

Reviving lost memories

“**A**ap Ki Nazron Ne Samjha” (Lata Mangeshkar, *Anpadh*), “Hum Se Aaya Na Gaya” (Talat Mahmood, *Dekh Kabira Roya*), “Na Tum Bewafa Ho” (Lata Mangeshkar, *Ek Kali Muskai*), “Kar Chale Hum Jaan-o-Tan Sathiyo” (Mohammad Rafi, *Haqeeqat*), “Tum Jo Mil Gaye Ho” (Mohammad Rafi, *Hanste Zakhm*), “Phir Wohi Shaam” (Talat Mahmood, *Jahan Ara*), “Jhoomka Gira Re” (Asha Bhosle, *Mera Saaya*), Naina Barse (Lata Mangeshkar, *Woh Kaun Thi*)... the list could go and on, when one talks of a particular music composer who went by the name of Madan Mohan. One of the greatest-ever music directors Hindi cinema can boast of, he was a man who died young, with a career spanning 25 years behind him. A career which could have had a much longer span had he not died an untimely death at the age of 51 on July 14, 1975.

That he was a sheer musical genius needs reemphasizing — the proof of it lies in the all-time classics he composed, songs that leave you with goose bumps every time you hear them. Proving his talent are over 100 films, many of which have got lost in the mist of time, but their songs still remain dew fresh.

A son's dedication

For all those who love pure melody and are fans of the master composer, here's some good news. Thirty four years after his death, a new album has brought to life 15 of his compositions from never-released films, five of them never heard before and even the other ten heard by probably just a handful of old timers. The album, “Tere Bagair...” is the result of a devoted son's dedicated approach to keep alive the memory of his father's artistic creativity, and the son, Sanjeev Kohli, who was till sometime back the CEO of Yashraj Films and is now a consultant to the company, is justifiably ecstatic about it.

“Madan Mohan the father is more etched in my memory than Madan Mohan the composer. The composing legend, that he has now become, was something I discovered only after he was gone. Today the younger generation is listening to very little of old film music. Even the older generation is not really buying old film music, rather they are more into downloading and copying. So old film music does not stand a chance really. And though it is all new as it has never been heard before, but finally it will be slotted as old film music. But then my aim is not to make money, what I am doing is as a proud son who wants people to remember Madam Mohan's genius through these unheard songs sung by some of our greatest singers,” says Kohli.

The album, released by YRF Mu-

sic, has two CDs, one comprising the 15 songs and one piece illustrating how Madan Mohan used to compose, and the other showcasing the making of the music of Yash Chopra's *Veer-Zaara*, which used the great composer's tunes to great effect a few years ago. The songs have been culled out by Kohli from the spools lying at the family residence, all comprising unused songs recorded with singers like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Mohammad Rafi, Talat Mahmood and Kishore Kumar, and tunes composed and hummed onto the tapes for future reference by Madan Mohan. “I don't even know the names of the films for which these recordings were made, as people associated with them are either gone or the songs are from so much way back in time that nobody really remembers the names of the films. So, I decided not to even hazard guessing the names of the films and have just listed the singers' names in the album,” says Kohli about the album launched on June 25, the 85th birth anniversary of his father.



The songs are all in their full versions, and not cut, as he had had to do when he had brought out a limited edition LP record just a couple of years after Madan Mohan's death under the Polydor label, comprising ten of the numbers included in this album.

“That album was not heard by many as it was a limited edition one, and soon LP records became a thing of the past,” says Kohli. The album opens with a Rafi song, “Kaise Kategi Zindagi Tere Bagair”, setting the mood for a journey into a masterly composer's mind. This is followed by Madan Mohan himself humming “Mere Ashqon Ka Gham” as he was composing it, followed by the same sung by Lata Mangeshkar. Following it are songs of various genres sung by Rafi, Talat Mahmood and Kishore Kumar. “We have digitally remastered the songs from the spool tapes, and added some instruments where the original instrument sound had got damaged, so as to make the listening pleasure maximum,” says Kohli.

Kohli says he still has about 150 tunes composed by his father with him. “I will have to think of how to use them. Maybe I will think of sharing it with filmmakers who might want to use them, but I will ensure that I am part of the creative process too,” he says. Coinciding with Madan Mohan's birth anniversary, Kohli has also launched a website on his father, www.madanmohan.in <<http://www.madanmohan.in/>>.

It might be a son's tribute, but “Tere Bagair”, excavated from the master tapes of Madan Mohan, and comprising songs composed when he was at the peak of his creativity between 1964 and 1972, is meant for any lover of great Hindi film music.

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