

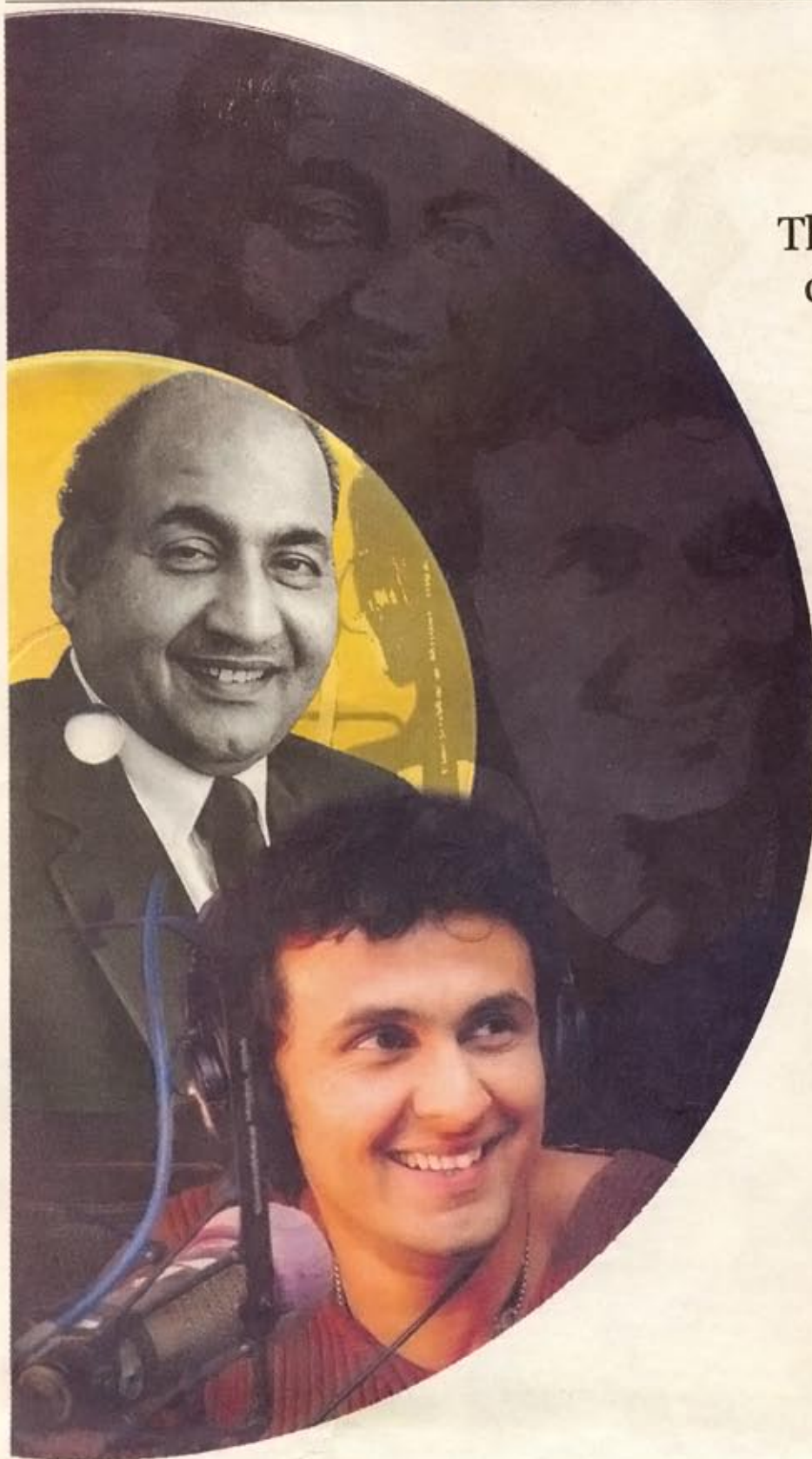
HE SAID IT

Anything that is too stupid to be
spoken is sung

— VOLTAIRE

Sound choices

The classics are, well, classics. But one song from a contemporary Hindi movie did the impossible: pleased a Rafi-loving father and his Metallica-loving son



**Harsha
BHOGE**
on HINDI MUSIC

**HARSHA
BHOGE**
A cricket commen-
tator and a journal-
ist, Harsha Bhogale
has also written a
book, *Azhar - The
Authorized
Biography of
Mohammad
Azharuddin*. He
also played advisor
to the Mumbai
Indians in the 2008
Indian Premier
League.

