

It is all of 20 years since Madan Mohan passed away on July 14. Singing his ghazals, Lata remains a legend. Yet the reality, going by what C. Ramchandra said, is that "Madan was good at doing every style of tune". This Madan style of songs, 75 of them, form the theme of a breakaway anniversary study by Raju Bharatan.

**W**AS it not the music score of Filmistan's 'Shabistan' (1951) that Madan Mohan took over upon Chitalkar Ramchandra's quitting the film, following a quarrel with its director, Bibhuti Mitra? Chitalkar left after having recorded with Lata something so trendily-Goanised as *Hum pyaar karna sakta ki nahin sakta*. And Madan Mohan matched its catchpenny hybrid tone with Shamshad Begum and chorus's *Chinchkpokly ho Chinchkpokly ho, tuchhokra mai chhokra!*

A reluctant populist, nonetheless, is the image we carry of Madan Mohan. Is it not time, now that we are into our 21st year without Madan Mohan, we had a second look at his repertoire?

Such a look must reveal that Vijay Anand was talking through the straw hat he sported in 'Agra Road' when he said Madan Mohan was not an 'audio-visual' composer like S.D. Burman. Yes, it is on 'the other Madan Mohan', this composer's lighter side, I focus here. The odd ghazal might creep into the study, but the broad idea is to bring home to readers that the music Madan made was not totally sans abandon.

It was without Lata, with Meena Kapoor, that Madan made his popular mark in his maiden 'Aankhen' (1950) with *Mori atariya pe kaaga bole mora jiya dole*. And he could be delightfully featherweight even as Lata stepped into his music fold with his 'Ada' notes on Rehana of *Saanwri soorat man bhayi re piya*.

If it is Lata's sombre songs from 'Ada' we better remember, the same applies to 'Madhosh'. Yet, even here, we get, from Madan, something so youthfully vivacious, in Lata's voice, as *Humen ho gaya tumse pyaar bedardi baalama*.

Nor need we be stuck with the set Lata-Madan tone in 'Aashiana' either. We have *Samaan hai bahaar ka le le mazaa pyaar ka*.

Suraiya was Madan Mohan's next-building neighbour. The two played together in the same courtyard. It was only natural, therefore, that Madan should have come up with something like *Ab chalu main balam sang thumak-thumak* for his 'Khubsurat' singing-star companion.

Madan was born in Baghdad. Thus for 'Baghi', even in Lata's voice, he had to be refreshing with a difference, on beauty queen Naseem, in the vein of *Kar ke badnaam meri neenden haraam*.

Mention 'Nirmohi' and you think of only the best of Lata and Madan. Yet, from this film, it is

diwane Binaca Geetmala topper, in the voices of Lakshmi Shankar and Rafi. The Rafi solo from 'Mastana', *Duniya ke saare ghamon se begaana*, was no less heard, as the movie's theme song. But the real remembrance I carry of Rafi and Madan from 'Mastana' is of that hit bhajan: *Mat bhool arre insaan*. Nor can Ameen Sayani forget this one, seeing the number of times he played it in

*Sun mere rasiya balam man basiya*.

Is it not fun, for a change, to go so tunelessly light with Madan Mohan? That is why I resist the temptation to pick, from Madan's 'Fifty Fifty', Lata's regrettably little-heard *Chal diya dil mera tod ke, yun akela mujhe chhod ke* and opt for Rafi-Kishore's less mind-testing *Aadhi tum kha lo aadhi hum kha len*.

Oh yes, Madan was never without the box-office touch, only he was a thoroughbred whom a producer could take to the pond, yet never be sure he could make him drink! If Madan set his mind to it, he could produce something to go so instantly on your lips as *Basti basti parbat parbat*, standing alongside Rafi in 'Railway Platform'!

Madan could also present Kishore and Asha in the tandem idiom of *Dil dil se milakar dekho* and, in the same film, get Asha and Talat Mahmood to duet charmingly as *Hamari gali aana achcha ji*.

Take 'Bhai Bhai'. It endures as an eight-song Lata-Madan classic. Yet can you ever forget the natty notes Madan struck in it, via Geeta Dutt on Shyama with *Ai dil mujhe bata de*. Believe it or not, this was the solo Geeta sang for Madan Mohan in Indian Cinema's silver jubilee

the Geetmala, as a C. Ramchandra tune? Young Babul, as Madan Mohan's assistant, walked up to Ameen's office to ensure that a correction be put out in the next Binaca. The same Babul who was to create, for Talat Mahmood in 'Reshmi Roomal', a ghazal to match the best by Madan Mohan: *Jab chhaye kabhi saawan ki ghata*.

