region: everybody likes and respects him. Something he is aware of: "If I wanted to be chief minister of this state, I could have ruled for 20 years without questions being asked." He's actually contested the assembly elections once (in 1967) and won comfortably as an Independent. Candidates in the recently concluded parliamentary elections went around canvassing, armed with "certificates" from Hazarika ("I did it for people I liked personally, not for their party affiliations"). Even Paresh Barua, "commander-in-chief" of the banned United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) has been known to call him up. Hazarika has offered to mediate between the banned group and the Government, provided the ULFA agrees to drop its secessionist demand. "Barua and I talked about stopping this madness, but their position is intransigent and I am too Indian to discuss the secession of my own state," says Hazarika.

But what is a man with these credentials doing in Bollywood? "It's a crazy place," says Hazarika, "but it is one way of reaching people." (Remember Dil hum hum kare from Rudaali?) But even in films, he started pretty early: in 1939, he was a child artiste in the second talkie film to be made in India, Indramalati. More than 50 years later, in 1993, the film industry conferred its highest honour on him: the Dada Saheb Phalke award.

Time to retire? Not for Hazarika. There's a film to be completed. Songs to be sung. Centuries whiz past at a Stonehenge-like mausoleum of the Jaintia tribesmen of Meghalaya. He walks through them for the camera. A tune is hummed. Stone warriors stand proud and listen. Their women lie with their ears to the ground. Hazarika is in concert.

RMIM Archive Article "166".

Annu Malik - Music is Life

Posted by: sidtap@utxvms.cc.utexas.edu (siddharth taparia)
devm@netcom.com (Dev Mannemela)
Source: G Magazine and "India West", 1996

Is the Anu Malik magic fading?

Dr. R.M. Vijayakar

It's been an eventful twenty-four month for Sardar Malik's son. Ever since Anu's rapid escalation from zero to ten in 1993, the music director has been on a high. The flak has been relentless, the competition ruthless, but by sheer pernacity and hard work, the man has stayed firmly in the saddle. The '93 - 95' period has seen the exit of Burman, and the eclipse of Laxmikant-Pyarelal, not to mention the near-annihilation of Bappi Lahiri and (despite Hum Apke Hain..Kaun!) Raamlaxman. On the other hand, A. R. Rahman has zoomed in as the latest cyclone while Rajesh Roshan, Nadeem-Shravan and Jatin-Lalit have overcome a dull phase. Anu Malik has withstood the barrage and cashed in on the fact that, Rahman apart, there is nothing stimulating emanating from any of his colleagues.

Early this year, amidst the Alisha Chinai controversy, Anu Malik went on with the recording of his first international album, Eyes. And even as his film music became quite repetitive, and many of his albums (Hulchul, Ahankar, Gundaraj, Surakshaa, Baazi, Beqabu) mediocre Anu had a lot to crow about too. Mansoor Khan decided to repeat his music in Najayaz, Yaraana, Akele Hum Akele Tum and Takkar kept his stock high. His films with Vinod Khanna, J. P. Dutta and Feroz Khan are running smoothly, he preens. He has signed an international Hindi film with one of showbiz's biggest names, whose songs will be recorded in America. (The name's a secret.)

How would you evaluate yourself today vis-a-vis 1993 in the immediate aftermath of your comeback?

See, life's definitely become more interesting for me. I've signed up films with major banners and It's almost uncanny, I'm enjoying my work more than ever. I've always loved music but today now I enjoy composing it more and more. Yet, I feel I can do much better. I feel that my music for Akele Hum Akele Tum is a thousand times better than that of Baazigar. People tend to think, "What will he do beyond "Baazigar o baazigar' or "churake dil mera?" There are so many critics who are welcome to their views and who want me to fail. But the public response to my music has confounded them. You see, I know critics whose criticism is never constructive, but destructive and full of personal vendetta. I'm sure that nine-and-a-half out of ten critics who lamburst a composer do not know what they are talking about. All they can write is from where such-and-such a tune has borrowed or copied from. I have yet to hear a critic say - "This Anu Malik song was in H-sharp. I wish it had been composed in G-scale - it would have sounded much better.' Or I wish a critic would write -

"Why couldn't Anu Malik have used a different raag for this situation and not Bhairavi?"

Why this grouse against critics?

Because they never stop hounding me. They are not keen on analysing my work objectively and fairly. Recently a critic said I'd reached the end of the road merely because Venus had signed Nadeem-Shravan again. I was highly amused. A few days later the Venus people informed me that, "We are launching a new film called Josh for which we've signed Mansoor Khan and he wants you to compose the music & I'm the first music director Mansoor has ever repeated.

But does somebody with your status and talent have to use a composition, other than your own, as the base for your song?

On what grounds is this question based?

For example "Mera piya ghar aaya" from Yaraana is by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan..

Ah... you do not have your facts right. You can quote me on this.

Do you know that this is a very old Punjabi folk song "Tu chhup rehnaa main tenu ghar leke jaanda?" Naushad, who is one of the greatest composers of all time, has also adapted folk numbers.

Even Shakespeare was not original. Even a composer as brilliant as Salil Choudhary lifted a symphony to compose "Itna na mujhe to pyar jataa". Does it make these composers bold? There are so many talented composers who were inspired.

Panchamda was a monumental talent who was often inspired this way - his "Mehbooba o mehbooba" from Sholay was a straight lift. This doesn't mean that Panchamda was a chor - you cannot take away Panchamda's credit for it. A R Rahman recently went on record to call my "Churake dil mera" a great song. Thank you very much. Prabhu Deva also called it one of his favourites. Thanks again. And that's not stolen from any song anywhere - it's 100% Anu Malik. See, look at the circumstances and the atmosphere we're working in - they want a hit song every day! It's just not possible! So we have to resort to such things.

What I do is, I hear a song, catch its hookline and change the rest of the format totally. In fact, I recently was told to re-work two major hits. I agreed but placed my conditions, I said I would change the antras, including the koda!

I don't want to pick up a fight with any hero, music company or film-maker. But I tell them, "main poora gaana nahin maar sakta." I don't enjoy borrowing music from other composers. (Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is a living legend) - but I have to do this to survive. But there are film-makers who want me to remain original too. "Dil mera churaya kyon" from Akele Hum Akele Tum. I love the original - "Last Christmas". But I changed everything after starting with "Why did you break my heart", why did you fall in love'..

For example, Vidhu Vinod Chopra. After Panchamda's 1942.., Vidhu had gone on record to say that "Without Panchamda, I didn't want to make another film, till I met Anu Malik." Now that's a compliment, isn't it? We've recorded two songs and received the best compliment. Aditya Chopra who said - "I've heard your songs for Vidhu's film Karee and have gone berserk!" It was a fantastic compliment. The man is himself on a high after Dilwale Dulhania

Le Jayenge, so he obviously meant what he said!

Were the lyrics written first ?

I first composed the tune when I redid the song. And Majroohsaab is phenomenal. Writing romantic lyrics like, "Rani ko dekho nazrein mili to nazrein churane lagi" - makes one look in awe.

His contribution to Hindi films is incomparable.

When you made an announcement that you were the first Hindi composer to bring on an international album, Eyes. A colleague of yours claimed to have released one before you... comment.

No Hindi film composer has written, composed and sung an English album. Those jealous of my success, have been accusing me of copying their songs. Well, this is one album where no one can accuse me of copying a single song. Those who have heard me are amazed at my singing -they say I've a split personality, one Indian, one English! Tell me, which Hindi film composer has sung or written-more than a couple of lines of English, that too words beyond "I love you, I want you or I'll get(!) you"? And I've signed my contract in London under British law, where one can be sued if one plagiarises or copies more than 8 bars from any song! I am recording another album there now.

During the production of Baazigar you had vowed not to take on too many films. But you did and your music suffered... Well, I'm both - the best as well as the worst music director. A director should know what music he wants from me. Mansoor Khan took the music of AHAT from me intelligently, patiently and aaram se. He knew what he wanted. Others do not. I've made it a policy to work only with select people, and work with good banners. I'm doing films for Venus, Tips, Time, Indra Kumar, Feroz Khan, J. P. Dutta and Vidhu Vinod Chopra. I don't work with directors I don't vibe with. Music that is drab is the result of a lack of understanding between a composer and a filmmaker. I can handle 1000 films at a time if I have good directors.

Of late people have been blaming you for too many things. Like Rajkumar Santoshi accused you of ditching him for these extra tunes for Ghaatak?

The truth is that Rajkumar Santoshi told me that five songs had been recorded by R.D.Burman. You see, it doesn't look good to have a credit line that reads - by R.D.Burman and Anu Malik. It's not fair to Panchamda. But as far as Mazhar Khan's Gang is concerned Panchamda recorded just one song but Mazhar told me that he wouldn't be using it. So I accepted the film.

Are you very God-fearing?

