

Forgotten Masters of Hindi Cinema

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Satish Chopra



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*Dedicated to the memory of
a few forgotten legends of Hindi Cinema
who never got the due they richly deserved—
Master Ghulam Haider, Dina Nath Madhok,
Bulo C. Rani, Hans Raj Behl,
Moti Lal, Jaidev, Vinod, Vasant Desai,
Ghulam Mohammad, Jamal Sen,
Sudhir Phadke and Sardar Malik*

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Foreword

The period 1940-1965, a span of a quarter of a century, can be termed as a period of national ferment and eventual stabilization of a civilization that is modern India. Never before had the national consciousness and conscience been seminated and fertilized by such myriad influences which would give birth to an entirely new culture.

India had been violently stirred by the twin forces of the national struggle and World War-II. Great luminaries like Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi had illuminated the Indian psyche with new mores of thought and social conduct. Western education moulded the Indian mind (which had so far been trying to rise from the slumber of a millennium through the influence of the medieval saints) into a dynamic and mature entity imbued with a deep understanding and a breath of vision.

This era also saw the maturing of Indian cinema into a technically cogent medium of mass communication and entertainment. The important contributors to this renaissance of the Indian cinema were lyricists, music composers and singers, apart from the other participants such as actors, script-writers, and directors. In a way Indian cinema gave a sterling expression to the new Indian psyche and civilization.

Satish Chopra like millions of his generation could not escape the magic of new cinema. There was something

unique in the music and the songs of the films of this particular era that touched the mind and the heart alike. The music compelled not just the body to sway to the rhyme and the rhythm of the songs, but also lent a new meaning to our very existence.

This compilation of essays on the various cine musicians of that age bears listening to that influence. It is not merely nostalgic but also a reminder of the fact that we were witnessing and participating in the birth of a new India. Somewhere in the pursuit of new material acquisitions we are losing the channels to the inner founts of joy and serenity and may end up feeling the despair and despondency of Dr. Faustus who sold his soul to the Devil in return for enjoyment of sensory pleasures.

Satish Chopra must be appreciated and congratulated for this noble attempt at recreating the memories of the forgotten masters of Hindi cinema.

–Ashok Gupta

Preface

As far as I recall, my first awareness of music began in the year 1949, at the age of seven, when I visited Lucknow in connection with the marriage of my cousin sister. There on a gramophone record player, I listened to *Aawaaz de kahaan hai & Urhan khatole pe urh jaaon, tere haath na aauon* on 78 rpm records. At that age, I was completely unaware about the singer, lyricist, composer or the films for which these melodies were recorded. But the sheer magic of the melodies, created a life time deep impact in me. As, even after more than six decades these melodies continue to haunt my head and heart.

During my childhood, a record player was beyond the reach of a common man and for a refugee family of Lahore to which I belong, it was a dream!

The modern generation of India may not believe it; a radio receiving set was a luxury, as very few could afford it. I always day dreamt of owning a record player or a transistor which could produce the melodies of my choice.

The only source for listening to film music, during the '50s and '60s was a weekly programme on the film-music called *-Binaca Geet Mala* compered by Ameen Sayani from Radio Ceylon!

The monopoly government owned Indian broadcaster -All India Radio occasionally played film-music, as it was taken below their dignity. Courtesy, Balwant Vishnu Keskar,

the purist and the then Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, who considered the musical instrument -'Harmonium', unworthy of broadcast over A.I.R, even as an accompanying instrument.

I wish I had an opportunity to ask the 'Hon'ble' -*Minister Saheb*, as to what opinion he had about a large number of immortal melodies sung by Kundan Lal Saigal, wherein the soul of the melody lies in the harmonium?

In view of the fact that our beloved A.I.R. occasionally relayed film music and Radio Ceylon played such music regularly on 'short wave', which had a poor to average quality reception in India and very few listeners could even afford a radio receiving set, the nostalgia has survived the test of time. Consequently, most of the music lovers listened to their favourite music in cinema halls. I believe majority of the film hits of that period owed their box-office success to the film's melodies, which often had eight plus song sequences. The story line, acting, direction, photography often took the backseat.

The films were primarily sold in the name of music directors and the number of songs it had. Even till date the VCD and or DVD prints of films of yester years are being sold mainly due to their qualitative music, with the notable exceptions of a few classic films, such as Bimal Roy's -*Do Bigha Zamin, Devdas & Bandini*, Kidar Sharma's -*Jogan* and Guru Dutt's -*Pyasa & Sahib Bibi Aur Gulam*. Even these films were not without some unforgettable melodies.

In spite of the fact that the availability of recordings of music was with a very select set of people, is it not surprising that as against the present day music (that too, if at all it can be called music), the melodies of the era -1931 till 1965 in particular, have survived? And, the present day demand for the music of this golden era -normally called *Purani filmon ke ganey* is certainly on the higher side than that of the period after 1965. Why?

The answer lies in my childhood memory -*Awaaz de kahan hai!*

The grand nostalgia of Hindustani film music was not merely a collection of 78 rpm gramophone records, nor was it confined to melodious songs of the legends like - K.L.Saigal, Kanan Devi, Pankaj Mullick, Noorjehan, Mukesh, Manna Dey, Rafi, Talat, Geeta Dutt, Shamshad, Rajkumari, Lata and Asha (just to quote a few names as examples). It reflected instead the grand heritage of our music, which had a wonderful heart throbbing catch, expressions of various human feelings, moods and thoughts including romance and lyrical fragrances. The folk songs or *lok-geets* were also brilliantly incorporated.

The music composers of yesteryears were 'The Masters' and they had a deep understanding of human sentiments, which were immersed in the lyrics. Besides, they bore in their mind the selection of *ragas*, instruments for accompaniment and the know-how of the timbre and tonal quality of the respective singer. They were also confident and the producers and the directors normally did not interfere in their working.

Over the years, after my childhood visit to Lucknow in the year 1949, I developed a keen interest in nostalgic Hindustani music, particularly in Kundan Lal Saigal and Begam Akhtar and it has grown strong in the last more than fifty years. To sustain my interest, I commenced collecting recordings of such music and a day came when I found that I had more than a thousand hours of recorded melodies with me, besides a sizable print material on music and musicians. Here, I must admit that my childhood friend, guide, philosopher and *guru* -Ashok Gupta has been largely instrumental in creating such *junoon* or obsession in me.

I enjoyed listening to this music but found that still there was something missing. Off and on an unknown drive in me, compelled me to spell out my inner heart's impressions on paper about the masters, who created such alluring and soulful melodies. Besides, I also commenced researching the background of a few legends of Hindustani cinema, who

never got the due, they richly deserved. This included actors, directors, lyricists, music composers and the singers.

As it appears; conveying feelings of the inner heart on paper is not that easy! Moreover if some one is attached and has deep sentiments towards the artists he admires the most. Describing sentiments thus becomes difficult.

To overcome this deadlock, my *Guru* suggested me to write my impressions in whatever manner I could express my thoughts in my own style. As such, one day I commenced writing on K.L. Saigal and his music (which has been my first obsession singer) on a newly acquired laptop.

After writing some ten odd pages in the system till late night (03.00 hrs), I 'shut-down' the laptop. But to my utter dismay, when the next day I tried to open the concerned file to see what had been written. I was literally shocked! The system refused to reveal as to what I had tried to write therein. It was perhaps owing to the reason that I failed to save, what I had inserted as I was completely ignorant about the operating system of the computer.

I shared my experience with one of my friends about my dismal experience. "It is not the end of the day, next time you will write better"—I was given to understand. The inspiration really worked!

The writing was thus revived. In my first write-up, I tried to put forth my impressions about Kundan Lal Saigal, his music, life and the humane aspects of his personality. The satisfaction that I derived was enormous. At times, while describing his human aspects, I virtually cried. Still I do not know as to why I could not control my emotions.

This writing gave me an amazing confidence. As I could spell out what was in my head and heart, I really wanted to share it with a large number of Saigal's music lovers.

When I was writing about my thoughts on Saigal, somehow I remembered an incident of the year 1962, when the eminent Urdu short story writer Rajinder Singh Bedi was invited by Delhi University's Kirori Mal College. While

speaking in the seminar, he said that he must have written a few thousand pages, but writing the script for the film *Mirza Ghalib* was a challenge for him and while writing the script, he repeatedly cried with tears in his eyes.

What Bedi spoke, it conveys nothing but his sense of involvement of thoughts and attachment. A total novice that I am, at the cost of repetition, I must admit that writing on Saigal made me cry time and again.

That is how the story of my writing of different chapters of this book goes!

In the subsequent chapters incorporated in this collection, I have attempted to put forth my impressions on some of the finest composers of Hindustani cine music and their invaluable contribution to the music world. This has been done primarily to keep alive their nostalgic memories, so as to preserve our grand heritage for the generations of music lovers to come.

Other than these music related personalities, I have inscribed my impressions on the marvel of direction of the genius Bimal Roy in his two classics -*Devdas* and *Bandini*. The portrayal of characters in these two films richly deserve to be written in golden letters in the history of Hindi cinema.

For writing about the role played by seething quietude - Nutan in *Bandini*, I played the film's VCD for at least six times, so as to fully absorb the impact on my intellect. I must admit that it was not that easy to write about the entire gamut picturized by the genius. Similar was the experience with the other chapter, i.e about the depiction of the last journey of *Devdas* (Bimal Roy's) before his final attainment in my chapter -Three versions of film-*Devdas* .

A completely forgotten and unsung genius Kidar Sharma, who was a master of practically all traits of film-making, also finds a place in this collection. Similarly, I have devoted a chapter on the enthralling lyricist and completely forgotten poet- Shailendra, who besides being a sentimental song writer with simple words and short sentences also

produced *Teesri Kasam* -a classic film with a completely different approach.

Once Raghupati Sahai 'Firaq', the eminent Urdu poet said -*Aane waali naslein tum par rushq kareingi, jub tum kahoge ki tumne Firaq ko dekha tha*. The saying goes down well with me also, though in a different context. Since I was privileged to have more than one opportunity of meeting Naushad. And, Anil Biswas was like a member of my family. Even a week before his demise; I, my wife Renu and his daughter Shikha Vohra had a memorable time with the maestro. The love and affection, which I and each one in my family received from Anil Da will remain a sacred-treasure and a source of inspiration for all the times to come.

Such affinity with these legends and fellow-travelers of my life as well has been one of the reasons for transcribing my recollections on the luminaries in the field of music and film making.

I do not know, as to how much I am successful in placing my impressions in these chapters before the readers, who may be interested in these Masters. However, I will be certainly indebted to them, if they send me their dispassionate impressions on what I have tried to communicate.

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1

Singing Sweetheart of the Millennium: Kundan Lal Saigal (1904-47)



A rare photograph of K.L. Saigal – taken by Kidar Sharma

The year was 1932; a gramophone record- *Jhulana jhulao* appeared in the music world, sung by a totally unknown singer. It was an instant hit, a class in itself by all parameters and so glorious that it continues to mesmerize listeners even today, after eight decades of its creations.

This debut was by an unknown singer, who was destined to rule the music arena not only for the next fifteen years, but for many years to come. The singer was Kundan



K.L. Saigal

Lal Saigal or more popularly, K.L. Saigal. Today, deservedly -the singer of the century.

Kundan Lal Saigal was born on 04.04.04 of the twentieth century in the town of Jammu. It is a matter of coincidence that another great in the field of music and master of the

masters amongst the music composers, Anil Biswas was born on 07.07.14.

Kundan's family belonged to Jullunder (now known as Jalandhar) in Punjab and his father Amar Chand Saigal was posted as a Tehsildar at Jammu at the time of his birth. He showed no signs of his exceptional talent during his childhood and was an average student in his school days. However, he took keen interest in theatre and acting in *Ramlila*, where he played the role of Sita.

His mother Kesar Kaur used to sing *bhajans* and mystic-songs and young Kundan would accompany her, wherever she went to sing. Once during his early childhood, he lost his voice-quality. His perturbed mother took him to a *faqir* (*saint*) by the name of Salman Yousuf, who blessed the young lad and predicted that one day Kundan would make a name for himself in the field of music.

His prediction proved to be absolutely right!

Kundan Lal Saigal in his early youth worked as a salesman for Remington Rand Typewriters Company, Calcutta. Besides he sold cotton *sarees* to supplement his income. He hired a coolie who helped him carry these *sarees* as they moved from one locality to another through the slums of Calcutta.

Once, Smt Durgesh Mehta (Saigal's niece) told me an interesting anecdote about a young muslim girl called Najma. In one of these places he encountered the charming Najma, who would always stop him and asked to see *sarees* which she loved. But, Saigal would show her other *sarees* and whereas she had set her heart on a particular green saree, which cost ten rupees. One day she told him- "I am an orphan and I doubt if even Allah will protect me. But I have my *dada* (elder brother), who will get paid next Friday. So please don't sell that particular *saree* till then and hopefully I will have the money to buy it." Saigal promised that he would keep the *saree* aside and bring it back the following Friday.

So on Friday, he was eager to make little Najma happy and went back to the colony but could not hear Najma calling out to him as she always did. Surprised, he went to the tiny stretch she lived in to remind her of her promise. When he entered, he found her elder brother Irshad sobbing like a child. Irshad narrated his ordeal, "Last night Najma complained about chest pain and I called the doctor who charged fifteen rupees for the visit. But by the time he left, she died of a heart attack, My Najma is lying inside and I do not have the money for her *Kafan* (shroud)". Saigal then told him that he had a green *saree* which she liked very much and as her brother he wanted to give her that *saree*. With this the *saree* selling phase came to an end!

Subsequently, Saigal served as a goods clerk with the Railways, before his singing talent was identified by Rai Chand Boral, the music-maestro and composer of 'New Theatres' -a renowned film producing company of Calcutta. This was the beginning of his acting and singing career and the year was 1932.

'New Theatres' of Calcutta produced a large number of legends in the field of acting, music, photography, direction, and other spheres of film making. The list of such personalities includes- Prithviraj Kapoor, Devaki Bose, Pahari Sanyal, Kidar Sharma, Timir Baran, Rai Chand Boral, Pankaj Mullik, Durga Khote, Kanan Devi, Panna Lal Ghosh, K.C. Dey, Nitin Bose, S.D. Burman, Bimal Roy and others; besides the one and only- Kundan Lal Saigal.

Amongst Saigal's earliest films were *Pooran Bhagat* (Music- R.C. Boral) and *Yahudi ki Ladki* (Music-Pankaj Mullick) released in the year-1933. While acting in *Pooran Bhagat*, he sang four *bhajans* viz *Bhaju mein to bhav se shree girdhari*, *Sumrin kar siya ram naam*, *Ausar beeto jaat prani tero and Radhe rani re de daro naa*. Whereas, in *Yahudi ki Ladki*, he sang two *ghazals* viz *Nukta cheen hai game dil & Ye tassaruf allah allah; Lag gayee chot karejawa mein* -a *dadra* and a *geet* *Laakh sahee hum pee ki batiyan*. With these songs Saigal had



arrived!

A singer who can sing *bhajans* with such sublime emotional feelings- *Bhaju mein to bhav se & Radhe rani re-* in particular, can also sing the ghazals of 'Ghalib' - *Nukta cheen hai gamein dil* and eight others with a masterly command on Urdu poetry, deep understanding of the thought and above all, keeping the melody in its true eloquence. Undoubtedly he was an exceptionally talented signer.

In a span of fifteen years, Saigal sang in Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Punjabi, Bangla and even in Tamil, in the varied genres of *ghazals*, *bhajans* and other modes, many in classical styles.

He sang the simplest of the simple songs exceptionally well and with same fervor and could sing some wonderful classical melodies, even in most difficult *Dhrupad* style.

Let me, therefore, evaluate his different forms and styles of singing; beginning with the *ghazal*.

In the recorded history of *ghazal* singing the name of the first and foremost amongst countless singers is that of - K.L. Saigal. The genre was further enriched by another legend- Begum Akhtar.

To me, these two legends never sang merely the words, but also expressed the feelings and thoughts immersed in

the lyrics through their singing. And, when they sang *ghazals* of Ghalib, the poetry appears to come alive!

Saigal was amongst the earliest, who sang and recorded *ghazals* of Ghalib. He sang his nine *ghazals*, namely - *Aah ko chahiye, Dil se teri nigah, Har ek baat pe, Ibne mariyam hua kare, Mein unhein chheroon, Nukta cheen hai, Wo aakey khwab mein, Phir mujhe did-aye-tar yaad ayaa* and *Ishq mujhko nahin*.

Is it a coincidence that Begum Akhtar also sang nine *ghazals* of Ghalib- *Ibne mariyam hua kare koyi, Aah ko chahiye, Dard minnat kashe, Taskeen ko hum na royein, Zikr us pariwash ka, Dil hi to hai sange kisht, Phir mujhe did-aye-tar, Koyee ummeed bar nahin aatee* and *Dayam paraa hua hoon?*

While comparing these eighteen fabulous masterpieces of these two great singers my pen pauses; as it is extremely difficult to comment on their unique voice-quality, citation, soul stirring performance that captivates nobility of the accompanying instrument, be it the harmonium, the *tabla* and or *tanpura*.

Once, I happened to discuss with select scholars of Urdu (one of them being an Associate Professor of Urdu & Persian in Oxford University) about the future of Urdu language, which has certainly enriched our cultural heritage. With the passage of time, however learning of this language has been limited to a particular section of our society. As a lover of Urdu literature and an ardent listener of music, who can't even read and write Urdu could only add that had it not been for the legendary Saigal or Begum Akhtar, the *deewans* (compilations of written works) of Ghalib and other outstanding luminaries would have remained buried in the archives (book-shelves) of colleges, universities and other research institutions.

Doubtlessly, it was Saigal and likewise singers, who kept the verses of a large number of Urdu poets-known and unknown alive; through their singing.

Seemab Akbarabadi was a great poet. Saigal by singing a few of his *ghazals* viz *Ab kya bataun, Aye bekhabri dil ko*



*Darling hero of music-loving Indian film-going public as BHAKTA
SURDAS – A Ranjit production*

Talkie Hereld– January 1943

deewana banaa dena, Duniyan mein hoon duniyan ka, Jaag aur dekh jaraa, Jalwa gahe dil mein, Shukriya hastee ka, etc. made the poet immortal. In the same manner; Habib Tanvir, (the theatre-maestro) immortalized Nazir Akbarabadi through

his all time great play -*Agra Bazar*.

I would like to invite listeners and readers attention precisely to the beauty of delivery of words and feelings expressed distinctively in the *ghazals* of Arzu Lucknavi (respectfully known as Arzu Saheb). When Saigal sings his verses –*Bahut us galee ke, Ghar ye tera sadaa na mera hai, Idhar phir bhi aanaa, Jeevan asha ye hai, Mein sote bhaag jagaa doonga, Matwale pane se jo ghataa jhoom paree hai, Preet mein hai jeevan jokhon, Sanwariya prem ki bansi bajay, Ye kaisa anyay data* and in particular, when the maestro recites- *Chhatee se dhuun uthaa hai jo boond paree hai* lines of the *ghazal*- *Marwale pane se*; the listeners become enthralled and spell bound. This is just one such example of his beautiful renderings.

There is a *ghazal* of Ibrahim Zauk, as sung by Saigal. The verses of this *ghazal* – *Laayee hayat aaye* have not only enthralled the listeners, but also provlced them with the mysticism of this immortal piece, especially in the follow up- *Apni khushi na aye, na apni khushi chale*. It compels you to take a pause and reflect on this poetic creation. The manner in which this *ghazal* has been recited is one of the rarest of rare examples of expression of mystical expression in the annals of *ghazal* singing.

These are just a few examples of Saigal’s capacity for communicating the depth of thoughts and feelings immersed in the lyrics of the legends.

Saigal, besides singing *ghazals* of these four lyricists- Ghalib, Zauk, Arzu and Seemab also sang a number of *ghazals* of noted poets of his time viz Kidar Sharma, Jameel Mazhari, Pt Sudarshan, Safdar Aah, D.N. Madhok, Khumar Barabankvi, Aga Hashr Kashmiri, Ameer Minai, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Bedam Warsi, Swami Ramanand and Pt Bhushan.

In this context, some of his all time popular *ghazals*- *Aie dil-e beqarar jhoom & Chah barbad karegi* (Khumar Barabanqvi), *Apni hasti ka agar* (Bedam Warsi), *Deewana hoon, Shamma ka jalnaa hai* (Kidar Sharma), *Binaa pankh panchhi*



*The two legends: K.L. Saigal & Sohrab Modi
(Larger than the Largest)*

*hoon mein, Us mast nazar per paree jo nazar (D.N. Madhok),
Kaun veerane mein dekhega bahar (Ameer Minai) etc are just
a few examples, enough to establish the mastery of ghazal
singing of the maestro.*

Naushad, the master composer, composed music for the film *Shahjahan* (1946). In this film Saigal acted and sang some popular numbers like *Jab dil hi toot gaya*, *Aye dil-e beqarar jhoom*, *Chah barbaad karegi*. These songs added to the recognition of the music-director. In a tribute to Saigal, Naushad has very appropriately commented- "*Naushad mere dil ko yakeen hai ye mukamal/Nagmon ki kasam aaj bhi zinda hai woh Saigal*". (Naushad swears by his lyrics that his heart is certain that Saigal is alive even today).

Was Saigal a better singer of *ghazals* or that of *bhajans* and mystic-songs? This aspect of his musical legacy is still a matter of debate amongst his critics and listeners.

The era of *ghazal* singing in a way commenced with Saigal. Because of its mass appeal, a large number of singers followed. Some of them earned fame and money. A few cine-singers also sang *ghazals* for the films, which further popularized *ghazal* singing. Notable amongst such *ghazal* singers were - Begum Akhtar, Malika Pukhraj, Talat Mahmood, Mohd Rafi, Jagjit Singh, Ghulam Ali, Mehdi Hassan, Abida Parveen and Tahira Syed.

At the moment, let me introduce to you the *bhajan* and mystic singing aspect of the genius. Saigal sang some fascinating *bhajans*. Amongst his all time greats are- *Bhaju mein to bhaav se shree girdhari*, *Radhe rani re de daro na*, *Nein heen ko raah dikhaa prabhu*, *Madhukar shyam hamare chor*, *Sumiran kar piya ram naam*, *Mein nahin maakhan khayo*, *Suno suno hey krishan kala*, *Janam janam ka dukhia prani*, *Jeevan ka such aaj prabhu*, *Hari bin koyee kaam na aayo etc* wherein I found that his complete surrender to the 'sublime' as immense. He was, and is matchless!

Listen to his voice quality, when he sings *Do charnon pe balihari* -in *Bhaju mein to bhaav se shree girdhari*, and *Is bansee mein mere praan basat hein* in *Radhe rani re*, *Chahun or mere ghor andhera* in *Nein heen ko raah dikha prabhu*. Here he makes the listener visualize, what blindness is. After listening to these alluring and captivating renderings, I have no



Kundan Lal Saigal in the film "TANSEN"

hesitation to admit that the singer makes me cry time and again.

Such illustrations of communicating the feelings expressed in the *bhajans*, which Saigal sang are endless. Though, it is the listener's understanding and intake, as to how he or she enjoys the allure of the singer's renderings.

There is a very interesting story about the legendary classical singer Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. A journalist



K.L. Saigal in recording studio

approached Khan Saheb for his interview and introduced himself as a scholar, columnist, a Phd in music and having a deep knowledge of music. After listening to the journalist, Khan Saheb enquired- '*Mian, kabhee royee ho; kabhee muhabbat ki hai?*' (Gentleman, have you ever shed tears and have you ever been in love?). The journalist was speechless. At this Khan Saheb advised him- '*Mian, chaye-waye pio aur jao, tumhein mausikee se kya lena dena?*' (Gentleman, have some tea and leave, what relationship do you have with music?)

The fact remains that music cannot be understood with the laws of physics or mere theoretical knowledge. This saying holds true for the music of Saigal, as well. If someone wants to enjoy the music and more particularly the melodies of Saigal, one must listen to them with the heart and not merely the head.

A unique feature of Saigal's singing was that he always sang while totally at ease, without any particular kind of physical-gesture, which is not usually the case in present day music concerts.

Once, while discussing Saigal and his music with

Raghva R. Menon (the biographer of Saigal) I was given to understand by Menon that he was fortunate enough to have listened to Saigal in person, four times during the maestro's life-time. He recalled that when Saigal used to sing, there was never any kind of expression on his face nor any hand movements. It almost appeared that it was a statue or a robot was singing. This was a unique feature of the maestro's personality.

In addition to *ghazals* and *bhajans*, Saigal sang a large number of songs -classical and or otherwise- which will continue to haunt the listeners.

Listeners may relish listening to some of his notable and easiest sounding melodies- *Jo beet chukee so beet chukee ab uskee yaad satay kyun, Baalam aye baso mere mann mein, Chhupo na chhupo na, Do naina matware, Jaag aur dekh zara, Jeevan been madhur na baje, Preet mein hai jeevan jokhon, Sar pe kadamb ki chhaiyan, Morey balapan ke sathi, Ye kaisa anyay data etc.* Again, listening to these everlasting melodies provides the listener a heart-felt eternal pleasure.

In the present day set-up of mad rush for amassing wealth and other material possessions, by means fair and foul and consequent distress of head and heart, one should try to the understand the meaning of contentment and solitude through such divine and heavenly music.

Saigal's contribution in this respect will be adjudged as everlasting!

A totally unknown poet wrote one of the easiest looking lyrics for Saigal viz *Ausar beeto jaat pranee tero ausar beeto jaat/ is kaal ki hera-pheree mein tero ausar beeto jaat/ saath mint (minute) gujre gayo ghanta, chaubis mein din-raat (day & night)/ pal-pal kar ke ksheen hot hai jyon tara prabhat.* The impact of this mystic song, as Saigal sang- is simply matchless. I am sure that the lyricist could never have imagined that he wrote such soul-stirring lines.

Likewise, listen to *Preet mein hai jeevan jokhon, jaise kohloo mein sarson* - what a wonderful expression of the agony in



A rare photograph: Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan (sitting in the middle), Chief Minister Punjab who visited New Theatres, Calcutta. R.C. Boral (sitting third from left) & K.L. Saigal (standing extreme right) are seen in this photo



Saigal with his family in New Theatres, Calcutta: Overnight he became the singer with a golden voice.

love! The lines were written by Arzu Lucknavi and composed by Pankaj Mallick in the film *Dushman* (1939). The delivery of words, minimal use of instrumentation and above all the quality of music rendered is a class in itself.

In the year 1938, Saigal acted in the film *Street Singer* (music-R.C. Boral) and sang *Babul mora naihar chhuto jaye*. He preferred to sing this song on the sets while acting, though the facility of playback music was available. This was in view of the fact that he did not want the authenticity of the scene to be diluted in any way. According to the director of the film, Phani Majumdar – “He requested me for such singing while acting. It was a difficult task to shoot the song live on the roads. But, Saigal did a great job. He was completely immersed in the song and the role. Everything looked so real. I don’t think any other actor could have done so well.”

To my mind, *Babul Mora* has proved to be the most popular and rarest of the rare high quality film or non-film song of the century.

Prior to Saigal, *Babul Mora* was also sung by Ustad Faiyyaz Khan in the year 1932. In view of the fame and applause of the listeners for Saigal’s *Babul Mora*, a galaxy of singers singing *Babul Mora* followed. The list of such luminaries includes - Kanan Devi, Pt. Bhim Sen Joshi, Kesarbai Kerkar, Mushtaq Hussain Khan, Siddheshwari Devi, Rasoolan Bai, Begum Akhtar, Girija Devi, Girija Devi & Shobha Gurtu (a duet), Kishori Amonkar & Hari Prasad Chaurasia, Kishori Amonkar (another duet), Jagmohan, Mahender Chopra (Saigal’s son-in-law), Khadim Hussain Khan, Shanti Sharma and Padma Talwalkar.

In the present time, well-known *ghazal*-singer Jagjit Singh, came to the limelight by his *Babul Mora* which he sang along with Chitra Singh in the early seventies. He sang and recorded yet another time *Babul Mora*, which is his solo version. A collection of all these recordings of *Babul Mora* sung by these luminaries, is certainly a collector’s treasure.



K.L. Saigal in Karorepati

Once while discussing the music of the thirties & the forties with the master-composer Anil Biswas, (who brought Mukesh and Talat Mahmood initially to the limelight) about Saigal's *Babul Mora*, his remarks about this were simply fabulous- *Bete, Saigal ke alawa kisi ka naihar nahin chhoota*.

Anil da is no more, but the casual manner in which what he said, I had nothing more to add to his comments. The fact remains that *Babul Mora* sung by Saigal will be listened to by music-lovers time and again, for ages to come. About others, no one can predict.

Saigal sang his three everlasting songs viz *Aye qatib-e-taqdeer*, *Do naina matware* and *Chhupo na chhupo na* for the film *My Sister* (1944) and the music was composed by Pankaj Mullick, who also recorded these three songs in his own voice. Both the singers were, and are considered to be 'masters' and any comparison of these priceless melodies is certainly meaningless.

