

# MOTHER INDIA

## Score Research

### The Musicians of Mother India

As part of the analysis and background for the music of Mother India I have been looking into the background of the recording in the 1950s and trying to ascertain some of the identities of the musicians involved in the film and how the music might have been recorded.

As can be seen in this record sleeve (featuring some amazing old photos of Lata Mangeshkar and Mohammed Rafi) the record was released on Angel Records which was a subsidiary of EMI. The Gramophone Company of India was also another name for EMI.



*motion picture music of India*

selections from film **Mother India** 3AEX 5001



**LATA MANGESHKAR** **MOHAMAD RAFI**

**the singers**

Lata Mangeshkar is the gifted daughter of a renowned musician who started her off on her musical career when she was but a child. In fact, at the age of 8, she was appearing in recitals with her father and by the time she was 10, she had appeared on the stage and acted in films.

The child prodigy grew up and in 1947 her voice on the soundtrack of a musical film immediately brought her into the limelight. From that moment onwards Lata has never looked back, but has gone forward from success to success, and to-day there is hardly an Indian musical film in which she does not contribute her voice and hardly an Indian home which does not own a collection of her records.

A true son of the soil, Rafi was born in a remote village and grew up like a typical rustic youth. He was however not destined to be a farmer. His natural talent as a singer was apparent at an early age and he underwent a course of training under a well-known teacher of classical music. Soon after, he started singing over the radio and making gramophone records. This was followed by his recordings on soundtracks of musical films. All this went to consolidate his career but what brought him success in a big way and established him firmly in the forefront of popular singers was his recording of a magnificent ballad based on the life of Mahatma Gandhi, which created an immediate nation-wide sensation.

**the songs**

**SIDE ONE**

**NAGARI NAGARI DUARE DUARE**  
**DHUNDUN RE SANWARIYA**—I seek you, Lover, from town to town and door to door.

**DUNIYA MEN HUM AYEN HAIN TO**  
**JINAH! PADEGA**—Live we must, now that we have come to this world.

**DUKH BHARE DIN BEETE RE BHAIIYA,**  
**UB SUKH AYO RE**—The sorrow-filled days are over brother; now happiness is here.

**HOLI AYA RE KANHAI**—The festival of 'Holi' has arrived, O Kanhai.

**PEEKE GHAR AAJ PYARI DULHANIYAN**  
**CHALI**—The dear bride is on her way to her husband's house.

**GHUNGHAT NAHI KHOLUNGI**  
**SAIYAN TERE AAGE**—I shall not undrape my head, dear, in your presence.

**SIDE TWO**

**O MERE LAL AAJA, TUJHKO GALE**  
**LAGALOOON DIL ME CHHUPALOOON**  
—Come my child, let me embrace you and put you next to my heart.

**O JANEWALO JAO NA GHAR APNA**  
**CHHOD KE**—Go not, those who are going and leaving their homes behind.

**O GADIWALE GADI DHIRE HANK RE**  
—O cartman, drive the cart slowly.

**MATWALA JIYA**—Intoxicated heart.

**NA MAIN BHAGWAN HOON NA MAIN**  
**SHAITAN HOON, JO CHAHE SAMJHE**  
**MAI TO INSAN HOON**—I am neither God nor Satan; I am only human, whatever others may think.

**CHUNDARIYA KATATI JAI, UMARIYA**  
**GHATATI JAI**—The outer garment wears itself out, the life-span gets nearer to its end.

LONG PLAY 33 $\frac{1}{2}$  R.P.M. RECORD

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I wanted to know more details about how the score was recorded, who performed it and where the master tapes and/or score might be today. The Mother India Wikipedia page states that it was recorded at Mehboob Studios:

<https://web.archive.org/web/20121108234921/http://www.hindu.com/mp/2004/05/13/stories/2004051300820100.htm>

*Naushad himself recorded chorus music for Mughal-e-Azam, and songs for Amar and Mother India on the main shooting floor of the famous Mehboob Studios, the breeding ground for some of the finest Hindi films. "Blankets were used for reducing the reverberations and as a measure against noise."*

It seems unlikely that I will be able to fully ascertain the identities of most of the musicians involved other than the Playback Singers listed on IMDB and the musicians I've listed later. This echoes Hollywood where musicians are rarely credited in films. The lack of credit here in Mother India for the musicians is presumably to do with the lack of collective bargaining power to be credited. The journalist Raju Bharatan states in his book "The Life and Music of Naushad" that Naushad resisted attributing credit to his assistants and musicians, feeling that their monetary payment was recompense enough (*Chapter 17 page 281*). I think that this practice was and is probably widespread though. Only recently, there was a campaign to better credit Lyricists on online platforms:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/swetakaushal/2020/08/30/indian-lyricists-demand-credit-for-their-bollywood-songs-online/>

Naushad himself was paid Rs 100,000 for the music of Mother India (an equivalent of £85,836 in today's money) plus a 5% share of royalties (equal to Mehboob Khan's share) and Rs10,000 for 'Orchestral Supervision Charges'. This was a large contrast to the Rs40 per month he earned as a film musician when he first moved to Mumbai and then became the assistant to Mushtaq Hussain.