I am treading on a path made for me by Him. I believe in God in any form and I think it is HE who inspires me to create good music.

Here are some excerpts from an interview with Anu Malik from "India West", a california based weekly. After I typed in a few paragraphs, I noticed there was an identical article in the G magazine (which was also posted on rmim). I don't know who copied from who, but this article has a bit more stuff.. The "G" one seemed like an much edited version.. So I typed a couple of interesting questions (and answers) which were missing from "G".

Music director Anu Malik is on a high despite an array of flops like Ram Shashtra, Yaraana, Hulchal, Ahankaar, Gundaraj and Suraksha and indifferent scores like Beqabu.

For one he's without real competition from any of his colleagues - Anand Milind are low-key even if they are consistent and the rest have still to matter. A.R.Rahman is no busybee. Moreover, A R Rahman is yet to be taken seriously as a full-blown Hindi film composer.

His international album "Eyes" makes him the first Hindi film composer to write, compose and sing a full-fledged pop album in English. The international response has been lukewarm, but he claims the album sold well in India's urban centers like Bangalore and Delhi. Anu is doing a series of big films too. Feroz Khan, JPDutta, Indra Kumar, Tips, Time, Venus, Vidhu Vinod Chopra and Mahes Bhatt are among his new employers.

He's also totally excited because of his two new assignments.

Anu Malik is the first composer to be repeated to be repeated by filmmaker Mansoor Khan. And he will be doing a Hindi film for Shekhar Kapoor, whose songs will be taped in the United States. The film is being shot for international audience.

Shuttling between Bombay and Madras (the first Bollywood composer to do so) to complete his assignments, Anu does find an hour for me at Bombay's Sahara. he talks straight from the heart.

Here are the excerpts from his interview with India-west.

Q: How do you evaluate yourself today vis-a-vis the beginning of your second phase?

A:..... For instance, I feel that my music for AHAT is 1000 times better than my songs from Baazigar....Those who criticized me have been confounded.

Q: But why this grouse against the press?

A: Because they're after Anu Malik, they are not evaluating my music. And they do not know what they talk about, All they can write about is which composer which song. Why can't they write genuine criticism? Like 'I wish Anu had not used Bhairavi again in this song' Or 'I think this song would have sounded better in the G-scale than it does in H-sharp.' They amuse me and inspire me also to do my best.

Q: But why copy? Like 'Mera piya ghar aay.'

A: [interrupts] yes-let's take that song. They say I have copied it from Nusrat Fatey Ali Khan, just because I took a few bars from there. But even here they've got their facts wrong. This tune is a vintage Punjabi folk number - "Tu chup rehn main tenu ghar leke jaanda". Everyone needs inspiration. If Nausdhad can pick up folk numbers and Salil Chowdhury can s symphony from the West as the base for "Itna na mujhse pyar", who is Anu Malik? But try to understand - I do not copy wholesale. I change the opening music, the first music, the second music. I will even change the koda after taking the hookline. This is the condition under which I rework my songs. I refuse to copy outright. Look, you must understand the situation today. They want a "hit" tune everyday, from us. It's not humanly possible. We have to resort to such things. And I'm here to make a living - I don't

want to fight with a major star, a major filmmaker, a major music company. I don't enjoy taking someone's music even in part. And luckily there are filmmakers who want me to be original.

Q: Like?

A: Like Vidhu Vinod Chopra. The man paid me a tremendous compliment, do you know that? He said after Panchamda's death that he did not want to make another film - till he met me. And we have done two fabulous songs. In fact, when I telephoned Aditya Chopra to invite him for the release of "Eyes", he complimented me and said, "I have gone berserk after hearing your songs in Kareeb". And he is not even working with me.

Q. Why are you recording so much in Madras?

A. Because there is discipline there. Incredible, but true that work begins at 9A.M. After lunch between 1 PM and 2PM, when no musician will play, the recording is through by 7PM. I'm having dinner there in my hotel by 9PM. There are fantastic singers there - Chitra, S.P.B. There is this girl I'm particularly optimistic about - Shubha. who was one of the singers in Bombay's song "Hulla Hulla". She's tremendous. All these pop divas of Bombay can't hold a candle to her.

The atmosphere there is full of devotion to work. Singers remove their footwear before recording. No one smokes. The workplace is a temple for artists. In SPB's Kothandapani Studios, there is a huge blow up of Latabai on one wall and another of Rafisaab on the opposite side. The man (SPB) himself is a legend, singing since I was a boy. He even anxiously asks me if he has sung my song well or whether he should sing it again. The same holds true for Chitra and all the others. Well, frankly it's a change from the atmosphere here where singers think they are doing composers a great favour by dropping in for a hurried take and rushing off to their next song without even bothering to inquire whether we, the composers of that song, are happy with the recorded version or not!

Q. So music is inspiration..

A. Yes, I work on instinct. I work on the spur of the moment. I don't want to sit on the harmonium and piano and make music - I can music at any time. People laugh t me for this. I don't have a huge stock. The directors inspire me with the situation. The other day Pritish nandy came to me - he wanted a song for some ad film on some village theme or something - I hummed out the tune and words even as we were discussing. He was amazed. "I can't believe it. You made this song in front of me", he said..

RMIM Archive Article "15".

A.R.Rahman - A Rising star (in four parts)

Written and Posted by: Satish Subramanian (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

Partial Source: The Hindu internation ed. (interview)

- Part I -

A Rising Star - A.R.Rahman.

Just half a dozen films old, already has a national award to his credit, and has millions of fans all over who are eagerly waiting for more from this young man in his early twenties.... that is A.R.Rahman for you, the latest sensation in the music world of the South!

This is a short series on A.R. Rahman, in which you will see an interview with him (which appeared in "The Hindu") and some lyrics from the first few films for which he scored the music.

Hope you will enjoy it!

bye

satish

-

Here is the first part of the interview, which is followed by a small review of ARR's first Tamil film "Roja" (along with some lyrics (Tamil and Hindi).

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A Passion for Quality Music

by

S.R. Ashok Kummar

(for 'The Hindu')

With his mop of dusky curls, t-shirt and jeans, he looks like a teenage college student, but the very first film for which he scored music fetched him the National Award. It and his subsequent films were also musical hits. The young music director of the South, A.R. Rahman, who shot into limelight with "Roja" for blazing a new trail in film music, has grown in stature and in undoubtedly here to stay.

Question: How did you come into films?

A.R.Rahman: My father, R.K.Shekar, was a music director in Malayalam films. He assisted Salil Chowdhary, Devrajan and others. He died when I was nine. At 11, I came to the field, playing on the keyboards and later as an accompanist. I worked under various music directors in Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam - Ramesh Naidu, M.S.Vishwanathan and Illayaraja. It started becoming a bit monotonous. I thought advertising would be a good alternative. This went on for three years. I built my studio and took to different forms of music - pop, rock and so on. It was then that I met producer Tirllok Sharadha, cousin of ManiRathnam at a party. He (Mani) came to my studio and heard some of my tunes. We agreed to work together though we did not then decide on which movie. Only later he told me it was to be "Roja" which he was directing for K.Balachander.

(to continue..)

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His first film was Roja which made everyone sit up and listen to him.. The music was very different from the usual fare that one was used to.

Esp. striking was the use of chorus and the instruments in most of the songs.

Film: Roja

Actors: Arvind, Madhubala

Lyrics: Vairamuthu

Music: A.R.Rahman

Director: Mani Rathnam

Here are the list of songs from this movie:

1.chinna chinna aasai - ****

(Minnmini)

Was rated the best song of the year 92. Received the national award - for best lyricist (for Vairamuthu) and best music (for Rahman). Very simple song, but has

2.rukkumaNi, rukkumaNi- **

Even though the lyrics and picturisation of this song makes some people biased, but the use of the chorus and the beat is real good.

3.kaathal rOjaavE - ***

A nice solo from SPB (with some humming in between by Sujatha).

4.pudhu veLLai mazhai - ***

A soothing duet from Unni Menon and Sujatha.

5.thamizha thamizha - **

A patriotic song sung by Hariharan and chorus.

