

Record Reviews

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(Published in NCPA Quarterly Journal, Vol VI Number 4, December 1977)

YUNUS MALIK: Ghazals. Evening Blues.

HMV S/7LPE 4028 (Stereo) .

DILRAJ KAUR: Ghazals. Super Ghazals on Super Seven.

HMV S/ 7LPE 4027 (Stereo).

RANG-E-GHAZAL SHAM-E-GHAZAL. Side One: Ahmadi Begum Chopra and others.
Side Two: Talat Mahmood, Mukesh and others.

HMV EMGE 12507.

The ghazal has now attained a definite stature as a form of non-classical music with a firm popular and musical base. It has travelled a long way from the stage of being a mere poetic recitation and has become a well-composed song where composers introduce intricate raga and tala themes in their tunes.

Yunus Malik and Dilraj Kaur both represent this stage in the development of the form. Yunus Malik's *Yun Unki Mast Nigahon Ka Ehteram Kiya* is sung in a well-controlled tempo, faster than that usually associated with ghazal singing. *Masti Men Jab Apna Sar Jhuka Doon* is sung in a tala of eleven matra-s. His singing is natural, but he does not exploit to the full the melodic quality of his voice. With lesser use of the intervening orchestrated music he might perhaps be able to achieve this-though with Mehdi Hassan's ghazal ruling over the Indo-Pak sub-continent, the proposition seems difficult.

Dilraj Kaur's performance confirms the tendency towards a tightly composed ghazal. With bansuri, harmonium, sarangi and guitar-strumming, all laced in with the utmost musical deliberation, her ghazal-singing gives an experience of well-executed musical intentions. But surely one longs for a greater touch of improvisation. Against this background her singing impresses the listener because of her clearly articulated

voice and confidently rendered tonal intricacies of tempi and arrangement of sharp-flat notes. Besides, there are those flavours of raga-s like Todi, Bhairavi etc. *Bin Tere Mujhko Nazaron ne Pareshan Kiya* is a good illustration of her abilities.

This mixed bouquet of ghazal-s sung by various artistes provides a study in contrast. Singers like Ahmadi Begum Chopra, Nirmala Devi, Malika Pukhraj on the one hand and Begum Akhtar, Talat Mahmood, Mukesh on the other, certainly represent a more classically-oriented style of ghazal-singing. Specially noteworthy in this respect is the scope of improvisation, the typical voice-projection and the use of conventions like *dugan* (tempo in double) at the end of a stanza etc.

Ahmadi Begum Chopra's *Aaj Meri Shab-e-Furqat* reminds one of Begum Akhtar's thumri-oriented ghazal; Nirmala Devi's use at the start of the tanpura, of a tune set in the raga Chandrakauns, and of fast passages of the Patiala gharana illustrate the classical base of the ghazal.

Malika Pukhraj's *Zahid Na Kah Bura* is more of an expressive recitation rather than a musical rendering: it is really a specimen of an earlier era and to my mind its inclusion here is to some extent anachronistic.

Josh-e-Giriya Se Yeh Ankhen and *Sab Kahan Kuchh Lala-o-Gul Men* are sung by Talat Mahmood and Mukesh as duets. Voice-wise, Talat Mahmood's tremulous crooning and Mukesh's slightly nasalized tone form an interesting combination. Unfortunately, tune-wise, the combination is not well-exploited.

Mehdi Hassan's pieces immediately strike a note of fresh authenticity. His use of bass and a sort of 'humming' projection of voice along with a relaxed tempo are evidence of a rare musical poise and a contemplative attitude towards music. The active following he enjoys in India is a clear indication of the unique impact he has made in the world of ghazal.