The film *Devdas* (1935) is a milestone in the history of Indian cinema, primarily because Saigal acted in this film

and sang his all time favourites- *Balam aye baso mere mann mein, Dukh ke din ab beetat naahin* and just two lines of a classic *thumri- Piyaa bin nahin aawat chein* (earlier sung by Ustad Abdul Karim Khan). The music of this film was composed by Timir Baran, who played *Sarod* for the first time in the history of film music, while composing *Balam aye baso morey man mein*.

When Khan Saheb came to know about his singing, he called at Saigal's residence and asked him to sing for him once again in his presence. After listening to Saigal, he was spellbound by Saigal's mastery of expression and his singing. He enquired as to who was his *ustad* (teacher). To this, Saigal replied that he had not learnt from any *ustad* and is gifted by the Almighty. Khan Saheb blessed Saigal and gave him a hundred rupee note, which Saigal kept with him till his death, as a token of his respect for Abdul Karim Khan.

During the course of shooting of the film *Devdas*, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the celebrated author visited the sets. He was deeply impressed with the acting of Saigal and was surprised as to how a non-Bengali could understand the character he had created in his novel so intelligently.

The other notable features of this film were that it was produced and directed by P.C. Barua (who had himself acted earlier in its *Bangla* version) with Bimal Roy as its cinematographer, who later on produced and directed another version of the film *Devdas* with Dilip Kumar as its hero. It is needless to add that as a mark of respect, Bimal Roy dedicated his film to the memory of K.L. Saigal and P.C. Barua.

While waiting for a train at a railway platform, Saigal wrote a fascinating poem at the back of the railway receipt. In this poem, he has expressed his attachment to the city of Calcutta, which shaped his destiny and initial personality. From Calcutta, Saigal later on moved to Bombay. On this paper Saigal expressed his pain of parting from the city of

Calcutta that he cherished and wrote- *O des se aaney waley bata.*

Saigal sang two Punjabi songs- *O soney sakia meri galee wee & Mahee naal je akhh lardee kadee na.* Both these songs bear the fragrance of the Punjab spirit. Though he himself was a Punjabi, Saigal sang only two songs in Punjabi, as against twenty eight songs in Bangla. On this matter, I once spoke to a close relative of Saigal who narrated that during one of his visits to his home town Jalandhar, a Punjabi singer from a nearby place named Sham Chaurasi came to meet Saigal and told him in Punjabi- *Hunn tussee Punjabi wich wee gana shuroo kar ditte hai, assee tan phukhe marr jawaan ge* (Now that you have started singing in Punjabi as well, thereby we will be starved to death). Saigal assured him that he will not sing in Punjabi in future and he did keep his promise.

Dilip Sarkar son of B.N. Sarkar, the owner of New Theatres while speaking at a public gathering, narrated that once Saigal accompanied Pankaj Mullick to Shantiniketan, where he introduced Saigal to Tagore. Gurudev asked Saigal to sing. After listening to Saigal, the poet blessed him and appreciated his talent. He also commented later- "the great thing about Saigal was that he was a bi-lingual artiste. Although, he was not a Bengali, he had appeared in many of the Bengali films produced by New Theatres. He had spoken in Bengali as any Bengali would have done. He has also sung songs in Bengali."

As stated, Saigal sang twenty eight songs in Bangla. At times an ardent listener, even without understanding a single word of the language (Bangla) is spellbound by his loveable and divine expression and voice quality.

Likewise, it must be recorded that Saigal also sang two Tamil songs in the Tamil version of film *Devdas*.

A few lines about the classical singing by the maestro. The films produced after the year 1941 came out with some splendid melodies, based on pure classical music. Such songs were sung by classical singers and also by traditional

film singers. A collection of some of these recordings include:

- * *Shubh din aayo & Prem jogan bun gayee*- both sung by Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan in film *Mughal-e- Azam* music Naushad.
- * *Jhanak jhanak paayal baaje* -sung by Ustad Amir Khan in film *Jhanak Jhanak Paayal Baaje* music Vasant Desai.
- * *Aaj gavat man mero jhoom ke-* sung by Pt D.V. Paluskar & Ustad Amir Khan in film *Baiju Bawra* music Naushad.
- * *Ketaki gulab juhi* -sung by Pt Bhim Sen Joshi & Manna Dey in film *Basant Bahaar* music Shanker Jaikishan.
- * *Ritu aye ritu jaye* - sung by Manna Dey & Lata Mangeshkar in film *Humdard* music Anil Biswas.
- * *Garjat barsat saawan aayo re*-sung by Lata Mangeshkar in film *Malhaar* music Roshan.
- * *Garjat barsat saawan aayo re* - sung by Kamal Barot in film *Barsaat Ki Raat* music Roshan.
- * *Bole re papihara-* sung by Vani Jairam in film *Guddi*, music Vasant Desai.
- * *Mann ki been matwari baaje* -sung by Rafi & Lata in film *Shabab* music Naushad.
- * *Laga chunri mein daag* -sung by Manna Dey in film *Dil Hi To Hai* music Roshan.
- * *Haye jia roye* -sung by Lata Mangeshkar in film *Milan* music Hans Raj Behl.
- * *Sun mere saajna* –sung by Lata & Rafi in film *Aansoo* music Husnalal Bhagatram.
- * *Tarana* -sung by Jagjit Singh film *Kalka* in his own music.

In all these classical numbers, when Saigal's evergreen -*Sapt suran teen gram* sung in classical *dhrupad* and *Diya Jalao* from the film *Tansen*, music Khemchand Prakash -are included, the beauty of the collection emerges multifold.

Someone has aptly observed- "Singing of Saigal has to be experienced, not merely listened". Whereas noted

composer of present day Tushar Bhatia once said - "*Wo sur ka badshah tha.*"

It is an established fact that Saigal was a renowned celebrity during his lifetime. Here are some of the clippings of the news and reports published in the few film journals and magazines of his era:

"Saigal, the singing sweetheart of millions was invited by Mahatama Gandhi (in the year-1941) at Wardha to sing for him the National Anthem *Jeete Desh Hamara* on the happy occasion of his birth day but the singer had to decline the invitation as he had to go to Hyderabad (Deccan) along with Pancholi Art Picture to shoot *Scandal*." (*Talkie Herald*'- October 1941)

Saigal acted in the film *Zindagi* which was released in the year 1940. In his review, published in the cine journal *Filmindia* (April, 1940 issue) Babu Rao Patel wrote about Saigal's singing: "What Saigal sings is music and when the golden notes come out of his throat, people forget the story, the writer, the director, the producer and even Saigal's big face monopolizing the screen for a long time. They just want his maddening music and there is a good amount in this picture. If this film runs for a long time it will be because Saigal has sung beautifully and not because Barua has directed it."

In another write-up Patel observed: "Saigal was a bard who sang the poetic sighs of the human soul and warmed the heart of heartless world."

"Saigal was like a soft grass sprouting out of the holes of a solid cement wall, always bubbling with life, full of enthusiasm, an epitome of gentleness, as it were. It is a rare experience to come across such a loving person" perceived Kanan Devi.

Saadat Hasan Manto, the legendary Urdu writer, while writing a sketch of the actress and singer Noorjehan wrote- "*Saigal ke baad mein Noorjehan ke galey se muttassir hua__ . Jab tak rekaard jinda hai, Saigal mahroom ki awaaz kabhee nahin marr*

saktee." (After Saigal, I am impressed with the voice-quality of Noorjehan. As long as gramophone-record is alive, Saigal's voice will never die.)

Manto added: "These days two persons rule the roost—the late Saigal and Noorjehan. Though Khurshid was quite popular and Shamshad too was very much talked about, yet Noorjehan's voice overshadowed all. Suraiya came later. I am sorry that while Saigal and Suraiya were teamed together, yet Saigal and Noorjehan were not. I don't know why the producers never thought of bringing them together, or may be there was some other reason. Anyhow, I regret and shall be sorry forever. Had they been presented together, the world of music would have seen a very pleasant seismic change."

Apart from being an actor and a singer 'par-excellence', Saigal was a wonderful human being. There are a large number of incidents to establish his kind-heartedness towards whosoever asked for help. His driver, Yousuf once narrated this incident with tears in his eyes. He told a columnist that once, when he fell ill, Saigal came to his house with lot of fruits and medicines. After enquiring about his health, Saigal started rubbing and pressing his legs. "*Sahib, wo to ek farishta the*" (Sir, he was an angel).

Kidar Sharma, the famous producer-director became very close to Saigal. It was Saigal who introduced him to Devaki Bose. Subsequently, it was Kidar Sharma who wrote some of the memorable songs for Saigal such as *So ja rajkumari, Deewana hoon, Balam aye baso mere mann mein, Dukh ke ab din beetat naahin, Mein kya jaanu kya jadoo hai. Kya humne bigara hai etc etc*. In his several interviews Kidar Sharma admitted that had Saigal not been there, his fate would have been different. As destiny would have it, later it was Kidar Sharma, who was instrumental in launching Raj Kapoor, Madhubala, Mala Sinha and Geeta Bali in his films.

In 1945, Kidar Sharma and Saigal were invited by a prominent person to his newly built bungalow at Ville Parle,

a suburb of Bombay, very close to the sea beach. In the large gathering of guests, Saigal somehow felt uneasy and without informing the host, he silently slipped out with Kidar Sharma and went to the nearby sea shore for a stroll. It was a little dark. In the darkness, they saw a *faqir*, who was singing a *ghazal* of Ghalib and was playing his harmonium along with it. Both of them sat on the sand and listened to the singer. Saigal was overwhelmed. After the singing was over, he touched the feet of the singer, took out five thousand rupees from his pocket and gave the money to the *faqir*. Kidar Sharma was amazed and spellbound at this gesture. He asked Saigal, if he knew how much money he had given to the *faqir*? Saigal replied in Punabi- "*Uppar waley ne ki mannu gin ke dittey si?*" (Did the Almighty count before he gave me?)

Recalling the golden era of New Theatre days Phani Majumdar wrote a fascinating account in the Illustrated Weekly of India:

"K.L. Saigal once bought a motor bike but refused to ride it himself. He actually hired a chauffeur to take him around. Finally, he decided to get a license—but he could never gain any real mastery over the bike. He was always looking forward to an opportunity to show it off to his friends. The New Theatre studio was just a few furlongs from the old tram terminus in Calcutta. Saigal would wait at the terminus every morning so he could offer someone a lift. But most of us preferred walking. One day I asked him to give Pankaj Mullick, who was just alighting from the tram, a ride. As I reached the studio, there came Saigal chugging away. He was alone; I asked him where Pankaj was. And Saigal looked stunned. He'd given Pankaj a lift alright but the man had fallen off the pillion somewhere mid-way. Not only Saigal not noticed that his companion had fallen off, he'd quite forgotten that he'd given Pankaj a lift in the first place."



Dead-body of K.L. Saigal

By the end of the year 1946, Saigal had the premonition of his death. He was a diabetic and had other health issues as well. He decided to leave Bombay. K.N. Singh, one of his closest friends besides others came to see him off at the Bombay Central railway-station. Saigal reached Jullunder on 26 December 1946 by Frontier Mail (which proved to be his last journey) at about 4.00 a.m. It was extremely cold. He was wearing a brand new woolen suit. At the railway platform, he saw a beggar shivering with cold. Saigal, took off his coat and gave it to the beggar and also all the money he had in his pocket, which was about 1800 rupees.

This particular incident was narrated to me by two of his relatives separately. One being Smt Durgesh Mehta, niece of Saigal (daughter of Saigal's elder brother – Hazari Lal Saigal), who was brought-up by Saigal as his daughter and also by Roshan Lal Saigal, a nephew of Saigal, whom I happened to meet at Dehradun in October, 1994.

Saigal on reaching his home town Jalandhar, in view of his poor health and the intuition that he may not live long, got his head shaved. As he was too weak, he had to call his *guru* (religious mentor) from the nearby village – Noormahal for paying his last respects. Since he was very fond of *sarson ka saag*, a mound (37 kg) *saag* was prepared and was distributed to all and sundry in fulfillment of his last wish.

The inevitable came in the wee hours of 18 January, 1947, when Punjab was in flames due to the partition riots. Smt Durgesh Mehta (who was at his death-bed) narrates that about 30-40 close relatives thought that it would be most appropriate to have the last rites performed as early as possible.

With all the heavenly melodies of Saigal alive in the hearts of millions of music lovers, who says Kundan Lal Saigal is dead?

2

The Great Singer and Composer: Pankaj Mullick



Guzar gaya wo zamana, kaisa kaisa, as and when we listen to these grand nostalgic signatures of the melody of the days gone by; something erupts in the head and heart of millions of music lovers. Was this melody sung and composed by Pankaj Mullick for the film *Doctor* (1941) a mere song? Certainly not!

It was indeed more than a song, as the music had a wonderful thought immersed in the lyrics. The musical instruments deployed and the complete control over the

tonal quality of the singer creates a magical impact on the listeners. Conclusively, this was just a glimpse of the music of one of the greatest singers and composers of the last century.

Pankaj Mullick was born in a middle class family on 20 April, 1904 in Calcutta. He had a deep interest in music from his early childhood. As he could not afford to buy a harmonium, he borrowed one from his neighbor, who was away to Iraq. He took his early lessons in music from Durgadas Chatterjee, Laxmibai Mitra (for Rabindra sangeet) followed by Dinendranath Tagore.

In view of the early demise of his father and consequent economic constraints, he could not complete his college education. However, he carried on with his music training. He was thus destined to be a singer and a composer. Thereby, he made his first recording disc for Beelophone Company in the year 1926.

In the year 1931, Pankaj Mullick joined the renowned music director, Rai Chand Boral for orchestral music under the banner of International Film Craft and jointly composed music for the films *Chesher Meyya*, *Chorkata* and *Dena Paona* in Bangla. He was perhaps the first to introduce western classical orchestral music in films and or otherwise. But he kept the taste of traditional Indian character intact, besides successfully according new dimensions to the vocal cord of the singers.

At All India Radio, Calcutta, Pankaj Mullick taught music to music-loving pupils. This was a prestigious job during those days. He even wrote books on music, namely—*Geet Balmiki*, *Raag Lakshan*, *Geet Manjan* and *Mahishasur Mardan*. Besides he also acted in the films – *Dhartimata*, *Doctor*, *Kapaal Kundala* and *Nartaki*.

As he had a deep understanding of literature, he could explore qualitative feelings in singing while composing; whether it was K.L. Saigal, Kanan Devi, K.C. Dey or any other singer of his era. Thus creating an easeful immortality in his music.

Pankaj Mullick composed music for an all time great film – *Yahudi ki Ladki* (1933) starring K.L. Saigal and Ratanbai. Its songs -*Lag gayee chot karejwa pe, Laakh sahee ab pee ki batiyan, Ye tassaruf allah allah* sung by Saigal continue to haunt the music lovers. A *ghazal* of Ghalib -*Nukta cheen hai gamey dil* sung by Saigal for the film is till date considered a marvel in the field of *ghazal* singing. What better style of *ghazal* recitation could one expect? It is a lesson not only for the singers but for the listeners as well. It sets up a base to evaluate the qualitative *ghazal* singing. To effectively communicate the poet's creation and its recitation, the composer created a melody; bringing the poet and the poetry come alive!

The film *Mukti* (1937) starring P.C. Barua & Kanan Devi is another milestone in the career of Pankaj Mullick. The enthralling music with the shades of the soil of Rabindra Sangeet sung by Kanan Devi- *Kaisa ujra chaman kisi ka, Kaun desh hai jana & Sanwariya mun ayaa re* and then Pankaj Mullick, himself sang *Kaun desh hai janaa, babu & Sharabee soch na kar matwale*. The totality, thus enriching the grand nostalgic treasure of cine music.

In the film *President* (1937) though the music was composed by Rai Chand Boral, yet a music lover cannot escape orchestral music effects contributed by Pankaj Mullick for the film.

Duniyaan rang rangelee baba, duniyaan rang rangelee re -a duet of film *Dhartimata* (1938) is certainly one of most popular songs of the century. There are two versions of this epoch-making recording. One better than the other. In the soundtrack portrayal, the song was sung by K.C. Dey, Umashashi and K.L. Saigal, while in the other gramophone-record version, it was in the voices of Pankaj Mullick, Umashashi & K.L. Saigal. The fact remains that the composition of Pankaj Mullick in both the forms, is simply brilliant. Besides, there was another remarkable song by Saigal in this film – *Ab mein kah karoon kitt jaaun*. In this song, the depth of the singer's voice cannot be put to words, it

can simply be experienced! More so, whenever an ardent listener needs deep solitude. There are very few melodies - to live through and experience the silence, isolation and calm atmosphere.

The music for another prominent film composed by the maestro was *Dushman* (1939) starring K.L. Saigal & Leela Desai. In this film as well, Saigal sang- *Karun kya aas niraas bhayee*, *Preet mein hai jeewan jokhon* and two other numbers. In these immortal numbers, the soul of the lyricist – Arzu Lucknavi appears to have come alive!

The songs sung by the maestro himself -*Piya Milan ko janaa* for the film *Kapaal Kundla* (1939), *Ye kaun aaj ayaa*, *sawere sawere*, *Madh bharee rut jawaan hai* & *Prem ka nataa chhuta* are some of the rare gems for the listeners who cherish the music for the soul.

“The film *Zindagi* (1940) starring K.L. Saigal, Pahari Sanyal & Ashalata will not be recognized for its legendary director P.C. Barua nor for the production banner of New Theatres of Calcutta but will be remembered for the songs sung by K.L. Saigal and its music composed by Pankaj Mullick,”- thus observed the flamboyant editor Baburao Patel in the April 1940 issue of his magazine *Filmindia*, while reviewing the film.

Listen to some of the greatest melodies of the century, recorded for this film -*Mein kya janoo kya jadoo hai*, *So jaa rajkumari*, *Deewana hoon*, *raahat se mein beganaa hoon* & *Jeevan asha ye hai meri*. The heart-throbbing style of singing – *Kya jadoo hai* of the singers immersed in the song – *Mein kya janoo*, and the manner it was composed in, further requires a deep sense of imagination to appreciate the music. In *So ja rajkumari* singing, the singer and the composer have created one of the finest *lorees* (lullabies) in the annals of film music history.

Interestingly, the lyricist Kidar Sharma initially wrote this *lore* as *Sojaa Rajdulari* as an offering to his wife Rajdulari. But for the song, it was altered to *So ja Rajkumari*.

As stated, Pankaj Mullick will always be remembered

for composing and singing the songs for the film -*Doctor* (1941) which bears his complete signatures. This chapter certainly will be incomplete if a reference to this film is not made. The full-throated voice quality in rendering -*Aayee bahaar*, loveable impact on the listeners in - *Mehak rahee phulwari*, *Chale pawan ki chaal*, *Aaj apni mehanton ka humko tamga mil gaya* and wonderful western orchestral instrumentation in *Pran chahey nein naa chahe*; all such factors established the maestro as a truly brilliant singer and a fabulous composer.

He torched great heights as a composer in the film *My Sister* (1944) starring K.L. Saigal. Just listening to the four golden melodies, sung in four different styles by the maestro – *Do naina matwale*, *Chhupo na chhupo na*, *Aye quatibe taqdeer* & *Haye kis but ki muhabbat mein giraftaar huye* which is a treat. And a casual hearing to these captivating numbers, will certainly prove to be love at first sight!

Looking at the acclaim received from the first three numbers viz *Do nainaa matware*, *Chhupo na chhupo na* & *Aye quatibey taqdeer*; Pankaj Mullick recorded these three songs in his own voice, which is indeed a collectors' treasure. However, a question generally arises among the minds of the listeners, as to who sang better.

Obviously, it is irrelevant to compare. It is just like comparing two flowers. Nevertheless, the fact remains that what Saigal sang, will be remembered for all times to come. But, nobody can predict about the other.

The chapter on Pankaj Mullick will be incomplete if a reference to his non-film songs is not made. The list of few of his noted numbers include -*Ye ratein ye mausam ye hasna hasana*, *Tere mandir ka hun deepak jal rahaa*, *Pran chahe nein na chahein* & *Yaad aye ki na aye tumhari*. In these classic melodies, the singer has secretly created an ambience of a class and explored emotions wonderfully immersed in the lyrics.

Some of the other films for which he composed the music were- *Meenakshi* (1942), *Oonch Neech* & *Ajanganrh* (1948), *Manjoor* (1949), *Roop Kahani* (1950), *Chhoti Maa*, *Yatrik*

& *Jaljala* (1952), *Naya Safar* (1953), *Chitrangda* (1954) and *Kasturi* -with *Jamal Sen* (1954).

Pankaj Mullick for his meritorious contribution to Indian cinema, was awarded the *Padma Shri* in the year 1970 and the prestigious *Dada Saheb Phalke Award* (the highest for contribution to Indian Cinema) in the year 1973. Besides, he was bestowed the coveted title - *Sursaagar*.

Leaving behind the memory of the haunting lines he once rendered – *Ye kaun aaj ayaa sawere sawere* and an aura of classical classics, the maestro breathed his last on 10 February, 1978.

3

A Master Music-composer called: **Anil Biswas**



The immortal melody of yesteryears -*Seeny mein sulagty hein armaan* – sung by Talat Mahmood and Lata Mangeshkar for the film *Tarana* (1951) will continue to haunt ardent music lovers, not only for years together, but for ages to come. The music for the film was composed by none other than Anil Biswas.

However, Anil Biswas (popularly known as Anil Da) once said during an interview– “If Rai Chand Boral is the *baap* (father) of Hindi cine music, then I am the *chacha* (father’s younger brother).” This verdict sounded egoistic,

since I was not fully acquainted with the other immortal melodies he had composed for films.

Six decades have passed and during all these years I have listened to some of the immortal nostalgic melodies time and again, more particularly songs based on classical ragas. Amongst such melodies were -*Mann ki been matwari baje'* (Lata & Rafi) -film *Shabab* music -Naushad, *Sun mere sajnaa dekho ji mujhko bhool na jana* (Lata & Rafi) film *Aansoo* music -Husnalal Bhagatram, *Sapt suran teen gram* (K.L. Saigal) film *Tansen* music-Khemchand Prakash and *Ketki gulab juhee* (Bhim Sen Joshi & Manna Dey) film *Basant Bahar* music- Shanker Jaikishan. These fascinating songs composed by the maestros continue to enthrall myriads of crowds and the glitter of their glory has not faded till date.

Then came a day when I listened to *Ritu aye ritu jaye* followed by *Pee bin soona jee* -sung by Lata Mangeshkar & Manna Dey for the film -*Humdard* (1953) the music for which was composed by Anil Biswas. I was indeed mesmerized! The duet is set in four classical ragas- *Gaud Sarang, Gaud Malhaar, Jogia & Bahaar* and bears the complete signatures of its composer. After listening to this captivating classical number, I had no option but to concur with what Anil Da had said in his interview that he was the *Chacha* of Hindustani cine music, which conveyed nothing but his conviction and a candid truth.

Anil Biswas like the illustrious K.L. Saigal never had any formal training in music from any *guru or Ustad*. Akin to Saigal, he also used to accompany his mother in *bhajan*-singing. However, he owed a little to Pt. Lal Mohan Goswami, who taught him a bit about *swaras*.

Born on 07 July, 1914 at Barisal in East Bengal (now in Bangladesh), the early childhood of the maestro was very eventful. He took active part in the freedom struggle and joined the revolutionary *Jugantar Party*. For such activities he was jailed at the tender age of 14. On his release after six months, he ran away from his home with just five rupees



Anil Biswas, Author and Manna Dey

and reached Calcutta. Here, after doing some odd jobs (even working as a domestic help), he landed at the house of his childhood friend Panna Lal Ghosh, the eminent flute player, who later on married his sister Parul (herself a singer of repute). The readers will perhaps be surprised to learn that in his early days Anil Da used to play the *flute* and Pannalal Ghosh was a *sitar* player. Later on they switched over to singing and the flute respectively.

Later on, Anil Biswas got associated with Kazi Nazrul Islam, the rebellious Bangla poet and also a celebrated music composer. During this period he worked for the Megaphone recording company. In the year 1935 he came to Bombay and gave music for his first film- *Bharat ki Beti*. One of its songs sung by Ratanbai -*Tere poojan ko bhagwan, banaa man mandir aalishaan* became an instant hit and till date the song is considered to be one of the finest numbers of the sentimental era.

In the year 1936, Anil Biswas married Mehrun Nissa, a

Kutchi muslim and a renowned film celebrity of her times. She was closely associated with Durga Khote and Shobhna Samarth. After her marriage, she was renamed as Asha Lata. Anil Biswas had four children, three sons- Pradeep, Utpal & Amit and a daughter Shikha. When they grew-up, Pradeep joined the Indian Air Force. However, as fate would have it, he was killed in an air crash in the year 1961.

Mehran Nissa had a vital role in strengthening the initial career of Anil Biswas because of her financial and poignant support. Her immense pecuniary hold was largely instrumental in his absorption of music making.



*A notable but a completely forgotten personality of Hindi cinema,
Mehrrun Nisa (Asha Lata)*

In view of his deep understanding and consequent acceptance in the film industry, till the year 1940, Anil Da had composed music for about 26 films. Notable amongst



them were *Manmohan* (1936), *Jagirdar* (1937), *Ek Hi Rasta* (1939), *Alibaba* and *Aurat* (1940). In the films *Ek Hi Rasta* & *Alibaba*, Waheedan sang some popular melodies. These two films were directed by the celebrated Mehboob Khan.

The film *Aurat* was directed and produced under the banner of the National Studios by Mehboob Khan with a star cast comprising of Sardar Akhtar, Surendra, Yaqoob and Kanhaya Lal. In addition to composing music, Anil Da acted as well in this film for the sequence -*Kahe karta der barati* and also lent his voice for a song sequence. Additionally, there were eleven other songs in this film sung by Sardar Akhtar, Jyoti, Surendra and Vatsala Kumdhekar. The film was a grand success and is considered as one of the classics from the era of the 30's & the 40's.

It must be remembered that the much acclaimed film *Mother India* (1957) produced and directed by Mehboob Khan was the remake of the film *Aurat*. In view of the superb performance of Nargis in *Mother India*, the film continues to be rated as one of the greatest films in the history of Indian cinema. Yet, owing to the grand success of the music of the film *Aurat*, the film critics have acclaimed *Aurat* as the mother of *Mother India*.

B.D. Garga, one of the foremost critics on films, once studied the two films together, and in the context of music,



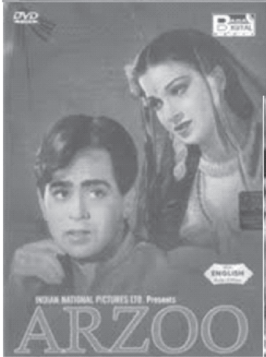
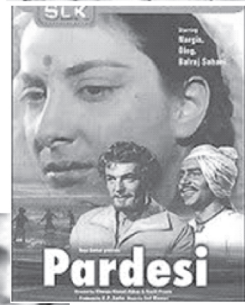
Khaiyyam, Anil Biswas, O.P. Nayyar and Naushad

he wrote - "Anil Biswas's music is more in tune with the dramatic movement of the film. His use of a single instrument for a mood was more authentic than Naushad's large orchestra overwhelming the auditory senses" (Cinema in India, April-June 1989).

"Even then Mehboob Khan was not fully satisfied with me, as he considered the music of *Alibaba* better than that of *Aurat*. Consequently, some differences developed between two of us," once observed Anil Biswas.

When another historic film *Roti* (1942) was in the making, a serious dispute between Anil Biswas and the producer developed over its music. In a fit of anger, Mehboob Khan asked Anil Biswas- *Tere liye Akhtari ko bulwa doon* (Should I call Akhtari for you?). Anil Biswas replied in the same tone- *Bulwa de* (Yes, call her). Thus, Akhtari Bai Faizabadi (Begam Akhtar, as she was then known), the ghazal queen was persuaded to act and sing for the film.

Thereby a momentous chapter was created. Begum



Anil Biswas and Lata Mangeshkar and a few films, in which Anil Biswas provided some immortal melodies.

Akhtar not only sang six fabulous melodies, she also acted in this film. In each of these timeless numbers of Begum Akhtar, whether it was the instrumentation, the alluring orchestration, the style of singing – the outcome was



somewhat unique. It will not be out of place to mention that in the history of Hindi cine music these melodies will find a pride of place. However, in view of certain disputes and technical complexities, all the six songs sung by Begum Akhtar were deleted from its soundtrack. What an irony!

After the release of the film *Roti*, serious dispute arose between the two masters -Mehboob Khan and Anil Biswas and they separated. It will not out of place to say that the separation seriously effected the career-graph and the fate of Anil Biswas. Thereafter Naushad became the music composer for more or less all the films of Mehboob Khan. This was indeed a turning point in the ongoing journey of Anil Biswas.

The film *Basant* (1942) bears the name of Pannalal Ghosh as its composer, but the fact remains that its music was composed by Anil Biswas. This was owing to the fact that during those days, artists used to work with the respective production companies on contract basis. As such, Anil Biswas was not supposed to work for Bombay Talkies, the



Front row: V. Balsara, Saraswati Devi, C. Ramchandra, Anil Biswas, Naushad, Lata Mangeshkar, Madan Mohan Back row: Jaikishan, Pandit Gobind Ram, Hansraj Behl, Roshan, Mohammad Shafi, Hemant Kumar, Ghulam Mohammad

producers of the film *Basant*. Though, he composed some enthralling melodies for this film, namely – *Tumko mubarak ho oonche mahal ye*, *Aaya basant sakhee*, *birha ka ant sakhee* and *Hua kya kusoor* which were sung by Parul Ghosh. The gramophone records and the credits of the film however, bear the name of Pannalal Ghosh as its composer.