--

Song: chinna chinna aasai (Tamil)

Sung by: Minnmini

chinna chinna aasai

siRakatikkum aasai

muththu muthu aasai

mudinthu vaiththa aasai

vennilavu thottu muththamida aasai

ennai indha poomi chutRi vara aasai

chinna chinna aasai

siRakatikkum aasai

muththu muthu aasai

mudinthu vaiththa aasai

vennilavu thottu muththamida aasai

ennai indha poomi chutRi vara aasai

chinna chinna aasai

siRakatikkum aasai

mallikaip poovaai maaRi vida aasai

thenRalai kandu maalaiYida aasai

mEkaNGaLai ellaam thottu vida aasai

sokaNGikaLai ellaam vittu vida aasai

kaarkuzhalil ulakai kattivida aasai

chinna chinna aasai

siRakatikkum aasai

muththu muthu aasai

mudinthu vaiththa aasai

vennilavu thottu muththamida aasai

ennai indha poomi chutRi vara aasai

chinna chinna aasai

siRakatikkum aasai

muththu muthu aasai

mudinthu vaiththa aasai

sEttRu vaYal aadi naatRRu nada aasai
 meen pidiththu meeNdum aatRil vida aasai
 vaanavillai koNYcham uduththi koLLa aasai
 pani thuLikkul naanum paduththu koLLa aasai
 chiththiraththu mElE sElai katta aasai
 chinna chinna aasai
 siRakatikkum aasai
 muththu muthu aasai
 mudinthu vaiththa aasai
 vennilavu thottu muththamida aasai
 ennai indha poomi chutRi vara aasai
 chinna chinna aasai
 siRakatikkum aasai
 muththu muthu aasai
 mudinthu vaiththa aasai

 These are the hindi version lyrics:

Film: Roja (Hindi)

Singer: Minnmini

Credits: Rekha Pai (rekhi@bombay.mti.sgi.com)

Dil hai chotta sa, choti si ash
 masti bhare man ki, bholi si ash
 chand taron ko, choone ki ash
 asmanon me udne ki ash
 dil hai chotta sa, choti si ash
 masti bhare man ki, bholi si ash
 chand taron ko, choone ki ash
 asmanon me udne ki ash
 dil hai chotta sa, choti si ash
 mehek jaoon main, aaj to aise
 phool bagiya me, meheke hai jaise
 badlon ki main odhon chunariya
 jhoom jaoon main banke bawariya
 apni choti me bandh loon duniya
 erero ere ereyo ...
 erero ere ereyo ...
 swarg si dharti, khil rahe jaise
 mera man bhi to, khil raha aise
 koyal ki tarha, gane ko armaan
 machli ki tarha, machloon ye armaan
 jawani hai layi rangeen sapna
 dil hai chotta sa, choti si ash
 masti bhare man ki, bholi si ash
 chand taron ko, choone ki ash
 asmanon me udne ki ash
 dil hai chotta sa, choti si ash
 masti bhare man ki, bholi si ash
 chand taron ko, choone ki ash
 asmanon me udne ki ash
 dil hai chotta sa, choti si ash
 masti bhare man ki, bholi si ash

-
 bye
 satish

-
Thanks to Srikanth (kanth@cse.ogi.edu) for ratings and corrections.

- Part II -

Hi All!

Here is the second part of the interview with A.R.R. from 'The Hindu' and a song from his second movie "Pudhu Mugam".

Enjoy!

bye

satish

-

A Passion for Quality Music

by

S.R. Ashok Kummar

Contd...

-

Q: Despite your success, you do not seem to be working in a lot of films.

ARR: Rather than making money, I believe in making people happy; all other things are secondary. That is why I am not interested in a lot of movies but only in one at a time. I like directors whom I can vibe with. Ten years of experience in this field has made me quite frustrated. I have evolved a technique which requires a lot of time. Other music directors record a song in seven or eight hours. But I am different. we do a basic sitting and we record it. we record the voice and I add instrument by instrument to improve the quality.

Q: Will not the producers say that you are delaying their projects?

ARR: My process involves a lot of time. The delay is not intentional. That is how I get my results. When people say that in "Gentleman" and "Thiruda Thiruda" the music is good and not like the usual beats, I feel happy. Abroad, in some places, they take three months to make an album.

(To continue..)

--

His second release was "Pudhu Mugam", and most of the songs seem to resemble his earlier songs in "Roja".

Film: Pudhu Mugam (Tamil)

Actors: Revathi and Suresh Menon

Lyrics: Vairamuthu

Music: A.R.Rahman

1. nERRu illaatha maaRum (2 versions) - ***

2. kaNNukku mai azhagu (2 versions) - ***

3. July maatham - **

4. sambhO sambhO - *

-

Song: nERRu illaatha maaRum

nERRu illaatha maaRum ennadhu?

kaaRRu en kaadhil yEdhO sonnadh

idhudhaan kaadhal enbadhaa

iLamai pongi vittadhaa?

idhayam sindhi vittadhaa?

sol maname

nERRu illaatha maaRum ennadhu?

kaaRRu en kaadhil yEdhO sonnadh

idhudhaan kaadhal enbadhaa
iLamai pongi vittadhaa?
idhayam sindhi vittadhaa?
sol manamE
kadavuL illai enREn , thaayai kaaNum varai
kanavu illai enREn , aasai thOnRum varai
kaadhal poi enRu sOnnEn unnai kaaNum varai
kavidhai variyin suvai, artham puriyum varai
gangai neerin suvai, kadalil sERum varai
kaadhal suvai onRu thaane kaaRRu veesum varai
nERRu illaatha maaRum ennadhu?
kaaRRu en kaadhil yEdhO sonnadhu
idhudhaan kaadhal enbadhaa
iLamai pongi vittadhaa?
idhayam sindhi vittadhaa?
sol manamE
hey hey.. hey hey.. hey hey..hey hey..
vaanam illaamalE bhoomi undaagalaam
varthai illamalE baashai undaagalaam
kaadhal illaamal pOnaal vazhkai undaaguma?
vaasam illamalE vaNNa poo pook kalaam
vaasal illamalE kaRRu vandhaadalaam
nEsam illaadha vaazhvil paasam undaaguma?
nERRu illaatha maaRum ennadhu?
kaaRRu en kaadhil yEdhO sonnadhu
idhudhaan kaadhal enbadhaa
iLamai pongi vittadhaa?
idhayam sindhi vittadhaa?
sol manamE
nERRu illaatha maaRum ennadhu?
kaaRRu en kaadhil yEdhO sonnadhu
idhudhaan kaadhal enbadhaa
iLamai pongi vittadhaa?
idhayam sindhi vittadhaa?
sol manamE

-

bye
satish

-

Thanks to Srikanth (kanth@cse.ogi.edu) for the ratings and corrections.

- Part III -

Hi All!

Here is part 3 of the interview with ARR from 'The Hindu',
followed by a review and a song from his third film "Gentleman".

bye
satish

-

A Passion for Quality Music

by
S.R. Ashok Kummar

Contd...

-

Q: Do you use computer in your films?

ARR: No. Not computers. The technique involved is different. In

fact, they say the music in "Roja" was computerised. As I said earlier the recording takes time. You can hear the same flute here in a different way. It is not computerised music. Nearly 40 persons sang 'Veerapandi Kottayile' (a song from "Thiruda Thiruda") that does not sound like computer music. 'Vellai Mazhai' (from "Roja") is sync oriented. I do not restrict the musicians, but ask them to play whatever they feel. Then I record what I want. I spend a lot of time on lyrics too. It takes around four days. We write something in the first instance and then improve. So it takes about a week to complete a song.

Q: Then you will be working only in perhaps half a dozen films a year?

ARR: What will I do if I work for more films and only a few click? I do not want my energy to be wasted. I want every film to be a musical hit. In fact, "Thiruda Thiruda" songs have created a record for any Tamil film - 25,000 discs were sold in Malaysia. They are going to give us platinum discs.

(To continue..)

-
His third film "Gentleman" has been his best offering yet. It had some great mixture of songs, very different from his earlier two films.

-
Film: Gentleman
Actors: Arjun and Madhubala
Lyrics: Vairamuthu
Music: A.R.Rahman

The songs from this film were:

1. ottagaththai kattikkO - ***

A duet between SPB and S.Janaki. Great beats and nice use of chorus.

2. en veettu thOttathil - ****

The best song of the whole lot, inspired from a classical composition.

Neatly done by SPB and Sujatha.

3. chikku bukku rayilu - ***

Real crazy lyrics, leaning on the 'rap'ish side. But still an enjoyable song. The picturization of this song is also supposed to good too.

4. paarkkaathE paarkkaathE - **

Reminds you of a song 'kilele kilele' from the group "Osibisa" which toured India in early 80s.

5. usilambhatti peNkutti - **

Tries a folk tune, but is not quite a pure folk number.

The lyrics spoil the song.

-
Song: en veetu thottaththil
Singers: SPB and Sujatha
Sujatha:hmmmm mmmm
aaa AAa....aaa

en veettu thOttaththil poo ellaam kEttup paar
en veettu jannal kambu ellaamE kEttup paar
en veettu thennam keeRRai ippode kEttup paar
en nenjai sollumE..
en veettu thOttaththil poo ellaam kEttup paar
en veettu jannal kambu ellaamE kEttup paar

en veettu thennam keeRRai ippode kEttup paar
en nenjai sollumE..

