

Woh bhooli dastaan, lo phir yaad aa gayi...

Sangeeta Gupta, daughter of noted music composer, late Madan Mohan, is in Goa to participate in a musical programme dedicated to her illustrious father. She speaks to NT BUZZ about her father's music as well as shares some of his memories



Madan Mohan with his daughter Sangeeta

ing that particular period, are considered as classics.

Q. When R D Burman was in the last leg of his career, the music he composed for the films was a hit, but the films were not. Don't you think a similar thing also happened to Madanji?

It happened to my father throughout his career. In fact, during the final years of his career, he may have got some hit films. Some of the films he made in the 1950s were so bad that you can't even tolerate them today. The music in them however, was brilliant. I have started watching some of them today. Once during my train journey, I took along seven-eight of his films on my laptop and couldn't bear to see them. As films they were so bad! You could only hear their songs on the records or radio. Today, the songs have taken a visual form. In present times, you can of course listen to his songs as they have melody and rhythm, but their visual form has become more important.

Q. On a parting note, if asked to choose your most favourite composition of Madan Mohan, which one would you pick?

I would not like to choose any of the commonly favoured ones. His two compositions, which are very close to my heart, are the rarely heard ones. One is 'Sapanon mein agar mere, tum aao to so jao' from the film, 'Dulhan Ek Raat Ki' and 'Meri aankho se koi neend liye jata hai' from 'Pooja ke Phool'.

(A musical retrospective of Madan Mohan will be presented by his daughter Sangeeta Gupta, accompanied by Sachin Chatte and Chandrashekhar Rao on June 13, 6:30 p.m., at Cinephile Film Club, Maquinez Palace, Panaji.)

Lata Mangeshkar and Madan Mohan created many musical gems for the treasures of the Hindi film music. When in the year 1967, Lataji commemorating her 25 years in the Hindi film industry announced personal 10 favourite songs, Madan Mohan was the only music composer whose two songs featured in the list. 'Lag jaa gale ki phir yeh haseen raat ho na ho' from 'Woh Kaun Thi?' (1964) was his first song in the list, while 'Bairan neend na aaye mohe' from 'Chacha Zindabad' was the other.

Q. Besides music, Madan ji loved sports as well as cooking...

Actually, he was in the army before coming to films and therefore, was very much conscious about his physical fitness. He enjoyed wrestling, doing exercise, and was even a champion swimmer. He also loved playing billiards and snooker. He loved cricket and wouldn't miss any cricket match. If there was a test match, he had to be at the Brabourne Stadium.

So as you see sports was an important part of his life. Cooking on the other hand was a passion, which gave him relaxation.

Q. How was Madanji as a father? Can you share some of your fond memories with him?

He used to take a lot of time out to interact with us, his children. We were taken for month-long summer holidays to hill stations. My mother and we went earlier and then he joined us during the last ten days. Every Sunday we were taken to National Sports Club of India (NSCI) or Sun & Sand (hotel) for swimming. He would also let us accompany him to the market to buy mutton and so on as he liked cooking. He was fully a family man. He loved cleaning the house as also his car, which was dear to him. We had two dogs and he was very passionate about them. In fact, after they died he didn't keep any more.

Q. It is said that Madanji composed a number of songs for various films that were eventually shelved. He was also fond of creating tunes for his 'Music Bank', some of which were used by Yash Chopra for his 2004 film, 'Veer-Zaara'. Can you tell us something about this aspect?

Earlier, one didn't have the facility for storing music, as we have now. They used to have these large spools, and since it was difficult to remember all these tunes, which came to him, I think he stored them on the spools. Also the notations would be done once the song was finalised, which left the spools as his only option. After Madanji's demise, my bother Sanjeev Kohli found these spools. The tunes used in 'Veer-Zaara' came from these very spools.

Q. Do you think that Madanji did not get his due during his lifetime, including awards and recognition?

I agree. He didn't. But then I would say a lot many others also did not; say someone like Chitragupta, C Ramchandra, Vasant Desai or even Salil Chowdhury. The public memory is very short-lived. I however think that Madanji is very lucky, luckier than the rest... People give him so much respect, and because of that we get that kind of honour, which I feel is much more than what some of his contemporaries are getting. Maybe he deserved it; maybe it was destined that he should get it after he left. I don't know!



