



Devindra Pooran on Kali Bharat Yatra: — A tribute to legendary singer Mukesh —

By
Ramesh D. Kalicharran

The 27th Kali Bharat Yatra (KBY) comes at a point when India is celebrating its auspicious 101 medals and the first place in the commonwealth games. It was a glorious moment for the independent India to host the games and to become the leader in sports.

Kali Bharat Yatra (from October 27- November 11) first congratulates the winners and the organizers and then likes to introduce, like its previous wonderful trips, the most popular singer of Guyanese decedent Devindra Pooran, who accompanies the group. Pooran sings legendary Mukesh's songs to its best. He has won many awards in music competitions, while he loves the legendary playback singer Mukesh whom he calls his ideal and a mentor.

On this special occasion, KBY takes its group to India, it pays tribute to the celebrated playback singer of Hindi film industry of yesteryear, Mukesh. It is said that there was in his voice a God-given touch of pathos that elevated an ordinary tune to the level of the sublime. Such a man had to end up singing the Ramayan.

Mukesh Chandra Mathur (22 July 1923 – 27 August 1976) was part of the golden voice trio along with Mohammad Rafi and Kishore Kumar, who left such a great impact on the Hindi Film Industry from the 50s to the 70s that they are still remembered to date with great reverence and affection..

Born in Delhi in a small middle class Punjabi Kayastha family to Zorawar Chand Mathur, an engineer and Chand Rani, Mukesh was the sixth in a family of ten children. The music teacher, who came home to teach Mukesh's sister Sundar Pyari, found a disciple in Mukesh who would listen from the adjoining room. Mukesh left school after the 10th standard and worked briefly for the Delhi Department of Public Works and experimented with voice recordings during his employment. His singing abilities progressed slowly and steadily.

Mukesh Chandra Mathur, popularly known as Mukesh, was not only the man with the golden voice but was the jewel of the music industry. Once, when Mukesh sang a song at his sister's marriage, his voice came into the notice of Motilal (a famous actor in Hindi movies) and a distant relative of Mukesh went to Mumbai with Motilal and the latter aligned training of singing for him. At this time, Mukesh got his first break in acting with the Hindi movie 'Nirdosh' (1941). He got a chance to sing, for the first time in 'Pehli Nazar' (1945). "Dil Jalta Hai to Jalne De" was the first song that he sang for a Hindi movie and was picturised on Motilal fortuitously. This song brought a drastic change in the career-graph of Mukesh. And then there was no looking back for him.

In 1949, Mukesh got in touch with Raj Kapoor and the duo of Shankar-Jaikishen. Mukesh is remembered for the songs that he sang with the direction of Shankar-Jaikishen for Raj Kapoor. Songs like "Aawara Hoon" and "Mera Joota hai Japani" reverberated in the streets of India and abroad. After 'Aawara' proved to be a big hit, Mukesh moved from singing to acting. He acted in the films like 'Mashuqa' (1953) and 'Anurag' (1956). Both the movies made a major hit at the box-office. He is best known for the songs he sang as a playback singer for Raj Kapoor, a legendary actor/director of Bollywood in the 1950s and 1960s.

Mukesh was a big fan of K. L. Saigal in his early years of playback singing he even used to imitate his idol. In fact, it is said that when K. L. Saigal first heard the song *Dil Jalta Hai to Jalne De*, he said "That's strange; I don't recall singing that song".

In 1974, Mukesh received National Film Award for



Devindra Pooran - The Melody King

Best Male Playback Singer for the song *Kain baar yoon bhi dekhaa hai* from *Rajnigandha* (1974), and Filmfare Awards for the songs *Sab Kuch Seekha* in the movie *Anari* (1959), *Sabse bada naadan wahi hai* in *Pehchaan* (1970), *Jai Bolo* in *Be Imaan* (1972) and *Kabhi Kabhie Mere Dil Mein*, the title song of *Kabhie Kabhie* (1976).

Mukesh came back to the singing panorama with the song "Yeh Mera Deewanapan Hai" of the movie 'Yahudi' (1958). During the period of 1860's & mid 1970s, Mukesh amplified and reached the forte of his career. He gave some of the best songs like *Jeena Yahaan Marna Yahaan* (Mera Naam Joker), *Maine Tere Liye hi Saat Rang ke Sanpne Chune* (Anand), *Main Na Bhoolonga* (Roti, Kapda Aur Makan) and *Kabhie Kabhie* (Kabhie Kabhie) of his singing career.

Kisee Ki Muskuraahaton Pe Ho Nisaar (Anari), *O Janewale Ho Sake To Laut Ke Aanaa* (Bandini), *Dost Dost Naa Rahaa* (Sangam), *Jaane Kahaan Gaye Wo Din* (Mera Naam Joker) and *Ek Din Bik Jaayega* (Dharam Karam) are some of the memorable songs sung by Mukesh. In 1959, Mukesh received the Film fare Award of Best Male Playback Singer for "subkuchh seekha humne" (Anari). Following it, he received Film fare Award for Best Male Playback Singer in 1970, 1972 and 1976 for the movie 'Pehchan', 'Beimaan' and 'Kabhi Kabhi' respectively.