The film *Kismet* (1943) starring Ashok Kumar and Mumtaz Shanti proved to be one of the most predominant movies in the history of Hindi cinema. It was primarily due to its music, which was composed by Anil Biswas. The film ran continuously for three years and eight months at Roxy theatre in Calcutta, which was a record till the release of the film *Sholay* (1973). One of its songs -*Door hato aye duniyan walo ye hindustan hamara hai* became an instant hit. The beguiling use of the trumpet in this song enralls the listeners with its patriotic fervor till date. Since it was against the spirit of the British Raj, the lyricist Kavi Pradeep and the composer went underground to escape arrest.

Additionally, there were some other brilliant numbers in this film sung by Amir Bai viz *Dheere dheere, aa re baadal*, *dheere dheere aa*, *Ab tere siva kaun mera krishan kanhaiya* & *Ghar*



Mehar Un Nissa (Asha Lata) wife of Anil Biswas

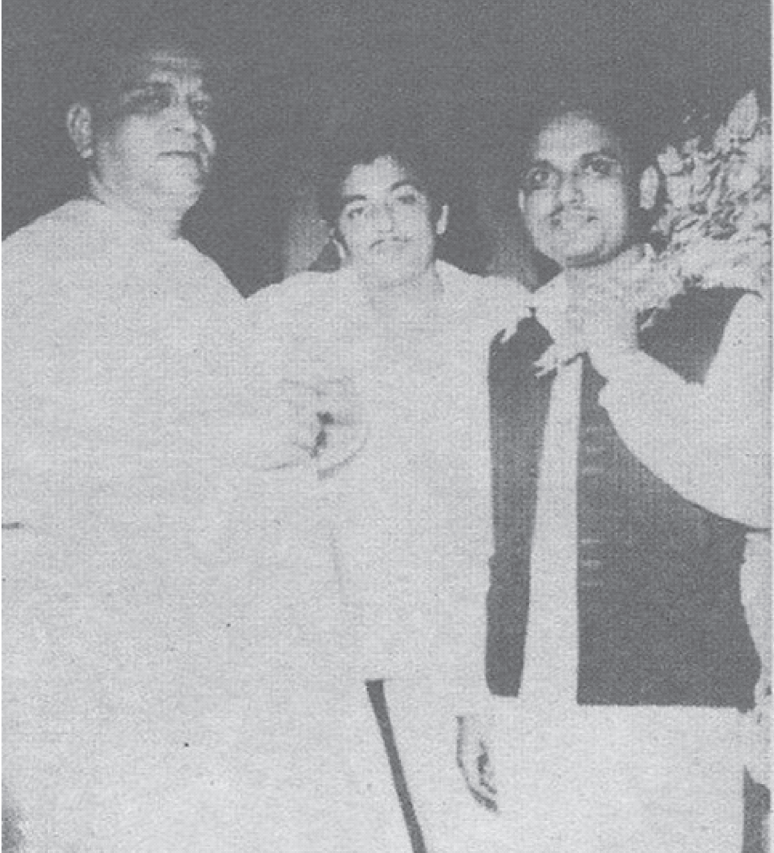
ghar mein diwali hai, mere ghar mein andhera and there was the all time trendy -*Papiha re* sung by Parul Ghosh.

In the years to follow till 1950, Anil Biswas composed music for a number of films. The notables were -*Hamari Baat* (1943), *Jwar Bhata* (1944), the debut film of matinee idol Dilip Kumar, *Pehli Nazar* (1945), *Milan* (1946), *Anokha Pyar* (1948), *Girls School & Ladli* (1949), and *Arzu* (1950).

In each of these films, consistently there were more than one enthralling melodies. Listen to some of these numbers -*Mein unkee ban jaon re* -Parul Ghosh for *Hamari Baat*, *Saanjh ki bela, panchhi akela* -Arun Kumar and *Bhool jana chahti hoon* -Parul Ghosh for *Jwar Bhata*, *Dil jalta hai to jalne de* -Mukesh and *Unka ishara jaan se pyara* -Naseem Akhtar for *Pehli Nazar*, *Suhani berian biti jayein, Jisne bana di bansuri & Mein kiski laaj nibhaaun* -Parul Ghosh for *Milan*, *Jeewan sapna toot gaya* -



Mukesh, *Mere phulon mein chhupi hai jawani, Yaad rakhna chand taro is suhani raat ko, Mere liye wo itnazaar chhodh gaye, Jeewan sapna toot gaya* -Lata for *Anokha Pyar*, *Tumhee kaho mera mun kyun rahe udas nahin* -Lata for *Girls School*, *Tumhare bhulane ko jee chahta hai* -Lata and *Aankhein keh gayee dil ki baat* -S.D. Batish for *Ladli*, *Aye dil mujhe aisi jagah le chal* –



A rare picture R C Boral with Anil Biswas and Madan Mohan

Talat Mehmood and *Kahan tak hum uthayen gham* -Lata for *Arzu*, *Zamane ka dastoor hai ye purana* -Lata & Mukesh for *Lajawaab* -to name a few.

Some of these musical marvels composed from 1941-50 establish the fact that Anil Biswas was certainly one of the finest music composers of his time. As against all other composers, his choice of the lyricist was wide open and not predetermined. As the maestro himself had a brilliant understanding of verse, he chose the lyricist, who he thought was best suitable for the story line. In a large

number of films, it is observed that there were more than one lyricist. The film *Bari Bahoo*, had eight songs and seven lyricists. Again, while composing a song he made the minimal use of instruments. Consequently, most of these



Prem Dhawan (One of the favourite lyricists of Anil da)

songs had a unique impact on the listeners. His use of counter-melody in various songs established him as a composer with a difference – highlighted when you listen to *Saanjh ki bela, panchhi akela* -Arun Kumar for *Jwar Bhata* and *Baar baar tum soch rahi ho* -Shanker Das Gupta for *Girls School*.

The greatest contribution of Anil Biswas lies in the fact that he introduced and brought a large number of singers into limelight. It is a matter of record that seventy six singers – male and female – sang for the maestro. Notable amongst them were Mukesh and Talat Mahmood. How can we forget *Dil jalta hai to jalne de* – sung by Mukesh for the film *Pehli Nazar* (1945) and *Aye dil mujhe aisee jageh le chal, jahan koi na ho*- sung by Talat Mahmood in the film *Arzu* (1950). Before singing these two memorable songs, Mukesh and Talat were entirely unknown. Mukesh was struggling for an appropriate opportunity and Talat, who was almost unknown– was in Calcutta, and used to sing by the name of Tapan Kumar.

The list of eminent singers, who came to prominence through Anil Da include – S.D. Batish, Surendra, Rajkumari, Sudha Malhotra, Ameerbai, Shanker Das Gupta, Sardar Akhtar, Parul Ghosh, Meena Kapoor, Arun Kumar and others. In his initial career, the maestro created some memorable melodies for dancer Sitara, prominent actors –



Anil Biswas, Lata and Talat Mahmood

Motilal, Ashok Kumar, Gope, Nalini Jaywant, Leela Chitnis, Sheikh Mukhtar, Sardar Akhtar, Ashraf Khan and a few others.

If we analyze the career graph of Lata Mangeshkar, she too was primarily brought to limelight by Anil Biswas in the year 1948, when she sang for -*Anokha Pyar viz Yaad rakhna chand taro is suhani raat ko, Ik dii ka lagana baaki tha, Ab yaad na kar* (with Mukesh), *Mere phulon mein chhupee hai jawaani* & *Jeewan sapna toot gaya*. Interestingly, these songs were originally sung by Meena Kapoor for the soundtrack



Composer Anil Biswas cooking. Also seen in the picture are Lata Mangeshkar and Smriti Biswas. Wo din kaha gaye bata...

of the film but for the gramophone record version, these numbers were re-recorded in the voice of Lata Mangeshkar. She sang hundred and fifteen songs for the maestro and quite a few of them can be included amongst her best.

Once during a casual conversation, the author of these lines enquired from Anil Da, as to why K.L. Saigal and Noorjehan, who belonged to his epoch, never sang for him. Anil Da replied emotionally, "Betey Satish, I had always wanted to compose songs for both these singers. Saigal was very close to my heart, but he was initially under an

agreement with New Theatres, Calcutta and after coming to Bombay, he was too busy with different production houses. Besides, he was not keeping well and died young. Noorjehan likewise migrated to Pakistan. However, I had in mind a duet – *Zamane ka dastoor hai ye purana*, ready for both of them.”

Though the immortal melody – *Zamane ka dastoor hai ye purana*, was later on sung by Mukesh and Lata for film *Lajwaab* and is rated as one of the finest duets of Hindi cine music– the fact remains that if these two greats – Saigal and Noorjehan – of undivided India had sung together, it could have been the most incredible song in the musical harmony of India and Pakistan.

Continuing the musical journey after 1950, Anil Biswas composed music for film *Tarana* (1951) starring Dilip kumar and Madhubala, which is rated as one of his best endeavors. All the nine melodies of this film were incredible. *Mosey rooth gayo mora sanwaria*, *Yun chhup chhup ke mera aanaa*, *Beimann tore nainwa, nindiya na aye*, *Wapas le le ye jawani*, & *Kya khabar thi, Wo din kahan gaye bataa* – all sung by Lata Mangeshkar. Then there was an all time favorite duet of Lata and Talat Mahmood -*Seeney mein sulagte hein armaan*, besides there were two other duets of Lata and Sandhya Mukerjee -*Nain mile nain huye bawre* & *Bol papihe bol re*. These songs made the film a musical super-hit. The depth of feelings emerged particularly in *Wo din kahan gaye bata* which continues to haunt music lovers, whenever this melody is played.

Though the films *Araam* (1951), *Doraha* (1952), *Aakash & Fareb* (1953) were not box-office successes; yet the maestro composed some rare gems for these movies. *Aye jaane jigar, dil mein samane aaja* – Mukesh and *Shukriya, shukriya aye pyar tera shukriya* – Talat for *Araam*. *Mann mein kisi ki preet basa le* & *Balma ja ja ja, ab kaun tujhe samjahye* – Lata and *Muhabbat tark ki maine, gireban si liya maine* – Talat for *Doraha* and *Saraa chaman tha apna* & *So gayee chandni* – Lata for *Aakash* and



Sahir Ludhianvi, Anil Biswas & Lata Mangeshkar

Mere dukh sukh ka sansaar & Husn bhi hai udas udas – Kishore Kumar and there was one of the finest duets of Lata and Kishore – *Aa muhabbat ki basti basayeinge hum* and another gem of Lata – *Mila dil mil ke toota ja raha hai* for Fareb.

A few interesting lines about the captivating duet – *Aa mohabbat ki bast basayeinge hum*. One afternoon Anil Da was in the company of celebrated actors – Dilip Kumar and Ashok Kumar at his residence. He played on his harmonium and hummed the sober tune of his aforesaid melody. As to

who would be the female singer, there was absolutely no doubt about Lata Mangeshkar. However, who will provide the male voice? “Dada it should be Talat” – said Ashok Kumar. Whereas Dilip Kumar suggested – “Anil Da, in any case looking at the serious lyrical notes, the male singer should be your favorite Mukesh.” Anil Da had something else in his mind. “How, if Kishore sings with Lata?” -said the maestro. Kishore! -Dilip was taken aback; *Agar Kishore aisa sanjeeda gana ga le to, aapka joota aur mera sarr* (if Kishore will sing such serious song, my head is ready for your shoe-beating) -added Dilip Kumar. *Mein joota le kar aataa hoon, sarr tayyar rakho* (Be ready with your head, I am bringing my shoe).

Kishore Kumar was called, who at the first instance, looking at seriousness and the complex notes, bluntly refused to sing the duet with Lata. The maestro’s conviction however prevailed. Eventually, this soul-stirring, an immortal and a rarest of the rare melody was created!

The music of Anil Da was not confined to a particular banner or a film production company. Like the combination of RK banner (of Raj Kapoor) was attached to Shanker Jaikishan, Navketan (of Devanad) to S.D. Burman and Mehboob Khan to Naushad. Again, the choice of these composers were more or less the same.

Since Anil Biswas was not attached to a particular banner and his producers at times did not have the experience and in spite of some fabulous songs composed by the maestro, some the films were utter box-office failures. The list of some such films include –*Hamdard* (1953), *Maan* (1954), *Jalti Nishani* (1957) and *Chhoti Chhoti Batein* (1963). The connoisseurs of Hindi cine music will perhaps agree that the finest classical melodies of Anil Biswas came from the film – *Hamdard*, which could’nt even have three day screening. Just listen to *Ritu aye ritu jaye* followed by *Pee bin soona ree* –Lata and Manna Dey for this film, which is considered till date as one of finest classical based film-

music marvels. Interestingly, this particular number was recorded twice. Primarily in the soundtrack version, as an accompanying instrument Pannalal Ghosh played the flute whereas in the gramophone record version Ramnarain played the sarangi. Thus, making the grand duet -a collector's treasure! The other memorable numbers of this film were *Torey naina raseele kateele & Tera haath haath mein aa gaya* (a class, from the pen of celebrated Majrooh) - which were sung by Manna Dey.

The fate of the film *Maan* was not better either. The grand enthralling numbers for this film -*Mere pyar mein tujhe kya mila & Allah bhi hai mallah bhi hai* (Lata) were simply captivating and had the complete signatures of the maestro. Sadly, the film could'nt complete even one week's screening and the story of such failure was repeated for the subsequent film like *Jalti Nishani* (1957) which also had some fabulous numbers. One of such enthralling melodies was - *Rooth ke tum to chal diye, ab mein dua ka kya karoon* - Lata. Likewise, the fate of Anil Da's last film *Chhoti Chhoti Batein'* (1963) - starring Motilal and Nadira - was not different. In this film Anil Da composed a few grand numbers. Shailendra wrote some soul-stirring lines -*Zindagi khwaab hai per hamein zindagi se bahut pyar tha* - a grand tribute to genius Motilal, who produced this film, but died before its completion. Mukesh sang this heart-throbbing number with lot of pathos. Besides, there were other numbers sung by Lata and Mukesh viz *Zindagi ka ajab fasana hai*, and Meena Kapoor's - *Kuchh aur zamana kehta hai* and two classics by Manna Dey - *Andhee duniyan, matlab ki dunian & Kya laye ho, kya le jaoge*. It was a pity that on the third day of its screening (on a Sunday) more than seventy five per cent seats in the cinema halls were empty. Consequently, the next day its screening was discontinued. The sad demise of Motilal and lack of desired publicity were the foremost reasons for the failure of this classic film.

The repeated failure of the films in which the maestro

provided the music; the demise of his eldest son Pradeep in an air crash and the death of his younger brother Sunil in less than a month's time turned out to be disastrous for the maestro. He left Bombay with his live-in-relation Meena Kapoor and joined All India Radio, New Delhi as Director, National Orchestra. Here in Delhi, he composed music for an all time popular soap-opera *Humlog*.

While at A.I.R. New Delhi, he created a large number of orchestral compositions (*Vadyavrind Rachnayein*) which were unfortunately destroyed or erased. Such an erroneous gesture is not unusual on the part of the state owned A.I.R and DD. A large number of rare gramophone records and other priceless recordings (held in the AIR library) can be seen with professional collectors and some with unscrupulous traders who sell such priceless and rare recordings for a hefty price.

It is an established fact that Anil Da's musical compositions had a large variety of colours and shadows. If he had shades of folk from Bengal, his compositions also had the flavour of Punjab, Haryana and even of Goa with the same fervor. At times, he could create songs using the *carnatic* style musical notes. He occasionally even mixed different *ragas* in one melody. For instance listen to *-Naa ja naa ja balam-* Lata in the film *Pardesi* (1957) and *Intzaar aur abhee* -Lata for *Chaar Dil Chaar Rahein* (1959). In these two alluring classical-based melodies, he created some brilliant effects. Similarly in the film *Sautela Bhai* (1962) starring Guru Dutt, he composed a few classical classics *-Ab laagi naahi chhote rama and Jaa mein to se naheen bolu* -Lata & Meena Kapoor and *Phule ban bagia* -Manna Dey and Meena Kapoor. All such aspects established him as a different composer as compared to the all other Bengali composers of his time viz Pankaj Mullick, S.D. Burman, Salil Choudhry and Hemant Kumar.

Though, a Bengali by birth, Anil Da had an amazing command over Urdu language and a deep understanding

of *ghazals*. By virtue of such understanding, before composing a song he could deeply imbibe the emotions, thoughts, feelings, messages and the entire composition of the respective lyricist. Such vital facets of composing are completely missing in present day set-up.

In view of his deep concern for poetry he wrote a book on the history of the *ghazal* in Bangla and its cover page was designed by the well known painter M.F. Hussain. Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the celebrated Urdu poet of the Indian sub-continent was his close-friend and a great admirer of his music. Both of them used to have long get-togethers and recalled each other's memories with passionate esteem.

Anil Biswas was perhaps the first composer, who deeply understood the various complexities of background music and also introduced counter-melody in his music. This was the reason that another maestro -Naushad called him his *guru*. He was indeed a master of invaluable techniques of singing. As a seer and a visionary, he closely witnessed the musical journey of Hindi cinema and also that of classical music. Thereby, he was admired by most of the composers and also classical musicians.

Lata Mangeshkar once confessed- "Anilda always stressed on where to pause, to take a breath, so that it neither disrupted the flow of the song, nor rankle the listener's ear. He would say, if you must break up the line, do it in a manner that the meaning is not changed." She added, "Anilda taught me how one should move away slightly from the mike while drawing a breath between two words and then return, almost instantaneously, to continue with the song".

Anil Biswas always remained unconcerned with the fate of the respective melodies composed for the films produced, whether it would be a box-office success or failure.

But a question arises after going through the maestro's brilliant career-graph, as to whether he got the recognition he richly deserved? Certainly, not! The *Chacha* of Hindi cine

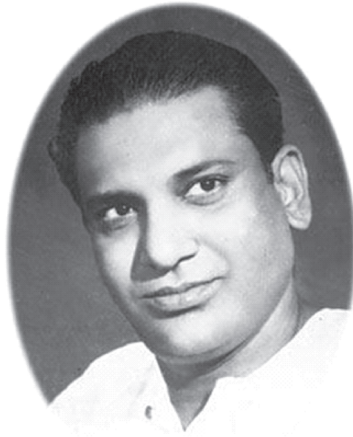
music was denied even a Padma award. Besides, he was certainly a front runner in the line of recipients of the Dada Saheb Phalke Award. About the reasons for such notable omission, it is lesser said the better!

However, in recognition of his contribution to music, Anil Biswas was awarded the Madhya Pradesh Government's -'Lata Mangeshkar Life Time Achievement Award', 'Sangeet Natak Academy Fellowship' and the Life Time Achievement award by the Indian Motion Pictures Association (IMPA).

It is ironic that Anil Biswas breathed his last on 31 May, 2003, in South Extension, New Delhi as a totally unknown person.

4

The Melodious Music Maker: Khemchand Prakash



The film *Mahal* released in the year 1949 will be remembered for times to come. It is not because it was directed by the legendary Kamal Amrohi, nor owing to the fact that Ashok Kumar and Madhubala acted in the film, not even for the completely forgotten aspect that Bimal Roy was its editor. The fact in that the film is still recalled in view of its majestic background music and its immortal melodious songs.

How can one forget *Aayega aney wala*, *Mushkil hai bahut mushkil* and *Dil ne phir yaad kiya* -sung by the then upcoming Lata Mangeshkar and *Ghabra ke jo hum sar ko*, *Ek teer chala* and *Mein wo haseen hoon* sung by Rajkumari and *Chhun*

chhun ghungharwa a brilliant duet sung by the well acclaimed Johrabai and Rajkumari.

The film *Mahal* became a landmark in the history of Hindi cinema primarily because of its everlasting background music and melodies. The upcoming Lata Mangeshkar became an established and the most popular female singer of the Hindi film music overnight.

A collection of choicest Hindi film music would always be deficient without one of the songs from the film *Mahal* and any musical performance by Lata Mangeshkar is just not possible without *Aayega aney wala* and *Mushkil hai bahut mushkil*. The use of the accompanying instruments deployed in the prelude to these grand melodies was simply splendid. The master music composer was in complete command and in total disagreement with Seth Chandulal Shah, who got irritated over the repeated *Ayega ayega*. He also thought that it was a dull and dead preface in *Mushkil hai*. But, the conviction of the music-maker overrode that of the producer.

The maestro Khemchand Prakash was born in Sujangarh (Rajasthan) on 12 December, 1907. His father Pt Govardhan Prakash was a court musician of the then Jaipur State. Before joining films, Khemchand Prakash performed at the Bikaner Royal court as a singer and then moved to the Royal Court of Nepal. But destiny landed him in Calcutta (now Kolkata) where he joined the All India Radio. Thereafter, impressed with his singing talent, Timir Baran, the famous music director of New Theatres took the young Khemchand Prakash under his wings.

In view of his deep understanding of classical music, including the most intricate *dhrupad* style, Khemchand Prakash composed music for most of the singers of his time. It was the era when understanding of classical music was a must. During the period from 1939 till 1942 he composed for the films -*Meri Aankhen* (1939), *Shaadi*, *Aaj ka Hindustan*, *Diwali*, *Holi* and *Pagal* (1940), *Pardesi* and *Bambai ki Sair*



(1941), *Mehmaan*, *Khilona*, *Fariyad*, *Dukh Sukh* and *Chandni* (1942).

When the celebrated actor Prithviraj Kapoor moved from Calcutta to Bombay, he took young Khemchand Prakash along with him. In Bombay, he introduced the maestro to Ranjit Movietone, a grand film production house. Here, he composed music for the all time classic film *Tansen* (1943) starring the celebrated stars K.L. Saigal and Khurshid.

In the annals of Hindi film music, songs from *Tansen* have few parallels. Singing in the classical 'dhrupad' style could not get better when Saigal effortlessly sang- *Sapt suran teen gram* and *Diya jalao*. The depth of feelings articulated by Saigal in another song- *Binaa pankh ke panchhi hoon mein*

cannot be phrased in words. And, when one listens to the duet sung by Saigal and Khurshid – *More balapan ke saathi, saiiyyan bhool jayyo na*, the sentiments expressed are simply brilliant, as are the numbers viz *Ghataa ghan ghor ghor*, *O dukhia jiyara*, *Ab raja bhaye more balam wo din bhool gaye* and *Barso re* -sung by Khurshid. Though, these timeless melodies have been forgotten with the passage of time, the fact remains that the film *Tansen* will always be remembered for its super-hit songs.

Yet again, in the years to follow, the maestro composed some unforgettable songs for the film *Bhanwara* (1944), -sung by K.L. Saigal viz *Muskarate huye yun aankh chuaraya na karo* and *Thukra rahee hai ye dunian*. Additionally, he created a number of other everlasting melodies for films to follow, which include -*Qurbani* (1943), *Mumtaz Mahal*, *Shahanshah Babar*, *Bhanwara* and *Bharthari* (1944), *Dhanna Bhagat* (1945), *Mera Suhag*, *Chalte Chalte*, *Mulakaat*, *Sama Ko Badal Dalo* and *Sikandar* (1947), *Asha* and *Ziddi* (1948), *Sawan Aya Re*, *Rimjhim* and *Mahal* (1949), *Muqaddar* and *Bijli* (1950) and *Shree Ganesh Janam* (1951).

In the year 1948, he composed music for the film *Ziddi* based on the story of the celebrated Urdu writer Saadat Hasan Manto and produced by Bombay Talkies. For this film Kishore Kumar sang his first and foremost song -*Marne ki duayein kya mangoo* followed by -*Ye kaun aaya re* a duet with Lata Mangeshkar. The music of these brilliant numbers was certainly soul-stirring! Needless to say that these notable melodies have certainly enriched two vocalists and subsequently shaped their destiny. Likewise, Talat Mahmood and Geeta Roy sang *Armaan bhare dil ki lagan kis key liye hai* for the film *Jan Pehchaan* (1950).

A peculiar feature of the music of the maestro was that he deployed minimum accompanying musical instruments and consequently created the finest possible ambiance through the vocal cords of the singer. This was one of the features of his brilliantly created immortal melodies.

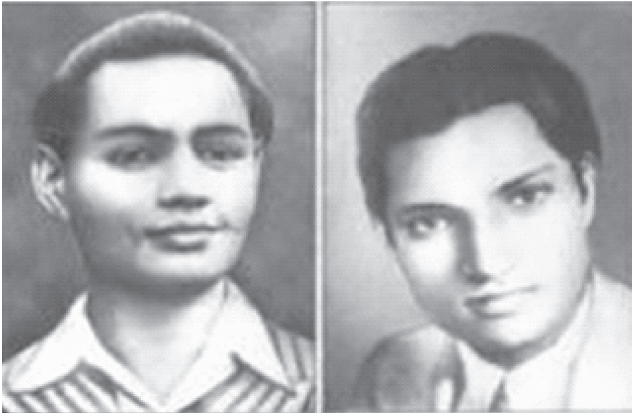
In this context, just listen to Shamshad's grand melodious song-*Naa tum aaye naa neend aayee* for the film *Rimjhim* (1949), *Dil ne phir yaad kiya* and *Mushkil hai bahut mushkil* -Lata's numbers for the film *Mahal*, which are some of the classic examples of his minimal usage of instruments.

The musical tradition of the maestro was carried by one of his assistants, Bulo C. Rani in his films. One of his all time classic film was *Jogan* (1950), starring Dilip Kumar and Nargis and produced and directed by Kidar Sharma. The influence of his mentor Khemchand Prakash is clearly apparent in some of the heart-throbbing songs of Geeta Roy.

Leaving behind a wonderful legacy of music for times to come, Khemchand Prakash breathed his last on the 10 August, 1950 at the young age of 43 years. It is a sheer coincidence that the other two greats of his time, Kundan Lal Saigal and Ghulam Haider also passed away in their early forties in the years 1947 and 1953 respectively.

5

The First and Foremost Populist Duo Music Composers: **Husnalal Bhagatram**



Husnalal Bhagatram

Chup chup khade ho zaroor koyee baat hai, pehli mulaqaat hai ji pehli mulaqaat hai - sung by Lata Mangeshkar and Premlata for the film *Bari Behan* (1949) was certainly one of the most popular melodies of its time.

I still remember, during my childhood days, an open air evening theatre and *Ramlila* were the most conventional media of entertainment for practically all sections of the society. Before the start of the show musicians would keep the waiting audience occupied with some popular melodies from films or otherwise. And, invariably every day there used to be one song -*Chup chup khade ho.....*

More than six decades have since passed, Lata

Mangeshkar sang hundreds of songs and made a number of records. The name of her co-singer Premlata can barely be found on a few gramophone records. Even if available, they cannot be played as the desired pins for 78 rpm record players are not in use any more. The music systems have been replaced by totally different technology.

The fact remains that as and when this melody is played, any young listener lad cannot resist asking her or his grand parents, as to who composed such an enthralling melody. Is it the same Lata Mangeshkar who sang *Didi tera dewar diwana* the popular song of later years, but has faded away and no where in listening? Why is there no good music of the fifties and sixties in the air. The reasons are many!

Amongst a large number of initial music composers, who shaped the destiny of Lata Mangeshkar, one of the foremost composers were the duo- Husnalal Bhagatram. The duet *Chup chup khade ho* was certainly one such song, which was composed by these two, who commenced their music journey with the film *Chand* (1944) starring Begum Para and Prem Adib. Its song -*Do dilon ko ye duniyan, milnein hi nahin deti* sung by a totally unknown Manju, became an instant success.

The other notable endeavor which followed was *Pyar ki Jeet* (1948) starring Suraiya and Rehman became a musical super-hit. Some of the songs sung by the singing star Suraiya -*Tere nainon ne chori kiya, mera chhota sa jia, o pardesia, O door jaane wale & Koyee dunian mein hamaari tarah* are still considered to be her favorites. The tonal quality of the voice of the singer explored by the composer duo in these melodies is simply superb.

Then, there was an all time popular song of Mohd Rafi in this film -*Ik dil ke tukde hazaar hue koi yahan gira koi wahan gira* communicating the agony of the partition of India. Yet again there was a captivating duet *Rutt rangeeli hai, suhani raat hai* -sung by an unusual pair- Surinder Kaur, Meena Kapoor and Ram Kamlani.

