

A wonder called Madan Mohan

The timeless appeal of the maestro's compositions can be gauged from the fact that when Madan Mohan's unused compositions were used for *Veer-Zaara*, its music topped all charts. **Tish Malhotra** pays a tribute



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MADAN MOHAN, the mellifluous composer, who was born on June 25, 1924, in Baghdad, began his career as assistant to Anil Biswas and S. D. Burman. He started giving music independently with *Aankheen* in 1950. His pioneering style of composing ghazal-based film songs earned him the title of ghazal king.

According to music critic, Raju Bharatan, Madan Mohan "brought to his art a velvety feel that will endure for ever in a vein of '*Jaana tha hum se door bahane bana liye (Adalat)*'. According to film critic Subhash K. Jha, "Madan Mohan did for the film ghazal what God did for the man by giving light to earth" '85. The melodic omnipresence of Madan Mohan is attributed to the timeless quality of his compositions. The noted music director C. Ramachandran had remarked: "What do you mean Madan was only good at composing ghazals? Madan was good at every single thing he composed" '85. Madan's light compositions have the same individualistic quality as his serious songs. What's more, I don't think anyone of us had this knack of picking the right instruments for the right song."

In a music journey spanning a quarter of a century, from 1950 to 1975, Madan Mohan composed many stunning songs. Pick up, for example, any fabulous number from films such as *Anpadh*, *Chirag*, *Heer Ranjha*, *Parwana*, *Laila Majnu*, *Aap Ki Parchaiyan*, etc. Else take the poignant songs from films like *Adalat*, *Jailor*, *Sanjog*, *Woh Kaun Thi*, *Haqeeqat*, *Mera Saaya*, *Dastak*, *Heer Ranjha*, *Hanste Zakhm*, etc. Add to the list the bubbly numbers from *Bhai Bhai*, *Duniya Na Maane*, *Neela Aakash*, *Dulhan Ek Raat Ki*, *Ek Kali Muskai*, etc.

In this series of astonishing music, the unbeatable combination of the melody queen Lata Mangeshkar and the versatile Madan Mohan gave us many eternal hits. Mohammed Rafi had also sang countless memorable songs for him. Asha Bhosle, Manna Dey, Mukesh, Kishore Kumar, Mahendra Kapoor, Geeta Dutt, Shamshad Begum and Bhupinder Singh have also contributed many dazzling gems. Talat Mahmood also came out with many heart-stoppers from films like *Madhosh*, *Ashiana*, *Chhote Babu*, *Deekh Kabira Roya*, *Bahana*, *Suhagan*, *Jahanara*, etc.

But in spite of producing such a huge repertoire of stunning songs, Madan Mohan never got the Filmfare award. Lata Mangeshkar had aptly remarked: "He saw little recognition in his lifetime. Today, after he's gone, no other composer is admired as much as he is. He was, perhaps, destined to be recognised after his death."

Suresh Kohli, in a recent article, said this about *Heer Raanjha*, "Madan Mohan's music contributed to the film achieving the cult status. Each Kaifi Azmi lyric lifted to heightened perception. Each song a gem" '85. Madan Mohan never won a Filmfare trophy and the only big honour that came his way was the National Award for *Dastak* in 1971."

The other distinguished lyricists with whom Madan Mohan mostly worked were Rajinder Krishan and Raja Mehdi Ali Khan. Yash Chopra and Sanjeev Kohli, the elder son of Madan Mohan, paid a befitting tribute to the maestro by resurrecting his unused compositions for *Veer-Zaara* in 2003. The music stormed the entire country. It topped all musical charts.

To commemorate Madan Mohan's 85th birth anniversary, in 2009 Yash Raj Films released an exceptional album *Tere Bagair* featuring a rare treasure of 15 unreleased songs composed by Madan Mohan in his lifetime. These were sung by Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Mohammed Rafi, Talat Mahmood and Kishore Kumar. Lata Mangeshkar said, "I am happy that his fans still revere him and listen to his music with such fondness. I am sure they will love the songs on *Tere Bagair*".

Yash Chopra had added, "Though I never worked with Madanji, 30 years after his demise his tunes embellished my film, and today I am happy that we are following this up with *Tere Bagair*."

Madan Mohan, who died on July 14, 1975, will always remain a wonder for the lovers of finest music. His music is immortal. Collections of his melodies songs are the pride possessions even in the era of free download.