SPB: vai paattu paadum peNNe maunangaL koodadhu
vai poottuch chattam ellaam peNNukku aagaathu

Sujatha:

vaNdellaam saththam pOttaal poonjOlai thaangaathu
mOtutkkaL saththam pOttaal vaNdukke kEtkaathu

SPB: aadik ki pinnaalE kaavEri thaangaathu

Sujatha:

aaL aana pinnaalE allippoo moodaathu

SPB: aasai thudikkinRadhO?

SPB: un veettu thOttaththil poo ellaam kEttup paar

un veettu jannal kambi ellaamE kEttup paar

un veettu thenam keeRRai ovvonRaai kEttup paar

en pErai sollumE..

un veettu thOttaththil poo ellaam kEttup paar[hmmm...]

un veettu jannal kambi ellaamE kEttup paar[hmmm...]

un veettu thenam keeRRai ovvonRaai kEttup paar[hmmm...]

en pErai sollumE..

Sujatha:

sOllukkum theriyaamal sOllaththaan vandEnE

sOllukkuL arththam pOla sOllaamal ninREnE

SPB: sOllukkum arthathukkum dhoorangaL kidayaadhu

sOllaadha kaadhal ellaam sOrgaththil sEraadhu

Sujatha:

eNNikkai theerndaalum muththangaL theeraadhu

SPB: eNNikkai paarthaalE muththangaL aagaadhu

Sujatha:

mmm mmm mm anubavamO?

SPB: heh-heh-ha!

Sujatha:

en veettu thOttaththil poo ellaam kEttup paar

en veettu jannal kambi ellaamE kEttup paar

en veettu thennam keeRRai ippode kEttup paar

en nenjai sollumE..

SPB: un veettu thOttaththil poo ellaam kEttup paar[hmmm...]

un veettu jannal kambi ellaamE kEttup paar[hmmm...]

un veettu thenam keeRRai ovvonRaai kEttup paar[hmmm...]

en pErai

both: sollumE..

-

bye

satish

-

Thanks to Srikanth (kanth@cse.ogi.edu) for ratings and corrections.

- Part IV -

Hi All!

Here is the last part of the interview with ARR from 'The Hindu'. Also
a review of "Thiruda Thiruda" and a song from it.

bye

satish

--

A Passion for Quality Music

by

S.R. Ashok Kumar
Contd...

-

Q: You say you are choosy, but you also go in for popular songs.
Why is it so?

ARR: Different people need different songs. I want to go down to the people at various levels. When I toured Tamil Nadu, I found that people wanted songs that would make them happy. Also nothing vulgar. There is nothing vulgar in "Sikku bukku Sikku bukku raile" (a song from "Gentleman").

Q: So you want to be with the masses?

ARR: No, rather I want my music to reach everywhere. If I play rock, only youngsters will understand, while older people will say "Why is he shouting like this?". Each category of music reaches only one circle: for the class audience "Thiruda Thiruda" and for the masses "Gentleman".

Q: Does basic knowledge of Carnatic music help?

ARR: Sure. I am learning Carnatic classical music from Dakshinamurthy and Hindustani from Krishnan Nair. I like traditional music much.

Q: Why is it that the songs these days go out of people's mind soon unlike the old numbers?

ARR: In those days, the lyrical value was greater in songs.

Q: You want to be called number 1 in the industry?

ARR: No. Numbers are not decided by me, but by the grace of God and by the people. I want my job to be interesting and fun. I just do not want to get stuck again in monotony.

-

(Done!)

-

His second successful venture with director Mani Rathnam, was "Thiruda Thiruda". ARR almost redefines the meaning of light music with his songs in this movie.

Film: Thiruda Thiruda

Actors: Arvind, Heera, Anu Agarwal

Lyrics: Vairamuthu

Music: A.R.Rahman

Director: Mani Rathnam

The songs from this movie are:

1. kaNNum kaNNum koLLai - *** (Mano)

Again a great use of chorus. (ARR finally uses the word 'harmony' for chorus on the cassette's inlay card.)

2. raasaaththi - ****

This is an amazing song, with no use of instruments. The song wholly rests on the rustic voice of Sahul Ahmed and the chorus (oops.. harmony :) providing the background 'music' with their humming.

3. konjam nilavu - **

A nice song that touches real high and low pitches. The voice is of a new singer, Anupama.

4. veerabaandi - ** (Mano, Chitra and Unni Menon)

A mixture of different instruments and great use of chorus.

5. puththam pudhu - ***

The song in parts resemble choir singing.

6. thee thee - **

Another new singer (Carolene). The use of chorus is again striking.

-

Song: raasaathi

Singer: Sahul Ahmed

Credits: Srikanth (kanth@cse.ogi.edu)

All words within paranthesis are sung by a low-pitched chorus and the other words are by a high-pitched solo(Shahul Hameed).

raasaathi! en usiru ennathilla! (hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
 poochhoodi, vaakkap pattu pORa puLLa! (hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
 nee pOnaa en udambu maNNukkuLLa! (hmmhmmmm mmm mmmmmhmm mm)
 raavOdu sEThi varum vaadi puLLa! (hmmhmmmm mmm mmmmmhmm mm)
 raasaathi! en usiru ennathilla! (hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
 (mmmm aaaa mmm aaa)
 kaara veettuth thiNNaiyila kaRikku manjaL araikaiyile...
 (manjaLai aRaikku munnae manasai arachchavale!)
 karisakkaattu Odaiyile kadaangi thuvaikkaiyile...
 (thuniyai nanaiya vittu manasaip puzhinjavale!)
 nellu kaLaththu mEtil ennai izhuththu mudinjukittu pORavale!
 (pORava, pORava than puththi kettu pOnava than!)
 pudhu kalyaaNach chElaiyile kaNNeerath thudachchikittu pORavale!
 (pORava, pORava than ponjaathiyaap pORava than!)
 naan thantha malligaiyai nattaaththil vittupputtu,
 aRaLip poochhoodi aLuthabadi pORavale!
 (kadalai kattuk kuLLa kaiyadichchu sonna puLLa!
 kaaththula ezhuthaNum pombaLainga sonna solla!)
 oooooooooo
 (kadalai kattuk kuLLa kaiyadichchu sonna puLLa!
 kaaththula ezhuthaNum pombaLainga sonna solla!)
 oooooooooo
 raasaathi! en usiru ennathilla! (hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
 poochhoodi, vaakkap pattu pORa puLLa! (hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
 nee pOnaa en udambu maNNukkuLLa! (hmmhmmmm mmm mmmmmhmm mm)
 raavOdu sEThi varum vaadi puLLa! (hmmhmmmm mmm mmmmmhmm mm)
 raasaathi! en usiru ennathilla! (hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
 (OOo aaa mmm OOo aaa mmm OOo aaa mmm)
 thottuth thottu pottu vacha suttu viral kaayaliye...
 (marik kozhunthu vachcha kaiyil vaasam innum pOgaliye!)
 maruthaiyila vaangith thantha vaLavi udaiyaliye...
 (mallu vEtti maththiyila manjak kaRai maaRaliye!)
 andhak kazhuththu thEmalaiyum, kaathOra machchaththaiyum paarpatheppO!
 (parppathu paarpatheppO, pourNamiyum vaaratheppO!)
 andhak kolusu maNich chiruppum, kumari iLanchiruppum kEtpadheppO!
 (kEtpathu kEtpatheppO, keerath thandu poopathheppO!)
 karuvElam kattukkuLLa karichchan kuruvi oNnu,
 suthi maaRik kaththuthamma thunaiyaththan kaaNominnu!
 (kadalai kaattuk kuLLa kaiyadichchu sonna puLLa!
 kaaththula ezhuthaNum pombaLainga sonna solla!)
 (kadalai kaattuk kuLLa kaiyadichchu sonna puLLa!
 kaaththula ezhuthaNum pombaLainga sonna solla!)
 raasaathi! en usiru ennathilla! (oooo hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
 poochhoodi, vaakkap pattu pORa puLLa! (aaa hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
 nee pOnaa en udambu maNNukkuLLa! (oooo hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm mm)
 raavOdu sEThi varum vaadi puLLa! (aaaa hmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm mm)

raasaathil en usiru ennathilla! (ooo ooo hmmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)
poochhoodi, vaakkap pattu pORa puLLa! (aaa hmmmhmmmm mmmmmhmm)

-

bye
satisf

-

Thanks to Srikanth (kanth@cse.ogi.edu) for the ratings and corrections.

- End -

RMIM Archive Article "45".

A.R.Rehman : The New Wave

Posted by: devm@netcom.com (Dev Mannemela)

Source: India Today (Jan 1995?)

The latest India Today has a feature on "1994: the people who made a difference". Rehman is the featured one in the music department. Here is the article on him... (Rehman watchers note the Govind Nihalani part)

A.R.Rehman: The new Wave

For close to two decades, Tamil Pop and film scores meant mostly Ilaiyaraaja. It was easy, he never really had any competition.

