



From Classical Roots to Cinematic Heights: Film Music Directors as Custodians of Indian Classical Music

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Abstract

India is a land of diversities but Indian film music has always acted as a unifying factor for the nation. It is a living source of happiness for our vast country. Melody is the basis of Indian film music. It has no barriers and has a direct connection with heart and heart empowers the brain too. That is why film music is adopted very easily without any efforts. It has such miraculous properties which help to control the negative aspects of personality like worry, bias, anger and monotony. It stimulates the moods and also does miracle in leading people into tears with its deep emotions and tunes. Film music is a great fascination as it accords one to the platform away from the weariness of life. Most of the film music directors had sound knowledge of Indian Classical Music. They blended diverse old and new, oriental and occidental, classical and folk styles in their compositions. The aim of this paper is to have a closer look into the contribution of a few famous film music directors in popularization of Indian Classical Music.

Keywords: Film, Directors, Classical Music, Compositions, Playback, Songs

Introduction

Incorporating various styles from various music traditions like classical, devotional and folk, Indian films are better known for their musical repertoire. Music directors of Indian Film Industry come from different back grounds. Some of them have their forte in classical music while others are deep into folk music traditions. But from early 20th century till 1960s, film music was highly influenced by Indian Classical Music as most of the music directors of this period had deep classical music knowledge and background. Some of the notable music directors of this era were Naushad Ali, Shankar Jaikishan, Madan Mohan, Vasant Desai, Sacin Dev Burman etc who were the custodians of Indian Classical Music. These legends not only popularised Indian classical music through their raag based film songs but also used different rhythm patterns for making their compositions par excellent. They carved a niche in the golden history of Indian Film Music. Lata Mangeshkar, Mohammad Rafi, Asha Bhonsle, Manna Dey were some of the popular playback singers of yesteryears who made these songs immortal with their captivating voice and beautiful rendition.

Naushad Ali

Naushad Ali introduced the classical component in Hindi film songs. He introduced the classical melodies and folk tunes in the Indian film music. In his musical masterpieces, he used beautiful notes combination in thumris and songs. His creations are a beautiful combination of rhythm and melody. His songs are a testimony to his orchestration skills and grip over classical music. He is considered to be the pioneer of his time (1940s to 1960s) as he had introduced classical music in films. He first gained popularity and success with his pure classical music based tunes in the film *Baiju Bawra* (1952). The sound track of this film was based on classical ragas such as Puriya Dhanashree, Todi, Malkauns, Darbari Kanhda and Desi. His music in this film played a vital role in popularizing Indian Classical Music. Mohamad Rafi and Lata Mangeshkar's erudite expressive voice was his main instrument in that endeavour.

Bade Ghulam Ali Khan rendered *Prem Jogan Banke* in rag Sohni and *Shubh din aayo* in rag rageshwari (film *Mughal-E-Azam*) under his direction only. Despite of its popularity, the music of film *Mughal-E-Azam* did not win the Filmfare award for Best Music as it was considered 'ilmi' (with intellectual appeal) and the award was given to Shankar Jaikishan for *Dil apna aur preet parai* for being filmi (with popular appeal). This remained a sore point for Naushad Saheb and lately he opined that film music should not be expected to promote Indian classical music.

Naushad Saheb also used the voice of music legends *Pandit D.V.Paluskar* and *Ustad Amir Khan* in *Aaj Gaawat man mero jhoomke* (Rag Desi in *Baiju Bawra*). The magic of his songs is still alive and has not faded yet. His songs are still popular among the masses.