*"I ventured to ask Mehboob Khan for royalty on the plea that his Mother India was a very big film. Mehboob Khan, being a God-fearing man and inherently decent, was appreciative of the massive musical effort that I had put into Mother India. So, for the first time in his life, Mehboob agreed to share his 10 per cent HMV [His Master's Voice/Gramophone Company of India] royalty, on a film, equally with me."*

*Chapter 1 – page 24 The Life and Music of Naushad by Raju Bharatan*

There is an interesting question of the role of Mohammad Ibrahim, Naushad's assistant on Mother India and what his contribution to the music might have been. It's entirely possible that some parts of the score were composed by him – he may also have orchestrated parts or his role could have just been the copying of parts, performing administration duties and arranging recording sessions. There is little information on him available other than his credits for this film and a few other films also in the assistant role to Naushad. An interesting fact about him is that he was the younger brother of Ghulam Mohammad, the film composer and Naushad's former assistant. Ibrahim replaced his brother when he went on to larger things – It's likely that the "Ibrahim" credited in the music department of several films scored by Ghulam Mohammad is also him.

<https://www.cinestaan.com/articles/2018/mar/17/11816>

I've found some praise that Naushad has lavished on Mohammad Ibrahim, saying that his Harmonium work made a particular piece of music the great song that it was (from the film Shabab, not from Mother India). From an article by Raju Bharatan.

<http://specials.rediff.com/movies/2006/may/08sl5.htm>

*"Naushad would say it is the harmonium of Mohammed Ibrahim that did the trick for him in the Shabab qawwali by Rafi & Co, Mehalon mein rehne waale, set in compelling Shahana."*

In the book "Naushadnama, The Life and Music of Naushad", Raju Bharatan writes

*“Mehdi Hasan, during that evening, had gone on to add that, apart from Talat Mahmood’s surpassing interpretation of Husn waalon ko na dil do yeh mitaa dete hain – crafted in Raag Bhimpalasi by Naushad – he had been struck by our composing wizard’s evocative use of the harmonium in that ghazal. ‘Would you know,’ queried Medhi, ‘about who played the harmonium in Husn waalon ko?’*

*‘Mohammad Ibrahim,’ I responded, ‘the one who was the younger brother of Naushad’s chief assistant, Ghulam Mohammad, himself an independent music director highly regarded by one and all in the Bombay film industry.’”*

Chapter 10 – page 156 *The Life and Music of Naushad* by Raju Bharatan

Further information on Mohammad Ibrahim’s role is voiced here by Naushad in the same book when he recalls dealing with having to manage the idiosyncrasies of Mohammed Rafi:

*“It is true that, once you began rehearsing Rafi for a song, his mind became set upon it. Yet it is not as though you could not get him to sing it differently at all. Everything depended upon how you tackled the problem. In the [1958] case of that Sohni Mahiwal Rafi solo, Aaj galiyon mein teri aayaa hai diwaana teraa, I remember how I changed an entire asthaai when we were all set to record. Well knowing that Rafi tended to be put out by such a tune amendment resulting from an afterthought, I said nothing to him inside the recording theatre. I just told him that Mohammad Ibrahim was still in the process of lining up the musicians for the recording, so let us step out for a cup of tea.*

*‘Rafi was caught totally unawares by this, yet he came along. We went to a nearby Irani restaurant; it was all but empty at that time in the morning. We were straight away recognized and the proprietor made us feel cozy in his best family room... I was with Rafi inside there, for some 45 minutes, after having softly broken to him news of a change... Rafi was appreciative of the way in which I had gone so private about such a change. He even forgot his surroundings as he began rehearsing that fresh asthaai inside the family room itself..*

*‘We went back into the recording theatre where, of course, I had discussed with Mohammad Ibrahim – even before Rafi turning up at 10.00 in the morning – details of how to allow for a couple of hours’ margin before we commenced operations... The point to remember here is this – that, if you, as a music director, want a late alteration, take Rafi into confidence, out of earshot. Ideally, don’t summon him for a rehearsal until you yourself are clear enough in your mind about the tune. Once you teach Rafi a tune, it gets printed in his head – Bus, chap gayaa samajhye. Remember another point. This is that, after the first round of rehearsal at my abode, Rafi takes the notations home with him and works on the tune further. That is why you have to be careful, with Rafi, in opting for a last minute change.’”*