No actress vivified the brighter side of Madan as did Geeta Bali in the voice of Lata, in 'Pocketmaur', with *Balma anadi manga de ghoda gaadi* (with its *Na cinema dikhaya na lemon pilaya* motif that summed up the maximum expectations of our penny-pinching youth!) Why this Lata solo did not catch on, the way it was enacted by Geeta Bali, is something no one could explain to Madan.

If Lata on Geeta Bali sounded extra-cute here, Asha took your breath away by invading her sister's Madan Mohan sanctum with *Ashok se teri hum ne tasvir banayi hai* in 'Dekh Kabira Roya'. Would you rate this one as Asha's best ever for Madan Mohan or would you vote for the solo Asha rendered so arrestingly for this composer in 'Bank Manager': *Sabase yeh keh do ki kaliyaan bichchaye?*

Not always did Asha catch the Madan mood as she did in these two solos though, contrary to



that lullaby (something Madan rarely composed) that endures in my mind and heart, as put over by Nutan via Lata: *Laadle so jaa laadle so jaa*. Thank you, Gopal Sharma, for playing this one over and over again on Radio Ceylon to make the tune a part of our psyche.

'Dhoon' starred Nargis and Raj Kapoor. An opportunity, therefore, for Madan (like in 'Aashiana') to be at his most plaintive. Sensitive Madan was in his best scoring 'Dhoon' theme. Yet, for me, the memory that abides from 'Dhoon' is of that ultra-rare thing called a Lata-Hemant Kumar duet (on Raj Kapoor) in the form of *Hum pyaar karenge hum pyar karenge*.

Even less can I forget, under the baton of Madan Mohan the resonance Hemant Kumar brought to the visage of Shammi Kapoor, in 'Mohar', with *Kho gaya jaane kahaan arzooon ka jahaan*. I just cannot believe Madan Mohan thought as poorly of Hemant Kumar as I know he did, hearing this composer-singer team's *Le le dard paraya kar de door gham ka saaya* in 'Chhote Babu'.

Madan Mohan's first box-office hit was 'Mastana', starring Master Romi and Motilal articulating the *Jhoom jhoom ke do*



The ideal family man: Madan Mohan photographed with sons Sanjiv and Mickey, daughter Sangeeta and wife.

Binaca.

'Tizam' starred the impish Kishore Kumar with the sedate Meena Kumari. But do not think I am going to oblige you by picking from it the expected in Asha-Kishore's *ABC, ABC, mere sapnon mein chori chori aaya karo ji*. Madan was catchy here, but somehow I prefer, from the same 'Tizam', Asha-Kishore's

programme, held in 1957. There was no Lata present, so Madan had to settle for Geeta. And how Geeta held the audience spellbound with this song.

Was not that stray Rafi solo Madan composed to go on N.T. Rama Rao playing 'Naya Aadmi', *Garibon ka pasina beh raha hai*, at first erroneously identified by Ameen Sayani, in

popular impression, she sang even more for this composer than did Lata.

Lata sounded so refreshingly carefree on Nalini Jaywant as she put over on her, for Madan in 'Sheroo', *Nainon mein pyaar dole dil ka karaar dole*. Here is tune that exemplifies C. Ramchandra's claim that "Madan was good at doing every

## Those Madanutties



style of song". In the same 'Sheroo', we had Manna Dey scoring with Prabhu dwaar chali prabhu ki daasi, but my pick, from this film, is Rafi's *Agar teri duniya mein yeh gham rahenge*. Why is this all-time great creation by Madan for Rafi seldom heard?

Nor do we get to hear that Asha solo so superbly picturised on Nutan (and Shammi), *Haay unki woh nigahen dil dekhe jinki raahen*, as tuned by Madan for 'Aakhri Daao'. Even more mysterious is why we hardly ever get on radio or TV that runaway Binaca hit from M.V. Raman's 'Chandan': *Bada hi CID hai woh nili chhatari waala*.

Here is yet another C. Ramchandran-noted instance of Madan's being able to match the trendiest composer, if he felt like it. I once asked Majrooh Sahab if he could possibly write, even for films, something so maudlin as *Bataa mujhe O jahaan ke maalik* with its *Tere samundar mein kya kami thi aadmi ko rula raha hai* sentiment. If Majrooh could write something like that for 'Ek Shola', Madan Mohan could tune it in the same meretricious spirit of Rafi!

Mention 'Jailor' and you instinctively think of Madan with Lata. Yet, in the same 'Jailor', what an appeal the Asha-Rafi duet held out in the form of *Mujh mein chhup kar mujhi se door*. Likewise, in the recalled-only through-Lata 'Bahana', Madan had Asha holding her own with Talat in that hummable duet: *Teri nigahon mein teri hi baahon mein*.