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Q. It has been more than 40 years since Madan Mohanji passed away. However, his tunes, his compositions still live on. What do you think is the secret of this musical immortality, especially since he was not a musically trained person?

My father was a very emotional person and what he said very clearly on many occasions is: 'for an artiste to be true to his art, he or she has to be an emotional person'. For him, emotion was of prime importance and I think that is why his songs live on. His emotions are reflected in all his works.

Q. Lataji has time and again spoken about her Madan bhaiyya and his compositions. Can you tell us something about the Madan Mohan-Lata Mangeshkar magic?

When they first met, they sang a song together for the 1948 movie 'Shaheed', which was about the affectionate relationship between a brother and a sister. It was composed by Ghulam Haider. Unfortunately, the song was deleted from the movie and is not available anywhere. Later, when my father started composing songs for films, he informed Lataji about it and requested her to sing for his films. But then, I think she didn't take him seriously as his father, Rai Bahadur Chunnilal was a studio baron. Also, she had doubts about his composing. However, when my father's first film as a music composer did well, Lataji realised that he was serious about his work and from his second film onwards she started singing under his baton. At that time, my father also recalled their first song together and expressed his wish to be her brother. Lataji had also treated Mukeshji and Dilip Kumar sahab as her brothers, however with my father this relationship was even extended to our family. She was very close to my mother, and thus to us children also. And after our parents passed away - my father passed away in 1975 and mother five years after his demise - she really took care of us. Lataji was a big moral support to us.

Q. There were some film directors like Chetan Anand and Raj Khosla, who were very close to Madanji. Did he make special

efforts to create music for their films?

I'm sure, he would have done so. Basically he didn't like any interference in his work. Whatever were the situations in the film, he composed according to them. And I think, maybe they gave him an extra free hand to do what he wanted to do. Furthermore, these directors were also musically inclined and that made a difference to the music composed for their films.

Q. While most of the music directors in the Hindi film industry who ruled the 1950s and 1960s golden era of film music began to fade away during the early 1970s, Madanji was very productive churning out melodious tunes in films like 'Dastak' (1970), 'Heer Raanjha' (1970), 'Parwana' (1971), 'Hanste Zakhm' (1972), 'Dil ki Rahen' (1973), 'Mausam' (1975), 'Laila Majnu' (1976) and so on...

By the time the 1970s arrived he went on to innovate his music. He was not happy being classified a 'Ghazal King'. There was much more to his work, his music, than just ghazals. It's just that people have a very narrow viewpoint of looking at an artist. In fact, every composer in those days was capable of creating everything that the film needed; a sad song, a comedy song, a romantic song, and so on. So likewise he too got a chance to compose all kind of songs. He changed his music while re-inventing himself. He changed with the times. I should mention here that he also received a lot of flak for this change. People started saying that he had turned modern in terms of his music. But today, the songs he composed even dur-

THE MADAN MOHAN - LATA MANGESHKAR MAGIC

1. Aap ki nazron ne samjha (Anpadh)
2. Hai isi mein pyar ki aabru (Anpadh)
3. Lag jaa gale (Woh Kaun Thi?)
4. Jo hamne dastaan apni sunaee (Woh Kaun Thi?)
5. Yun hasraton ke daag mohabbat mein (Adalat)
6. Unko yeh shiqayat hai ki hum kuchh nahin kehte (Adalat)
7. Main toh tum sang nain milake (Man-Mauji)
8. Nainon mein badra chhaye (Mera Saaya)
9. Bairan neend na aaye mohe (Chacha Zindabad)
10. Baiyan na dhara (Dastak)
11. Hum hain mata-e-koocha-o-bazar ki tarah (Dastak)
12. Mai ri main kase kahoon (Dastak)
13. Rasm-e-ulfat ko nibhaen to nibhaen kaise (Dil ki Rahen)
14. Aaj socha toh aansu bhar aaye (Hanste Zakhm)
15. Ruke ruke se kadam (Mausam)