Some of his other classical rag based film songs are :

- Ek shahanshah ne banwa ke haseen Taj Mahal (Rag Lalit)
- Man tadpat hari darsha ko aaj (Raga Malkauns)
- Rasik Balma (Rag Shudddh Kalyan)
- Mohe bhool gaye saanwariya (Rag Bhairav)
- Jo mein jaanti bisrat hain saiyaan (Rag Maand)
- Mohe panghat pe (Rag Gara)
- Mohabbat ki jhoothi kahani pe roye (Rag Darbari Kanhada)
- Ye dil ki lagi kam kya hogi (Rag Jai Jaiwanti)
- Do hanson ka joda (Rag Bhairvi)
- Paayaliaa baawree (Rag Madhuvanti)
- Na milta gham (Rag Yaman)

- Pyar kiya to darna kya (Rag Bheempalasi)
- Teri mehfil mein (Rag Darbari)
- Bekas pe karam keejiye (Rag Kedar)

Shankar - Jaikishan

Shankar- Jaikishan were the famous music directors of their time. Once taking up a challenge by Sarod Maestro Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Shankar composed brilliant sarod interludes in the song 'Suno Chhoti si gudra ki lambi kahani'. Shankar preferred to compose with serious, classical and high orchestra and his favourite ragas were Kirwani, Darbari Kanhada, Bhairavi, Shankara and Bheem Palasi etc. and Jai Kishan liked to compose light romantic songs in rag Bhairvi, Kalyan, Bhoop, Baageshree, Shuddh Kalyan and Tilang. Jai Kishan used Cello, Flute, Clarinet, Mendolin Dholak in his compositions while Shankar had keen interest in Piano, Accordion, Western style stringed instruments. They were a complete pair together who composed many semi - classical songs based on ragas:

- Ketki gulab juhi (Rag Basant Bahar)
- Manmohna bade jhoothe (Rag Jai Jaiwanti)
- Jaao jao nand ke lala (Rag Bageshree)
- Koi Matwala aaya mere dware (Rag Darbari Kanhada)
- Sur na saje kya gaaron mein (Rag Basant Bahar)
- Mein piya teri (Rag Bhairvi)
- Nain mile chain kahan (Rag Bageshri)
- Sajan sang kaahe neha lagaye (Rag Tilang)
- Hum tere pyaar me sara aalam kho baithe (Rag Tilak Kamod)
- Tere bin jiya na laage (Rag Shiv Ranjini)

Madan Mohan

Madan Mohan is considered amongst the best music directors of Indian film industry. He used Indian instruments like sitar, sarangi, santoor, tabla, violin in his compositions. He used famous sitarist Raees Khan's melodius sitar in his song. Madan Mohan was a famous name for classical filmi ghazals like :

- Hum pyaar mein jalne walon ko (Jailer)
- Vo chup rahein to mere dil ke daagh jalte hain (Jahan Aara)
- Agar mujhse mahobbat hai (Aap ki Parchhaiyan)
- Yoon hasraton ke daagh (Adalat 1958)

Madan Mohan's song compositions had a base of classical music:

- Jiya le gayo ji mora saanwariya (Yaman Kalyan)
- Do dil toote do dil haare (Maand)
- Meri veena tum bin roye (Ahir Bhairav)
- Ja re badra bairi ja (Yaman Kalyan)
- Haale dil yun unhe sunaya gaya (Pahadi)
- Bairan neend na aaye (Kafi)
- Naino me badra chhaye (Bheempalasi)
- Tu jahan jahan chalega mera saya saath hoga (Nand Rag)
- Maine rang li aaj chunariya (Peelu)

Vasant Desai

Vasant Desai is known as a complete Indian music composer like Naushad as he too embellished his compositions in true Indian style using beautiful combination of notes in aalap. He learnt intricacies of music from maestros like Ustad Alam Khan, Ustad Inayat Khan and Dagar Bandhu. He brought Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma (Santoor), Samta Prasad (Tabla), Sudershan (Khol) to Mumbai for his immortal music in the film Jhanak Jhanak Paayal Baaje. He experimented with the use of Hindustani traditional bandish in his Marathi films which became quite popular. One can enjoy the melodious tunes in his compositions and marvellous use of Jal Tarang, Shahnai, Dholak, Tabla, Sitar etc.

- Saiyaan jao (Rag Des)
- Dil ka khilona (Rag Bhairvi)
- Tere sur aur mere geet (Bihag)
- Ik tha bachpan (Gurjari Todi)

- Dar laage garje badariya (Surdaasi Malhar)
- San sanan sanan (Chandra Kauns)
- Jhir Jhir barse sawani ankhiyan (Gaud Malhar)
- Jeewan mein piya tera (Rag Bhairvi)
- Kah do koi na kare (Rag Jogiya)

Salil Chaudhuri

Salil Chaudhury was an expert flautist and had mastered the instruments like Piano and Esraj under his uncle Nikhil Chaudhury's guidance. He was of the opinion that to compose a song entirely based on a raga is not challenging but it just cages one as a composer. That's why in his music compositions, only rarely do we hear pure raga based tunes like 'Ja tose naheen boloon' - Rag Hansdhwani.

