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Madan Mohan lives on...!

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Woh bhooli dastaan, lo phir yaad aa gayee' (that forgotten tale returns to haunt me once again). Yes, forgotten memories did forge ahead in our minds during the evening filled with nostalgia. The event was the function 'Madan Mohan - a retrospective' organised by the Entertainment Society of Goa on June 13 to celebrate the genius of Madan Mohan, the legendary music composer of Hindi cinema of yore. The presenters were Sachin Chatte and musicologist Chandrashekhar Rao, along with Madan Mohan's daughter, Sangeeta Gupta.

The evening began with the cluster of short video clips of songs from the maestro's initial films from early 1950s, such as 'Madhosh', 'Baaghi', 'Railway Platform' and a few more. Most of his early films flopped at the box office, though their music was appreciated.

'Bhai Bhai' (1956) brought Madan Mohan the long awaited success. The second cluster of songs of the late 1950s were from the films 'Bhai Bhai', 'Jailor', 'Adalat', 'Dekh Kabira Roya' and 'Gateway of India' among others.

What followed then was an interaction with Sangeeta on her relationship with her illustrious father, their family life, his love for cooking, the birth of some of his hit songs and many other subjects. She also offered her comments and anecdotes from time to time on the songs that were being screened at the programme.

There were recorded interviews with Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhonsle, wherein they spoke highly of Madan Mohan and his music. Also included were interviews of other stalwarts such as Mala Sinha, Khayyam, Zakir Hussain, Jaidev and Manna Dey.

Clusters of video clips of songs were presented chronologically. After the early and late 1950s, it was the early 1960s, late 1960s and the first half of 1970s.

By the early 1960s Madan Mohan was well established in the industry and worked on a number of films. Musically prominent among them were 'Sanjog', 'Anpadh', 'Manmauji', 'Woh Kaun Thi?', 'Ghazal', 'Haqeeqat' and 'Jahan Ara'. He was nominated for a Filmfare Award for 'Anpadh' and 'Woh Kaun Thi?', but lady luck denied him the award on both occasions.

The late 1960s witnessed Madan Mohan composing for some of his most popular films like 'Mera Saaya', 'Chirag', 'Dulhan Ek Raat ki', 'Heer Ranjha' and 'Dastak'. Unexpectedly, 'Dastak' brought Madan Mohan the great honour - National Award for music.

In his last five years, Madan Mohan was not very prolific - 'Bawarchi', 'Hanste Zakhmi', 'Hindustan ki Kasam', 'Mausam' and 'Laila Majnu' were some of his final films; the last two released after his demise. He was nominated for a Filmfare Award for 'Mausam' but once again did not win.

Madan Mohan passed away in 1975 at the age of 51. All the recognition he received, other than the love from his fans, was the National Award for 'Dastak' and a five rupee postage stamp released in his honour, in 2013.

A special section was devoted to music of Yash Chopra's 'Veer-Zara' (2004), which was credited to Madan Mohan. The songs were recorded based on tunes composed by Madan Mohan, which remained unused during his lifetime. They were located by his son Sanjeev Kohli, who took great pains to restore them. 'Veer-Zara' songs were well received and Madan Mohan was posthumously bestowed upon with the IIFA award for the music.

A maximum number of Madan Mohan's popular songs found a place in the programme, which went on for almost three hours. All in all, it was a grand programme for the lovers of vintage film music, with whom the auditorium was packed to its capacity.

(The writer is an avid film and music buff)