Chapter 15 page 251 *The Life and Music of Naushad* by Raju Bharatan

This retrospective look at of Naushad also by the journalist Raju Bharatan gives several interesting accounts of Naushad’s experiences of working with his favourite singers:

<http://specials.rediff.com/movies/2006/may/08sl1.htm>



*“When Lata Mangeshkar first came to me,” the composer observed, while showcasing Uthaye jaa unke sitam from Mehboob Khan’s Andaz (left), “I never asked that will-o’-the-wisp to sing. I merely asked Lata, first, to recite the Majrooh (Sultanpuri) song-lyric 25, 30 times. Only after she had absorbed the essence of Urdu poetry in Uthaye jaa unke sitam did I cast it in the Kedara mantle for her to immortalise on Nargis.”*

The best result of course would be to find the multitracked stems on the original master tapes that separate dialog and music as then there would be more options in a potential re-scoring. This proposal to turn Mehboob Studios into a residential zone may mean that it would be better to act fast if the tapes are to be found:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/movies/celebrities/story/maharashtra-govt-proposes-to-convert-mehboob-studios-into-residential-zone-1849483-2021-09-05>

In interview, Iqbal Khan mentions remastering old films in respect to colourizing the old black and white one – the issue of the modernity of the music is a key factor in his decision to not colorize the films (as well as the even more important factor of cost):

*"You need a lot of money to colour the classics and we don't have that kind of money. I would prefer to see the classics in black and white. But some classics like Naya Daur should be coloured because its music is modern and it has drama.*

*"But my father's film Andaaz music will not be appreciated today. Modern youngsters may not be able to enjoy Andaaz."*

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/entertainment/historic-mehboob-studio-ticks-away-in-anonymity/story-0r0JlpwPLWaX169YVjjo4L.html>

The colorization of Mughal-e-Azam in 2004 shows that there is precedence for music to be redeveloped in the way that MI21 might go. The same musical team was in play for this film as for Mother India: Naushad as MD, Mohammed Ibrahim as his assistant, lyrics by Shakeel Badayuni, Playback Singers Mohammed Rafi and Lata Mangeshkar (also Shamshad Begum who was technically uncredited in Mother India). With the assistance of Uttam Singh, the score was re-recorded by a modern orchestra and mixed with the original vocal recordings from 1960. The multitracked recordings of the original music must have been available for them to separate the vocal parts.

*"The executive producer had planned to re-do the entire score in electronics to save on the expense. But Naushad and his arranger Uttam Singh contacted the original producer's son in London and termed this distortion "unethical, an offence and a violation of intellectual rights as the audio in those days was a part of the negative itself". Naushad insisted on redoing the music himself and made a click-track for every change of beat and a new track timed to the split second was generated to add to the first for Stereo. The process, with 120 live musicians, took six months and irretrievably compromised the composer's health"*

<https://web.archive.org/web/20130703045336/http://www.indianexpress.com/news/celluloid-monument/656505/0>

This does imply that a score was available to work from for Mughal-e-Azam and Naushad was known for his comprehensive scoring of his work:

*"Naushad also became the first of our composers meticulously to maintain notations of each piece of music that he had created. That's what saw this maestro coming to be hailed as the absolute master of background scoring on the Indian screen. As he re-recorded the background music of Aan at a prominent studio in London, the entire notation of that August 1952 Mehboob film's music was published. This was a spot aid to the BBC orchestra in London playing (from the notations made) pieces from the background music of Aan. In fact, they could have even played the film's total score (oral and background), so complete was Naushad's presentation"*

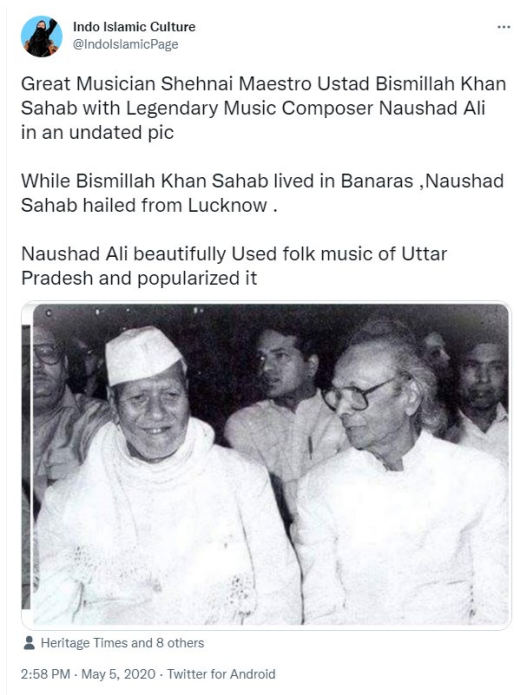
*Chapter 2 page 40 The Life and Music of Naushad by Raju Bharatan*