Thanks to ATN's prosperity to repeat clips, we know, by now, all about that Asha solo composed by Madan to go on Shyama (vis-a-vis Johnny Walker) in 'Khota Paisa': *Jogi aa jogi aa kahaan jaane laga hai munh pher ke*. If this one sounds O.P. Nayyarised, so did Madan's Asha-Rafi duet in 'Adalat': *Zameen se humen asmaan par hitha kar gira to na doge*. Of course, Madan was here compelled to imitate O.P., but you have to concede he did it well. Asha is Geeta all over in *Zameen se humen asmaan par*.

Madan Mohan could thus at once be imitative and creative. An aspect of his creativity that stunned one was the effective way he presented Mukesh, on an unlikely-looking

Pradeep Kumar, via *Hum chal rahen hain woh chal rahe hain* in 'Duniya Na Mane' and *Bhuli hui yaadon mujhe itna na sataao* in 'Sanjog'. This when we thought Madan had all but forgotten Mukesh after the first-time 'Ankhen' impact he made, through this voice, with *Preet laga ke maine yeh phal paaya*. Yet, as I said, Madan could do the trick with any voice if he felt so inclined, you had proof of it in the Lata-Mukesh 'Samundar' duet: *Kya saath mera doge in pyaar ki raahon mein*.

That duet makes me revert to Lata, to a series of her numbers for Madan that somehow did not register, in their time, as they should have. In this Madan category fall Lata's *Mori paayal geet sunaye* ('Baap Bete'), *Maane na, maane na, haay balam*



Om Prakash, R.C. Talwar, Madan Mohan, Rajendra Krishan, I.S. Bali and Prakash Malhotra, photographed together at the premiere of 'Izam'.



Attempting to pass on his passion for music to son, Sanjiv, is Madan Mohan.

*pardesiya* ('Jagir'), *Un aankhon mein neend kahaan, ji aankhon se preetam door base* ('Minister'), *Hindolana jhoola aayee balama badariya jo ghir ghir chhayi balama* ('Senapati'), not to forget *Aa ri nindiya ki pari, meri gudiya ko sula* ('Rishte Naate'), a Nutan-enacted lullaby to rival the softest by any composer.

But when a Madan Mohan film flopped, it just flopped. Like 'Bank Manager', Shekhar being so unkindly chashted by the audience! Manna Dey's Madan solo from this film, *Jab dil mein nahin hai khot to phir kyun darta hai*, survived the film to prove mildly popular.

I tell you, but for Radio Ceylon, a composer's composer like Madan Mohan would have been lost to films. Any radio station would have picked up for playing the mood tunes Madan composed for Lata to ghost on, say, Madhubala in 'Gateway Of India'. But it was only thanks to Radio Ceylon that we could also get to hear regularly, from this film, Lata-Rafi's *Dekhla chala gaya main zindagi ki raah mein* with those zany comedy interpolations.

It was a racy Madan Mohan number that Kishore put over, as 'Manmauji', in the shape of *Zaroorat hai zaroorat hai zaroorat hai*. This singing star, in a memorable Ameen Sayani chat show, later cited, as relevant to his life and times, a line from this 'Manmauji' solo: *Ek*

*shrimati ki, Kalavati ki, seva kare jo pati ki!*

Even in a Lata-remembered show like 'Woh Kaun Thi?' (Madan's first genuine jubilee, coming nearly a quarter century after he came to films), this composer could present Asha at her best on Praveen Choudhary as *Shokh nazar ki bijliyan*. Likewise, Asha left an impact all her own, under Madan, in *Thodi der ke liye mere ho jaao* ('Akeli Mat Jaiyo'). But in no film did Madan test Asha as in 'Parwana', alongside the classically fully read Parveen Sultana, in *Piya ki gali laage bhali*. And Asha met in style the Parveen challenge.

From Sultana to Sultan! I refer to my good friend Sultan Arshad, the PIA chief in Bombay and a connoisseur of Hindustani film music. It is for Sultan Arshad's very special delectation I commend the catchy light in which a drawing-room composer like Madan Mohan projected fresher Mahendra Kapoor in *Sikandar ne Porus se ki thi ladai* ('Anpadh'), *Aapne apna banaya meherbaani aap ki* (with Lata in 'Dulhan Ek Raat Ki'), *Arre O shokh kaliyon muskura dena woh jab aaye* ('Jab Yaad Kisiki Aati Hai') and *Chhod kar tera pyaar ka daaman* (with Lata in 'Woh Kaun Thi?').

Mahendra Kapoor stayed in the same Makani Manor as Madan Mohan did on Peddar Road. It was only natural the-

refore, Sultanman, that Madan should have got Mahendra to duet with a Lata living on the same Peddar Road! Even Madan Mohan had thus to acknowledge Mahendra Kapoor as the people's voice.

The real people's voice, of course, was Rafi, all along a strong Madan favourite. Even in 'Jahanara', a ghazal show belonging to Talat Mahmood, how Rafi stands out, under Madan, in *Baad muddat ke yah ghadi aayee* with Suman and in the solo: *Kisi ki yaad mein duniya kahain bhulaye hue*.