WHILE CRICKET has been the overwhelming motif in my life, Hindi film music has played a pretty strong supporting role. Put it down to the radio, Vividh Bharati and Radio Ceylon with the incomparable Ameen Sayani, and the fact that there weren't too many other forms of entertainment. And Hindi film music was simple, really poetry set to words, and so you could hum it. One of the great differences between my adolescent years and now is that today's film music is fantastic to listen to but quite often, impossible for ordinary people like us to attempt because instruments are juggled around and the words are but one of the many components.

And so I became a huge fan of Mohamad Rafi, Kishore Kumar in his *Chalti Ka Naam Gaadi* or *Jhumroo* avatar and in course of time, I suspect influenced by my father, of Manna Dey. *Poocho na kaise maine rain bitayee*, was one of his favourites and in course of time became mine as well but on my little Walkman, I can't remember how often I heard *Laaga chunari mein daag*, especially the high notes at the end and surely nobody could have brought a lump to the throat the way Manna Dey did with an all time favourite *Ai mere pyaare watan*.

Through my father's conversations, and to some extent my aunt's, I quickly learnt to identify compositions. The easiest, because they were the most stylized, were OP Nayyar and Madan Mohan and I got SD Burman right more often than I did wrong. *Aap ki nazaron ne samjha pyaar ke kaabil mujhe* from *Anpadh* was a talking point in the household because an aunt sang it at her wedding and in lonely hotel rooms I have often heard the classic from *Mera Saaya*, *Tu jahaan jahaan chalega mera saaya saath hoga*. Maybe it was just a bit of my childhood coming back because one of my favourite albums in recent years is *Veer Zaara*, especially when the hugely gifted Sonu Nigam starts with *Do pal ruka khwabon ka karawan aur phir chal diye hum ka-*

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han tum kahan.

In course of time when the Walkman and the cassette player in the car became available, travel and music became even more inseparable. The Walkman was my best friend on early tours and I remember drives in New Zealand and England, letting the scenery sink in with the eyes while the ears devoted themselves to collections of Khayyam or Roshan. The earplugs were mighty uncomfortable but they were a conduit for the music I loved. And I picked up cassettes anywhere, including one from a taxi driver in Mumbai.

I was on my way to the airport when the driver slid in a cassette into a player that was on its last legs. And I began listening to the most awesome collection of Rafi songs. Now I had a few myself, and still do, but this was the best collection I had heard, every song a hit, almost like someone had personally put it together. Only once, as we passed Mahim and entered Bandra, did I doubt if it was an

original but it sounded so good that I let it be. And as we waited at the signal at the old Centaur, I asked him where he got it from. He didn't know. I told him I had never heard such a great collection of Rafi and he turned and said, *"Saab yeh Rafi ka nahi hai kol aur hai."* That made me even more curious and I asked him how much he had paid for it. *"Kuch tees rupaye"* he said. I asked him if he would sell it to me for Rs 30. He smiled and agreed and that is when I discovered that the songs were sung by Sonu Nigam. Diehard Rafi fans might snort at me but I promise you, you couldn't tell. I still have the cassette and by a wonderful quirk of fate, Sonu Nigam has become a good friend.

And earlier this year in Australia, I was driving with a friend of mine. He looked at me and said "Rafi?". Out came another gorgeous collection and as the Sydney Cricket Ground appeared in the distance, came the song I had yearned to hear for almost 20 years. It was an unusual combination of talents. Kamal Amrohi, Khayyam and Rafi in a film called *Shankar Hussain*. *"Kahin ek masoom si ladki..."*. It tells you what music can be: simple words set to simple music and creating a great ambience. Listen to it if you can get hold of it, especially this part: *"chalo khat likhe jee me aata to hoga, magar ungaliyan kanp-kanpaati to hongi, kalam haath se chhut jaata to hoga, umange kalam phir uthati to hongi, mera naam apni kitabon me likhkar who daanton me ungli dabaati to hogi, kahin ek maasum naazuk si ladki..."*

In recent times I have enjoyed almost everything that Rahman has put together. Indeed his *Rang de Basanti* unites me and my Metallica-loving son! But in case you think I am glorifying the past and belittling the present, here are two beauties that KK has sung that could fit into any generation. *Aankhon me teri from Om Shanti Om* and the incomparable *Tadap tadap ke is dil se aah nikalti rahi.....* Back to the cricket!