The film *Badi Behan* (1949) was again a classic in the



Mohd Rafi, Unknown, Husnalal and standing-Bhagatram

history of Hindi cine music. Besides the most popular song -*Chup chup khade ho*, listen to the seven other numbers *Wo pass rahein ya door rahein*, *Tum mujhko bhool jaa ab hum naa mil sakeinge*, *Likhnei wale ne likh dee meri taqdeer mein barbadi likhneiwale ne* and *Bigdi banane wale, bigdee banaa de* (Suraiya) and *Muhabbat ke dokhe mein koyee naa aye* (Mohd Rafi). The songs by Lata are simply great. In *Chale janaa nahin* and *Jo dil mein khushi ban kar aye* Lata was perhaps at her best and there could not have been a better gift from her composer Husnalal on her twentieth birthday (Lata was born in 1929). The utterance coming straight from the singer's heart, at times makes the listener spell bound. The quality of a

diamond-cutter in master violinist Husnalal in particular, can be visualized through these two immortal melodies of Lata Mangeshkar. The Punjabi style *dholak* played by their musician, Shanker (of the Shanker Jaikishan duo) was a notable feature in enriching this perpetual number.

In view of the grand success of the music of *Badi Behan*, Shanker Jaikishan thereafter formed a team for Raj Kapoor's all time great film *Barsat*, by replacing Ram Gangoli. In all the popular melodies of *Barsat*, one can very well observe the glimpses of instrumentation of the mentors of Shanker. The use of the *dholak* and violin in particular were the soul of its wonderful melodies. Just listen to some its songs and in particular *Jiya beqraar hai*, *Patlee qamar hai* & title song *Barsaat mein*. The splendid touches of *dholak* in all these numbers are simply outstanding. Besides accompanying violin in another song- *Mujhe kisi se pyar ho gaya* is a classic! Thus, in view of the vigorous training Shanker had from his mentors, another duo music composers were created in the history of Hindi cine music. What the duo Shanker Jaikishan composed later is a matter of serious study.

Husnalal Bhagatram composed music for a sizeable 50 films and created some soul- throbbing melodies. A few of their memorable numbers include- *Teri is do rangee duniyan mein* (Lata)- film *Sawan Bhadhon* (1949), *Lut gayi ummeedon ki duniyan* (Lata) and *Hai kaam mohabbat ka fariyaad kiyey janaa* (Rafi)- film *Jaltarang* (1949), *Dil hi to hai jo tarap gayaa* (Lata) -*Aadhi Raat* (1950), *Chhota sa fasanaa hai tere mere pyar ka* (Lata & Rafi) -*Birha ki Raat* (1950), *Mujhse ye keh rahee hai taqdeer ki lakirein* (Geeta Roy & Shamsad), *Toote hue dil se morey awaaz ye aayee* (Rafi), *Agar dil kisi se lagaya na hotaa* (Lata)-film *Gauna* (1950), *Dil le ke dil diya hai, ehsaan kya kiya hai* (Lata & Rafi)- film *Stage* (1951), *Mohabbat ki hum chot khhayey hue hein* (Talat Mehmood) -film *Farmaish* (1953), *O parwane, shamma ko apni ruswa na karna* (Suraiya), *Shamma Parwana* (1954), *Aye meri zindagi tujhe dhundhun kahan* (Talat Mahmood) -*Adal-e-Jahangir* (1955), *Manwa mein pyar doley* (Mukesh & Zohra) - *Sartaj* (1950), *Yaad aa rahaa hei dilko*

bhoola hua fasanaa (Suraiya)- *Amar Kahani* (1949).

A glance at the profile of the duo- Husnlal & Bhagatram. They were the younger brothers of Pt Amarnath -who himself was a musician of great eminence and died young. He was also associated with the music of the film *Mirza Saheban* (1947) starring Noorjehan & Trilok Kapoor. Husnalal, was born in the year 1920 at Kehma, Distt Jallandhar (Punjab) and Bhagatram was born in the year 1914. They had their initial training in music under the guidance of Pt Amarnath and thereafter from Pt Dilip Chand Vedi, a highly respected classical musician.

Husnalal's zest for learning of the violin took him to Ustad Bashir Khan. The brilliance of his command over violin can be seen in the different compositions of the duo. In his personal life as well, the first passion of Husnalal was playing the violin. A day before his demise, he played the violin at the well known yearly *Harballabh Music Festival* at Jallandhar. Yet again, he was a great classical vocalist and his singing was appreciated by none other than Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan.

In giving shape to Lata Mangeshkar's tonal cord for a song, Husnalal used to initially play the tune on a violin. Years after his demise, I was given to understand by Nirlmalaji, his beloved wife that before going to sleep, he used to invariably play the violin whatever may be the time. *Maalkauns* was his favourite raag.

As stated, the duo (along with their elder brother Pt Amarnath) composed some admirable melodies for Noorjehan for the film *Mirza Saheban* (1947)- *Kya ye hi tera pyar tha, Aaja tujhe afsanaa judai ka sunayein* (solos); *Haath seene pe jo rakh do, to karaar aa jaye, Tum aankhon se door huyee, neend aankhon se door* (with G.M. Durrani). The list of memorable songs of Noorjehan is certainly incomplete without these incredible numbers.

If a collection of all time great film duets (sung in male & female voices) is prepared, it will be predominantly

incomplete without the wonderful- *Sun mere saajna, dekhoji mujhko bhool na jana*- based on raag *pahari* and sung by Lata Mangeshkar & Mohd Rafi for the film *-Aansoo* (1952). Due to its length, it was recorded on both sides of a 78 rpm record. While singing *Saajnaa*, Lata simply captivates the listeners! The quality of the flute and the drum playing, the pauses in the vocal articulations, the delivery of the lyrical dialogues mixed with deep feelings and remarkable touches of *shehnai*, astonishing style of rendering of words *bhool* and *rooth* by Lata, generates a soul stirring impact on the listener. The *aalap* and *taan* in this song, needs to be written in golden letters. Likewise, while listening to another two songs from the film *Badi Behan* -*Jo dil mein khushi ban kar aaye* and *Chale jana nahin*, sung by Lata, create a totally different impact.

Kishore Kumar sang an amazing song for Husnalal Bhagatram for the film *Kafila* (1952) -*Wo meri taraf yun chale aa rahein hein* with Lata. While listening to this number, one can say that Kishore was certainly different!

In B.R. Chopra's maiden film *Afsana* (1950) the music was composed by the duo. In this film Lata sang a classic number -*Wo paas bhi reh kar paas nahin, hum door bhi rehkar door nahin* and *Abhee to mein jawan hoon* which is considered by a few of her critics as a better version than the earlier well known rendering of the same by Mallika Pukhraj.

The chapter on Husnalal Bhagatram will certainly be incomplete, if a mention is not made of -*Suno suno aye duniyan walo, baapu ki ye amar kahani*, which was recorded after the demise of Mahatma Gandhi. The singer, a young 24 years old Mohd Rafi, became a celebrity overnight with this recording. The lyrics were written by Rajinder Krishan and composed by the duo within a record time of just 24 hours. More than one million copies of a set of two 78 rpm discs of this recording were sold within one month. In a way, during those days, whosoever owned a gramophone, is supposed to have bought these two gramophone records.

What better popularity in the annals of music history,



can one expect. However, destiny unfolded otherwise. The complexities of relationships and consequent disregard by the industry, compelled Husnalal to leave Bombay and settle in a large disputed compound in the Paharganj, New Delhi for the remaining short span of his life.

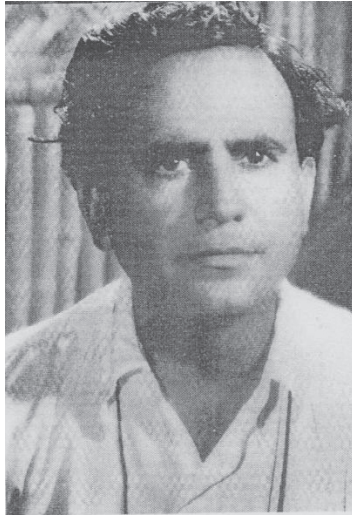
In Delhi, he taught music and instead of charging any fee at times offered his pupils meals and tea. One of his well known disciples was Neelam Sahni (a popular singer of her time). He also sang on All India Radio and at other well acknowledged concerts.

On a chilly morning of 28 December, 1968 he went out for his routine morning walk and had a massive cardiac arrest on the way. He fell down at the nearby Gole Market vicinity and was taken to the then Willington Hospital (presently RML) where he was declared as: 'An unknown body brought dead.'

The fate of his elder brother Bhagatram was no better. For his survival, he worked as a mere musician with different composers. He too passed way unsung on the 29 November, 1973.

6

The Genius of Film-making Named: **Kidar Sharma**



A painter, photographer, story-writer, poet, lyricist, dialogue-writer, editor, director, producer, a Masters in English Literature from Punjab University; was none other than the one and only -Kidar Sharma.

A life that was full of distress, neglect, poor economic conditions and mental agony in his early days; yet it could not discourage him from his passion and determination to join films. The film *Pooran Bhagat* produced by New Theatres of Calcutta and directed by Debaki Kumar Bose in the early 1930s, had a perpetual impact on his psyche.

He recalled in his memoirs- "I have nothing to recommend me. My voice was horrible and my face was average. My health was poor and my purse empty besides there was nobody to help me. Only my sense of humour and my faith in God, goaded me on to continue the struggle." About Debaki Kumar Bose, he wrote- "He expressed his ideas through symbolism. He was the greatest movie maker. Even today no one can match his subtlety and mastery. He was the supreme guru and all subsequent directors have learnt more than a thing or two from him".

The tiring rail journey in a III class compartment from Amritsar took the young Kidar Sharma to a totally unknown place called Calcutta in search of Debaki Kumar Bose, the director of New Theatres -the then Mecca of the Indian film industry. He did not have the train fare to go to Calcutta but his wife Raj Dulari gave him the money Rs 25 from what she had saved. Consequently, for his survival he occasionally pasted film-posters.

After repeated attempts to enter the gate of New Theatres and forbidden by the watchman, Kidar Sharma approached two punjabies Prithviraj Kapoor and Kundan Lal Saigal, who were associated with New Theatres for their help.

As destiny would have it, Saigal introduced the young Kidar Sharma to Debaki Kumar Bose through Durga Khote, the well known face of Hindi cinema. Thus, commenced the journey of Kidar Sharma, which also proved to be the beginning of a golden phase in the history of Hindi cinema.

Debaki Kumar Bose hired Kidar Sharma initially as a still photographer for the film *Seeta* (1934). He continued working in the photography department for the subsequent films *Inqilab* and *Dhoop Chhaon* (1935) and *Pujarin* (1936). Eventually, he came to the limelight with the historic film *Devdas* (1935) starring his life long friend K.L. Saigal. It was directed by the legendary P.C. Barua. In this film Kidar Sharma got his first major break as a lyricist and dialogue

writer besides the young Bimal Roy as the cinematographer. Its two enduring songs - *Balam aye baso mere man mein & Dukh ke ab din beeta naahin* (sung by K.L. Saigal) were written by Kidar Sharma. These two melodies are still alive in the memories of music lovers.

Kidar Sharma, was born on 12 April, 1910 at Narowal (now in Pakistan) in what was then the Punjab region of India. He grew up in extreme poverty. His two brothers, Ragnath and Vishva had died as infants and a sister Taro too died due to tuberculosis at an early age. Though a younger sister Guro survived, as did a brother Himmat Rai, who would later work with Kidar Sharma in films before establishing himself as a successful Urdu poet.

Kidar Sharma attended Baij Nath High School, Amritsar where he got interested in painting, theatre and photography besides philosophy. His family could not afford his initial education, and to earn some money he did book-binding for the school library. Thereby he earned four annas (a quarter of a rupee) a day to sustain himself and continued his education. After completing his high school education, he ran away from home to pursue a career in cinema in Bombay, but was unsuccessful in getting any work. He returned to Amritsar and continued his studies. He attended the Hindu Sabha College where he founded the College Dramatic Society which would later give him his first break in films.

In his early days, while struggling for a living, he would paint portraits of the luminaries, religious idols and film personalities. On one Diwali, the young Kidar sold a captivating painting of Lord Rama on a footpath in Hall Bazaar, Amritsar for a mere sum of nine rupees (which included four rupees incurred for its framing) so as to purchase crackers for his younger sister Guro and sweets for the family.

On joining films, he continued his passion for creating images. He painted the portraits and made sketches of Uma

Shashi, Kanan Devi, Pahari Sanyal, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and in his later days, that of Jawahar Lal Nehru. Besides these wonderful paintings, in the midst of his large number of fascinating still photographs, there is a prized portrait of the young Kundan Lal Saigal with his solo hat, which has been published time and again in different magazines and journals. He utilized the art of still photography adequately in his directorial attempts. One such example can be visualized in one of his films *Jogan* (1950) wherein close-ups are beautifully shot.

The lyricist in Kidar Sharma needs no introduction to the keen film-music lovers. As stated, he came to limelight with the lyrics of the film -*Devdas*. A list of some of his other most unforgettable lyrics include - *Deewana hoon, Hum apna unhein banaa na sakey, Jagat mein prem hi prem bharaa hai, Kya humne bigaraa hai, kyun humko satate ho, Muskurate hue yun aankh milaya na karo, So jaa rajkumari* (sung by K.L. Saigal). *Khayalon mein kisee ke is tarah aya nahin karte, Teri duniyan mein dil lagta nahin, Mujhey such such batado, kya, Sun bairee balam mat bol, ibb kya hoga, Sapna ban saajan aye, Muhabbat ke maron ka, Farishton ki nagri mein main, Gokul se gaye girdhari, Kabhee tanhaiyon mein yun hamari yaad ayegee and Ankhon mein teri yaad liye jaa raha hoon mein*. These are just to name a few.

During earlier days of his financial crisis, Kidar Sharma wrote some of Saigal's immortal non-film songs for a petty sum of rupees five each! A few such lyrics include -*Panchhi kahe hot udaas, Suno suno hey krishan kala and Shamma ka jalna hai*.

It may be observed that most of his lyrics are generally worded with an ease, and simplicity, in a unique style which is close to dialectical prose, spontaneous, effortless and straight from the heart. For instance, if it is *Dukh ke ab din beetat nahin or Mujhe such such bataa do, kya* and *Khayaoln mein kisi ke, is tarah aya nahin katrte*. In the saying of Mathew Arnold – 'Poetry is the overflow of spontaneous thoughts' – the affirmations goes aptly with the genius Kidar Sharma.



Again, his role as a dialogue and screen-play writer must be appreciated for his in-depth appeal and passion particularly for some of his films like – *Devdas* (1935), *Vidyapati* (1937) and later on for *Jogan* (1950). There were other enduring movies like *Suhagraat*, *Bawre Nain*, *Shokhian*, *Gauri* second version of *Chitrlekha* and *Hamari Yaad Aayegi*.

A hard task master with a deep understanding of the psyche, the humane and above all an uncompromising director; Kidar Sharma resigned from New Theatres when he could foresee that his convictions and endeavor would be strained, though this increased his financial problems. He moved to Bombay along with his lifetime associate Prithviraj Kapoor, where he was introduced to Seth Chandulal Shah of Ranjit Movietone - a reputed film producing company.

At Ranjit, he scripted and directed his first film *Aulad* (1940) starring A.S. Gyani and Romola, with an off-beat subject dealing with human conflicts. The film marked the beginning of the new wave cinema.

As a major entrant to Bombay cine production, Kidar Sharma directed another classic film *Chitrlekha* (1941) starring A.S. Gyani and Mehtab. It was based on Hindi laureate Bhagwati Charan Verma's eminent novel with a classic story line and a conflicting theme. In this film he

wrote its theme song *Tum jao jao bhagwan bane* -sung by Ramdulari. The music for the film was composed by Jhande Khan (an eminent composer). Kidar Sharma directed, yet the second version of the film *Chitralkha* (1963) -starring Meena Kumari and Pradeep Kumar. Though, himself a lyricist of eminence, he suggested Sahir Ludhianvi's name for writing its theme song -*Sansaar se bhage phirte ho*, composed by Roshan and sung by Lata Mangeshkar.

Nargis' role in the film *Mother India*, produced and directed by Mehboob Khan is generally considered as her best. However, Nargis could not restrain herself, when in one of her interviews she said- "Though I touched my best in the movie *Mother India*, yet I think I gave my best ever performance in *Jogan*." Perhaps Kidar Sharma, director of the film *Jogan*, could extract a better performance from the actor than Mehboob Khan in *Mother India*.

I would like to share an interesting anecdote during the making of *Jogan*! Once Kidar Sharma observed: "The producer of the film Seth Chandulal Shah told me that I will have to finish the film within a month. "I love challenges, so I agreed on two conditions", one, 'I'd shoot during the day and edit at night provided he would give me a room at the studio to sleep and a man to make me a cup of tea any time of the day or night.' The stars were Nargis and Dilip Kumar. On the first day of the shooting, I asked Dilip Kumar if he was ready and he said "Yes, Boss". Lekh Tandon gave the clap and the camera started rolling, but Dilip Kumar could not concentrate. This happened again and again and finally I told him -"You are a prize horse which will run the race, no doubt, I'm the jockey who controls you with the reins to make you win'. He co-operated fully after that and we completed the film in 29 days". Thus, history was made within the ambit of Hindi cinema with what became the classic film - *Jogan*.

The film *Jogan* was one of the four highest box-office earning movies of the year 1950. The gross sale of tickets



Dilip Kumar and Nargis in the film 'Jogan'

was over Rs. 1.20 crores. The other three were *Samadhi*, *Babul* and *Dastan*. The present day generation of cine-goers will be amazed to learn that the maximum rate of a ticket in an elite urban cinema hall used to cost Rs. 2.50 and a semi-urban and rural area hall's ticket was Re. 1.25. Very few people could even afford a lower class entry costing five annas and ten annas (thirty one and sixty-two paise).

The music of the film *Jogan* was composed by Bulo C. Rani (a former assistant of the legendary Khemchand Prakash). Most of its soul-stirring melodies were sung by Geeta Roy. Each and every song was a glittering gem. Just listen to a few of its Meera *bhajans* sung by Geeta Roy (nee Geeta Dutt) *Ghunghat ke pat khol re, Mein to girdhar ke ghar jaaon, Aye ree mein to prem diwani, Jogi mat ja, Pyare darshan dijo aaj & Uth to chale awdhoot*. Owing to the poignant voice quality of Geeta Roy, its songs became a milestone in the history of Hindi cine-music. She was perhaps at her best in this film. While listening to these inspiring melodies, one is reminded of the *bhajan* singing by greats like Juthika Ray and M.S. Subbulakshmi.

The fact remains that Kidar Sharma had a brilliant sense of music, right from the days he wanted to enter the film-world and was stirred by the musical-hit film *Pooran Bhagat* (1933) in which Saigal sang some touching melodies- *Bhaju mein to bhav se shree girdhari, Ausar beeto jaat pranee tero ausar beeto jaat* and *Sumiran kar piya raam naam*. He thus complemented his fulfillment through these magnificent melodies of the film *Jogan*.

Prithviraj Kapoor, the doyen of theatre and cinema had an unyielding trust in his enduring friend, Kidar Sharma. When his eldest son Raj Kapoor failed in his matriculation examination, he requested Kidar Sharma to accept him as his assistant. Raj Kapoor joined Kidar Sharma as his clapper boy. As his junior, he even swept and mopped floors before he actually became the hero, that he was!

Then came the day when Kidar Sharma decided to launch Raj Kapoor as a hero in his next film *Neelkamal* (1947) along with another newcomer, Madhubala as the heroine (known as Baby Mumtaz). Though this was against the wishes of the producer Seth Chandulal Shah. Yet, the conviction and firm determination of Kidar Sharma could not deter him from making this film and creating legendary actors. Besides these illustrious stars, Kidar Sharma also



introduced Geeta Bali in the film *Suhagrat*, Mala Sinha in *Rangeen Rati*, Rajender Kumar in *Jogan* and brought Tanuja to limelight in his film *Hamari Yaad Aayegi*.

Roshan Lal Nagrath (later on known as Roshan) left Delhi for Bombay in search of an opportunity as a composer. He came across Kidar Sharma at the Dadar Railway Station.

The meeting gave Roshan an opportunity to compose music for the film *Neki aur Badi* (1949) directed by Kidar Sharma. Though it proved to be a box-office failure, yet Kidar Sharma could foresee the hidden talent in Roshan. Kidar Sharma while evaluating his aptitude, gave Roshan another chance in his next film *Bawre Nain* (1950) -starring Raj Kapoor and Geeta Bali. It proved to be a turning point in the career of Roshan, as the film went on to become a smashing hit.

The haunting melodies of yester years composed by Roshan for *Bawre Nain- Khayalon mein kisi ke, iss tarah aaya nahin karte* -sung by Geeta Roy and Mukesh, *Teri duniyan mein dil lagta nahin* -sung by Mukesh and *Sun bairi balam mat bol re ibb kya hoga* and *Kyun mere dil mein* -sung brilliantly by Rajkumari proved their worth. The lyrics of these fabulous melodies were written by Kidar Sharma. Any collection of melodies 'down memory lane' will be certainly incomplete without the inclusion of these numbers.

Kidar Sharma was a grand cinematographer also. Dr. Badri Mehrotra of Florida (US) in one of his communications to the author of these lines observed: "He was one of those pioneers of Indian cinema who laid the early foundation of our movie making industry. It is sad and shameful that our movie industry has not given him the recognition he deserves. I was stunned when at the age of fifteen I saw the cinematography of *Bawre Nain*. I was learning black and white photography at that time and this movie became a 'text book' for me. In those days we would get an old run down video showing *Bawre Nain* but one can still appreciate the magic of Kidar Sharma."

Needless to reiterate that in the myriad roles of a story-writer, lyricist, screen-play & dialogue-writer, editor, photographer and a director; Kidar Sharma in his career in the film industry in one way or the other, was associated closely with some memorable films – *Devdas*, *Vidyapati*, *Chitralekha* (two versions), *-Aulad*, *Mumtaz Mahal*, *Zindagi*,

Vishkanya, Jogan, Bawre Nain, Suhagraat, Gauri, Shokhian, Rangeen Ratein, Pyase Nain, Hamaari Yaad Aayegi just to name a few. The list is endless.

In the later part of his career, Kidar Sharma was associated with the Children Film Society and produced and directed some classic films like- *Chetak* and *Dunia Ek Sarai*. His film *Jaldeep* won an award at the Cannes Film Festival.

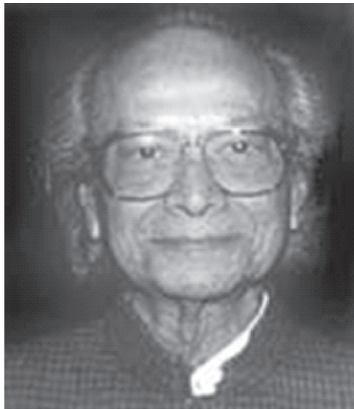
“Kidar Sharma passed away on 29 April 1999, dreaming till the last of the many more films he wanted to make. He always had a subject ready or a script waiting to be financed. It never happened. And strange as it may seem, he was, I think, the only film-maker who was not adequately honored in this country in his lifetime”- noted critic Saeed Akhtar Mirza has appropriately observed after the maestro’s demise.

Award or no award! In the present day over-all scenario in our country, now that every one understands, how and when the capability of a person is being evaluated, it is lesser said, the better about the recognition, the maestro richly deserved.

The fact remains that in the history of Hindi cinema, Kidar Sharma’s name will stand out amongst the greats of the silver screen. What he wrote and Mubarak Begum recited *Kabhi tanhaiyon mein bhee, hamari yaad aayegi* for his film *Hamari Yaad Aayegi* will find its meaning to haunt millions of avid lovers of the cinema and its music.

7

The Most Conventional Indian Music Composer: **Naushad**



If and when a dispassionate history of the evolution and the development of the Hindi film music comes to be written, Naushad's name will certainly find a place of pride in it, for the enormous contribution he has made in the field of music for the Hindustani films.

Naushad was amongst the earliest music directors to recognize the limited range of indigenous musical instruments for modern orchestration and to introduce western instruments into Indian orchestras. And yet he was one of the few composers, who had been critical of just copying western music.

The sixty or sixty plus odd films in which this brilliant music director has provided music gives ample evidence of

the richness and the variety of his collection ranging from the modern to folk to the light-classical and classical.

Naushad had been a legendary figure in the Hindustani film world for nearly three decades and the secret of his unparalleled success, more than anything else is the meticulous care he displayed in the execution of his work and his zest for distinction and excellence.

Naushad, son of Wahid Ali a *munshi* in the courts, was born on 25 December, 1919 at Lucknow. He had a keen interest in music from his very childhood and not much inclined towards education. Against the wishes of his parents, he ran away from his home town and arrived in Bombay in 1937. Here, he came across Ustad Jhande Khan, the music composer and became his assistant for the film *Sunehree Makaree* and composed his first song *Kyon ye dil deewana hai, akl se beganaa*. But, sadly the film was not released. Thereafter, he got a chance of assisting another composer Mushtaq Hussain Khan for the films *Nirala Hindustan* and *Bagbaan* in the year 1938 and *Pati Patni* in the following year.

In the year 1939, Naushad joined reputed film production company Ranjit Movietone, as an instrumentalist to music directors Manohar Kapoor and Khemchand Prakash for the films *Aakhein* and *Ghazi Salaudin* respectively.

Manohar Kapoor was also a music composer for the Punjabi film *Mirza Saheban* produced by D.N. Madhok. While the film was in making, Madhok recognized the talent of Naushad. Consequently, he recommended Naushad's name to Seth Chandulal Shah, the proprietor of Ranjit Movietone for independently composing music for his next film *Kanchan*.

Naushad composed his first song for film *Kanchan -Bataa do mujhe, kaun galee gaye shyam* -sung by singer-actress Leela Chitnis. But, owing to some differences, Naushad after discussing with D.N. Madhok, left the film in-between. As



Naushad and his wife Aliya khatoon

a result the music was completed by Gyan Dutt.

D.N. Madhok wrote the story, the dialogues and the lyrics for the film *Premnagar* (1940) which was produced by Mohan Bhavnani. The music was once again composed by Naushad and in the following year he composed music for the films *Darshan* and *Station Master*.

A.R. Kardar produced and directed the film *Sharda* (1942). Naushad got another chance to compose its music and a 13 year old Suraiya sang her first playback song - *Panchhee jaa*, which proved to be a super-hit.

After the release of the film *Sharda*, A.R. Kardar was deeply impressed with Naushad. He also suggested Naushad's name to Mehboob Khan (his bother-in-law) for

the music of his forthcoming films. This proved to be very significant in the career of the maestro.

Mehboob Khan produced some classic films like *Aurat* (1940) and *Roti* (1942) and the music for these films was composed by the genius- Anil Biswas. But, owing to some financial and other problems, they separated. If Anil Biswas would have continued his association with Mehboob Khan, Naushad's destiny would have been certainly different!

Naushad composed music for a large number of films produced in the early forties under the banner of Kardar production. The list of such films include *Kanoon*, *Namaste* and *Sanjog* (1943), *Pehle Aap*, *Geet* and *Jeewan* (1944), *Sanyasi* (1945), *Keemat* and *Shahjahan* (1946), *Dard* and *Natak* (1947), *Dillagi* and *Dulari* (1949) and *Diwana* (1952).

Some of the other noted melodies Naushad composed for Kardar's films *Ek tu ho ek mein hoon aur nadee ka kinara ho* -Suraiya (Kanoon), *Aan milo morey shyam sanwarey* -Parul Ghosh & G.M. Durrani (Namaste), *Chale gaye chale gaye, dil mein aag lagane wale* -Zohrabai Ambalewali (Pehle Aap), *Suno ji pyari koyalia boley, mast jawanee doley*- Amar & Zohrabai (Sanyasi), *Aaj machee hai dhoom, jhoom khushee mein jhoom* & *Afsanaa likh rahee hoon dil-e-beqaraar ka* -Uma Devi, *Hum thay tumhare tum thay hamare* -Suraiya (*Dard*), *Dil waley dil waley, jal jal kar hi mar jana* -Uma Devi (*Natak*), *Murliwale murli bajaa, sun sun murli ko* -Suraiya (*Dillagi*), *Tu mera chaand mein teri chandni* & *Zalim zamana mujhko tumse chhura rahaa hai* -Suraya & Shyam, *O teer chalane wale__ teer khate jayenge* -Lata, *Tasveer banata hoon teri khune jigra se* -Rafi (*Diwana*). Besides, all the 12 songs of a completely forgotten film *Dulari* were splendid. For instance, *Suhanee raat dhal chuki* -Rafi and *Taqdeer jagaa kar aayee hoon* & *Aie dil tujhe kasam hai, himmat na harnaa* -Lata and *Naa bol pee pee morey angnaa* -Shamshad Begum's songs deserve a particular mention. Besides all these glittering gems, the film *Dulari* had a fascinating orchestral composition.

Nevertheless, the greatest Kardar-Naushad hit was the



Awards and rewards

film *Shahjahan*, starring Kundan Lal Saigal. There were six popular songs of Saigal in this film - *Gham diye mustaqil, kitnaa nazuk hei dil, Kar lijiye chal kar meree jannat ke nazare, Jab dil hi toot gaya, Aie dil-e-beqaraar jhoom, Chaah barbaad karegi hamein maloom na tha & Merey sapnon ki rani, ruhee ruhee ruhee*. In the last number - *Merey sapnon ki-* the young Mohd Rafi too accompanied the singer.