A Madan film long held up was 'Naya Kanoon'. Yet even here, Rafi left some kind of an impression with *Shama mein taaqat kahaan jo ek parwane mein hai*.

In 'Ek Kali Muskayee', you have the theme song of this film - in its happy and sad versions alike - as scored by Madan for Rafi to soliloquise. *Lo ek kali muskayee* is not heard as much as it should be. But then nor is Rafi's *Tere kooche mein tera diwana aaj dil kho baitha* from 'Heer Raanjha', the theme that had Dada Burman singing Madan Mohan's praises like he had done of no composer before. Also, Rafi was right there with Asha when Madan wanted him for a with-the-breeze 'Neela Akash' duet like *Tere paas aake mera man mein aasna jaise hai*.

All these tunes, with a spot each in the public imagination, have been cited to underscore my point that Madan Mohan could be as populist as the rest. It is important we also recall such tunes on the occasion of Madan Mohan's anniversary, so that we are realistically reminded about how amazingly all of Madan's originality was within the ambit of popular cinema.

As songs in our films became fewer and fewer, Madan happily came to feel liberated from the loathful idea of competing with the Shanker-Jaikishans and O.P. Nayyars of the film world. There was now less chance of a good tune going abegging - as had gone abegging Lata's *Dil todna kisi ka yeh zindagi nahin hai* ('Pooja Ke Phool'), Rafi's *Tu mere saamne hai teri zulfen hain khuli* ('Suhagan'), Lata's *Tum se bichhad kar chain kahaan hum paayenge* ('Maharaja') and *Bhor hote kaaga pukare kaahe Ram* ('Chirag').

Still it was not easy to attune to the new generation of heroes and heroines, Madan could do it only with the aid of say, Hri-

shikesh Mukherjee directing Rajesh Khanna as 'Bawarchi': *Tum bin jeevan kaisa jeevan* by Manna Dey. Madan did make a brave attempt to swim with the tide, coming up with a hit duet in 'Ek Mutthi Asmaan' offering in the neo voices of Vani Jairam and Kishore Kumar: *Pyaar kaohi kam na karna sanam*.

But it was noticed Madan could be effective now only when working with someone like Chetan Anand in 'Hanste Zakim': *Tum jo mil gaye ho by Rafi or with Gulzar in 'Mausam': Dil dhoondhta hai phir wohi phursat ke raat din* by Bhupendra. It was not as though Madan had lost the popular touch. Even in a theme, like 'Dil Ki Raahen', in which he produced *Rasme-e-ulfat* for Lata, he came up with *Apne suron mein mere suron ko basa lo* for Usha Mangeshkar and Manna Dey.

But, as 'Laila Majnu' unfolded after his death, you could sense Madan's powers had been on the wane, because he was finding the box-office adjustments even more difficult to make than before. His *Husn haazir hai* posthumously emerged as the Binaca Geetmala Song of the Year - without Ameen Sayani's crediting it to Madan Mohan!

The film's score had been completed by Jaidev, so Ameen said he could not be sure which tune was Madan's. I confirmed for him - as did Ameen himself in a later programme that Lata's *Husn haazir hai* and Rafi's *Main tere dar pe aaya hoon*, Lata-Rafi's *Is reshmi paajeb ki jhankaar ke sadke* and *Ab agar hum se khudai bhi khapha ho jaaye*, as also Rafi's *Barbaad-e-mohabbat ki dua saath liye jaa* were all five the handiwork of Madan Mohan.

But was it the real Madan Mohan you heard in 'Laila Majnu'? Was not something vital missing even with Lata and Rafi there? Yes, what was missing was the heart. The skill was still intact. But the skill by itself makes you a mere songsmith.

Madan Mohan was something more. But only in a less soul-stifling setting. Even in a more favourable setting, he had always had only the gift, never the luck.

Just look back at Madan Mohan tunes I have cited here from 'Madhosh', 'Aashiana', 'Nirmohi', 'Baghi', 'Dhoon', 'Railway Platform', 'Fifty Fifty', 'Chhote Babu', 'Dekh Kabira Roya', 'Sheroo', 'Gateway Of India', 'Aakhri Daao', 'Bank Manager', 'Jailor', 'Duniya Na Mane', 'Jagir', 'Sanjog', 'Mohar' and 'Senapati'. Can you believe that each one of these films, for all their fine tunes, bombed?

Yes, Madan Mohan was a near stranger to success right up to 'Anpadh' (1962). 'Bhai Bhai' (1956), when it was heading for a silver jubilee, was withdrawn from the theatre by AVM, because of a personal quarrel with its employee-director, M.V. Raman!

Talk of circumstances conspiring against genuine talent. Madan Mohan's tragedy was that he belonged to the court, not the courtyard.