

THE VISIONLESS AND HIS MUSICAL VISION
(Excerpts from an interview with Music composer, Shri Ravindra Jain)

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ABSTRACT: In July 2010, the ace music composer visited the institution in which I had been working. The Head of Music Department was the chief architect behind this visit. He was a die-hard fan of Ravindra Jain. I had followed Shri Jain's compositions as much as I did the compositions of other greats. Shri Jain arrived by 10 O' Clock in the morning. He would be a resource person enlightening the children on the subject **DISABILITY OF ONE'S BODY IS NEGLIGIBLE IF THE MIND IS THE STRONGEST**. After exchange of pleasantries, the session with students commenced. Here was a visionless person who perfectly described how Rafi, Kishore, Mannadey and Yesudas looked like!! While playing his harmonium, he illustrated the need for dexterity to locate musical keys without looking at them. The composer also said that one should feel the keys more than seeing them! The session was followed by an interview granted to a faculty member and a few students who would record it as part of a project. I have been fortunate to get the excerpts of my interview with Shri Jain for publication albeit after many years

KEYWORDS: Vision, Dexterity, Rafi, The Greatest, Yesudas, The Perfect, Kishore, The Freak, Story Of Shadjane Paye, The Myth About Rafi's Refusal To Sing, Actors No Match For Rafi, Humble Human, Tharangini Studio, Indebtedness To Yesudas, Lean Patch In Hindi Cinema, Malayalam Compositions, Sagar Productions.

INTRODUCTION:

The interview started at around 11.15 AM. Shri Jain was seated in a sofa cum bed. A few students and I were looking eager to start the proceedings. The students were also being taught as to how in interview would be done.

EXCERPTS:

AK: Namaste Ravindra Jain ji. As an avid lover of film music, I follow almost all great

composers. And I have a special place for you in my heart.

RJ: The joy is mine too. I know nothing except music. I am fortunate to be with learned people.

AK: Once again, we feel honoured. Ravindraji, I would like to know what prompts you to churn out melodies which are the all time best?

RJ: All credits to the Creator. When I touch my harmonica, my Creator transforms me into a creature that sees, breathes and feels music.

AK: Well yes. That is why your music overwhelms all of us. Ravindraji, I would like to know about your association with the great play back singers of your time!

RJ: My time?? The greats always continue to be so!!! Mohamma Rafi is the greatest singer ever..... There will never be another Rafi. Yesudas is the most obedient student of music. Mannadey is all class and Kishore is a self-taught genius!

AK: Your association with Yesudas.....??

RJ: Well, his devotion to work amazes me. We became friends as soon as we met!!

AK: Well... anecdotes say that you had once said if you were to regain your vision, Yesudas would be the first human you would love to see!!!

RJ: (thoughtfully) Yes..... His desire for perfection draws me close to him.

AK: Indeed. As a duo, you have both contributed many gems to the world of music. By the way, your composition got him his first national award! CHIT CHOR's success owes greatly to its music track!

RJ: I know it is one my most-loved works!

AK: This is an unpleasant question. How did you feel when TANSEN was shelved?

RJ: (with a sigh) I did feel it in the gut. The songs were the most challenging ones. But then... you cannot fight the fate!

AK: I can resonate with you. I have read that SHADJANE PAYE is your most difficult piece

sung by Yesudas!!

RJ: It is a challenging song. Yesudas, being a perfectionist practiced it for a week rigorously to create the wonderful result that we see today!

AK: Some of your interviews say Mohammad Rafi declined to sing it as he felt challenged by the toughness of the composition! Any thoughts!

RJ:(a bit disturbed) These news paper men are badmashs(scoundrels) who can go to any extent to gain attention.

AK: You mean they have all misreported your comments?

RJ: What else could they have done with their limited understanding of music?

AK: Well...I am getting curious here!

RJ: Anil ji,I need to dispel some notions here. I visited Rafi saab and requested him to sing SHADJANE PAYE.I played it out for him. A visibly overwhelmed Rafi saab embraced me And said,"This music is straight from ALLAH and believe me I would not be able to sing it.I have been on medication for blood sugar and hypertension. More over,I have already committed many Ghazals and I will also need to set aside fasting time for HAJ"

AK: It is quite unfortunate that many people try to slight Rafi saab by quoting his words to you selectively!!

RJ: Yes....and do you know....Rafi would have lent extra life to the hero of the song! No offence meant to my friend,Yesudas,though!! There is none, past or present who can match Rafi's genius! If Yesudas is a perfectionist, Rafi is an angel from heaven. RAFI SAAB EK FARISTHA HEI!!!!

AK: Now I see that a myth is getting shattered!!

RJ: Yes...I tried to dispel such notions many a time. But...one cannot stop evil minds from talking, you know!

AK: That is true. Now...moving on to your association with Yesudas who also played the good Samaritan when you were going through a lean patch!

RJ: He introduced me to Malayalam industry. He also gave m work under his Tharangini studios. It indeed helped me overcome a lean patch and financial work. I am indebted to Yesudas and his family.

AK: It was indeed a great gesture from Yesudas. How were your association with other singers,by the way?

RJ: Mannadey was a disciplined singer. Kishore was a self-taught freak.

AK: And the female singers???

RJ: Lataji,Ashaji and Hemlatha are the ones along with a few others!!

AK: Hemlatha in that elite group?

RJ: Why not?She has got attention to details and deserves to be there!

AK: I was just being curious.Her rendition of JAB DEEP JALE speaks volumes of her craft!!!! Now...slowly moving to your work with Sagar productions.How far did it help a workless veteran?

RJ: At first it was Yesudas and then it was Sagar. Productions. They revived a dying craft in me. They provided me solace.I am grateful enough to remember them every day.

AK: Now...on your blindness.... The last of my questions....have you ever thought you will overcome the challenges posed by your physical state?

RJ: If I have no vision,I am blessed with dexterity of my hands.I always knew I should not crib about what I lack.I should rather make best use of my strengths!!My inner eyes can see colours of music!What else do I need?

AK: Yes your inward eye propels the spirit in you and I could see that. By...the way....Ravindraji....thank you so much for this conversation with me.I consider it the fortune of a freelancer.Thank you once again.

RJ: Thank you so much. It has been a pleasure sharing all that I know, with you. God bless you.