



*Fate played against Madan always... the top awards went to Shankar Jaikishen, SD Burman and others*

## MADAN MOHAN

He was a schizophrenic – he had two distinct personalities. One was of the fabulous musician steeped into creativity. The other carried traits of his military training (he was once part of the army) - strong and *kadak* (strict). Even Lata, whom he called his sister, once told me, “If he liked a song, he’d give me a hard whack on my back and I’d be all shaken up.” Madan often got into friendly fights. Once he fought with Om Prakash brandishing a *chimta* (tongs) and got down to blows. Even lyricist Raja Mehdi Ali Khan would have a mock fight saying, “Madan, I’ll ask my dog to bite you if you don’t compose well.” I remember Madan was grief-stricken when Raja passed away. He could reach only as people were covering up the grave.

Fate played against Madan all the time. He was one of our most outstanding musicians along with SD Burman and Roshan. But the top awards only went to Shankar Jaikishen, SD Burman and others. Once someone even asked Madan for a bribe to present him the award. He was livid about it.

There was no question of juggling the list in *Geetmala*. Ciba and I were both strict about accuracy. We’d tally the sales list from the top 10 to 12 music shops all over India with the *farmaish* (request) list sent to us by the public. But I discovered there was rigging in the *farmaishes* – many postcards carried requests for the same song! The addresses would represent cities like Benares, Pune, Kohlapur... but when you turned around the postcards, you’d find the stamp of Kalbadevi Post Office in Mumbai. So I scrapped this *farmaish* list. Instead, we formed radio clubs in various cities, which sent us the popularity lists.

Madan’s songs never topped the charts. They reached the 2nd and 3rd position but never became No. 1. All songs of *Anpadh* (1962) made it to *Geetmala*. I’d praise his songs to the skies, hoping the sales would go up. They did but still never topped. Except after he passed away (1975). *Koi pathar se na mare* from *Laila Majnu* (1977) topped *Geetmala*. Though the song was not as good as his other great compositions, fate did bend a bit for Madan after his death.