Till a 25-year old who prefers untrained voices to silky smooth renditions and breathing space between beats to typical many-layered, cramped orchestration came along.

Now, two years later, A.R.Rehman looks like he is here to stay, with his digitalised sound based on pop-rock and reggae and fused with traditional Indian-mainly Carnatic-folk idioms. The supreme irony: he used to play keyboards in Ilaiyaraaja's orchestra. Says Gangai Amaran, a music director and Ilaiyaraaja's brother: "Rehman's music is of the computer age. It is digital, but intelligent, not just noise. He concentrates on his melody and has not deviated totally from Carnatic traditions."

What he has done, though, is deviated totally from the norm and rung up hit score after hit track, moving near effortlessly from the Tamil scene to take over Hindi film music. And spawned on the way a whole new approach that is finding imitators countrywide. Even before the Hindi version of director Mani Ratnam's Tamil film Roja hit the screens last year - in a way, Rehman can be called a Ratnam discovery, spotted by him as a promising composer even against the backdrop of Ilaiyaraaja's elaborate orchestration - the sound track and songs were churning cash registers. They helped sell over 25 lakh tapes. Bollywood director Subhash Ghai has replaced Laxmikant-Pyarelal with Rehman for his next project, and pre-release has sold the sound track for a figure of Rs.1 crore, very respectable by industry standards. Art film maestro Govind Nihalani has also signed him on. And Ratnam has banked on Rehman's earlier magic with Roja to sell the sound track for his soon to be released Bombay for Rs.80 lakh.

Rehman, a former jingle composer, works to exacting standards of quality, but is also an inveterate risk-taker. For Roja, he used the quavering voices of old women to great effect, and for the now famous title track, the non-filmi, pop voices of Baba Sehgal and Shweta Shetty. For Chikkubukku raile, a Tamil hit song, he banked on an unknown voice, its lisp and anglicised delivery. Rehman likes working with untrained voices, saying a slight "defect in the singing adds a human touch." A workable quirk? Typically, critics say that like other music trends, Rehman and his mood music will also fade away. He hopes to delay that by changing and offering new sounds, and staying relatively exclusive by accepting no more than five film projects a year. The fact is that it could take a Rehman to replace a Rehman. Few are likely to complain.

RMIM Archive Article "151".

Great composers, haunting melodies

Posted by: Adithy (munna@cs.uidaho.edu)
alt.culture.kerala

Source: The Hindu, Aug 1994.

Author: T.P.Sasthamangalam

Great composers, haunting melodies
Malayalam Films

by
T.P. Sasthamangalam
The Hindu, Friday Review, August 19, 1994

Great composers, haunting melodies

The golden jubilee of Malayalam film music was observed in August, 1994. T.P. Sasthamangalam surveys the developments in the sphere in the last 50 years.

- The golden period in Malayalam film music started with "Neelakkuyil". The major lyricists of this period were P Bhaskaran (first song: "Choriyuka madhumadhuri" in the film "Chandrika"). Vayalar Rama Varma (first song: "Thumbi thumbi vaa vaa" in the film "Koodappirappu"), and ONV Kurup (first song: "Aa malar poykayil aadi" in "Kaalam marunnu"). If Vayalar's lyrics followed the classical literary tradition, Bhaskaran's verses oozed rustic charm. Scoring poetically ponderous words of Vayalar posed a great challenge for composers, while Bhaskaran's inherently musical lyrics found them at ease. The earlier works of ONV Kurup reflected the poet's concern for the downtrodden. And his innumerable poetic creations of this period, to say the least, belonged to a rare class.

The images of classical Sanskrit literature, particularly those from the works of Kalidasa, were adapted for the first time into Malayalam lyrics by Vayalar. And these ditties were breathtakingly tuned by G Devarajan, who came to the scene in 1955 after a successful stint as music director in the leftist theatre group Kerala People's Arts Club (KPAC). With the arrival of singers S Janaki in 1959 (first Malayalam song: "Rakkuyile" in the movie "Minnalpadayali), P Susheela in 1960 (first Malayalam song: "Pat-tupadi urakkam njan" in the film "Seetha"), K J Jesudas in 1962 (debut song: "Jathibhedam mathadwesham" in the film "Kalpadukal") and P Jayachandran in 1966 (first song: "Oru mullappoo malayumayi" in the film Kunjali Marakkar"), the stage was set for a truly remarkable period that was to take Malayalam film music to glorious heights.

The songs by the Vayalar-Devarajan team, which opened its account in "Chaturangam", were the hallmark of this period. The hits by the duo included "Periyare" ("Bharya"/1962), "Kannuneer muthumayi" ("Nityakanyaka"/1963), "Kattil ilam kattil" ("Odayil ninnu"/1965), "Sanghupushpam kannezhuthumbol" ("Sakunthala"/1965), "Ezhu sundara rathrikal" ("Aswametham"/1967), "Parijatham thirumizhi thurannu" ("Thokkukal katha parayunnu"/1968),

"Swarnnachamaram" ("Yakshi"/1968), "Kattadichu kodum kattadichu" ("Thulabharam"/1968), "Nityakamuki" ("Susy"/1969) and "Sanyasini" ("Rajahamsam"/1974). Another prominent composer of the period was M S Baburaj, the son of a singer from Bengal who settled down in Kozhikode.

Most of the songs Baburaj were based on the Hindustani style, in which he had his initial training. He was introduced to the world of film music by singer Kozhikode Abdul Khader and lyricist P Bhaskaran through the film "Minnaminungu" (1957). Some of the haunting melodies in Malayalam were created by the Bhaskaran-Baburaj team. The hits included "Adyathe kanmani" (Bhagya-jathakam"/1962), "Anuraganatakathin" ("Ninamaninja kalpadukal"/1963), "Thaliritta kinakkal" ("Moodupadam"/1963), "Anjanakannezhuthi" ("Thacholi Othenan"/1964), "Thamasamenthe varuvan" ("Bhargaveenilayam"/1964), "Vasanthapanchaminalil" ("Bhargaveenilayam"/1964), "Oru kochu swapnanthin" ("Tharavattamma/1966), "Innale mayangumbol" ("Anweshichu kandethiyilla"/1967), "Swarnavalakalitta" ("Lakshaprabhu"/1968), "Pathiravayilla" ("Manaswini"/1968) and "Vijana theerame" ("Ratri vandi"/1971).

Says singer K J Jesudas: "Baburaj is the greatest melody-maker Malayalam cinema has ever seen. Even 15 years after his death, his songs remain hot favourites. And they will be so forever." The period also saw the rise of composers like M B Sreenivasan (debut film: "Swargarajyam"/1962), R K Shekhar (first film: "Pazhassi Raja"/1964), Job (debut film: "Oral koodi kаланayi"/1964), Pukazhenth (debut film: "Muthalali"/1965), Salil Chaudhury (debut film: "Chemmeen"/1966), A T Ummer (first film: "Thalirukal"/1968), M K Arjunan (first film: "Karutha pour-nami"/1968), Usha Khanna (debut film: "Moodalmanju"/1970) and K V Mahadevan (debut film: "Padmatheertham"/1971).

The prominent lyricists in the latter part of the golden period were Yusufali Kecheri (first song: "Mailanchithoppil" in the film "Moodupadam"/1963) and Sreekumaran Thampi (first song: "Avalude kannukal" in the movie "Kattumallika"/1966). "By the late Seventies the music scene went through massive changes. A new culture where speed and ostentation mattered most came along with the introduction of modern recording facilities. The songs were written, composed and recorded with mind-boggling briskness, and forgotten by the public with equal alacrity. Unable to get along with the flippant new trends, the musicians of my generation thought it better to lie low. However, a few good songs were produced in the modern period too", says G Devarajan.

The composers who emerged at the top in the modern period included Syam (first film: "Manyasree Viswamithran"/1974), Kannur Rajan (first film: "Mr. Sundari"/1974), K J Joy (first film: "Love letter"/1975), Ilaiyaraja (first Malayalam film: "Aaru manik-koor"/1978), M G Radhakrishnan (first film: "Thampu"/1978), Ravindran (first film: "Choola"/1979), Vidyadharan (first film: "Aagamanam"/1980), Jerry Amaldev (first film: "Manjil virinja pookkal"/1981), Johnson (first film: "Inaye thedi"/1981), Raghukumar (first film: "Dheera"/1982), Ouseppachan (first film: "Kathodu kathoram"/1985), Ravi (first Malayalam film: "Panchag-ni"/1986), Mohan Sithara (first film: "Onnu muthal poojyam vare"/1986) and Perumbavoor G Raveendranath (first film: "Thoo-

vanathumbikal"/1987). Veteran Hindi composer Naushad Ali turned out a couple of hits in the film "Dhwani" in 1988.

