

Musician

On the occasion of Madan Mohan's seventh death anniversary, NITISH RELE traces the career of this 'Prince of Composers' who was not a trained musician but whose compositions revealed a classic touch.

IN 1947, the year that India achieved her independence, a handsome but short-statured youth landed in Bombay with dreams of becoming a film actor. Perseverance paid off and he was signed on to act in *Purdah*. But the curtain never rose on that film. And the youth turned instead to music direction in time becoming a famous music composer.

Madan Mohan, the Prince of Composers, who died on July 14, 1975 had composed music for some 80 films and in 1970 had won the national award for music, for the film *Dastak*. Born in Baghdad, where his father was for sometime an Accountant General with the Iraq Police, Madan Mohan spent the first five years of his life in the Middle East. He studied in the Punjab and joined the Indian army after his schooling. However, his interests lay elsewhere, and two years later he left the army. He resigned from his job in the Lucknow Station of All India Radio when he came to know that he would not be associated with the music section.

Borrowing money for the train fare from a friend, he left for Bombay. Although his father, Rai Bahadur Chunilal, was a film magnate, Madan Mohan had to struggle to gain a foothold in the film industry for it was the father's

wish that the son should make it on his own merits.

Shekhar, an old associate introduced him to Devendra Goel who gave Madan his first break as a music director for *Ankhen*. This turned out to be a musical hit. Madan's genius was further revealed in *Railway Platform*, *Bhai Bhai*, *Madhosh*, *Mastana* and *Adalat*.

Madan did not specialise in only a particular type of music. He composed highly polished and popular tunes in the classical Indian style as well as those in a light modern vein. That is one reason why his compositions were used in various kinds of films. And he succeeded in making so many tunes of his hits.

Popular bhajans

His gazals and bhajans were as well known as his hit numbers.

"Mat bhool, are insaan" (Rafi in *Mastana*) and "Prabhu dwar chali Prabhu ki dassi" (Manna Dey in *Sheroo*) are some bhajans that became popular.

He had no set method of composition and believed that no creative musician should have one. "Music for my songs have their own individuality—each one has its own mood—its period of gestation.

"One song may take a month, another may take a week, while a hit