Music director Salil Chaudhuri composed many other rag based film songs. One can hear the sweet and melodious blend of Indian and western instruments like sitar, tabla, flute, violin, clarinet, guitar, saxophone, bongo, cello, oboe in his compositions. His musical compositions show his extra ordinary imagination and creativity.

- Jaago mohan pyare (Bhairav)
- Man re hari ke gun ga (Bhairav)
- Ghadi ghadi mera dil dhadke (Bageshree)
- Aaja re pardesi (Baageshree)
- O sajna (Khamaj)
- Ye bansi kyun gaae (Khamaj)
- Na jiya laage na (Malgunji)
- Laagee naahee chhoote rama (Pilu)

Some other music directors also composed classical raga based songs. **S.N.Tripathi** was the music director of film Sangeet Samrat Tansen. The music of this film was totally based on ragas. Music of this film was a big challenge for S.N. Tripathi but he accomplished this task successfully.

- Jhoomti chali hawa (Sohni)
- Badli badli duniya (Jhinjhoti)
- Sapt suran teen gram (Yaman Kalyan)

C. Ram Chandra used delicate pieces of violin, piano, sitar, shahnai, flute, trumpet, clarinet, oboe and harmonica in his songs. Some of his semi classical songs are:

- Kaise jaaon jamuna ke teer
- Kaise bhaae sakhi rut saawan ki
- na maro najariya ke baan
- Tum kya jano tumhari yaad mein hum kitna roye

Music director **Anil Biswas** composed a raag mala in the film Humdard. This classical composition was intricately woven by using multiple ragas in Manna Dey and Lata's voices. Top artistes like Pandit Panna Lal Ghosh (Flute), Pt. Ram Narayan (Sarangi) showed their expertise in this raag mala.

- Ritu aaye ritu jaaye sakhi ri

He also composed semi classical songs in films like :

- Piya tose naina laage re (Rag Tilang, Mishr Khamaj, Chhayana)
- Poocho na kaise maine rain bitaaye (Rag Ahir Bhairav)

Music director **Jaidev** had taken training in classical music from Pt. Barkat Rai. He also joined the music centre which was run by Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and Pt. Ravi Shankar. He assisted the sarod maestro in Chetan Anand's first two films Aandhiyan and Humsafar. His music compositions were typically serious, intricate and were mainly inspired by Hindustani classical and folk music.

- Allah Tero Naam Ishwar Tero Naam (Gaud Sarang)
- Prabhu Tero Naam (Dhaani)
- Zindagi ko sanwaarna hoga (Ahir Bhairav)

Khayyam also composed many beautiful rag based songs like

- Dil cheez kya hai (Rag Bihag)
- Bahaaro mera jeewan bhi sanwaro (Rag Pahadi)

Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma and Pt. Hari Prasad Chaurasia collaborated as Shiv - Hari in film Silsila and rendered classical melodies in Rag Pahadi with the folk tunes. **A.R. Rahman** used the elements of Hindustani and Carnatic music with Western Classical to mark a global presence. His Roja track was based on Rag Khamaj. His Manmohini Morey is a bandish in Rag Bhimpalasi. Albelo sajan aayo re by Ustan

Sultan Khan in Rag Ahir Bhairav in film Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam, Thumri by Pt. Ajay Chakraborty and Parveen Sultana in Gadar were indeed a great success.

Conclusion impact, Hindi film can awaken the interest of people in classical music. They hear it first in the form of Ghazals, later light classical and finally in pure classical. Film music thus helps in exploring the depths of classical music. One can easily recognize the basic ragas by associating them with Hindi songs. Classical music when presented before the masses in its simplest form touches hearts - this has rightly been proved by the talented music directors of Indian Films.

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