During this period, singers like M G Sreekumar (first song: "Velikkolusode" in the film "Coolie"), G Venugopal (first song: "Manathe manikya kunninmel" in the film "Odaruthammava alariyam"), K S Chitra (first song: "Chellum chellum" in the film "Attahasam"), Sujatha Mohan (first song: "Kannezhuthi pottuthottu" in the film "Tourist Bungalow"), Arundhati (first song: "Arikilo akaleyo" in the movie "Navambarinte Nashtam"), Minmini (debut song: "Akkare ninnoru kottaram" in the film "Swagatham") came to the fore. The lyricists who carved a niche for themselves in the industry during the same period included Poovachal Khader (first song: "Mazhavillin ajnatha vasam kazhinju" in the film "Kattuvithachavan/1973), Bichu Tirumala (first song: "Akkaldama" in the film "Rathinirvedam/1978) and Kaithapram Damodaran Namboodiri (first song: "Devadundubhi sandralayam" in the film "Ennennum kannettante"/1986).

Though the number of artists in the music scene increased in the Eighties, the quality of songs dreadfully came down. "I don't think we will ever be able to better the songs produced during the golden period. They were created in an era when innocence and warmth still had their place in human life. Amidst the din and bustle of today, it is certainly a great relief to immerse oneself in the old melodies", sums up K J Jesudas.

RMIM Archive Article "259".

The RMIMeet Chronicles

Posted by: Satish Subramanian (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

Author: Satish Subramanian (subraman@cs.umn.edu)

 MDs copying each other

[Context: A discussion in one of the RMIM meets about songs sounding similar to each other]

> After much pushing and prodding from Ashok, here for your reading
 > pleasure is an account of two episodes from the RMIMeet that were
 > neglected in earlier commentaries.
 > The Trial by Jury [...] in order to differentiate photocopying someone
 > else's work from merely glancing at it over one's shoulder. First on
 > the stand were :
 > 1. tu pyaar ka saagar hai (Seema, Manna Dey, Shankar Jaikishan)
 > 2. maanasa vaire vare (Chemmeen, Manna Dey, Salil Chowdhury)
 > SalilC was found innocent of all charges. Except for a couple of
 > snatches here and there, no cause was found to declare 2 to be a copy
 > of 1. Satish Subramanian who imagined some similarity in these songs
 > was asked to pay costs to both the parties. Sami wrote a dissenting
 > note to this judgment when he said that there was a definite flow of
 > inspiration from 1 to 2 which came as a surprise to those who were
 > familiar with this jury member's ideological leanings.

Alright! :) Let's assume that I did imagine some relation between the songs. Now what did you 'imagine' when you wrote "snatches here and there"; what did Sami 'imagine' when he said there was a "flow of inspiration"; and what did Pradeep 'imagine' when he wrote "Salil song starts off sounding similar to the SJ song"? Also I never said Salil had copied the "Seema" song. This is what I wrote:

> "Chemmeen" had another great song by Manna Dey which is based
 > on a Shankar-Jaikishan's tune. It was the bhajan tune from the
 > movie "Seema" - 'tu pyaar ka saagar hai, teri ik boondh ke
 > pyaase hum'. Sung again by Manna Dey. (Even the strongest of
 > SJ-haters on RMIM, if you recall, had openly admitted to
 > liking this song. No wonder even Salil liked it :).

(Hey, I even got Sami's musical leanings right. :)

I am beginning to wonder if the "pushing and prodding from Ashok" was just to give a start to this article or...? :) Anyway, with a hung jury, who passed that premature judgement? Hope it is taken back. Hmm, what was that motto - "Have many convictions, but never get convicted," was it? :)

> 1. kya mil gaya Bhagwaan tumhein (Anmol GhaDi, Noorjehan, Naushad)
 > 2. de di humein aazaadi bina khaDg (Jagriti, Asha, Hemant Kumar)
 > "Hemant copied", he said. And that was also the unanimous verdict of
 > everybody present although we didn't use such strong language. I
 > felt it was a tribute from one talented composer to another.

Going by "snatches here and there" definition, I think the song from "Bazaar" (MD: Shyam Sunder) "apne nazar se door ho" (Lata-Rafi) has something in common with the song "socha tha kya kya ho gaya" (Suraiyya; Anmol Ghadi). And the similarity between "tera khilona Too'Ta balak" (Rafi; Anmol Ghadi) and "yeh hai duniya ka bazaar" (Rafi;

Bazaar again) was mentioned by Chandel recently on RMIM. I am sure Naushad must be overwhelmed by all these 'tributes' for his "Anmol Ghadi"!

Talking about 'tributes', not so long ago Ikram wrote in a "MDs copying each other" thread:

> Even Naushad pays tribute (probably unconsciously) to SC's Aja re o
> pardesi in Guddu's song "Selena" {Wow, ek hi song meN tribute to
> SalilC and tejano singer Selena bhi?? :)}. The stanzas have some
> notes at the very end which are similar to the aja re o pardesi
> song. mHo. Most probably I would say that Naushaad must have liked
> that song greatly and it came out naturally from his sub-conscious.
There is unmistakable similarity between the songs "hum do panchhi
uDe gagan mein.. Selena.." (Guddu; Naushad) and "aja re pardesi"
(Madhumati). The tunes are similar in the stanzas of the two songs,
esp. in the lines:

"aao chalen aakash ke peechhe
jungle parbat paaon ke neechhe
uDte rahen ham ankhon meechhe"
(Sanu and Devki in "hum do panchhi")

In the movie "Papa Kahte Hai" too Rajesh Roshan uses the "aja re pardesi" tune a little bit in the lines:

"gajra sajaaye mehkaaye aanchal
aankhon mein leke sapnon ka kaajal"
(Sanu and Poornima in "aaha ham dulhan waale")

Talking about "Guddu" and "Papa..", how can one forget "Guddi", where the entire Madhumathi song was replayed? Why was it included verbatim? They had a nice line before the song, to justify its inclusion, "Sing a film song, only those are popular nowadays" or something to that effect. I am sure there are more songs that belong to the family of songs inspired by the "Madhumati" song.

Talking about family of songs, perhaps the most famous (at least on RMIM) is the "saagar kinaare" family. It starts with S.D.Burman's "thandi hawaayen leharake aaye" (Lata, Naujawan). This SBD tune was taken by Roshan to make his "rahe na rahe ham mehka karenge" (Lata, Mamta). R.D.Burman once wrote about this song in an article:

Roshan said to me "You know what I've done? I've taken the metre of Dada's Naujawan composition, 'thandi hawaayen lehra ke aaye', just changed the tune and turned it into 'rahen na rahen hum!'".

What a beautiful tune! Yet the metre had been provided by Dada! The same metre appeared in Madan Mohan's "yehi hai tammana tere ghar ke saamne" (Rafi, Haqeeqat). This then became RDB's "hamen raaston ki zaroorat nahin hai" (Asha, Naram Garam) which Pradeep mentioned recently on RMIM. Finally (?) it was used again by R.D.Burman in "saagar kinaare dil ye pukaare" (Kishore, Saagar).

Another well-known pair is Sajjad's "yeh hawa yeh raat yeh chandni" (Talat, Sangdil) and Madan Mohan's "tujhe kya sunaon mein dilruba" (Rafi, Aakhri Dao). Ravi's "zara sun haseena ai nazneen" (Rafi) from "Kaun Apna Kaun Paraya" also seems to be inspired by this Talat-Sajjad song. In his career, Sajjad had just a handful of songs, yet that didn't stop the other MDs from looking for inspiration there. Doesn't Naushad's "gham ki andheri raat mein" (Rafi-Talat duet) sound a little similar (at least at the beginning) to Sajjad's "dil mein samaa gaye sajan" (Talat, Lata; Sangdil)?

The "Papa Keh-te Hain" song "mujhse naraaz ho to ho jao" (Sonu Nigam), was based on Madan Mohan's "baad muddat ke ye ghaDi aayi, aap aae to zindagi aayi" (Suman, Rafi; Jahan Ara). Before using it in "Papa Keh-te Hain", Rajesh Roshan had already used the same tune in "paas ho tum magar qareeb nahin" (Lata; Lootmaar). So you have another family of songs there.

C.Ramchandra's "eena meena deeka" (Asha) inspired a bunch of songs, like CAT cat maane.. in "Dilli Ka Thug". Then there is the Muqabla family of songs ('Mukaala Muqabla laila', 'O jaaneman chehra tera jadoo', 'Muqabla hai pyar ka', 'Mukkala muqabla hoga'). Apparently the song "Channa jor garam baabu" also has a set of related songs. Anyone with the details?

Madan Mohan's "main nigaahen tere chehre se hataoon kaise"(Aap Ki Parchaiyaan) seems to have the same tune as Jaidev's "kabhi kud pe kabhi halaat pe rona aaya" (Hum Dono).