The score would possibly be in the same place as the master recordings either in the possession of Mehboob Studios or in the Naushad Ali Estate. As Naushad did not leave a will any documents might take a bit of tracing:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/news/music-director-naushad-heirs-in-43-cr-home-row/videoshow/5751860.cms>

Here is a possible instrumental line-up for Mother India based on Raju Bharatan's accounts. When I refer to Western style or Hindustani style violin I mean the technical aspect of how the performers played – not the style of music that they played – all of the performers listed were fluent in the classical Indian style:

- Ibrahim Mohammad : Chief Assistant and Harmonium (definitely involved)
- Josico Menezes : First Violin (Western Style) and arrangements (more than likely involved – Naushad's favourite violinist) <https://scroll.in/reel/816122/background-notes-menezes-narvekar-and-the-untold-history-of-violinists-in-hindi-film-music> (this is a great article worth checking out)
- Mohammed Shafi : Sitar (Naushad's most used sitar player – possibly involved), <https://www.cinemaazi.com/people/mohammed-shafi>
- Abdul Karim : Tabla (Naushad's most used tabla player – possibly involved)
- Bhalchandra Barve : Flute (possibly involved)
- Harishchandra Narvekar : Violin (Hindustani style) – see the link under Josico Menezes (possibly involved)
- Anthony Gonsalves : Violin (Western style) (definitely played on the Mother India score) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony\\_Gonsalves](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Gonsalves)
- Bismillah Khan : Shennai – possibly, he is the only Shennai player that I can connect to Naushad



<https://narenmusicnotes.wordpress.com/2013/04/29/instruments-from-india-8-shehnai-nadaswaram>

# The Music of Mother India

Naushad:

*"What I have religiously endeavoured to do, through the popular medium of films, is gently to educate our people on our own tradition, lying untapped, while we have been borrowing from the worst rather than the best, of the West."*

<https://web.archive.org/web/20121108234921/http://www.hindu.com/mp/2004/05/13/stories/2004051300820100.htm>

Naushad developed a reputation as one of the finest Orchestrators in Mumbai working with a western style orchestra. Naushad himself though wished to move film music away from the western influences that were becoming prevalent and provide a stronger focus on Hindustani music.

*Naushad has not only an extensive knowledge of music but of allied subjects as well. He studies the story, the situation, the editing, the sound recording, the music recording and the re-recording. He is an accomplished piano player and he is familiar with Western notation. He knows every instrument in his orchestra and what instrument is best for a certain piece of music. He was the first to present combinations of the flute and the clarinet; of the sitar and the mandolin. He also introduced the accordion, the been, the brass instruments, the daf and the vibraphone.*

*Chapter 2 – page 42 The Life and Music of Naushad by Raju Bharatan*

For Mother India, Naushad used several different ensembles for various parts of the film. There is also a change in style during the film: for the first section, Mother India uses exclusively Hindustani music with the Orchestra entering for the first time after 35 minutes. Conversely, the final 25 minutes of the film uses almost exclusively orchestral music (the notable exception here being the song O Mere Lal Aaja which mixes the orchestra with an Indian ensemble). This does, of course reflect the different moods at play in the film at these points, for instance, Naushad favours the orchestra for moments of tension and tragedy, and favours violin and harmonium for softer emotional segments.

In addition to the orchestra Naushad has some favourite ensembles that he regularly returns to during the film. The most common is a simple combination of Violin and Harmonium (also with a Vibraphone at one point). The first section of the film makes significant use of the Shennai, an instrument commonly found at weddings and celebrations and here related to the wedding between Radha and Shamu.

Naushad has a very large ensemble in addition to the orchestra for the song, including a percussion section usually featuring Tabla or Dholak and violins, flutes. There are also rare appearances of sitar during the film.

For the transcription, I have transcribed O Janewalo Jao Na. This has been chosen for a few reasons. Firstly it is one of the moments where Naushad combines his ensembles, mixing the orchestra with one of the film's core songs. Secondly, it features Radha in a pivotal moment of the film, where she calls her fellow villagers to stay and reclaim the land after the flood – becoming the 'Mother' of the village. Thirdly it coincides with the section that we are re-scoring for the re-scoring commission, doubling down the focus on this scene.