In one of his broadcasts over A.I.R. (Vividh Bharti), Naushad affirmed that on the funeral of Saigal, his popular composition *Jab dil hi toot gaya* was sung as a tribute to the legendary singer. I discussed this particular aspect with one of the family members of the singer, who at the outset negated such an occurrence. I was also given to understand that at wee hours on 18 January, 1947 when Saigal breathed his last at Jalandhar, the whole of Punjab was in the flames in view of the partition riots. As such, about 30-40 family members and close friends thought it most appropriate to cremate the dead body at the earliest. What is more, Saigal died at the young age of just 42 years. As such, there was no question of singing of the song *Jab dil hi toot gaya*, as narrated by Naushad.

In the year 1944 Jamuna Productions, Bombay produced

the film *Rattan*. The songs for this film were written by D.N. Madhok, who even composed the tunes of his songs by playing his fingers on a '555' cigarette-tin. The music was composed by the maestro. The total cost of the film was mere seventy five thousand rupees. In view of the popularity of all its ten songs, the film proved a smashing box office success and it ran for more than seventy five weeks.

Some of its songs viz *Akhian mila ke, jiya bharma ke chale nahin janaa, Pardesi balamwa baadal aye, Aayee diwali aayee diwali, deepak sung naache patanga & Rumijhum barse badarwa, must hawanyein aanyee* -sung by Zohrabai Ambalewali and *Angrayee teri hai bahanaa & Jhuthhe hein sab sapne suhane* -sung by Manju and *Jab tum hi chale pardes laga kar thes* sung by Karan Dewan & *Saawan ke baadlo, unsey ye ja kaho* -sung by Zohra & Karan Dewan and *Mil ke bichhar gayee akhiyan* -sung by Ameerbai and *O jaaney waley balamwa* -sung by Ameerbai & Shamkumar were super-hit.

During my personal meeting with Naushad in the year 1978, I was given to understand that first year's royalty from the sale of the film's (*Rattan*) gramophone-records -costing two rupees each -was over three lakh rupees.

In the films to follow, Naushad composed some memorable melodies for the film *Mela* (1948) viz *Gaaye ja geet Milan ke* -Mukesh, *Dharti ko akash pukare, Mein bhanwara tu hai phool, Meraa dil torne wale, Aayee sawan rut aayee* -Mukesh & Shamshad, *Ye zindagi ke meley, dunian mein kum na hongey, Phir aah dil se niklee, tapkaa laho jigar se* -Zohrabai Ambalewali.

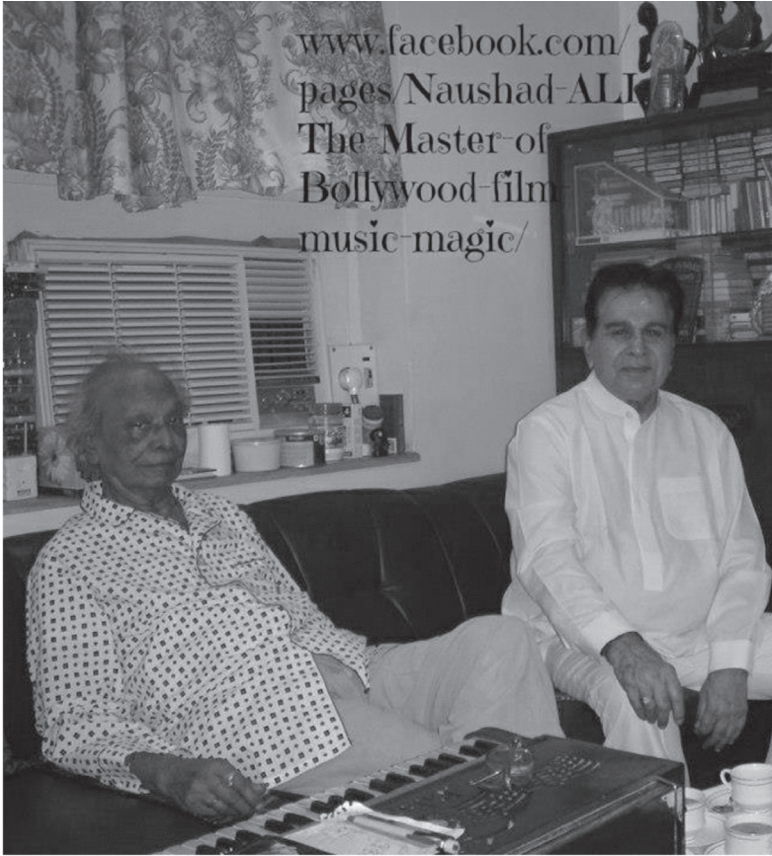
And, *Lagan more mun ki balam nahin jaane, Panchhi bun mein piya piya gane laga* -Lata, *Na socha tha ye dil lagane se pehle & Chhord babul ka ghar* -Shamshad, *Mera jeewan saathi bichharh gaya, Kisee ke dil mein rehna tha, to merey dil mein kyun aaye* -Lata & Shamshad, *Milte hi aankhien dil hua diwana kisika' & Duniyan badal gayee* -Talat Mahmmud & Shamshad for the film *Babul* (1950).

During the music recording of the film *Babul*, a deplorable incident took place. The singer Talat Mahmood lighted his cigarette in the presence of Naushad, which hurt and annoyed his composer. So much that, he never got a chance to sing for Naushad again.

Another two films *Dastaan* (1950) and *Jaadoo* (1951) were unique in the career of the maestro. In these two films he deployed western orchestra in an outstanding manner. Though in his later years, as stated he campaigned for the purity of Hindustani classical style of music for his films. However, some of the numbers he composed were indeed remarkable viz *Ye mausam ye tanhayee*, *Aie shamma tu bataa*, *Nainon mein preet hai* -Suraiya. Besides, there was an instrumental recording of orchestra on both sides of a 78 rpm disc for the film *Dastaan*. These incredible orchestral numbers were played by Radio Ceylon for years together as the signature tune for their popular programme -*Aap ki Pasand*. The reminiscence of a magnificent dance number (picturized on Nalini Jayawant) on the orchestral music of *Lara loo* for the film *Jadoo* is still alive.

The film *Deedar* (1951) will be remembered for its two numbers- *Dekh liya maine kismat ka tamasha dekh liya* -Lata & Rafi and a solo by Lata -*Bachpan ke din bhula na dena*.

The film *Baiju Bawra* (1952) produced by Prakash Pictures and directed by Vijay Bhatt was another signpost in the career of Naushad. The classical based music of this film is still alive in the head and heart of music lovers, even after a gap of more than six decades. How can one forget *Mohe bhool gaye sanwaria & Bachpan ki muhabbat ko dil se na judaa karnaa* -Lata, *Insaan bano, O duniyan ke rakhwale & Mann tarpat hari darshan ko aaj* - Rafi, *Jhule mein pawan ki aayee bahaar & Tu ganga ki mauj mein jamna ki dharaa* -Lata & Rafi and *Door koyee gaye dhun ye sunaye tere bin chhalia re* -Lata, Shamshad & Rafi. The alluring *jaltarang* support with *Jhule mein* was unique and can be added to the list of the finest by Naushad.



The perspective on the music of the film *Baiju Bawra* will be incomplete if a particular reference is not made to two classical numbers of Ustad Amir Khan -*Tori jai jai kartaar* & *Dhanan dhanan barso* and yet another classical classic -*Aaj gaawat mann mero jhoom ke* -a duet by Pt D.V. Paluskar & Ustad Amir Khan. Interestingly, this classical duet was recorded as the playback for the film's hero Bharat Bhushan (Baiju) & Surendra (Tansen) respectively. Since Surendra himself was an eminent singing-star; he could not understand why someone else will do the playback singing for him. However, when he learnt that Ustad Amir Khan

will sing for him, he rather humbled and felt elevated.

Baiju Bawra, in view of its popular music, completed a record period of more than 75 weeks of its screening. On its grand success a function was organized at *Broadway* theatre, located at Dadar, Bombay to felicitate Naushad. The maestro was called to the stage to say something about the music and also the success story of his career.

Naushad recalled the event and shared that he got so emotional and felt completely short of words. Consequently, he could merely utter -*Dosto, is theatre ke footpath se lagee seedion se is stage tak aane mein mujhe solah saal ka wakt laga hai. Mujhe aaj bhi yaad hai, jab mein apne Lucknow se Bumbai aaya tha, to mein is theatre ki seedion par soyaa kartaa tha.* (Friends, I have taken sixteen years to reach this stage from the stairs of this theatre. I still remember that when I came to Bombay from Lucknow, I used to sleep on the stairs adjoining the footpath of this theatre).

With the passage of time and due to financial constrains, *Broadway* theatre was converted into a shopping plaza. When the theatre was being demolished; Naushad told me that he personally went to the site and watched the scene of demolition for ten minutes. He returned home and recollected emotionally the memory of the day when the film *Baiju Bawra* completed 75 weeks of its screening at the Bombay's 'Theatre of Pride' called *Broadway*.

It will not be out of place to say that in singing-*O duniyan ke rakhwale* and the other songs, the young Mohammad Rafi was certainly at his career best. And it is a recognized fact that what he sang for Naushad was entirely different from what he sang for all other composers.

Another milestone in the career of the maestro was the film *Udan Khatola* (1955), produced by Naushad himself under the banner of Sunny Art Production - starring Dilip Kumar and Nimmi. Though the film left much to be desired, yet the music was simply outstanding. Each of its thirteen melodies composed were better than the other. The

orchestra used for *Mera salaam lejaa & Ghar aaya mehmaan*, human-humming accompanying for *Haiya ho haiya re haiya morey saiiyyan ji utrenge paar ho, nadiya dheere baho*, the depth in the opening notes of *Dooba tara ummindon ka sahara toot gaya*, *Naa ro aye dil kahin ronein se taqdeerien badalee hein*, *Haale dil mein kya kahun*, the incredible use of *swarmandal* in *Sitaron ki mehfil sajee, magar tum na aaye* (all Lata numbers) and *Muhabbat ki raahon mein chalnaa sambhal ke & Na toofaan se khelo* (Rafi) was indeed incredible. Yet again, the assistance of Mohd Ibrahim in creating the entirety of music was simply superb. In totality, all such features proved a grand treat for the music lovers.

Down memory lane, one of the key factors for the success story of Naushad, was his association with the genius Mehboob Khan, who after his break-up with Anil Biswas, took the young Naushad as a music director for his forthcoming films after the release of the film *Roti* (1942). The channel of introduction to Mehboob Khan was established by the splendid lyricist Dina Nath Madhok, who introduced young Naushad to Abdul Rashid Kardaar and he subsequently recommended him to his brother-in-law Mehboob Khan. Thus, the success story emerged!

The perfectionist Mehboob Khan produced a good number of films with Naushad as his music composer. The list of such musical-hits produced include -*Anmol Ghadi* (1946), *Elaan* (1947), *Anokhi Ada* (1948), *Andaaz* (1949), *Aan* (1952), *Amar* (1954) and *Mother India* (1957).

In his maiden endeavor with Mehboob Khan, the maestro composed -*Aawaz de kahan hai, dunian meri jawan hai* sung by evergreen melodious Noorjehan and Surendra, which proved to be one of the most popular melodies not only of India, but for the entire Indian sub-continent. The accompanying instrumentation employed was poignant. After listening to such immortal melodies, one can say without any hesitation that music cannot be bound by any barriers.

The melody queen of Indian sub-continent, Noorjehan migrated to Pakistan after the partition of India, which is considered as one of the biggest loss not only to Hindi cine music, but for the music of entire Indian sub-continent. Had Noorjehan stayed in India, her fate and that of Lata Mangeshkar would have been entirely different. It is my firm conviction that in the making of Lata Mangeshkar (during her *Golden Era* -1948 till 1955) she was fortunate enough to have a galaxy of music composers, who were indeed diamond-cutters. They not only shaped her voice quality, but also her destiny!

At this juncture, it will not be out of place to mention that there was a complete lack of qualitative composers for the class and voice quality of Noorjehan in Pakistan. The excellence of her 114 melodies composed in undivided India was simply matchless. For instance simply listen to some of her evergreen numbers of *Khandan* (1942), *Dost* (1944), *Bari Maa*, *Zeenat* and *Village Girl* (1945), *Anmol Ghadi* (1946), *Mirza Saheban* and *Jugnu* (1947). The galaxy of composers who not only shaped her providence but also harmonic and thereby could extract something unique were -Master Ghulam Haider, K. Dutta, Sajjad Husain, Shyam Sunder, Husnalal Bhgatram, Naushad and Feroze Nizami.

As destiny would have it, Noorjehan was not as lucky to work with the brilliant composers that Lata had during her singing career. Though Noorjehan continued to sing in Pakistan and earned a lot of fame, admiration, wealth and applause; yet the fact remains the immortality of her singing, specially in *Badi Maa*, *Dosti*, *Anmol Ghadi* and *Mirza Saheban* like films, was missing in her later singing.

Back to Naushad and the story of Noorjehan, who sang some brilliant numbers in the film *Anmol Ghadi viz Jawan hai mohabbat*, *Ajaa meri barbaad mohabbat ke sahare*, *Kya mil gaya bhagwan*, *Mere bachan ke saathi mujhe bhool na jana* and a milestone melody of career -*Awaz de kahan hai* (a duet with Surendra), which became synonymous with her. Naushad

very wisely used the violin in this number, and recorded the song in her voice with an excellent matching violin. Thus, making it an evergreen melody.

There were two other fabulous Noorjehan songs- *Jawan hai mohabbat* and *Mere bachpan ke saatih mujhe bhoon na jaana*, and some grand numbers by Suraiya. Enjoy listening to *Sochaa tha kya, kya ho gaya, Man letaa hei angrai & Mein dil mein dard basaa layee* and Surendra's *Kyun yaad aa rahein hein* and Rafi's - *Tera khilona toota* and Zohra & Shamshad's *Uran khatole pe urh jaoun, tere haath na aaoun*. What a grand commencement of the Naushad-Mehboob Khan joint venture it proved to be!

Though Mehboob Khan was a towering figure in the field of film production, even then Naushad did not allow him to intervene in his music making. He reminisced to Raju Bhartan (the famous music critic), "When I recorded my first song for Mehboob's *Anmol Ghadi*, he asked Noorjehan to change a note here and there. He was the boss. The next day I purposely went to the sets as the song was being picturised. Mehboob welcomed me, saying, 'Look, your song's being shot!' 'May I see it through the camera?' -I asked. I peered through and daringly asked to move this table left, and the chair right. Mehboob caught me by the ear and said, 'Who do you think you are! this is not your job. Your job is music, direction is my job.' I said that was the very admission I wanted from him- that his job was direction, not music! Mehboob's answer was never to enter my music room again and I did all his films unfettered."

There is not much to be commented on the subsequent film *Elaan*. But Mukesh sang some memorable songs for the film - *Anokhi Ada viz Manzil ki dhun mein jhoomte gaate chale chalo, Bhoonle wale yaad na aa, Ye pyar ki batein & Kabhee dil, dil se takrayaa to hoga*. Uma Devi (Tun Tun) too sang -*Kahe jiya dolye, kaha nahin jaye & Dil ko lagaa ke humnein kuchh bhi na paya*. There were also songs of Shamshad & Surendra and a fabulous duet by Mukesh & Shamshad -*Bhoon gaye kyon de ke sahara*.

The next major success was super-hit film *Andaz* (1949) -starring Dilip Kumar, Nargis and Raj Kapoor. In this film the young and upcoming Lata Mangeshkar sang for the first time for Naushad. There were three solo and three duets of Lata with Mukesh, besides another four marvels of Mukesh. Looking at the major star cast and also the legendary director-producer, Mehboob Khan, it was not only a challenge for Lata Mangeshkar but also for the composer. This was owing to the fact that young Maharashrian Lata Mangeshkar basically lacked an understanding of the Urdu language. More so, Dilip Kumar and Mehboob Khan had their reservations about her *Marathi* accent.

“Music is my department and I don’t want any interference; be it director, actor or the producer. I told Mehboob Saheb, when fingers were raised, as to who will be the female singer for the playback of the heroine Nargis?” Once again Naushad had to assert. This conveyed his conviction and confidence in the singer!

As such, at the time of recording of her first song with Naushad – *Tod dia dil mera, tune arey bewafa*, everybody including Dilip Kumar and Mehboob Khan were spell bound by the impact created by the composer and the singer. The other five numbers –*Koyee mere dil mein, Uthaye jaa unke sitam* and *Da dir dara, meri ladli* and the duets –*Darr na mohabbat kar le* (with Shamshad) & *Yun to aapas mein* (with Rafi) were beyond any one’s expectation. The music of the film *Andaz* indeed proved to be a milestone in the career of Lata Mangeshkar.

Again, all four songs by Mukesh for this film –*Hum aaj kahin dil kho baithe, Tootey na dil tootey na, Jhoom jhoom ke nacho aaj* & *Too kahey agar jeevan bhar mein geet sunata jaaun* came out as memorable. Though for the next nineteen years, till the film *Saathi* (1968), he did’nt sing for Naushad.

In view of the recognition of the music of *Andaz* in general and of Lata in particular; immediately thereafter Lata got a chance to sing for the film *Barsat* (1949) produced

and directed by Raj Kapoor and for which the music was composed by the new entrant duo -Shanker Jaikishan.

The music of the film *Aan* (1952) was splendid. The memories of *Tere jane ke baad teri yaad aayee & Aaj mere mun mein sakhee bansuri bajaye* (Lata) and *Khelo rung hamare sung, din rung rangilaa aaya* (Shamshad & Lata) are still alive. Though the next film *Amar* (1954) was not a box office success, but all the ten recorded songs had an alluring impact on the listeners. To this day, whenever a signature tune of a temple bell is heard, the memory of - *Insaaf ka mandir hai ye, bhagwaan ka ghar hai* (Rafi) is evolved. Additionally, Lata's brilliant numbers for the film include - *Jane wale se mulakaat na hone paae, Naa shikwaa hai koi, naa koi gilaa hai, Khaamosh hai khewan haar mera, Tere sadke balam*. Besides, there was a brilliant *ghazal* sung by her- *Naa miltaa ghum to barabadee ke afsane kahan jate*.

The first song (a *bhajan*) by Asha Bhonsle for Naushad - *Radha ke pyare, krishan kanhayee, teri duhai*, was a musical endearment. Though listeners' memories have faded with the passage of time; to me, it was and is certainly one of the outstanding melodies of Asha. The magical touch of the composer is clearly evident in this immortal number. The voice quality communicating a classic patho is simply amazing. Whenever the recording of this fascinating number is played, very few listeners can even believe that its the voice of Asha. In this melody, Naushad certainly has made use of Asha's voice, with a difference!

The height of 'Naushad-Mehboob Khan' music collaboration can be heard in film *Mother India* (1957) starring Nargis, Rajkumar, Sunil Dutt, Rajender Kumar and Kanhaiyalal. It was the remake of Mehboob Khan's earlier film *Aurat*. The role of Nargis in the film was a landmark in the history of Indian cinema. The direction of Mehboob Khan and the acting of Nargis were certainly 'par-excellence'. Most of the songs created by Naushad were perfectly, matching with the story line and more particularly those sung by Lata for Nargis.

Listen to *Nagri nagri dwaare dwaare, O jane wale jao na ghar apna chhor ke* & *O mere laal ajaa* -Lata and *Chundariya kat tee jaye re, umariya ghat ti jaye re* sung by Manna Dey created some superb effects on the viewers. Again, the folk music in *Garhiwale garhi dheere hank re* -Shamshad and Rafi; *Dukh bhare din beete re bhaiyya, ab sukh aayo re* -Shamshad, Rafi & Manna Dey. The background music and the melodies positively enhanced the impact of the events portrayed.

Overall, the large orchestra of Naushad produced some spectacular music. In *Holi aayee rey kanhayee rung chhalke, sunaa de jaraa bansure*, the maestro also created one of the finest *Holi* songs of the century. The loveable duet was sung by Lata & Shamshad and the unique nasal voice quality of Shamshad provided fascinating colours to the alluring melody!

In the composer's voyage to follow, a major signpost was the film – *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), which was produced and directed by K. Asif. It was based on the Anarkali-Salim love affair. The impact of the identical story line based musical super-hit film *Anarkali* (1953) was still alive. How can one forget C. Ramcharda's composed -*Ye zindagi usee ki hai, Duaa kar gamein dil* & *Mujhse mat pooch mere ishq mein kya rakhha hai* sung by Lata and -*Jaag dard ishq jaag* a classic number by Hemant Kumar & Lata Mangeshkar.

It was a challenge for Naushad for the heavily budgeted *Mughal-e-Azam* with stars - Dilip Kumar, Madhubala and *papaji* of Hindi cinema, the great theatre actor Prithviraj Kapoor. The expectations of the producer were sky-high. Naushad once narrated to me that in his career he never had a sleepless night. But, while composing the music for this film, his regular time schedule was seriously disturbed.

The celebrated film *Mughal-e-Azam* was released on 05 August, 1960 at a fairly large number of cinema halls all over India. It proved to be a historic day in the annals of the history of Indian cinema and witnessed an extraordinary large crowd at the booking windows throughout the

country. At hundreds of places, police was called to control the cine-goers gathered for the advance booking. The black marketers had a field day, selling the tickets at a huge premium.

Naushad's music for the film received extraordinary reviews from the critics. The melodies composed on classical ragas were well acclaimed by one and all. Undisputedly, its music was one of the major factors for the success of the film. Even to this date, music lovers have not forgotten - *Pyaar kiya to darna kya, Mohabbat ki jhoothee kahani pr roye, Beqas pe karam kijiye sarkare madeena, Khudaa nigebaan ho_dhadakte dil ka payam lelo, Ye dil ki lagee kum kya hogee, jab raat hai aisi matwali, phir subah ka aalam kyahoga & Mohe panghat pe nandlal chherh gayo re* -all Lata numbers and *Teri mehfil mein kismat aazmaa kar hum bhi dekhenge* a grand *qawwali* sung by Lata and Shamshad.

Another notable feature of the film were the two classical melodies sung by Ustad Bade Gulam Ali Khan - *Shubh din aayo & Prem jogan banke*. The songs were admired by the viewers, the listeners and the critics alike.

How did Bade Gulam Ali Khan – the doyen of Hinduatani classical music – agree to sing for a film? I enquired from the composer during one of my meetings. "Yes, it was a very difficult task. As the eminent classical singers considered it beyond their dignity to sing for a film. But, during the making of *Mughl-e-Azam*, one day K. Asif insisted that we should have something unique in its music. And, before I could react, he told me that we should contact Bade Gulam Ali Khan and request him to sing a song for the film".

"As such, an appropriate time for the meeting was arranged and we (Naushad & K. Asif) called on Khan Saheb. I offered my respects. Khan Sahib enquired the reason for this meeting and before I could complete my sentence, Asif Saheb interrupted by saying – '*Khan Saheb hum ek film banaa rahein hein aur aap ne usmein ek ganaa, ganaa hai*'. At this Khan

Saheb flared up and told -'Naushad, tum kis ehmak ko pakad laye ho'. There was a complete lull. I was in a fix as to what to say. On one side, was the most respectable *Ustad* and on the other side the producer of eminence. After a few minutes, Khan Saheb said *Mere gane ki keemat jaante ho!- mein ek gane ke pachees hazar letaa hoon'*. At this, as if the battle was won. Asif Saheb spoke '*Khan Saheb hum to apke gane ki keemat bahoot zyadaa samajhte hein, baheraal hum aapko pachees hazar denge'*. This is how Khan Saheb was made to agree. He came for the recording; and as he was very much impressed with the situation, background and also the story line. Instead of one song he ended up singing two songs for a sum of fifty thousand rupees in the late fifties, when the highest fee for a song used to be not more than three thousand ruprees." – once shared Naushad.

After *Mughal-e-Azam*, Naushad composed music for more than twenty five films, but the fact remains that with



the passage of time, changes in the music scenario and most importantly, the demise of his brilliant assistant Ghulam Mohammad (who himself was an established music director), the glitter of glory of his music was somehow not there in his subsequent films. In some of his later films, the reference can merely be made to -*Kohinoor* (1960), *Ganga Jamuna* (1961), *Mere Mahboob* (1963) and *Leader* (1964). In these films, there were just a few excellent songs.

As a gesture of goodwill, he completed the music of *Pakeeza* (1971) as its music director Ghulam Mohammad expired before its completion.

A question is generally asked as to which was the best musical hit of Naushad. I too asked this question when I went to see the maestro. To this, he modestly said- "I am still alive!" which made me speechless.

In my opinion, the best of Naushad can be heard in the film *Shabab* (1954) starring Bharat Bhushan and Nutan.

Let us have a look at what is in store in the recordings of the film *Shabab* (1954). Just listen to *Mann ki been matwari baahe* – a brilliant duet sung by Mohd Rafi and Lata Mangeshkar. I believe that this was one of the best duets by these two legendary singers. The depth in the recitation, the accompanying instrumentation, the matching male and female voices, the enthralling endurance and excellent tonal quality are some of the unique features of this grand number. This melody bears the complete signatures of Naushad and his talented assistant Ghulam Mohammad.

The fine solo songs of Lata Mangeshkar viz *Jogan bun jaungee* and *Aayi hoon, Jo mein jantee bisrat hein saiiyan, ghunghataa mein aag lagaa detee* (a melody, based on raag *Maand*) *Mar gaye hum jeete jee maalik* and *Marna teri galee mein, jeena teri galee mein* are some soul-stirring melodies. Then, *Aaye na balam wada karke* and *Yahee armaan lekar aaj tere ghar se hum nikle* and *Mehlon mein rehne wale* -sung by Mohd Rafi (wherein young Mubrak Begum beautifully lent her support) are yet again completely distinct songs of the singer.

Additionally, listen to one of the best *bhajans* sung by Manna Dey for this film -*Bhagat ke bass mein bhagwan, maango milega subko daan*. The quality of harmonium played as an accompanist by Mohammad Ibrahim was brilliant.

I would like to share a particular reference in this chapter, about a memorable duet – *Chandan ka palnaa, resham ki doree* sung by Hemant Kumar and Lata Mangeshkar, which was an unusual combination in the maestro's music-making. This was the first occasion when Hemant Kumar (a music director and singer himself) lent his voice for Naushad (the second one was of course for the film *Ganga Jamana -Insaaf ki dagar pe bacho dikhao chal ke*). This song is certainly a much better composition than any of his (Hemant Kumar's) own composed songs. After gathering some courage, I enquired from Naushad, as to why he didn't have Hemant Kumar later in his films? Was it because that he belonged to Bengal school of music and you are from Lucknow? To this the maestro replied in his usual humble tone – "*Aisaa nahin hai, Hemant Saheb ek achhey mausikaar hein, per wo merey kirdaaron se mail nahin khatay hein*".

Last but not the least, music lovers of yesteryears and of the present era will be indebted to the maestro for recording –*Dayaa karo, he giridhar gopal* - sung by Ustad Amir Khan in this film, thereby, confirming my conviction that Naushad was truly at his best in the film *Shabab*.

Naushad was an exceptional human being, without any ego and a noble poet at heart. While living in 'Aashiana' Carter Road, in the posh vicinity of Bandra, Bombay; he never forgot the memories of his days of distress and struggle. When he came to Bombay, he had to sleep on the footpath and walked on foot for miles together, to save one anna (six paise). He was a highly religious person and invariably used to offer *namaaz* five times a day. But he was away from the orthodox customs as well, which divide humanity on the basis of religion. This is evident from some of his compositions –*Bhagwaan, O dunian ke rakhwale* and *Bhagat ke bus mein hein bhagaan*, which he composed for the

films *Baiju Bawara* and *Shabab* respectively.

In recognition of his distinguished contribution to music, Naushad was bestowed with a number of awards. He was honoured with the prestigious *Sangeet Academy Award*, the coveted *Padma Bhushan* and also the highest *Dada Saheb Phalke* award'.

Naushad bade adieu on 5 May, 2006 in Mumbai.

8

A Perfectionist of Film Music: **Sajjad Hussain**



Hindi film panorama after the commencement of the talkie era, witnessed a variety of personalities attached to different faculties of production; whether in acting, direction, photography, editing, dialogue-writing, music composing and singing.

In the middle of a large number of music composers, we had some rarest of the rare gems, who not only crafted some captivating melodies, but also shaped the destiny of a large number of singers. This was in view of the fact that these music composers had a profound understanding of lyrics, the use of instrumentation, classical music base, the voice

quality of the respective singer and an insight into quality recording.

One amongst such music-directors was Sajjad Hussain, who was known for his perfectionist and a controversial personality. He fashioned some immortal melodies, which were entirely different from all others. But sadly with the passage of time he has been completely forgotten.

A few lines about the career-graph of Sajjad Hussain, who was born at Sitamau (Central Province now Madhya Pradesh) on 15 June, 1917. His father, Mohd Amir Khan was a *sitarist*. But, Sajjad could not confine his learning to *sitar* only. He additionally learnt playing the *veena*, the *jaltarang*, *accordian*, the violin, Spanish and the Hawaiin guitar, flute, piano, banjo, mandolin and harp. Thereby he could brilliantly deploy these instruments for the background music effects and also created some enthralling sound effects.