A Filmfare reader wrote about a program on Vividh Bharati which used to play similar sounding songs back-to-back, without mentioning which was the original. The reader mentioned some of the songs that were played in that program which I repeat here without verifying (I just added the year of the film where ever possible).

1. Roshan's "gusse se jo" - Dil Hi To Hai - 1963 - Mukesh
Chitragupta's "muft hue badnaam" - Baraat - 1960 - Mukesh
2. Bappi Lahiri's "saiyaan bina" - ? - Lata, Bhupindar
R D Burman's "tere bina jiya" - Ghar - 1978 - Lata
3. Hemant Kumar's "kahan le chale" - Durgesh Nandini - 1956 - Lata
Shankar-Jaikishan's "kahan ja raha hai" - Seema - 1955 - Rafi

Looks like there are many 'tributes' to SJ's "Seema"!

In recent times it is not rare to find two different songs on the same top-ten list to have the same or similar tune!

To end, here is one interesting case of a 'flow of inspiration' going from S.D.Burman's "sar jo tera chakraaye" (Rafi; Pyaasa) to Anu Mallik's "ruk ruk ruk" (Alisha; Vijaypath).

Alisha's song goes:

ruk ruk ruk,
arre baba ruk
o my darling,
gimme a look!

While Rafi sings (a few lines after the start of the song):

sun sun sun,
arre raja sun
is champee mein,
baDe baDe gun!

:)

-

bye
satish

RMIM Archive Article "375".

Plagiarism

Posted by: jagadIsh@us.ibm.com.nospam (jagadIsh)

Source: MP Chronicle

Author:

Music Directors' Stand On Plagiarism

by

MG Rai

Anandji (of the Kalyanji-Anandji duo) says, "There isn't anything wrong in being inspired by someone else's work and creating a tune around it. Everyone is inspired by something. As a youngster I loved a particular SD Burman tune. As a composer, that tune was my stepping-stone to create something similar of my own." Veteran composer Khayyam too voiced similar sentiments. The aching chasm between the 'final quality' and thus the popularity of 'Jumma Chumma' from LP's Hum and 'Tama Tama Loge' from Bappi's Thanedar is a shimmering example. "Amitabh had liked the Mory Kante number so much that he wanted us to work on it. We told him that we would prefer to work out something of our own. But Amitabh was very keen on the song. How could we refuse someone like him?" question's Pyarelal. The duo thus took up selected bars from the original and fashioned a song around it.

So that's the nub. Where does inspiration end and imitation begin? Where does a music director stop creating and start copying? In an era and environment when creativity is at a great premium, how differently interpreted is the term 'inspiration' from what it means? And why? Nadeem, once said, "primarily we are entertainers". If delivering entertainment meant copying well-known foreign/Indian hits, then his tone implied - so be it. Bappi Lahiri, with a definite touch of sarcasm, said that the older composers too had been copy-cats. The fact, cold and undeniable, remains that in the '40s, '50s and '60s, there were no cassettes available at an affordable price. From Shanker-Jaikishan, OP Nayyar and Naushad down to Usha Khanna had done their bit of copying.

"In 1958," says Anandji, "C Ramachandra's 'dekh hame awaaz na dena (Rafi-Lata) from Amar Deep and Shanker Jaikishan's 'yeh mera diwanapan hai' (Mukesh, Yahudi) were two different interpretations of the same basic source. How different this ingenuity is when we compare it with Dilip Sen-Sameer Sen's 'bol gori bol zara itni si baat' (Meherbaan-93), a straight lift from AR Rahman's 'Rukmani Rukmani' (Roja) which, startlingly again, is itself inspired by a foreign tune! Or from Bappi Lahiri's 'tumse milna milkar chalna' (Amaanat) and Dilip Sen-Sameer Sen's 'uf yeh shabab' (Khoon Ka Sindoor) which are both based on the same tunes of Khaled? Or similarly from Bappi Lahiri's 'mere jaisi haseena ka dil' (Amaanat) and Anu Malik's 'O meri neend churane wale tera' (Chamatkar)? Or from 'love rap' (Krantiveer) by Anand- Milind and Anu Malik's re-cycling (in Gambler) of the same 'me wan gal' hit by Apache Indian? Or those half-a-dozen versions of 'Didi'?

Rahul Dev Burman, in a television interview, revealed how music directors are as revered and gifted as his father SD Burman and the

late Roshan was, both created masterpieces from one musical 'metre'. He said, 'My father's Lata number, 'Thandi hawayen leherake aayen' from Naujawan (51) was so much liked by Roshansaab, that he took it as the starting point for his own Lata classic 'Rahe na rahe hum' from Mamta (66).' (Those were the days when a composer would openly admire a colleague's creation and even telephone to tell him so). The late Pancham-da also disclosed how he himself completed the cycle by using the Mamta gem as the basic take-off point for his own Kishore-Lata beauty 'Saagar Kinare dil yeh pukare' (Saagar-85). Musicologist CM Desai mentioned Shankar-Jaikishan's (specially the former's) mischievous trait of 're-working' tunes of colleagues which he felt had the potential of being great numbers but had flopped partially or totally due to insufficient attention to fine details and nuances! 'Almost always,' says Desai, 'the later S-J version proved to be a surperhit.' Off hand, he mentioned Naushad's 'Hameen se muhabbat, hameen se ladaai' (Leader) which 'touched up' by S-J, came to us as 'Ae phoolon ki rani baharon ki malika' (Arzoo), the latter song still sounding daisy-fresh in '94 as it did 28 years ago! This particular song was Jaikishan's handiwork. And S-J used to do this even with their own tunes.

For An Evening In Paris, S-J used several well-known French tunes as the base. Usha Khanna openly admits that her music is heavily influenced by West Asian music. With a healthy attitude towards seeking inspiration as a prelude to giving something novel, men like RD Burman and Salil Choudhary have enriched our music immeasurably. How poorer would our music be if the Burmans (both father and son) had not brought to us, the rich folk of Assam and Bengal? And Salil-da's penchant for elegant western compositions is as well-known as is his flair for adapting songs from the west Bengal's rich musical vaults?

'But it was only Pancham (Rahul Dev Burman) who integrated the two diverse styles and fashioned terrific compositions.' Among them, are RD's superb numbers like OP Nayyar palmed off several Western and Arabic songs, including straight lifts, as his own 'original' works! Coming to today's era where plagiarising is more rampant than ever before, the picture is vastly different. Counters, Anu Malik, 'How many entirely original songs can an artiste create in a month? Two, three, maybe four? We have to record at least ten songs in a month.' In a milieu where survival is more a matter of successful strategy than of merit, no composer can survive on pure originality. Having seen sheer rejection for four miserably frustrating years (89-92), Anu has developed what he calls 'his greed for money', with big banners eagerly coming to him.

And however adds that hard work is everything. 'I was and am crazy about Shankar-Jaikishan, whom I consider the ultimate amongst the film composers. I even share their special love for Bhairavi and their other favourite raagas, but I have never copied them. My father would hate it if I even copied him. But everyone needs inspiration. I'm Anu Malik not a Beethoven or a Mozart. Anyone claiming to be original is a liar. There are only seven notes in music and we have to move within them. But I cannot copy outright. The exceptions happen because I have to oblige someone. But then I prefer to do well-known songs, not hide anything'. Among Anu's better 'inspired' numbers are 'Ae mere humsafar' (Baazigar) from LP's Khubsoorat hasina' (Mr X In

Bombay). But dozens of Anu Malik's creations give an uncannily- eerie-
deja-vu feel of the S-J of the sixties. Paas woh aane lage zara-zara'
(Main Khiladi Tu Anari), 'Ek yaad ke sahere' (Imtihaan), 'Badalon mein
chhup raha hai' (Phir Teri Kahani Yaad Aye), 'Kaatil aankhon wale'
(Hum Hain Bemisaal) and 'Kitni hasen hai raat'(Naaraz)- written by
SJ's home-lyricist Hasrat Jaipuri) are among recent prime examples of
such Anu Malik numbers.

In fact, Shanker-Jaikishan, followed in that order by Laxmikant-
Pyarelal and the two Burmans have been the inspiration or blueprint
for hundreds of tunes from present-day music makers. At the peak of
the media feud between Nadeem-Shravan and Anu Malik, a leading singer
snorted sarcastically. "How dare they accuse each other of copying
when they should both apologise to Shanker- Jaikishan and other
masters?"

Laxmikant-Pyarelal's orchestral pattern has inspired hundreds of
songs. Whether it is Anand-Milind who styled scores as varied as Lal
Dupatta Malmal Ka and Udhaar Ki Zindagi on the L-P format, Dilip
Sen-Sameer Sen, Naresh Sharma, Mahesh Kishore or even Nadeem Shravan
('Saajan ka Ghar', 'babul' and 'behna' numbers). Even classically
gifted composers like Shiv-Hari choose to tread L-P in songs like
'Meri Bindiya' (Lamhe).

