

A Maestro Remembered

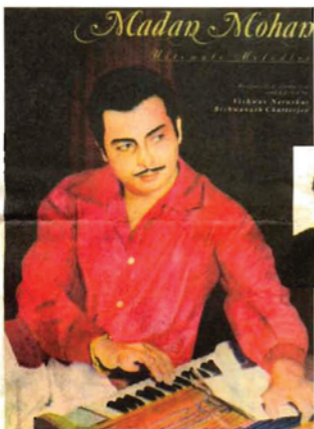
Filmmaker Yash Chopra launched a book, *Ultimate Melodies*, about the late composer Madan Mohan at a musical show held in the memory of the late music director on June 22 in Mumbai. The day marked the 32nd death anniversary of the music director who composed music in over 100 films from *Ankhen* (1950) to *Sahib Bahadur* in 1980.

On the occasion, Yash Chopra said, "I had always been an admirer of Madanji's music but did not get the opportunity to work with him in his lifetime. It is indeed miraculous and historic that for my 2004 film *Veer-Zaara* I used his unused melodies. It was almost as if he had left behind a tune for every situation in my film."

The music show featured 30 songs from his repertoire rendered by young talents. The hits included 'Aap ki nazon ne samjha' (*Anpadh*), 'Lag jaa gale' (*Woh Kaun Thi?*), 'Tum jo mil gaye ho' (*Hanste Zakhm*), 'Kaun aaya mere man ke dwaare' (*Dekh Kabira Roy*), 'Phir wohi shaam' (*Jahan Ara*), 'Dil dhoondta hai' (*Mausam*) and 'Tere liye' (*Veer-Zaara*), a tune originally composed for *Mausam*.

The function was attended by all the members of the Madan Mohan family.

The book features tributes by Yash Chopra, Gulzar, Manna Dey, actress Sadhana, Bhupinder Singh, and Madan Mohan's family members and also documents various facets of his life and all the songs that he composed before his untimely demise at the age of 51. *Screen* talked to the late composer's son, Sanjeev Kohli, CEO, Film Business, of Yash Raj Films on the occasion. Excerpts.



With the media so widespread, the golden era of film music should be given prominence and the people responsible for it must be remembered. There is a younger generation that knows nothing about the stalwarts and thus an entire era is in danger of going into oblivion. Only a few crusaders, usually family members or admirers, make efforts to perpetuate the memories and work of veterans, which must be documented, archived and more so aired more often.



Sanjeev Kohli
veterans.

Albums should be released on a regular basis and the media should help by dedicating space to the golden era. The tendency to believe that lovers of old music are diminishing is not true as can be seen from the responses to tributes to all the

The current music scene is very pro-Western and pro-fusion. What were your father's views on the use of Western and foreign elements in film music?

Music tastes are dependent on environment and social ambience. As the world became smaller, we got more exposed to influences different from traditions. Younger composers are more oriented to the youth. But earlier too, there was always a cabaret or 'item' song. Madan Mohan had Western songs too based on the requirement of the situation even if he specialized in every Indian songs, semi-classical numbers and *ghazals*. But sometimes his melody itself followed a Western pattern, like 'Lag jaa gale' (*Woh Kaun Thi?*) in the treatment of its chords. 'Teri aankhon ke siwa' (*Chirag*) was arranged in a Western manner and in his last years he used Western packaging for Indian melodies in *Hanste Zakhm*, *Parwana* and *Mausam*, as in 'Tum jo mil gaye ho' in the first film.

Are you planning any other projects or strategy to keep Madanji's name alive among a generation that seems to know little about old film music beyond some fast numbers of R.D.Burman?

A lifelong dream came true with the music of *Veer-Zaara*. Those who had never heard of Madan Mohan became aware through a film

that came from the biggest banner, had the biggest director and the biggest stars, something he had never experienced in his lifetime. When I saw his name on the billboards in the best cinemas of the world I was overwhelmed. Little children were singing 'Main yahaan hoon', a song composed in 1954, and Frenchmen were humming 'Tere liye'. I was indeed a proud son. This was the first time in our music history that such a thing happened and I am grateful to Yash Raj Films.

■ RV

What are your feelings on this occasion?
When my father passed away 32 years ago, there was very little media. So there was little access to information on composers and other creative people. Fans did not even know what their favourites looked like. My father had a niche, loyal fan following that became evident after his demise through the write-ups, the fan mails, the sales of tribute albums, the popularity of his songs on television shows and the respect from the younger composers. Because he did not live to realize all this, any commemorative moment always makes us, his family, very happy. Fans have done theses on him and organised seminars and commemorative concerts on each anniversary. The release of a book means that his admirers will now have access to such rare pictures and details of his life and music.

Do you feel that there is greater need for such activities (shows, books and use of unused tunes) in the case of your dad and other music directors as well?

Veer-Zaara