During the all India Music Conference held in Calcutta in the year 1956, where greats of classical music such as Vinayak Rao Patvardhan, Ali Akbar Khan, Allaudin Khan, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, Ahmed Jaan Thirakwa and Nikhil Banerjee were present; Sajjad Husain played classical ragas -*Shivranjani* and *Harikauns* on the mandolin. The listeners including all these maestros were spell bound at his mastery over the mandolin, which is considered a completely un-traditional musical instrument.

Sajjad Husain as a music director created some immortal melodies in the voices of Noorjehan, Rattanbai, Nirmala Devi (mother of actor Govinda), Lata Mangeshkar, Suraiya, Geeta Roy, Asha Bhonsle, Mohd Rafi, Talat Mahmood, Surendra and others.

He came to Bombay in the year 1940 and was introduced to Mir Allahbuksh (father of Meena Kumari) who was a composer and associated with Minerva Movietone. Mir Allahbaksh was very much impressed with Sajjad's playing of the mandolin. As a result, he took him on as his assistant.



Sajjad Hussain & Lata Mangeshkar

Later on he joined another composer Pt Hanuman Prasad and assisted him for the music of film *Gaali* (1944). In this film Sajjad composed two songs for Nirmala Devi - *Aag lage saarwan mein* and *Ab aa jaa dil na lage*.

Sajjad Husain got his major break for the film *Dost* (1944) starring -Noorjehan and Motilal. For this film Noorjehan sang some dazzling melodies - *Badnaam muhabbat kaun kare*, *Ab kaun hai mera* and *Koyi prem ka de ke sandesa*. The film is remembered till date because of these musical super-hits. It

will not be out of place to mention that what Noorjehan sang for Sajjad was totally different from what she sang for all other composers, whether in India or later on in Pakistan.

If you have listened to these captivating melodies, you would have observed the beauty of delivery of the word *badnaam*, and a charismatic pause thereafter. Again owing to her expression of thought and an extra-ordinary quality of *sur*, it was rated as a class in itself. Then, the pain of parting and sorrow transformed in other numbers -*Ab kaun hai mera* and *Koyee prem ka de ke sandesha* were indeed soul-stirring.

However Shaukat Hussain Rizvi, the paramour and later on the husband of Noorjehan, who produced this film, after viewing its grand success observed that the entire credit for the success of these songs goes to Noorjehan. Sajjad could not digest such remarks and vowed not to compose a song for Noorjehan ever again. As a result, for her next film *Jugnu* (1947), the music was composed by Firoze Nizami.

Even then, Noorjehan admired and respected Sajjad Husain the most. According to her, Sajjad Husain was the greatest composer amongst all. "He was a man of high self-esteem and Shaukat was rude to him. Shyam Sunder and Naushad are also great, but nobody can ever reach the level of Sajjad Hussain." She had once observed.

In his subsequent films Sajjad composed a number of wonderful melodies like '*Teri nazar mein main rahoon, meri nazar mein tu*' a duet of Suraiyya and Surendra for the film *1857* (1946), *Bhool ja aye dil muhabbat ka fasana, kisi se dil lagana* -Lata Mangeshkar and *Saajna din baahure hamare* -Geeta Roy for the film *Khel* (1950) and *Aaj mere naseeb ne mujhko rula, rula diya* -Lata Mangeshkar for film *Hulchal* (1951) which was a very difficult song and bears the complete signatures of the maestro.

In the film *Saiyyan* (1951) Sajjad composed seven classic melodies and each one was different from the other. In particular, the singer -Lata, and the composer, created an

aura of pathos which was amazingly visible in *Kismat mein khusi ka naam nahin, aey gum ke savere tu hi bata, Wo raat din wo sham ki guzari huyee kaahaniyan & Kaali kaali raat re, dil bara satay teri yaad aye*. The sentiments expressed in the lyrics were outstanding and soul-stirring.

Sajjad Hussain was certainly at his best in the film *Sangdil* (1952). Each of its eight melodies was a jewel! Just listen to a lesser known *Dharti se door gore badlon ke paar aja, aja basa lein naya sansaar aja* sung by an unusual pair-Geeta Roy and Asha Bhonsle. In this amazing number, the flute played in the prelude and the accompanying orchestra was simply brilliant. Then, there was a rarest of the rare *bhajan - Darshan pyasi ayee daasi, jugmug deep jalain* sung by Geeta Roy. In this number the accompanying use of *jaltarang* and other instruments was simply superb. Besides there was - *Wo to chale gaye aye dil, yaad se unki pyar kar* -was again a deep rooted number by Lata, which makes the ardent listener cry. The next- *Aaj preet ne tord dee bandhan ki deewar_ dil mein samaa gaye sajan* a classical classic duet of Talat and Lata. Additionally there was -*Ye hawaa ye raat ye chandni, teri ik adaa pe nisaar hai*, which was certainly one of the finest renderings by Talat. As a hard taskmaster, he took 17 retakes of this song. In view of all such classics from the film *Sangdil*, I may conclude that it can be rated as one of the greatest musical hits of all times.

However it is ironical that despite creating such splendid melodies, he could merely get a chance to compose music for just fourteen films. The reasons are very simple. He was a perfectionist, egoist, uncompromising and extremely short-tempered. Above all, he suffered from a highly complex behavior. During one of the rehearsals he told Lata Mangeshkar - "*Latabai, ye Naushad miyan ka ganaa nahin, gane mein dhyaan dijiye*". Another time, he observed - "Kishore Kumar should have been named as Shor Kumar and Talat Mahmood as Ghalat Mahmood".

Sajjad Hussain composed music for film *Rukhsana* (1955),

and after a considerable gap of eight years, he got a chance of composing music for the historic film *Rustam Sohrab* - starring Prithviraj Kappor and Suraiya in the year 1963. In this film, he once again created some memorable melodies viz *Phir tumhari yaad aayee alla kasam* in *quawali* style sung by Rafi, Manna Dey and Sadat Khan and *Ab der ho gayee wallah* -sung by Asha Bhonsle. Then there was an outstanding Lata number -*Aye dilruba*. The recordings of instrumentation of this film is a 'collectors' treasure' for music lovers.

In the year 1958 Madan Mohan, the renowned music director composed *Tujhe kya bataun aye dilruba, tere samne mera haal hai* in the voice of Mohd Rafi for the film *Akhari Dao*. The song was identical to Sajjad's masterpiece *Ye hawa ye raat ye chandni* of the film *Sangdil*.

On listening to this song, Sajjad was furious, owing to the fact that Madan Mohan had copied his composition. In a get-together at the Music Directors Association meet, he asked Madan Mohan in a fit of anger, how he dared to copy his tune without his permission. Madan Mohan very calmly replied, "I couldn't find a better composer to copy", which made Sajjad speechless!

In view of such foregoings, it was obvious that he was short of funds. Once he borrowed ten thousand rupees from veteran composer O.P.Nayyar. Years passed and he could not repay. One day he went to Nayyar and told him in an emotional tone- "Unless you free me from the debt of ten thousand rupees, which I owe you, Allah will certainly send me to hell!" Nayyar was taken aback and said that he will write off the debt. To this Sajjad insisted to Nayyar to say keeping Allah as witness - "*Mein Allah ko hazir nazir rakhte hue, mein apko diye hue dass hazar ropaye ke karz se azad karta hun*" (With Allah as a witness, I free you from the debt of ten thousand rupees that you owe me).

"He was an extremely talented man, very conversant with different aspects of music and its harmony. But his

temperament was his undoing, even around if someone made a minor suggestion, he would turn and say - "what do you know about music? He fought with almost everyone. Due to this attitude, he remained at home most of his life and wasted his talent. The body of work he has produced, small as it may be, ranks among the best in Hindi film music," said Naushad.

"By all standards Sajjad Hussain was an original, a genius music director, different from all others and each of his musical compositions carried most difficult notations, which he himself used to create and took utmost pleasure out of it," observed Anil Biswas.

"We only get, a music director like Sajjad - once in a lifetime," bemoaned Noorjehan at the demise of the genius Sajjad Hussain. At the beginning there were difficulties with everyone. I was always apprehensive when I sang for Sajjad Hussain Sahib because he was very particular. He never liked loud singing. Sometimes an *alaap* is sung rather loudly- he did not like that. He insisted all the musical instruments must be perfectly tuned. He played the mandolin extremely well and if a single musical instrument was slightly out of tune, it displeased him. Compromising was not in his nature".

"I often wondered when I sang for him: 'Will he like it? Am I singing correctly?' But I always wanted to work with him. Even now, when you hear his songs, though the verses are sung in a high octave, they sound effortless. They aren't painful to hear, nor do they sound as though they were strenuous for the singer. This was his approach and I found it a little difficult," said Lata Mangeshkar.

Sajjad was a package deal. You could either take him in his entirety or forget about him. The waste of his talent is ultimately our loss. We have missed the hundreds of tunes that never got created by him, because he was never given a chance. What we have with us now is just a tiny fraction of his untamed genius. We should be thankful for that. After all his music was eternal!

Sajjad breathed his last on 21 July, 1995. The leitmotif of his lifetime, isolation, cast its shadow over his death too. With the notable exception of Khaiyyam and Pankaj Udhas none 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.”

Sajjad Hussain died in oblivion. His last years were not exactly how they should have been. His genius went unsung. One wonders if the story would have been different had he been a little amiable.

Khalid Hasan, the famous Pakistani journalist once asked Noorjehan about her favourite song. She remarked that all her songs were like her children and she could not choose one. On insistence, she recalled a song from film *Dost -Badnaam mohabbat kaun kare*, composed by genius Sajjad Hussain.

9

In Search of a Genius: **Shyam Sunder**



Thirty five years after the partition and two wars between India & Pakistan, in the year 1982 melody queen, Malika-e-Tarannum Noorjehan visited India. It was certainly a grand occasion for millions of music lovers of the Indian sub-continent.

In her honour and to felicitate music lovers, an impressive show was organized in Sanmukhanad Hall, Bombay, which was attended by a large number of luminaries of Indian cinema. Notable amongst them were Anil Biswas, Naushad, the master music composers and matinee idols, Devika Rani, Ashok Kumar, Dilip Kumar and the nightingale of India, Lata Mangeshkar to name a few. It was certainly a grand event!

Noorjehan came to the stage to a thunderous applause from the jam-packed auditorium and after a brief speech, as expected she sang her most popular melody -*Awaaz de kahan ha, dunian meri jawan hai*, which she recorded in India for the film *Anmol Ghadi* - the music for which was composed by Naushad.

Thereafter, it was Lata who was to sing. She found herself in a very difficult situation in view of a completely charged atmosphere all around the auditorium. Nevertheless, she kept every one guessing about the selection of her song. Finally, she came out with one of her most endearing melodies- *Saajan ki galian chhod chale, dil roya aansoo beh na sake* from the film *Bazaar*, music for which was composed by Shyam Sunder. The applause was beyond imagination. The memory of the completely forgotten music director Shyam Sunder came alive, when in her next round Noorjehan sang *Baithee hun teri yaad ka ley karke sahara* another immortal melody from the film *Village Girl*, music for which the music was also composed by none other than Shyam Sunder.

The audience was spell bound. Every one wondered why she chose a completely forgotten Indian melody instead of a large number of songs she recorded in Pakistan after migrating from Bombay. It was perhaps in view of the fact that the singer and the composer of the film *Village Girl* were from undivided Punjab.

The momentous occasion continued with lots of nostalgic and tearful exchanges, and it became a historic event in the annals of pre and post partition Indian music scenario.

A period of another three decades has since passed, but the memories of these two immortal melodies composed by Shyam Sunder (besides many others) are unforgettable. Why has such a legendary music-composer been completely forgotten? Though, he was the composer of some of the classics of his time, such as *Village Girl* (1945), *Devkanya*

(1946), *Actress* and *Ek Pal* (1947), *Bazaar* and *Lahore* (1949), *Dholak*, *Kale Badal* and *Alif Laila'* (1951) -just to name a few.

Down memory lane, in the year 1938, the legendary singer K.L. Saigal visited Lahore, the city known as the Paris of East for a performance and Shyam Sunder accompanied him. It was certainly a grand occasion. When the programme was about to start, some fault developed in the microphone system. Consequently, it became very difficult to control a large audience. Mohammad Rafi, who was known to Shyam Sunder was also present in the gathering. He requested Shyam Sunder to allow him to sing without a mike till the sound system was restored.

So, before the commencement of the show, Mohammad Rafi, the young lad who came from a nearby village, sang a few songs in Punjabi without a mike. He was appreciated by one and all, including Shyam Sunder and Saigal.

Subsequently, when a Punjabi film named *Gul Baloch* was produced and its music was composed by Shyam Sunder, young Mohammad Rafi recorded his first song (in Punjabi)- *Soniyo nee, heeriyo nee*.

In the years to follow, the collection of melodies composed by Shyam Sunder is embedded with some rare gems. In the year 1943, he composed music for the film *Nai Kahani*. An alluring song of G.M. Durani and others-*Neend hamari khwab tumhary, kitne meethe kitne pyarey* became an instant hit. Even today after a gap of more than six decades, the melody richly deserves an eloquent place in the list of popular melodies of yesteryears.

In his next film *Village Girl* (1945), Shyam Sunder came out with flying colours, with Noorjehan singing some of her fabulous melodies viz-*Baithi hoon teri yad ka le karke sahara, Kis tarah bhulega dil & Sajan pardesi, balam pardesi*. These songs had great lyrics written by Wali Saheb and Noorjehan was in absolute command. The accompanying instrumentation and the matching orchestration was simply superb. The genius of the composer was distinctively visible!

It is needless to reiterate that as and when a list of immortal melodies of the previous century of the Indian sub-continent in general and Noorjehan in particular will be drawn; these numbers will invariably find a prime place, the music for which was composed by a totally forgotten genius called- Shyam Sunder.

Again, it will not be out of place to record that Noorjehan continued to sing after migrating to Lahore. But, what she sang and recorded in undivided India was indeed unique, matchless and of much better quality than what she sang later in Pakistan. One of the foremost reasons, according to my personal observations, was that she never had the quality composers of the calibre of Shyam Sunder, Sajjad Husain, Anil Biswas, Naushad, Khemchand Prakash, K. Dutta, Pt Amarnath, Husanlal Bhgatram and others (barring Ghulam Haider and Khursheed Anwar). These master composers certainly proved to be like qualitative diamond-cutters for the singers of India, which is very much indicated by the melodies composed during the golden era of Hindi film music from 1950 till 1965.

Coming back to the music of maestro Shyam Sunder after the exit of Noorjehan from Hindi film music, there came the film *Actress* (1948), which was also Mohammad Rafi's introduction to the music world, when he sang – *Hum apne dil ka fasana unhein suna na sakey* .

The film *Bazar* in 1949 was certainly a class, in view of its musical hits. Just listen to some of the fascinating melodies of this film -*Sajaan ki galian chhod chale, dil roya aansoo beh na sakey & Basaa lo apnee nigahon mein pyar thorha sa* (Lata Mangeshkar), *Aie mohabbat unse milnen ka bahana mil gaya* (Lata & Rafi), *Shahidon tumko mera salaam* (Rafi) and *Chhalla de jaa nishani teri mehrbani* (Rafi and Satish Batra).

Another musical masterpiece titled *Lahore* (starring Nargis and Karan Dewan) was released in the same year. In this film Shyam Sunder composed three unforgettable songs for Lata Mangeshkar—*Nazar se door jaane wale;*

—*baharein phir bhi aanyeingi magar hum judaa honge, Tootey huye armanon ki ik duniyan basaye & Us dil ki kismet kya kahiye.* These captivating melodies were immersed in different classical *ragas*. Besides, there were another two engrossing duets for this film viz *Duniyan hamare pyar ki & Sun lo sajan meri baat* (Lata & Karan Dewan). The pain of the partition could be deeply felt in the song *Wahi rotaa hua ik dil idhar bhi hai, udhar bhi hai*, sung by Karan Dewan.

While evaluating his music in his subsequent films like *Kamal Ke Phool, Bhai Behan & Nirdosh* (1950), *Kale Badal, Mukhra* and *Dholak* (1951) and *Alif Laila* (1951), a particular reference needs to be made to the film *Dholak* in which Shyam Sunder crafted three poignant compositions- *Mere dil mein aaiye* sung by Shamshad, *Chori chori aag si dil mein laga ke chal diye, hum tarapte reh gaye, wo muskara ke chal diye & Mausam aya hai rangeen, bajee hai kahein surili been, aisey mein haule haule* sung by a totally forgotten Sulochana Kadam and Satish Batra. In the last number, the orchestration was simply unique and captivating.

The list of his other memorable melodies include: *Ik bewafa ki yaad mein tadfa ke maar dala*-Suraiya *Char Din* (1949), *Thandi hawa ke jhoke* -Shamshad *Nirdosh* (1950), *Ye meri chalti phirti laash* -Lata, *Sazaa mili hai ye kisi ko ye dil lagane ki* and *Koi dil mein samaya chupke chupke*- Suraiya and *Jalti hai dunia jalti rahegi* -Talat, *Kamal Ke Phool* (1950), *Akhiyan mila ke akhiyon ki neend chura ke* -Sulochana Kadam *Mukhra* (1951), *Khamosh kyon ho tare, ummid ke sahare* and *Kya raat suhni hai* -Lata & Rafi *Alif Laila* (1951).

The journey and the career-graph of Shyam Sunder can be matched by another maestro called Sajjad Husain, who also composed music for just 14 films, but shaped some of the finest melodies of his era.

Both the masters were perfectionists, ill-tempered and uncompromising. Shyam Sunder additionally, in view of his addiction to liquor and excessive drinking, occasionally, used abusive language and at times lost control over his

speech. During the making of the film *Lahore*, he had some abusive interface with Lata Mangeshkar. As such, they were not even on talking terms for a considerable time.

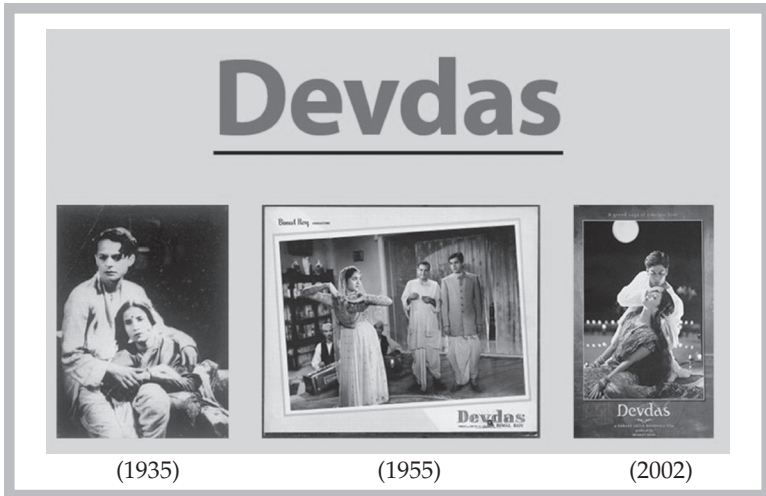
Not much is known about the personal life of the composer. Once the author of these lines enquired from Pushpa Hans (the celebrated Punjabi singer) who also sang songs for Shyam Sunder in the film *Kamal ke Phool* about her impressions about the maestro. What she observed was shocking: "Though a very intelligent composer, with great knowledge of classical music, he was very quarrelsome and always under the influence of liquor. Most of time during the recordings of *Kamal ke Phool* he was not available and the accompanying instrumentalists and recording engineers did their job without him."

On contacting his grandson Vijay Gaba, who runs a stationery shop at Hauz Khas in New Delhi for some briefing for this chapter; surprisingly he refused to respond and even told me not to speak about him in the future. The only one fact that I could extract was that Shyam Sunder hailed from Multan (now in Pakistan).

In the year 1952, during the making of *Alif Laila*, Shyam Sunder died in the recording studio, owing to excessive drinking and a consequent heart attack. The unfinished music was then completed by his assistant Madan Mohan.

10

Three Versions of Film: Devdas



The film *Devdas* released in the year 1935 is a milestone in the history of Indian cinema, primarily because K.L. Saigal acted and sang his all time favorites *Baalam aye baso merey man mein*, *Dukh ke ab din beetat naahin* and just two lines of a classic *thumri* -*Piya bin naahin aawat chain* -earlier sung by Ustad Abdul Karim Khan.

The music of the film was composed by Timir Baran. He played the sarod, an instrument used for the first time in the history of cine-music. The song -*Baalam aye baso merey man mein* till date is rated as one of the finest melodies not only of Saigal, but of Hindi cinema. When Khan Saheb came

to know about his singing; he called at Saigal's residence and asked him to sing once again in his presence.

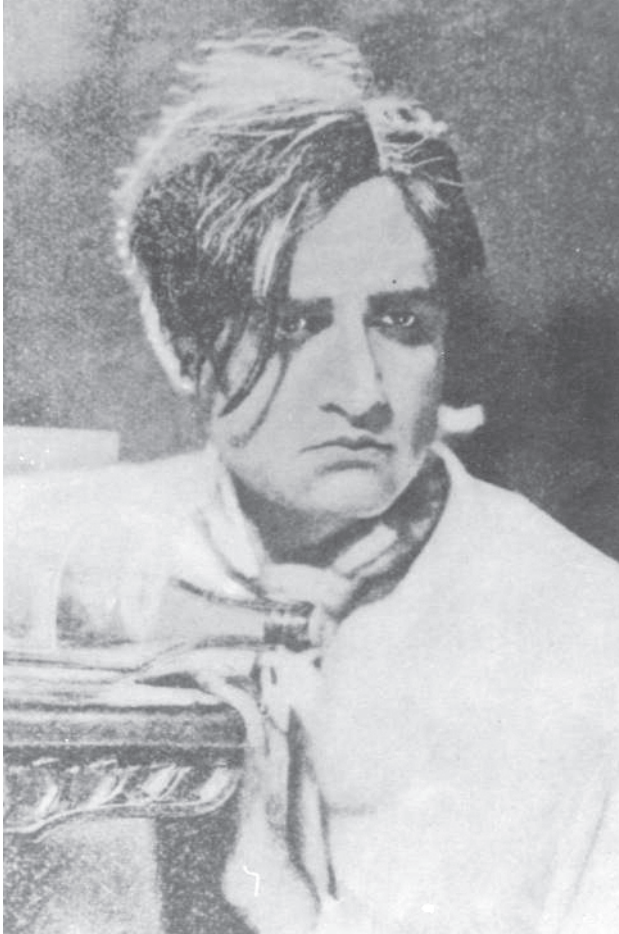
After listening to Saigal, he was spellbound by his mastery of expression and enquired as to who was his *Ustad* from whom he had learnt such singing. To this, Saigal replied that he had not learnt from any *Ustad* and it was only *Ooperwala* (Almighty), who had taught him singing. At this, the *Ustad* blessed the maestro and gave him a hundred rupee note, which Saigal kept with him till his death, as a token of his respect for *Ustad Abdul Karim Khan*.

During the course of shooting of the film, *Sarat Chander Chatterjee*, the author of his classic *Devdas* visited the sets. He was deeply impressed by the acting of Saigal and was surprised as to how a *Punjabi* could understand so intelligently the character he had depicted in his novel in *Bangla*!

The memorable features of the film *Devdas* (1935) was that it was produced and directed by P.C. Barua (who himself earlier acted in its *Bangla* version) and its cinematographer *Bimal Roy*, who later on himself produced and directed another version of *Devdas* (1955) starring *Dilip Kumar*. As a mark of respect, *Bimal Roy* dedicated his film *Devdas* to the memory of Saigal and Barua.

Saigal's songs and acting were another notable characteristic of the film. Besides this, there were three captivating melodies of *Pahari Sanyal* viz *Roshan hai terey dum se*, *Ujhardh chukka hai jo chhota sa aashiana* and *Pee ki nazaria aye hein* and three enduring songs of *K.C. Dey* viz *Matt bhool musafir*, *Umariya beet gayee saari* and *Teri maut kharhee hai*. Additionally, there was a charismatic *thumri* in raag *Piloo* by *Rajkumari* (of Calcutta) –*Nahin aye ghanshyam*. In this charismatic rendering she (*Rajkumari*) was definitely not trying to entertain anyone, but to share her own intoxication with music, as an act of her love!

Though these priceless melodies have been forgotten with the passage of time and non-availability of their

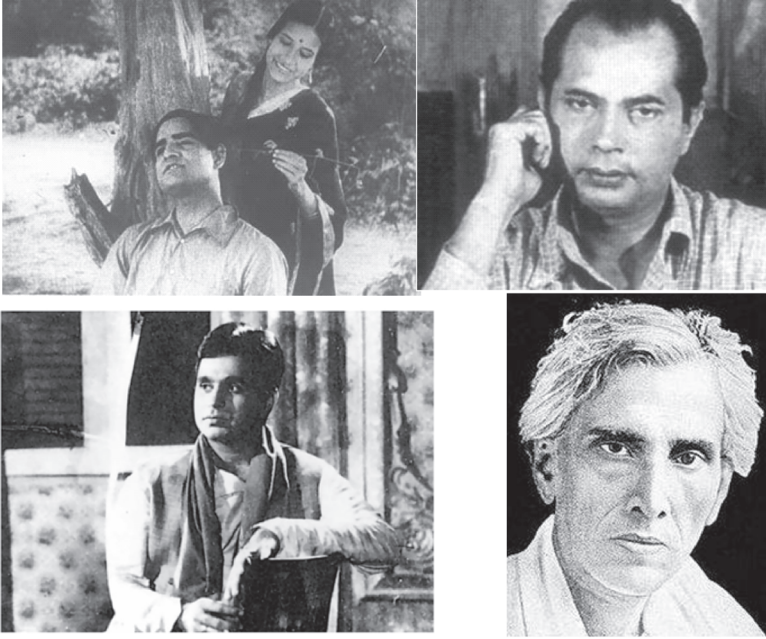


Kundan Lal Saigal in the film Devdas (1935)

recordings, the fact remains that Barua's *Devdas*, even today is considered as one of the greatest musical films of the previous century.

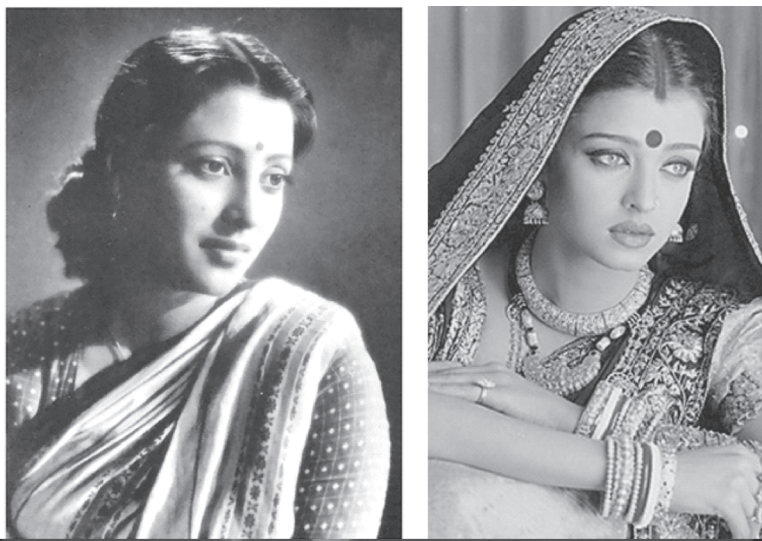
What's more, the two genius of Hindi cinema got their first big break in this film; Bimal Roy as the cinematographer and Kidar Sharma as the lyricist and dialogue writer.

Bimal Roy's version of *Devdas* (1955) is yet another milestone in the history of Hindi cinema. The deep



understanding of the storyline and portrayal of its characters is beyond description. Presenting them on the silver- screen with superb cinematic effects with enchanting background music by S.D. Burman, excellent delivery of dialogues, and above the sets and the locations used in the film are some of the factors which can only be categorized as 'par-excellence'. The dialogus were written by the renowned Urdu-writer Rajinder Singh Bedi.

The childhood role of Paro (Parvati) was played by Baby Naaz and the songs picturised on her viz *Aan milo aan milo shyam sanwre* and *Saajan ki ho gayee gori*, the all time memorable role of Chunni Babu was played by Motilal; the depth of sorrow of Devdas conveyed in *Mitwaa...* (sung by Talat Mahmood); the sound of the alarm-clock conveying the panic expressed in a letter written and dispatched to Paro by Devdas; the sequence depicting Paro's emotional turbulence when she comes to Devdas bedroom at



Paro—Suchitra Sen and Aishwarya Rai in film Devdas in 1955 and 2002



Motilal in Bimal Roy's film Devdas (1955)



*Paro (Suchitra Sen) and Devdas (Dilip Kumar) in
Bimal Roy's Devdas (1955)*

midnight; the superb depiction of the glimpses of Chandermukhi and Paro (played by Vaijyantimala and Suchitra Sen) when they cross each other in the rainy and muddy village lane; the portrayal of the situation when Devdas returns from Calcutta and calls upon Paro at her house and the lighting of the earthen lamp; the beautifully picturized Devdas, when he sings *Kisko khabar thee*. This was shot through the legs of the horse (the same shot was also taken by Bimal Roy in Saigal's *Devdas*, when Saigal sang his immortal classic *thumri* – *Piya bin naahee aawat chein*). The captivating scene of Chandermukhi when she wistfully says, *Ab phir kab milna hoga* with Mubarak Begum's all time great melody *Wo na ayengey palat ke*, playing in the background.