RD Burman was and is the obvious blueprint for the bulk of Jatin-
Lalits' output. Their songs in Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikander, (Naam hai mera
Fonseca, 'Jawaan ho yaaron') and above all Shehar ki pariyan ke
peeche' which even has Sadhana doing an RD-Asha essque ('Hey- Hey')
Raju Ban Gaya Gentleman ('Dil hai mera diwana') Kabhi Haan Kabhi Naa
and Laqshya (practically all the songs) reek so much of the master
that one even wonders why RD himself was not approached for the
films. RD was also the 'base' on which Bappi Lahiri built his career.

RMIM Archive Article "382".

Salaries of MDs

Authors: Surjit Singh (two parts) and A S Chandel

Salaries of MDs in Golden Era

Hi Fellow Music Lovers:

Recently, there was a discussion about the money paid to MD's in the golden age. Here is some info from my files. It comes from the book, "The Economic Aspects of the Film Industry in India" by Dr. Rikhab Das Jain. It is based on his Ph. D. thesis on the same subject submitted by him to Agra University during 1960. The info occurs in Table XLVII on page 134. Here is the Table in its entirety.

Years 1955-56

Amount per film Names of the MDs

50K to 60K Naushad, CR, Shankar-Jaikishan

35K to 45K S. D. Burman

30K to 35K Anil Biswas, O. P. Nayyar

10K to 15K Ghulam Mohamad, Madan Mohan, Roshan, S.

N. Tripathy, Bulo C. Rani, Chitragupt, Nashad

During April 1958

Amount per film Names of the MDs

100K to 110K O. P. Nayyar

50K to 75K S. D. Burman, Shankar-Jaikishan, CR

40K to 55K Naushad, Anil Biswas

12K to 15K Madan MOhan, Nashad, Vinod, Roshan

8K to 12K S. N. Tripathy, Bulo C. Rani,

Chitragupt, Ghulam Mohamad

I hope that you find this info helpful in your discussions.

Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fan(atic), period.

From: "Dr. Surjit Singh, a CALTECH dad"

MD's get a pay raise

The year 1949 is taking longer than I thought. It will be ready soon, very soon! In the meantime, enjoy the following from my boxful of newspaper and magazine cuttings.

When Dalsukh Pancholi's Khazaanchii became a super musical hit, he made a lot of money. He asked the MD, Ghulam Hyder to ask anything he wanted. The MD asked for a Rayleigh Bicycle. Pancholi was surprised but bought the bike, which cost him Rs. 80 in those days. Ghulam Hyder must have realized that he could have asked more, much more. A few years later, when K. Asif asked Hyder to quit Lahore to give music for his phuul (1945), Hyder said, "For creating music for your film, if you promise to give me Rs. 25,000, I will leave Lahore and come to Bombay." Asif agreed and Hyder did.

It is generally believed that that's how MD's started demanding and getting equal or more money than stars. For example, in 1955, the highest paid stars were Dilip Kumar, Prithviraj Kapoor, Meena Kumari, Raj Kapoor and Nargis, who got anywhere from Rs. 60,000 to 100,000 per acting job. Next in line were, Dev Anand, Madhubala and Nimmi, who were given an amount ranging from Rs. 50,000 to 70,000. On the other hand, the best paid music directors in 1955 were Naushad, C. Ramchandra and Shankar Jaikishan who got from Rs. 50,000 to 60,000 per assignment. Next was S. D. Burman, with Rs. 35,000 to 45,000 and Anil Biswas and O. P. Nayyar with Rs. 30,000 to 35,000. I will type in the full list at a later date.

Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fan(atic), period.

Posted by: aschandel@alpha.ntu.ac.sg (A S Chandel)

Author: A S Chandel

Very interesting and informative piece. I would like to add to this few rumours that I had read/heard during my time.

To start with the blockbuster of 40s RATAN cost only Rs75,000 to make but the producer received more than 100,000 just from the records.

From this one can guess how much Naushad got as a composer.

When Azad (*ing Dilip Meena) was announced, as usual for Dilip movie, Naushad was signed as MD. The producer wanted Naushad to compose all 11 songs in 2 weeks which Naushad refused. When the Producer went to C.Ramchandra he said " I can give you all 11 songs in 11 days, however you have to pay me the same as you offered Naushad". well Producere gave in and paid Rs100,000.

another story is that C.Ramchandra was favoured by South and composed for PPs SHARDA (sing Raj Kapoor and Meena K). CR was also signed for "Chhoti Bahen" which was being planned then. After the debacle of Sharda music, PP wanted CR out and signed SJ instead. CR was promised Rs85,000 for Chhoti Bahen while SJ were given only Rs75,000. Well it was a big jump for SJ from Rs75/month as instrumentalist with Prithvi Theatre in late 40s.

In 1964 I had read the following rates for stars.

Dilip Kumar-800,000 (for Leader)

Raj Kapoor-500,00

Shammi Kapoor-400,000

Rajendra Kumar-400,000

Suneel Dutt-250,000

Pradeep Kumar/Bharat Bhooshan/Ashok Kumar 80,000

Among Heroines: Vyjantimala and Nutan were highest paid at Rs300,000.

During late 50s OPN became highest paid MD, but by early 60s SJ were getting Rs500,000.

If you consider the inflation, then these were princely sums. The best inflation indicator is that my father bought 400sq.yd plot in posh area of Agra in 1957 for Rs3,200 only, same is now over Rs1,000,000.

ABOUT THE COMPILER

Professor Surjit Singh, a diehard movie fanatic, period. He is a retired Theoretical Physicist. He has been watching Hindi movies since 1952, has been collecting Hindi songs, movies and magazines since 1969, and has been writing about these things since 1996. He has had a website since 1999,

<https://hindi-movies-songs.com/joomla/>

OTHER BOOKS BY THE PUBLISHER

For more information please visit

<https://hindi-movies-songs.com/joomla/index.php/published-books>

- 1 Edwina: An Unsung Bollywood Dancer of the Golden Era, by Prof Surjit Singh (2015)
- 2 The RMIM Minibus (1992-): A Compendium of Selected Writings About Indian Films, Their Songs and Other Musical Topics From a Pioneering Internet Discussion Group, by Prof Surjit Singh (2017)
- 3 Music and Arts in Hyderabad Deccan: A Contribution to the History and Culture of Bygone Days, by Kamalakar Pasupuleti (2017)
- 4 Indurani: An Unsung but Unforgettable Heroine of the Early Talkies by Prof Surjit Singh (2017)
- 5 Sahraa Sahraa (Urdu poetry, Hindi and Urdu editions), by Raj Kumar Qais (2017)
- 6 Telugu Filmography Volume 1 (1932-1980) by Dr Venkata S Vutukuri (2018)
- 7 Telugu Filmography Volume 2 (1981-2000) by Dr Venkata S Vutukuri (2018)
- 8 The Lost Treasure: Early Hindustani Talkies: Based on Contemporary Material, by Kamalakar Pasupuleti and Prof Surjit Singh (2018)
- 9 Forgotten Artists of Early Cinema and The Same Name Confusion, by Arunkumar Deshmukh and Prof Surjit Singh (2018)
- 10 Drops on a Leaf by Jyoti Bhamra (2018)
- 11 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast (1933-1937), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2019)
- 12 Illustrated History of Punjabi Cinema (1935-1985), by Bhim Raj Garg (2019)
- 13 Unsung Junior Artists of Hindi Cinema Who Debuted Before 1961, by Upendra Samaranayake and Prof Surjit Singh (2019)
- 14 Beete Hue Din (Forgotten Memories of Hindi Cinema) by Shishir Krishna Sharma (2020 English)
- 15 Beete Hue Din (Forgotten Memories of Hindi Cinema) by Shishir Krishna Sharma (2021 Hindi)
- 16 Hindi Films: Pictures of the Cast II (1938-1940), by Sheo Khetan and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
- 17 Unsung Junior Artists of Hindi Cinema Who Debuted After 1959, by Upendra Samaranayake and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
- 18 Master Ebrahim: The Forgotten Ace Clarinetist, by Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
- 19 Censor Certificate Information of Hindi Talkies (1931-2010), by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2021 English)
- 20 Censor Certificate Information of Hindi Talkies (1931-2010), by Har Mandir Singh 'Hamraaz' and Prof Surjit Singh (2022 Hindi)

- 21 Background Dancers in Hindi Films (1952-68), by Edwina Violette, Narsingh Agnish and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
- 22 Films Showing in Madras Theatres (1941-1947), by MV Surender, N Ramaswamy and Prof Surjit Singh (2021)
- 23 Rainbow of Emotions, by Lalit Berry (2021)
- 24 The Caliginous Light, by Rashmin Bhardwaj (2021)
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