The crossing of two trains coming from opposite directions. The blast of fire in the engine of the passing train depicting the condition of Devdas' head and heart. These are some of the classic examples of the amazing vision of of Bimal Roy's direction.

The role of Devdas played with utter ease by the genius Dilip Kumar, depicting various aspects of mental conflict, dejection and love, cannot be expressed in words. But the truth is that, he was certainly at his career best in this film. Above all, I would like to draw the attention of the readers to the portrayal of the last ten minutes of the film. Such depiction is the rarest of the rare in the ambit of Hindi cinema.

Devdas alights from the train at Pandua station, leaving behind his trusted servant Dharam Das (role played by Nazir Hussain). He takes a bullock-cart for his last journey to Manikpur (Paro's village). The depiction through the flashback of the significant events of his early life during the bullock-cart journey and his eventual collapse at Paro's doorsteps and her agony on hearing the contents of the letter found from the pocket of the unknown body, revealing the identity of the deceased as Devdas, simply stuns the mind of the viewer watching the film. Finally, the classic depiction of two birds flying before the film comes to 'The End'.

Such stunning portrayal was possible in view of vigorous experience that Bimal Roy had initially as a



cinematographer at the New Theatres, which made him a great director. The dull lights used in the referred portrayal again is a lesson for the film makers and critics of serious cinema.

Inspired by the grand success of these two versions of *Devdas* (though there have been 16 before and after); Sanjay Leela Bhansali made a third attempt with an unabashed opulence, which was in stark contrast to the austere ambience of its predecessors. A large number of viewers went to cinema halls simply to see as to how he had portrayed the legendary *Devdas*.

Hyperbole in the name of dialogue, lot of sound and fury signifying nothing only jarred the sensibilities of the audience. The spirit of love and its tragic culmination was smashed to smithereens by the artificial sets and high decibel dialogues which hurt one's sentiments and sensibilities alike. While the story of *Devdas* represented the unbridgeable chasm between affluence and affection, Bhansali's film has presented before us a deep gulf between the India that was, and the India that now threatens to become a surrealistic juxtaposition of the deprived and depravity. May God save us from such recreations of past classics in the garb of modernity!

11

The Light of Music: **Roshan**



Khayalon mein kisi ke is tarah aya nahin karte sung by Mukesh and Geeta Roy for the film *Bawre Nain* (1950) starring Raj Kapoor and Geeta Bali is still alive in the head and heart of millions of music lovers. As and when the unforgettable melody is played, the listener encounters a different kind of soul-stirring emotion, which somehow cannot be put to words.

The reason- singing at ease, the simplicity of lyrics and above all the captivating and charming instrumentation in the music by an almost unheard of melody maker called Roshan Lal Nagrath, more popularly known as Roshan!

After serving All India Radio, Delhi for ten years as a *dilruba* player besides a love affair and second marriage with his disciple, Ira Moitra (a Bengali lady), Roshan reached Bombay in search of some assignment as a music composer. The place available to stay was the garage of Pt Husnalal (of Husnalal Bhagatram duo). It was in this garage, where his first son Rakesh was born!

It was a mere coincidence! That at the Dadar station, he came across Kidar Sharma, the renowned producer-director and the doyen of Hindi cinema, who was planning his next film *Neki Aur Badi* (1949). He somehow decided to repose his trust in Roshan as a composer for his next film by replacing Snehal Bhatkar with him.

The film failed and the dejected and hypersensitive Roshan came to his mentor in an emotional state and said, *Sharmaji mein khudkushi karna chahta hoon* (Sharmaji, I want to commit suicide).

Later, while narrating this incident, Kidar Sharma revealed that after patiently listening to Roshan, he told him that as regards his intention of committing suicide, he had no objection. At the same time, he asked him whether he would like to be drowned at Haji Ali or if he should take him to Versova, where the water level was higher! However, he assured him that if he would defer his decision, he could give him another chance in his next film *Bawre Nain* (1950).

Thus, the thought of suicide was averted, but during this kind of period of such mental distress, the composer in Roshan created a heart throbbing melody -*Teri duniya mein dil lagta nahin, wapas bula le, main saazde mein* which was later on sung by Mukesh for the film *Bawre Nain*.

Before commenting on the grand success of *Bawre Nain*, I would like to narrate another interesting incident, which occurred during the course of its making. Kidar Sharma in an interview given to the brilliant Radio broadcaster Ameen Sayani said: "One day Mr Dandh, a film distributor from Indore came to my office, when Roshan was already there.

He put a bundle of fifty thousand rupees on my table and told me that he would also give me another fifty thousand for an additional territory of East Punjab for his forthcoming film *Bawre Nain* on the condition that I replace Roshan and instead engage Husnalal Bhagatram for its music”.

“Roshan, who was sitting in the same room, on hearing these words, immediately left”- added Kidar Sharma “I too left the room, leaving behind Mr. Dandh and went to the adjacent room, where I saw Roshan sobbing. He (Roshan) told me: *Sharmaji aap Husnalal Bhagatram ko le lijiye, jis-se aapka pachis hazaar bhi bach jayenge.*” (Sharmaji, you please engage Husnalal Bhagatram in my place. You will also save twenty five thousand rupees).

“I came back to my room, where Mr. Dandh was sitting. Though in my life, I had never seen such a big amount; I gave the bundle containing fifty thousand rupees back to him and told him that his conditions were not acceptable to me and further said that it was like suggesting to me to change my wife for a better option!”

In spite of his maiden failure in the film *Neki Aur Badi*, as a visionary Kidar Sharma could visualize the hidden talent in Roshan.

That is how the journey of Roshan in music commenced.

In the film *Bawre Nain* in addition to *Teri duniyan mein dil lagta nahin* and *Khayalon mein kisi ke is tarah aya nahin karte* he composed some memorable melodies viz *Muhabbat ke maron ka* sung by Rafi, *Ghir ghir ke aasman par*, *Kyoun mere dil mein* and *Sun bairi balam sach bol* sung by Rajkumari and *Mujhe sach sach batado, kya* sung by Mukesh and Rajkumari. In view of the simplicity of lyrics and matching musical instrumentation, all these numbers were instant-hits.

Thus a name amongst the greats of Hindi cine music was added!

During the decade (1951-60) Hindi film industry had a galaxy of music composers and each one of them wanted to bestow something better than the other. Amongst the

idols were Anil Biswas, Naushad, Husnalal Bhagatram, Shanker Jaikishan, Hemant Kumar, S.D. Burman, C.Ramchandra, Vasant Desai, Ghulam Mohammad, O.P. Nayyar and Khayyam - just to name a few. The music of that era was one of the prime factors for the success of a film. For an up-coming composer it was extremely difficult to survive in the industry, if the songs composed for the film were not to the expectations of its viewers. In view of such great music of the said decade, the phase was aptly named as the 'Golden Era' of Hindi cinema. Roshan too had the talent and he eventually proved his worth.

Back to Roshan's early days of his life at Gujranwala (Punjab) where he was born on 14 July, 1917. He had little interest in studies but could play the harmonium well. He quit his schooling at a premature stage and went to Shahjahanpur (near Lucknow) where his father was in service. It was at this stage that he had an opportunity of learning from the legend Ustad Allaudin Khan, the doyen of Maihar *gharana* and father of renowned sarod maestros-Ali Akbar Khan and Annapurna Devi. This training though short lived, proved to be of immense value and a blessing for his future as a music director.

Thereafter he studied at Marris College, Lucknow (later known as the Bhatkhande College of Music) and had an opportunity of learning music from Pt. S.N. Ratanjankar. After that he came to Delhi where he met the great singer in the offing, Mukesh. They became very close friends and this amity resulted in the creation of some of the finest songs ever sung by Mukesh for Hindi cinema.

In the film *Malhar* (1952), Roshan composed some alluring melodies -*Bade armanon se rakha hai sanam teri kasam*, *Ik baar agar tu keh de* and *Kahan ho tum* -duets by Lata and Mukesh, and *Hota rahaa yun hi agar*, *Tara toote duniyan dekhe* and *Dil tujhe diya tha rakhne ko* -three memorable solos of Mukesh; *Koyee to sune mere dil ka fasana* and *Mohabbat ki kismet banane se pahle, duniyan ke maalik tu roya to hoga* -solos

of Lata. In addition to, there was the captivating classical title song of Lata- *Garjat barast bheejat*.

There were also some enthralling numbers for the film *Humlog* (1952)- *Chhun chhun baaje payal mori, aaja chori chori* and *Chalee ja chalee ja chhod ke duniyan* -solos by Lata, *Apni nazar se unki nazr tak* and *Dil ki pareshania ishq ki veeraniya* - sung by Mukesh and *Gaaye chalaaj ja gaaye chalaaj ja* -duet by Lata and Durrani.

In *Naubahaar* (1952) there were four everlasting melodies of Lata -*Airee mein to prem diwani mora dard na jaane koye, Dekho ji mora jiya churaye liye jaye, Wo paas nahin majboor hai dil* and *Unke bhulane pe bole mera dil*. These melodies are still fresh in the memory of music lovers. The sheer charm of Rajkumari was very much apparent in another classical number -*Kajrari matwari madbhari akhiyan*. Additionally, there was a ghazal by Talat Mehmood in his silken voice - *Kisi soorat lagi dil ki*. All such fabulous numbers made the film a milestone in the career graph of the composer. Again in the film -*Raag Rang* (1952), Roshan composed yet another classic *Aie ree aalee piya bin* -brilliantly sung by Lata.

In 1956, Kidar Sharma produced and directed a film *Rangeen Ratein* starring Shammi Kapoor and his charming wife Geeta Bali. Roshan gave music for the film. A duet by Rafi and Lata -*Bahut assaan hai chilman se laga kar muskura dena* of this film became an instant hit. Lata sang -*Saari saari raat teri yaad sataye* in the film *Aji Bas Shukriya* (1958), which proved to be one of her favorite numbers.

In the career of Roshan, the year 1960 was perhaps the most successful. It was certainly in view of his all time great -*Barsaat Ki Raat*. The cine goers went to cinema halls time and again not merely to see the film, but to enjoy and listen to its all time great melodies. How can one forget these charismatic *qawallies* - *Na to karwan ki talash hai, ye ishq ishq hai ishq*- sung by Rafi, Manna Dey, Asha, Sudha Malhotra, Shiv Dayal Batish and others. It was recorded on both sides of two 78 rpm records. The composition proved to be the

most popular qawwalli in the history of Hindi cinema. Besides this (*qawalli*) there were two other *qawallies* -*Nigahein naaz ke* -sung by Shanker Shambhu, Asha, Sudha Malhotra & others and *Jee chataa hai*- sung by Balbir, Asha, Sudha Malhotra and Bande Hasan. In addition to these numbers, there were some other fascinating melodies which made the film a perfect musical hit for all times to come. Any music lover just cannot forget- *Zindagi bhar nahin bhoolegi wo barsaar ki raat* sung by Lata and Rafi and *Maine shaayad tumhein, pelhe bhee kahin dekha hai* by Rafi. Above all, there was the classical classic title -*Garjat barsat saawan ayo re, laayo na hamre* -sung by Kamal Barot and Suman Kalyanpur. The orchestra for this number was simply superb. Undoubtedly, the lyrics and the raga were identical to his earlier composed classic number (solo) *Garjat barsat* for the film *Malhar*, which was sung by Lata Mangeshkar.

Roshan's musical journey continued luminously. In the film *Aarti* (1962), he composed an appealing duet of Lata and Rafi -*Aapne yaad dilaya to hamein yaad aya* and another solo of Rafi *Ab kya misaal doon* and another duet -*Baar baar tohey kya samjhaein*.

Dil hi to hai (1963) was another splendid attempt. Manna Dey sang one of his classical favorites -*Laga chunri mein daag, chhupaaun kaise* and Mukesh sang -*Dil jo bhi kahega maneige* and -*Tum agar mujhko na chaho to koi baat nahin & Bhoole se muhabbat kar baithe nadan tha bechara*. Besides there was a *qawalli* sung by Asha and others- *Nigahein milanein ko jee chahta hai* and another sung by Manna Dey, Asha and others -*Parida uthe salaam ho jaye*.

The film *Tajmahal* (1963) proved to be yet another landmark by the maestro. The music connoisseurs just cannot forget the most popular duet of Lata and Rafi - *Jo wadaa kiya wo nibhana padega*. It was rated as the year's top song for Binaca Geetmala in its annual programme. Also there were two solo numbers of Lata and Rafi- *Jurmein ulfat pe hamein log & Jo baat tujhmein hai teri tasveer mein nahin*

respectively and a *qawalli* - *Chandi ka badan sone ki nazar* sung by Lata, Rafi, Manna Dey and Mahendra Kapoor. Roshan was conferred the prestigious Filmfare award for the music of this film.

Kidar Sharma's passion for portraying complex human emotions motivated him to produce yet another version of the film *Chitrlekha* based on the novel of the Hindi laureate Bhagwati Charan Verma. It was the remake of his earlier film *Chitrlekha* (1941) for which the music was composed by Jhande Khan. One of its hit songs - *Tum jao jao* is invariably placed in the list of songs of the sentimental Era of Hindi cinema. This time the composer was Roshan. Though an established name in music making, it was a challenge for him, as he was working for his mentor's paramount conviction about the talent and the utmost trust imposed in him.

The music of the film was once again enlhralling. The deep rooted nuances of Sahir Ludhianvi's lyrics matching the mental conflict were remarkably captivating. Two solo songs of Lata and Rafi- *Sansaar se bhage phirte ho* and *Man re tu kahe na dheer dhare* respectively proved their worth. Additionally, there was a classic *Kahe tarse jihra* sung by Usha Mangeshkar and Asha and another of Lata's *Aali re roko na koi*, thus crafted brilliantly.

Manna Day's distinct style of singing was once again visible in *Dooj Ka Chand* (1964) when he sang *Phul gendwaa na maaro, lagat karejwa pe chot*. In *Bheegi Raat* (1965) also, Lata and Rafi individually sang an instant hit solo - *Dil jo na keh sakaa, wohi raze dil kehne ki*.

The stage poet Neeraj offered some of his lyrics for the film- '*Nai Umar Nai Fasal* (1965) and Roshan gave the music. Rafi sang *Karwaan gujar gaya, kahaar dekhte rahe* and *Aaj ki raat badi natkhat hai*. In the film *Dadi Maa* (1966) Manna Dey and Mahender Kapoor sang *Usko nahin dekha hamnein magar* which enhanced the list of Roshan's successful numbers.

The film *Mamta* (1966) was yet another signpost in the

musical journey of Roshan. In this film, he provided some of his well acclaimed melodies. Lata sang some of her stirring classics- *Rahein na rahein hum*, *Rehte the kabhi unke dil mein*, *Sakal ban magan pawan chalat* and *Vikal mora manwa un bin haye*. Also there was a poignant duet by Hemant and Lata *Chhupa lo yun dil mein pyar mera, jaise mandir mein lau diye ki* which created a great emotive impact on the listeners.

Continuing his musical journey, in the film *Bahu Begum* (1967) the composer provided some popular melodies - *Parh gaye jhoole sawan rut aayee re* -a duet sung by Lata and Asha. Rafi sang *Ham intzaar karenge kayamat tak* and in the film *Noorjehan* (1967) Suman Kalyanpur sang *Sharabee sharabee*. All these numbers were well admired.

A heart patient for almost twenty years, a chain smoker and a highly hypersensitive, Roshan breathed his last in Bombay on 16 November, 1967 leaving behind his first name -Roshan, as a surname for his sons -Rakesh and Rajesh and thereafter for his grandson Hrithik.

This was perhaps an extension to the tradition of gaining recognition during the initial stage by using their father's first name, as embraced by Amitabh Bachchan, who also adopted his father's pen-name Bachchan as his surname.

Mukesh Chand Mathur's son and grandson Nitin Mukesh and Neel Nitin Mukesh respectively, too adopted Mukesh as their surname.

This was the same Roshan Lal Nagrath, who had been determined to commit suicide after the failure of his maiden film *Neki Aur Badi* in the year 1949.

When he passed away, his last released film *Anokhi Raat* starring Sanjeev Kumar was in the making. If Kaifi Azmi wrote for the silver screen, the philosophy of life, it was Mukesh who sang- *Oh re taal mile nadee ke jal mein, nadi mile sagar mein, sagar mile kaun se jal mein, koi janey na*. After his demise, Ira Nagrath (his wife) completed the music of this film.

12

Seething Quietude: Nutan in film **Bandini**



The cinematographer of P.C. Barua's film *Devdas*, editor of the all time musical great *Mahal*, director of the classics *Do Bigha Zamin*, *Devdas* and *Madhumati*, the genius Bimal Roy produced and directed yet another classic film *Bandini* in the year 1963, starring Ashok Kumar and Nutan.

The film was based on a fascinating story of Jarasandh, a brilliant Bengali novelist, who was a jailor by profession. The narrative depicts a female prisoner – Kalyani (enacted by Nutan) serving an eight year detention on a murder charge.



The screen-tale goes into flash back. Kalyani, the daughter of a village post-master meets and falls in love with the revolutionary freedom fighter Vikas Ghosh (role played by Ashok Kumar) who accepts her as his wife. However, they are separated before they are married socially.

Perturbed by gossip amongst the village folk, Kalyani leaves her home and lands at her friend's place in Allahabad. Subsequently, for her survival, she accepts a petty job of an attendant at a nursing home. Here, she is made to look after a female patient suffering from hysteria, who turns out to be the wife of Vikas Ghosh.

One day on hearing about her father's arrival in Allahabad and his subsequent road accident, Kalyani rushes to the hospital and finds his dead body. This leaves her totally numb and she leaves her father's dead body and returns back to the nursing home, only to find her patient in a fit of hysteria.

The mental agony of Kalyani and the resultant tragic situation has been portrayed through some outstanding images, i.e., the pumping of a kerosene stove and consequent sound of the flames, sparks of welding, clatter of hammering the iron in the vicinity (shown across the window of the nursing home) and the resultant poisoning through a cup of tea prepared for the patient (Vikas' wife). Thus, the sequences depicted, were indeed rare marvels in the history of Hindi cinema.

The fact remains that but for the acting talent of Nutan, it would have been simply impossible to portray the given situation.

It must be conceded that in the role played by Nutan in the film *Bandini*, she created history in the annals of acting of Hindi cinema. The calm, seething quietude, subdued, depressed and subtle characterization of Kalyani in the jail is simply matchless.

The story line moves further and Kalyani convicted of murder charge lands in the jail where the doctor (role played by Dharmendra) attending to the prisoners is attracted towards Kalyani. She refuses to respond to the doctor in view of her past events. Disheartened, the jail doctor resigns.

In the final episode of the film, Bimal Roy impresses his



Nutan in film *Bandini*



viewers once again with the genius of his direction, already seen previously in classics like - *Do Bigha Zanin* (1953), *Devdas* (1955), *Madhumati* (1958) and *Sujata* (1959).

After serving the vail sentence, Kalyani is seen at the waiting area of a steamer-cum-rail road station of Maniharighat. The images created through smoke coming out of a steam-engine and also from the chimney of the steamer; portrays her mind-boggling state of mind. Her dilemma whether to board the train and be with the doctor (who is still waiting for her); or to board the steamer where she may join Vikas Ghosh, is brilliantly evoked through these visuals.

Conclusively, it will not be an exaggeration to say that if Nargis is known for her roles in films *Jogan* and *Mother India*, Meena Kumari for *Sahib Bibi Aur Gulam*, Suchitra Sen for *Devdas*, Nutan's performance in *Bandini* will also be remembered for all times to come.

13

The Fabulous Lyricist and a Song-writer: **Shailendra**



Sajan re jhooth mat bolo, khuda ke pass janaa hai, na hathee hai na ghorha hai wahan paidal hi janaa hai - was sung by Mukesh for the film - *Teesri Kasam* and composed by Shanker Jaikishan.

These seemingly simple lyrics carry a profound meaning and this fabulous melody will certainly be remembered for years together. After listening to this song, one can confidently say that the writer of the sonata must be Shailendra, who is known for his simplicity and effortless expression of thoughts in his lyrics.

In the year 1949, Raj Kapoor produced and directed the film *Barsat* and introduced a large number of personalities, such as music director duo-Shanker Jaikishan, story writer-Ramanand Sagar, actress - Nimmi and lyricists -Hasrat Jaipuri & Shailendra. It was indeed a big stake, since it was only his second film, that he was producing, the first being *Aag*.

It is an established fact that during the first three decades of Hindi cinema (1931-60) music and songs of the film would be instrumental in determining the fate of a film.

The magical eye of Raj Kapoor acquired a splendid vision from his mentor Kidar Sharma. As a grand filmmaker to be, he had a wonderful sense and a deep understanding of the medium. He was a master craftsman and the film *Barsat* thus, proved to be a landmark in his career.

The title song *Barsat mein humse mile tum sajan* which was penned by Shailendra and sung by the young Lata Mangeshkar, became an instant super-hit. It outshined all the other songs including his (Shailendra) own written- *Patli qamar hai tirchhee nazar hai* and others written by Ramesh Shastri, Qamar Jalalabadi and Hasrat Jaipuri. The soulful song of Shailendra forming a thin and delicate veil between life and death reflected the passion and the obsession to dwell upon the brevity and the uncertainty of life and the finality of death.

This was the beginning of the success story of Raj Kapoor and also of Shailendra. As a close associate of Raj Kapoor's films, he continued till *Mera Naam Joker* not only as a lyricist but also as a title song writer. Besides, in the future course, wherever there was a song based on the rain, the success of the film came as an assurance. This was courtesy, *Barsaat mein*.

When the film *Barsat* was in-making; C. Ramchandra, one of the greatest music composers observed - "*Apnee nayee film mein, Prithviraj ke betey ne naye chehre lekar jo jua khela*

hai, wo usko itna mehnga padega ki wo tasweer banaa bhool jayega". (The gamble played by the son of Prithviraj Kapoor (Raj Kapoor) in choosing all new faces i.e music director/s, lyricists, and actors will cost him so heavily that he will forget the task of film-making).

The prediction turned out to be totally incorrect!

On the contrary the trust, the confidence and the conviction shown by Raj Kapoor in Shailendra and also selecting Shanker Jaikishan became a milestone in the career of the brilliant showman.

In some of his songs, the pain of parting is depicted most effortlessly- viz. *Do din ke liye mehmaan yahan* (Badal), *Janey naa haye ye dunian dil ki lagee* (Buzdil), *Aie mere dil kahin aur chal* (Daag), *Ye shaam ki tanhaiyan & Chhoti si ye zindgani* (Aah), *Mittee se khelte ho baar baar kis liye* (Patita), *Rulaa kar chal diye ik din* (Badshaah) *O janeywale ho sakey to laut ke ana* (Bandini). The lyricist in Shailendra had explored such sentiments, which was certainly a divine gift to the composers, the producers and above all to the thoughtful listeners.

Shailendra had a great rapport with Shankar Jaikishan, but he shared an equally pleasant understanding with musical giants of those days, like Salil Chowdhry (Madhumati & Parakh), S.N. Tripathi (Sangeet Samrat Tansen), S.D. Burman (Guide & Bandini), Pt. Ravi Shanker (Anuradha) and Anil Biswas (Chhoti Chhoti Batein) just to name a few.

Once Anil Biswas, the master composer observed that the principal factor for the success or failure of a song depends on the choice of its lyrics. Then comes, the composer's understanding of the depth of thought and the capacity to explore the feelings immersed in the verses. Thereafter, it is the choice of instrumentation and the respective *ragas* to be deployed and the selection of the singer. This is how according to the maestro a melody must be composed. His observation that the prime factor for the

success of an everlasting melody goes to its lyricist -bears his conviction and a candid truth.

The films produced during the black and white era are primarily remembered for their immortal melodies. The success of a large number of films made during such period is generally attributed to the star cast followed by the composers and singers. But, it is an irony that the viewers, the listeners and even the critics have rarely and often inadequately evaluated the role of the respective lyricists.

In this context the film *Rattan* produced in the year 1944 is a classic example to substantiate this vital aspect of recognition of the lyricist. In view of its fabulous songs the film was an instant success. The nostalgic music lovers have still not forgotten its immortal melodies -*Akhiyan mila ke, jiyaa bharna ke chale nahin janaa Pardesi balamwa baadal aaye, Mil ke bichharh gayee akhiyan, O jaane wale baalamwa laut ke aa, laut ke aa* and *Aayee diwali, aayee diwali, deepak sang nachey patanga* - sung by Zohra Bai Ambalewali for this film.

The unforgettable songs for this film were written by Dina Nath Madhok, who even prepared the tunes of all these songs by tapping his fingers on a matchbox or his favorite '555' cigarette-tin.

Naushad, the music director of this film once admitted that the total cost of the film *Rattan* was a mere seventy five thousand rupees. However, the first year's royalty earned through the sale of its gramophone records was over three lakh rupees. During those days a 78 rpm disc used to cost two rupees. It was indeed a landmark. But, the fact remains that the song writers never got their due recognition! The destiny of lyricist Shailendra was not different, either!

As stated, Shailendra entered the film-music-arena in the year 1949 with Raj Kapoor's film *Barsat*. It was during this phase, when a galaxy of eminent song-writers and favorites of the composers were already available. Notable amongst them were -Kavi Pradeep, Qamar Jalalabadi, Kidar Sharma, J. Naqshab, Prem Dhawan, D.N. Madhok, Bharat Vyas, Pt.



Raj Kapoor and Shailendra

Indra, Shakeel Badayuni, Rajender Krishan, Safar Aah, S.H. Bihari, P.L. Santoshi, Tanvir Naqvi, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Kaif Irfani, Behzad Lukhnavi, Raja Mehndi Ali Khan, Ehsan Rizvi, Khumaar Barabanki, Aziz Kashmiri, Jan Nisar Akhtar, Pt. Bhushan and others.

A few lines about the life and career-graph of *jan-kavi* (people's poet)- Shanker Keshrilal Shailendra (as he was known by birth). He was born on 30 August, 1923 at Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan), where his father Keshrilal was posted while serving in the Indian Army. His family belonged to Bihar, however, after his retirement they settled at Mathura (UP). Shailendra studied at the Government School, Mathura and topped in the matriculation exam with a first division. He was also a good hockey player.

After his schooling in the year 1941, he joined the Indian Railways as an apprentice (welder). Seemingly, it was in view of his family's financial constraints that he could not pursue his studies. In the year 1947, he was sent to Bombay for training in G.I.P., later on renamed as Central Railway.

While serving the Railways, he sustained his pursuit in poetry and used to write verses inspired by the leftist movement. He was also actively associated with the progressive Indian People Theatre Association (IPTA). In the year 1947 in a symposium he read a poem -*Jalta hai Punjab-Meri bagia mein aag lagaa gayo re gora pardesi*, where Prithviraj Kappor and his son Raj Kapoor were also present.

The text of the momentous poem was:

*Jalta hai punjab
 Jalta hai, jalta hai punjab hamara
 Jalta hai Bhagat singh ki aankhon ka tara
 Kisne hamare jallianwala bagh mein aag lagai
 Kisne hamare desh mein. phoot ki jwala dhadhkai
 Kisne mata ki asmat ko, buree nazar se taka
 Dharm aur matbhed se, apni badniyat ko dhaka
 Kaun sukhane chala hai, panchon nadiyon ki jaldhara
 Jalta hai, jalta hai
 Hum jaan gaye, dushman teri chaalein
 Saajish hai teri, hamein bhida kar
 Ukhree jadein jamaa lein
 Tune kuchh majhab ke andhon ko hai uksaya
 Kuchh dharm ke thekedaron ko, tune hi hai bharkaya
 Uff yeh kaisa vish phailaya
 Jalta hai, jalta hai punjab hamara
 Jalta hai, jalta hai bhagat singh ki aankhon ka tara*

Raj Kapoor was overwhelmed by his poetry. He was on the look out for a lyricist for the climax song of his maiden production—*Aag*. He considered Shailendra as an appropriate song-writer for his films. Consequently, he asked Shailendra to write the theme-song for his film-in-making.

Shailendra refused outrightly and added that he considered film lyrics to be cheap and thereby beyond his pride. However, at the insistence of Raj Kapoor, he kept his visiting card.

As destiny would have it, after about a year when

Shailendra's wife was in the hospital for the delivery of their first child (Shaily), he was short of funds, even to pay the medical bill of the nursing home. At this point, he went to Raj Kapoor for financial assistance. At the studio gate, he was forbidden entry by the gate-keeper. It was raining heavily and at this stage Raj Kapoor came in his car. He opened the window by rolling down the window. Shailendra on seeing Raj uttered – *Barsaat mein tum se mile hum sajan, hum se mile tum!*

Raj Kapoor took him to his office. In an arrogant manner he told Raj Kapoor - "I am in need of five hundred rupees." He got the desired money without any interaction. This is how the two maestros met once again and the rest is a history as they say.

The trust and confidence of Raj Kapoor in choosing Shailendra for his film- *Barsat*, for writing the title song - *Barsaat mein humsey mile tum sajan, tumse mile hum* proved distinctive. The lyricist and the poet was fully equipped and established himself as an eminent song-writer.

The winning song carried some amazing lines which haunts the listeners time and again.

*Barsat mein tumse mile hum sajan,
Hum se mile tum, barsat mein
Der naa karnaa kahin ye aas toot jaye,
Saath chhoot jaye, tum naa aao dil ki lagee mujh ko hee jalaye,
Khak mein milaye, aag ke lapton mein pukarey ye mera gum,
Mil naa sakey hum, mil naa sakey tum!*

The film ends with this song with a simply fascinating impact on the viewers and till date it is considered as one of the finest achievements of Raj Kapoor and his duo composers – Shanker Jaikishan.

Even in the other songs of *Barsat*- a memorable duet sung by Mukesh and Lata Mangeshkar- the lyricist wrote something, which created a splendid impact on the listeners.

Patli qamar hai

*Mein behte darya ka pani
 Khel kinaron se bandh jaoon
 Bandh na paaon, naya nagar nit
 Nai dagar hai, patli qamar hai tirschhi nazar hai.*

The lyricist in Shailendra emphatically established himself as a lyricist with a difference. His simplicity of expression made his songs immortal. For the subsequent films, he wrote lullabies (*lorees*), love songs, lyrical sagas on pain of parting, philosophy of life, devotional songs (*bhajans*) and on different aspects of humanity. As stated, he also wrote all the title songs for R.K. films till *Mera Naam Joker*. He was a master of expressions, which can be observed in most of his lyrics.

The tradition of *lore* is an oldest form of singing. Mothers usually sing *lore* to putting a baby to sleep. K.L. Saigal sang an immortal *lore* -*So ja rajkumari*. While continuing the tradition Shailendra wrote some memorable lullabies viz. *Aa ja ree nindiaa (Do Bigha Zamin)* and *So ja so ja merey rajdulary (Kathputli)*.

His songs of devotion or *bhajans* and mystic melodies have formed an integral part of a large number of films. Just take a glance at some of his immortal *bhajans* for films- *Jago mohan pyare (Jagte Rago)* and *Tu pyaar ka saagar hei (Seema & Matlab kee duniyan pyarey (Chhoti Chhoti Batein)*.

The child in the heart of the poet made him write some enthralling songs for the young-ones. A few glimpses:

*Nanne munne bache teree muthee mein kya hai
 Muthee mein hai taqdeer hamari
 Humnein kismet ko bus mein kiya hai (Boot Polish)*

*Naanee teri mornee ko mor le gaye,
 Baaki jo bachaa wo kaley chor le gaye (Masoom)*

*Munna baraa pyara, ammi ka dulara__
 Kyon na rotiyon ka perh hum lagalein
 Aam torein roti torein
 Roti aam kha lein*

*Kahe karein roz roz
Ye tu jhamela (Musafir)*

The celebrated English poet P.B. Shelly wrote- "Sweetest are the songs, that sing of the saddest thoughts". While Shailendra in one of his immortal lyrics wrote-

*Hein subse madhur wo geet jinhe
Hum dard ke sur mein gaate hein. (Patita)*

Here are a few of his songs, with classic expressions, coming straight from the heart -

*Haye re wo din kyun na aayey &
Janey kaisey sapnon mein so gayee akhian. (Anuradha)*

Aaja abto aaja, meri kismet ke kharidaar ab to aaja &

*Dua ker gamein dil, khuda se dua ker
Jo bijli chamkti hai unke mahal per
Wo kar lein tassali mera ghar jala kar. (Anarkali)*

Roun mein saagar ke kinarey (Nagina)

*O janey waley ho sakey to laut ke anaa
Ye ghaat ye baat kahin bhool na jana &*

*Ab ke baras bhej bhayia ko babul
Sawan mein leejo bulay re (Bandini)*

*Ganga aur Jamuna ki gehri hei dhaar
Aage ya peechhe sabko jana hai paar.
Dharti kahe pukaar ke,
Geet bichha le pyaar ke
Mausam beeta jaye__
Apnee kahani chhod ja
Kuchh to nishani chhod jaa. (Do Bigha Zameen)*

Dunian na bhaye ab to bulale (Basant Bahaar)

Koyee lauta de mere beete huye din (Door Gagan Ki Chhaon Mein)

*Din dhal jaye haye raat na aye
Tu to na ayey teri yaad sataye (Guide)*

*Poochho na kaisey meiney rein bitayee (Meri Soorat Teri
Ankhein)*

Andhe jahaan ke andhey raaste (Patita)

Dunian walon se door, jalney walon se door (Ujala)

*Ik aaye ik jaaye musafir
Duniyan hai ek saraay (Musafir)*

Kahaan ja rahaa hei tu ae jaaney waley (Seema)

O sajnaa barkhaa bahaar aayee (Parakh)

Chhota sa ghar hogaa badlon ki chhaon mein (Naukri)

*Maati se khelte ho baar baar kis liye
Toote huey khilon se pyar kis liye (Patita)*

Do din ke liye mehmaan yahan (Badal)

Jhan jhan payal baje, kaise jaun pee se milan ko (Buzdil)

Mere dil ki dharkan kya boley, kya boley (Anhonee)

*Dekho ji mora jiya churaye liye jaye
Naam na janoo dhaam na janoo. (Naubahar)*

*Ye sham ye tanhayian &
Chhoti si ye zindgani, ye chaar din ki jawani teri (Aah)*

*Dil ka haal sune dilwala
Chhote se ghar mein gareeb ka beta
Mein hoon maa ke naseeb ka beta
Ranjo gum naseeb ke sathi
Gum se abhi azad nahin mein
Sun lo magar kisi se na kehna (Shree 420)*

Sur na saje kya gaon mein (Basant Bahar)

*Sab kuchh seekha humne
Na seekhi hoshiyari*

*Such hai duniyan walo
Ki hum hain anari
Dunian ne kitna samjhaya
Kaun hi apna, kaun paraya
Phir bhi dil ki chot chhupa ke
Humnein aap ka dil behlaya
Khud hi mar mitnein ki
Ye jid hai hamari___
Dil ka chaman ujadte dekha
Pyar ka rang utarte dekha
Humnein har jeene wale ko
Dhan daulat pe marte dekha___
Dil pe marnein wale marenge bhikhari
Asli naqli chehre dekhe
Kya kya khwaab sunehre dekhe. (Anari)*

*Awara hoon
Ya gardish mein hoon, aasman ka tara hoon
Ghar-baar nahin sansaar nahin
Mujhko kisi se pyar nahin
Us paar kisi se milnein ka ikraar nahin
Sunsaan nagar anjaan dagar ka pyara hoon
Awara hoon___
Gata hoon khushi ke geet magar
Jakhmon se bhara seena hai mera,
Masti hai ye mast nazar___
Duniyan, dunian mein tere teer ka ya
Taqdeer ka maraa hoon
Awara hoon. (Awara)*

The list of such heart throbbing verses is endless!

*Zindgi khwaab hai,
Khwaab mein jhooth kya,
Aur bhalaa such hai kya___*

This song was pictured on the genius Motilal in the film *Jagte Raho* who dominated the film world for more than three decades. He had a great image and was known for his

splendid acting talent. With the passage of time and changes in human values, the viewers have forgotten a lot many faces of the bygone era. Yet, the fact remains that whenever this song is played, the image of Motilal comes alive. The song and the actor in a way became alike.

Motilal produced and acted in his classic film *Chhoti Chhoti Batein*, but before its completion he breathed his last. Once again Shailendra wrote - *Zindagi khwab hai* as a tribute to the maestro. Here are some incredible lines that he wrote—

*Aah mein bhi pataa
Per hamein zindagi se bahut pyar tha
Sukh bhi the, dukh bhi the, dil ko ghere hue
Chahey, jaisa tha rangeen sansaar tha.
Aa gayee thee shikayat labon tak magar
Kise kehte to kyaa kehte, kehnaa bekaar tha
Chal parey dard si kar, to chalte rahe
Haar kar baith janey se inkaar tha*

Look at the intellect of the lyricist particularly in these lines—

*Chund din ka basera hamara yahan
Hum bhi mehmaan the,
Ghar to us paar tha
Hum safar ek din to bichharna hi tha
Alwida, alwida—alwida, alwida’.*

What better tribute and a compliment one can expect? While commenting on these lines, my pen stops! I am completely short of words to express my sentiments. I can only add that the composition sung by Mukesh and composed by Anil Biswas, makes the listeners cry, with its soul stirring depth.

Ghar to us paar tha, perhaps the poet in Shailendra had the vision of ‘beyond the horizon’ as he must have visualized at the Junu beach, Mumbai or at his native Mahendru Ghat, Patna and or it was another Ganga river

bank at Mongyer. Nevertheless, we can envisage the seeds in the lyricist's mind, which were ripe in *O re majhee*—Burman dada (S.D.Burman) sang for his immortal film *Bandini*.

Anil Biswas, the master composer of the film *Chhoti Chhoti Batein*, while remembering Motilal and Shailendra once observed that both the personalities were amongst the best.

Shailendra, besides writing some captivating lyrics for a large number of films also wrote a number of thought provoking verses. Here are a few extracts from his lesser known literary masterpieces.

In his non-film verses, while writing a tribute to Shaheed Bhagat Singh, he said:

*Bhagat Singh na lena kaya bharatwasi ki
Desh bhakti ke liye aaj bhi sazaa milegi phansi ki
Yadi janta ki baat karoge tum gaddaar kahlaoge
Band-sab ki chhodo, bhaashan doge, pakde jaoge
Nikla hai kanoon naya, chutki bajte bandh jaoge
Nyay adalat ki mat poochho, seedhe mukti paoge
Kangres ka hukm, jaroorat kya warrant talashi ki
Baith gaye hein kale, per gore julmon ki ghadi hai
Wahi riti hai, wahi niti hai, gore satyanashi ki
Saty ahinsa ka shashan hai, ram rajy phir aya hai (Bhagat
Singh Se-1948)*

In his another poem, Shailendra has exposed the leaders-

*Leader jee, parnaam tumhein ham majdooron ka
Ho nyotaa swikaar tumhein ham majdooron ka
Ek baar in gandee galion mein aao
Ghoomein Delhi-Shimla, ghoom yahan bhi jao.
Tab sawaal paida hoga- hum kya tumhein khilayein
Jwaar baajre ki roti ya bhaat khilaein?
Tum to gehoon-hi-gehoon khate aye ho
Bade baap ke bête, sab patay aye ho
Tum bhakri jwar ki kaise kha paoge*

*Dar lagta hai tumhein na badhazmi ho jaye
Raajnitik ka kiriyakaram shithil par jaye. (Netaon ke Naam-
1948)*

Though, in another verse, he expressed his optimism:

*Tu zinda hai to zindagi ki jeet mein yakin kar
Agar kahin hai swarg to utaar la zamin par
Ye gum ke aur chaar din, sitam ke aur chaar din
Ye din bhee jaayenge guzar, guzar gaye hazaar din. (Tu Zinda
hai)*

*Nirdhan ke laal laho se, likha kathor ghatna-kram
Yon hi aayega jab tak pidit dharti se
Poonjiwadi shasan ka nat nirbal ke shoshan ka
Yeh daag na dhul jayega tab tak aisa ghatna-kram
Yon hi aayega-jayega yon hi aayega -jayega (Nyota aur
Chunoti)*

A line conveying his courage and conviction:

Hamare karwaan ka, manjilon ko intzaar hai !

What a grand conviction!

Very few trade union leaders of India might be aware that the famous slogan - *Har jor julam ki takkar mein, hartaal hamara nara hai* was written by poet Shailendra in the year 1949. Here is an extract from his couplet:

*Mat karo bahane sankat hai, mudraprasaar inflation hai,
In baniyon aur luteron ko kya sarkari kansession hai?
Baglein mat jhaanko, do jawaab kya yahi swaraj tumhara hai?
Mat samjho hamko yaad nahin hai june chheyalis ki dhatein,
Jab kale gore baniyon mein chalti thi saude batein;
Reh gayee gulami barkaraar hum samjhe ab chhutkara hai
Ab samjhein samjhotaparast ghutna teku dhulmul yakeen
Hum sab samjhotabajon ko ab alag kareinge been-been.*

(Har Jor Julam ki Takkar Mein- 1949)

Phanishwar Nath 'Renu' was an eminent fiction writer of Hindi literature. He wrote some of the classics viz Partee

Parikatha & Mailaa Aanchal (novels) and a large number of short-stories depicting the lifestyle of a cross section of society, mainly of the illiterate and the deprived sects of Bihar. The complexities of human character portrayed by 'Renu' in his writings is a matter of captivating study. It requires a particular bent of mind to understand his writings. Amongst this large number of short-stories, there is one classic named— *Teesri Kasam urf Mare Gaye Gulfaam*, wherein he has brilliantly depicted the attractions mixed with illusions towards each other of a village bullock-cart driver 'Hiraman' and a *Nautanki* dancer 'Hirabai'. The short story in itself by all standards, can be categorized as a world class piece of fiction.

After being in the field of cinema for two decades, the reflections in the poet and his personal friendship with Renu; deeply motivated Shailendra to play the biggest gamble of his life. He produced the film – *Teesri Kasam* based on aforesaid short-story line with a super-star cast -the legendary Raj Kapoor and the exemplary Waheeda Rehman. It was directed by Basu Bhattacharya, who like his father-in-law Bimal Roy, profoundly understood the sentiments of the characters depicted in the story. As a director, it was his maiden attempt and so was that of the producer.

It was estimated that the shooting of the film will be completed within six months. But, sadly it took more than six years. Consequently, the relations between the director and the producer became strained. While the film was in the making, Basu had serious problems with his wife-to-be Rinki and her father Bimal Roy, which seriously effected the continuity of shooting. This certainly caused a serious setback for the editors -Iqbal & S.P. Khol and also the producer.

Shanker Jaikishan provided some fascinating melodies and background music based on most of the lyrics written by Shailendra and Hasrat Jaipuri. In all, the film was a classic by all standards. Shailendra once again wrote some

fabulous and bewitching verses—

*Dunian banane wale, kya tere mun mein samayee,
Kahe ko duniyan banayee,
Kahe banay tune maattee key putle,
Kahey banaya tune dunian ka rela
Jismein banaya tune dunian ka khela
Gup-chup tamasha dekhe, jismein akela
Kahey ko dunian banayee.*

The film after its completion was released hurriedly and in haste during September, 1966. In view of acute shortage of funds, there was no publicity before its screening, which by all standards was a must. Consequently, it came out as a complete box-office flop in the first week of its release. Viewers in general were unable to appreciate the sentiments and the depth of its story line.

Initially, the film was released in Delhi and UP. Shailendra's son Dinesh remembers, "He was very excited because he was accompanying his parents to Delhi for the film's premiere. But all his plans went aghast when Shailendra got a call advising him not to show up in the capital. He had stood guarantor to some distributors and there was a legal problem during the film's release. Shailendra was inadvertently drawn into the mess. Unable to be present at the opening of his own film, came as a shock to the debutant producer. What made it worse was that the screening of the film was pulled out on the third day after its release."

Shailendra was shattered by the debacle. He wasn't prepared for the fact that the film he had backed for six years, would be summarily rejected by the viewers. It was unthinkable that they didn't identify and empathize with the story of 'Hiraman' and 'Hirabai'. "However, it was not so much the financial loss that he suffered that hurt my father. But it was the betrayal of friends and family in whom he had invested so much trust," observed Dinesh.

Shailendra was at the peak of his career in 1966 when



Teesri Kasam was released. Dinesh believes that with the kind of money he was making as a song writer he could have recovered the losses in six months. But after the film's disastrous first run in Delhi and UP, Shailendra just lost interest even in writing.

Dinesh has fond memories of the drives he and his brothers would take with their father every morning. "He was an early riser and as soon as we woke up around at 6 a.m, he would bundle us into his car and drive us down to Juhu beach. There was a hotel called 'Sea View' on the beach in front of which there was a pile of rocks. My father would sit on these rocks and write while we played in the sand

till it was time for us to return home and get needy for the school. It was a misconception that he wrote his songs while drinking, rather, it was on these rocks where he wrote his best sonnets, at times even without a cup of tea," says Dinesh emphatically.

The lyricist whose songs were always so vibrantly alive, paradoxically was obsessed with death. May be the fatal attraction stemmed from having lost his mother at a young age. After the debacle of *Teesri Kasam* and the desertion of his friends, Shailendra was drawn even more strongly to death.

The debt incurred for making the film and his poor health further aggravated the woe. According to his scholar friend Arvind Kumar – "traumatized Shailendra could not bear the agony of the failure. His dreams were shattered, he started taking liquor in excess, which damaged his liver and proved disastrous and certainly suicidal."

On the evening of 13 December, 1966 when he was taken to a nursing home, he desired that he should be taken via Chembur (in a completely different direction) so that he could see his much cherished R.K. Studio. May be, he had the intuition about the inevitable!

Shailendra breathed his last the following day on 14 December, 1966 (at the age of 43) which coincides with the date of birth of his mentor, Raj Kapoor.

After his demise, *Teesri Kasam* was critically acclaimed. The film also received a National Award and the President's Gold Medal for the best film of the year 1966. Subsequently, it was a grand success!

What an irony!

In a tribute to the genius, Lata Mangeshkar observed - *Shailenderji nahin rahe. Ek bhalaa insaan chala gaya. Aisa insaan jisne bade jatan se Hindustan ke aam aadmi ke dukh-dard, apne dil mein sanjo kar rakhe the. Unke dil mein sadaa ek aag dhadhakti rehti thi. Jo anyayee samaaj ki vyavashtha ko phoonk dena chahti thi. Filmi geeton ki hazaar bandishon mein rehkar bhi, yeh aag unke*

geeton mein spasht dikhai deti hei. (Shailendra is no more. A noble soul has passed away. He effortlessly adorned the sorrow and the happiness of the common man. A flame was always burning in his heart with which he aspired to fight the cruel system. Many of his lyrics for films clearly portray such thoughts in spite of the limitations of writing lyrics for films).

It is a sheer coincidence that the other three genius in the field of music viz K.L. Saigal, Khemchand Prakash and Ghulam Haider also died in their early forties.

Last but not the least, ever since recordings came to existence during the last more than eight decades, Hindi cinema has witnessed a large number of lyricists. They not only created a heart-throbbing solace to their listeners, they also shaped the destiny of a large number of composers, singers and also the film producers. To a great extent, songs and music was largely instrumental in determining the success or the failure of a film. Prominent amongst these distinguished lyricist and poets, there were Shailendra and Sahir Ludhianvi. The ardent songs and music lovers, film producers and above all admirers of expression of inner heart will always be indebted to them.

Sahir wrote his verses in Urdu and in recognition for his writings, he has been accepted by *Urdu-adab* as an established literary poet. He was also awarded the 'Padma Shree' by the President of India.

But sadly, Shailendra was denied such honour by the Hindi literary world. He was even deprived of a rightly deserved 'Padma' award. About the '*Hindi wallas*' it is lesser said the better!

14

Babul Mora...



K.L. Saigal in *Street Singer* (1936)

Wajid Ali Shah, the Nawab of Awadh was banished from his beloved Lucknow by the British during the eighteenth century. A true lover of dance and music, he himself was a composer of great merit. He expressed his pain of parting in his lyric *Babul mora naihara chhuto jaye*, which was indeed a soulful depiction of the agony of his heart.

Ages have passed and the recollection of his spiritual expression portrayed in these lines became a history.

Then, there came the film *Street Singer* in the year 1936 and the world listened to the immortal lines of *Babul Mora* in the golden voice of one and only Kundan Lal Saigal. The

music was composed by Rai Chand Boral, who is rightly considered as the father figure amongst Hindi cine-music composers.

Phani Majumdar, the director of the film, once observed, "Saigal was very deeply immersed in the feelings of the lyrics of *Babul Mora*. Thereby, he wanted to sing the song while acting on the sets. It was a very difficult task to record the song while Saigal acted and sang on the road. Besides, during such acting and singing, recording of the accompanying instruments played along with the golden voice of Saigal was not an easy job for the sound-engineers. But, Saigal did a great job. He was completely immersed in the song. Everything looked so real. It was certainly in view of the fact that perhaps he rightly understood the anguish of Wajid Ali Shah."

Shambhuji Maharaj of Lucknow, the well known musician trained a large number of singers of his time. Notable amongst them was Jagmohan, popularly known as *Sursagar*. In one of his interviews Jagmohan recalled a very interesting incident, wherein he narrated that a young man of about 30 years of age came to Shambhuji Maharaj to learn the singing of *Babul Mora*. The genius taught him within three days. At this point, Jagmohan was a little upset and annoyed with his master. Dejected, he asked him as to how he guessed that he (Jagmohan) will take at least six months to learn the singing of this composition, as against just three days taken by that young man. To this Shambhuji Maharaj replied, "You know who was this young man? He was Kundan Lal Saigal."

That is how the story of *Babul Mora* goes on.

The fact remains that for all the times to come *Babul Mora* has proved to be the most popular lyrics in the history of music of India, whether it is amongst film, light-classical or classical singers. In view of such amazing applause of the listeners of Saigal's *Babul Mora* a galaxy of singers singing *Babul Mora* (even classical instrumentalists) followed.

Kanan Devi, the golden melodious voice of 'Sentimental era' was amongst the earliest. She sang just a sketch of this song in the film— *Street Singer* for a little over minute's time. Because of the short duration, no recording of this masterpiece singing was made on a gramophone record and it is only available on the sound track of the film.

The list of luminaries who sang *Babul Mora* includes—Bhim Sen Joshi, Kesarbai Kerkar, Siddheshwari Devi, Rasoolan Bai, Khadim Hussain Khan, Mushatq Hussain Khan, Girija Devi, Shobha Gurtu & Girija Devi (jugalbandi), Kishori Amonkar & Hari Prasad Chaurasia (another jugalbandi), Kishori Amonkar, Jagmohan, Padma Talwalkar, Shanti Vaidyanathan Sharma, Mahender Chopra (son-in-law of K.L. Saigal) and none other than ghazal queen Begum Akhtar. Ustad Faiyaz Khan sang this in the year 1932, that is prior to Saigal.

Interestingly, Jagjit Singh, the well known ghazal singer came to limelight by singing *Babul Mora* which he sang along with his wife Chitra Singh in the early seventies. He recorded *Babul Mora* yet another time, which was his solo version.

A collection of all these renderings of *Babul Mora* sung by these legends in the last three decades is indeed a 'collectors' treasure'.

It is generally debated as to who sang *Babul Mora*, the best? To me, it is a ridiculous subject; similar to the comparison of a rose with jasmine and jasmine with a lily. However, once I discussed different versions of *Babul Mora* with the music maestro Anil Biswas. To this his remarks were simply fascinating, when he said, *Bete, Saigal ke alawa kisi ka naiher nahin chhuta*.

The fact remains that *Babul Mora* sung by Saigal will be listened to by ardent music lovers time and again for ages to come. About the others, no one can predict.

15

A Child Prodigy: Master Madan



Yun naa reh reh kar hamein tarsaiye and *Hairat se tak rahaa hai jahane wafa mujhe* - these two *ghazals* of Master Madan recorded at a tender age of eight on a 78 rpm gramophone record is a priceless collection of yesteryears' immortal music.

Anyone with even a cursory interest in music is familiar with these two Sagar Nizami's *ghazals*, sung by the amazing child prodigy- Master Madan, who died at an age of just less than fifteen.

The two *ghazals* have retained the magic even after a gap of seven decades, which is evident from a collection of ten CDs released by HMV, entitled *Ghazal Ka Safar*. This

collection includes these two *ghazals* of Master Madan, along with the recordings of majority of eminent ghazal singers of the previous century. The collection was edited by the eminent singer, Jagjit Singh.

Till the end of the previous century, just these two numbers of Master Madan were available. However, after strenuous efforts by some zealous music collectors (one being-my close friend and an ardent music lover, Pramod Dwedi of the daily *Jansatta*, who could arrange from Jaspal Singh, a resident of Shimla and the nephew of Master Madan), we could trace another six of his fabulous renderings. Thus, making available a collection of eight priceless and precious melodies. Pramod's efforts thus deserve a sizeable appreciation!

A few lines about Master Madan, who was born on 26 December, 1927 in an orthodox Sikh family in a village called- 'Khankhana', built and named by Abdul Rahim Khankhana in the Jalandhar district of Punjab. Abdul Rahim Khankhana was one of the *nauratans* (nine gems) at the court of Emperor Akbar. He was a warrior, an eminent Hindi and Arabic poet-philosopher and was popularly known as 'Rahim'.

Master Madan's father Sardar Amar Singh was in the service with the Education Department and his mother Puran Devi was a religious lady. She, too, died young in the year 1942.

Master Madan, the child prodigy started singing at the tender age of three and quickly became a craze all over India. His amazingly matured voice left a deep impression on the listeners in general and devout Sikhs in particular. Listen to his captivating rendition- *Chetna hai to chet le a hymn*, a *sahabad* of Guru Teg Bahadur Saheb, which is a classic example of his excellent understanding of thought and feel. Shanti Devi, his elder sister later revealed that he always carried a portrait of Guru Nanak wrapped in silk, a rosary and a *gutka* (abridged holy Granth) wherever he went to perform.



Master Madan

He gave his first public performance at the age of three and a half years at Dharampur Sanatorium (Himachal Pradesh) where he enthralled the audience by singing in *dhrupad* style of Indian classical music. According to Shanti Devi, the listeners were spell-bound with his command over *laykaari* and *surtaal* (rhyme and rhythm). The young lad concluded the recital with a devotional composition *Hey sharda naman karoon* in raag *mishr kafi*. The critics hailed it as the beginning of a fabulous era.

After the conclusion of this captivating concert, he was bestowed with a gold ring, a shawl and a gold medal. His first successful performance made him a celebrity overnight. There was a grand news coverage in the media. Some such paper clippings are still available with Ravinder Kaur, the niece (bothers' daughter) of Master Madan at Butail Building, Shimla.

Overnight, the identity of the genius spread like fire all over the music fraternity of the country. After this grand show, he continued giving performances along with his elder brother Master Mohan. After this he was in great demand everywhere. Though, two posters portrayed the photographs of both the brothers, there used to be a special mention of the mesmerizing singing by Master Madan.

The maestro began his training in music at the age of seven years, under the able guidance of Pt. Amar Nath, a great musician and the elder brother of the composer duo - Husnalal and Bhagatram. He had composed music (along with Husnalal Bhagatram) for film *Mirza Saheban*, wherein Noorjehan sang some of her captivating numbers. The two ghazals by Master Madan, referred here-in-above were also composed by Pt. Amar Nath.

Master Madan's elder brother Master Mohan, who was in Shimla, also used to sing and play the violin. This was the time when the legendary singer K.L. Saigal too was in Shimla. Very often, Saigal used to bring his harmonium to their home—'Butail building' for his singing and his brother, played the violin.

Interestingly, in 1940 Mahatma Gandhi visited Shimla and very few people turned up at his meeting, as most of them had gone to a concert of Master Madan.

The singing sensation was a particular favorite of the rulers of the Indian states, who conferred many medals and decorations on him. Some of these medals, he invariably wore at his recitations. He was always in demand for his singing. Thereby, his family was thrilled, as he used to bring lot of money and valuable presents.

But, this took its toll. In view of excessive strain under which the young boy lived and performed, his health began to suffer. He would complain of exhaustion and low fever. Sadly, he was not properly taken care of and provided adequate medical attention. When at a later stage, he was taken for a medical check-up, he was found to be beyond recovery. The diagnosis was a slow poison that had affected his vital organs. The genius with his immortal voice died in Shimla on 5 June, 1942 several months short of his fifteenth birthday. He was cremated wearing all his medals.

There have been many stories about the real cause of his death. One such story was that when he was performing at Ambala, a local singing girl had invited him to her *Kotha*

and gave him a doctored *paan* (betel leaf). Another said that at Radio Station Delhi, he was given mercury in his drink by a jealous performer. Yet another was that in Calcutta, after a sensational concert at which he sang a *thumri- Bintee suno meree*, someone gave him a slow-acting poison in his drink. It was noticed in retrospect that he never recovered his voice after that particular performance.

However, the fact is that it was the greed of the family and the envy of the rivals that killed the child-prodigy-Master Madan, leaving behind recordings of just eight classic classicals.

Yun naa reh reh kar hamein tarsaaiye (Ghazal)

Hairat se tak rahaa hai jahane wafaa mujhe (Ghazal)

Goree goree baiyaan (Thumri)

Mori bintee mano kanha re (Thumri)

Man ki man hi mein rahi (Gurbani)

Chetnaa hai to chet le (Gurbani)

Bagaan wich peegan paiyaan (Punjabi)

Raavi de palle (Punjabi)

Those whom the God loves, die young, goes the adage! Few examples in the history of Hindustani music bear the testimony to this truth as did the death of Master Madan.

One is reminded of a pithy couplet by Abdul Rahim Khankana:

*Rahiman ochhey naran soun, bair bhalo na priti;
kaatein chatein swaan ke, dou bhanti vipreet.*

(Rahim let not a petty man be your friend or foe;
A dog's lick or bite will only lead to woe).