"Chanchal Sheetal Nirmal Komal" from the movie 'Satyam Shivam Sundaram' was the last recorded song of Mukesh. While he was on a concert tour in the United States, he left the corporeal world after a sudden heart attack in Detroit on 27th August 1976. The funeral procession of the legendary singer and actor took place in India with due tribute by the actors and personalities of Indian Film Industry. The great soul is resting in peace; still his memories can never be separated from the hearts of people.

His personal life was equally interesting and full of vigor. He fell in love with an 18-year old, Sarla Trivedi Raichand alias Bachhiben, the daughter of a Gujarati Brahmin millionaire. With Mukesh having no proper house, an irregular income and a supposedly "immoral" profession, Mukesh and Sarla had to elope. He got married in 1946 to Sarla in a temple in Kandiwali, at the residence of R. D. Mathur. Everyone made predictions of unhappy days and divorce; but both weathered the tough days and celebrated their thirtieth wedding anniversary on 22 July 1976, five days before his departure for the U.S.A. on 27 July 1976. The couple had five children as Rita, Nitin, Nalini (d. 1978), Mohnish (Taboo - nick

name) and Namrata (Amrita). He is the grandfather of actor, Neil Nitin Mukesh.

Mukesh died of a heart attack on 27 August 1976 in Detroit, Michigan, USA, where he went to perform in a concert. His body was carried back to India by Lata Mangeshkar, where a grand funeral ceremony took place as many famous actors, personalities of the Indian film industry, and fans paid tribute to the late singer. When the news of his death reached Raj Kapoor, he burst into tears, and remarked, "I have lost my voice," which is a testimony to the association of Mukesh's voice (in playback) to the immensely popular songs of Raj Kapoor's films. A detailed, minute by minute description of Mukesh's final moments on earth is on broadcast every August 27th from 8pm EST to 11pm EST on www.easy96.com

Famous journalist, Khushwant Singh describes Mukesh "among the many great sons of Delhi, known popularly by his first name, Mukesh. His first love was the stage. He acted in many plays before he took to singing. His inspiration was Kundan Lal Saigal. He rose to the top as a playback singer in Hindi films. Saigal who regarded himself as the *baadshah* of light classical vocal music recognised Mukesh as his heir-apparent."

Singh said, "I met Mukesh once when I happened to go to Chandigarh. He had been invited as the chief guest of the local Rotary Club... When he died in distant Canada while on a singing tour with Lata Mangeshkar, I heard her tearful tribute to her singing partner. Ever since my favorite film songs have been *Saawan Ka Maheena*, *Woh Subah Kabhie to Aayegee*, *Aa Laut Kay Aajaa Merey Meet*; *Kabhi Kabhie Meyrey Dil Mein Khayal Aata Hai* and *O Jaany Vaaley Ho Sakey to Laut Key Aana*."

After Mukesh's death, his newer unreleased songs released in 1977 with films like *Dharam Veer*, *Amar Akbar Anthony*, *Khel Khiladi Ka*, *Darinda*, and *Chandi Sona*. The year 1978 also featured a good number of Mukesh songs, films like *Aahuti*, *Paramatma*, *Tumhari Kasam*, and *Satyam Shivam Sundaram*, where Mukesh sang his last film song "Chanchal Sheetal Nirmal Komal" for Raj Kapoor's younger brother, Shashi Kapoor. From 1980 onward, Mukesh's voice was heard in many late released films like *Shaitan Mujarim*, *Premika*, *Patthar Se Takkar* (1980), *Sanjh Ki Bela*, *Maila Anchal* (1981), *Aarohi* (1982), *Chor Mandali* (1983), *Nirlaj* (1985), *Love and God* (1986), *Shubh Chintak* (1989), and his last known release of *Chand Grahani* (1997).

There was a 15 - years gap between the first two songs he recorded for O.P.Nayyar. The first one is "Miss Coca Cola", the "Jhuka Jhuka Ke Nigahen Milayen Jaten Hain" duet with Asha, was an instant hit. When O. P. forget all about him for fifteen years and then recorded in his voice "Chal Akela Chal Akela" for "Sambandh", the song was a runaway hit a full year before the film came.

He was a great gentleman, it was reflected in the "persuasive" quality of his singing. Lata Mangeshkar, said "you got the feel a "Bhala Aadmi" singing when Mukesh sang." of life. He had this knack of communicating his warmth to every person with whom he came in contact. He knew no ego, was the soul-force of Raj Kapoor and was the picture of humility like Lata. That is why Mukesh and Lata got on so famously - they were both untainted by fame.

Mukesh's music continued with his son Nitin. Who studying business management over seas went back to India to keep the music in him alive. He sings his father's songs and his own. And now we have the third generation of Mukesh making waves with his grandson,

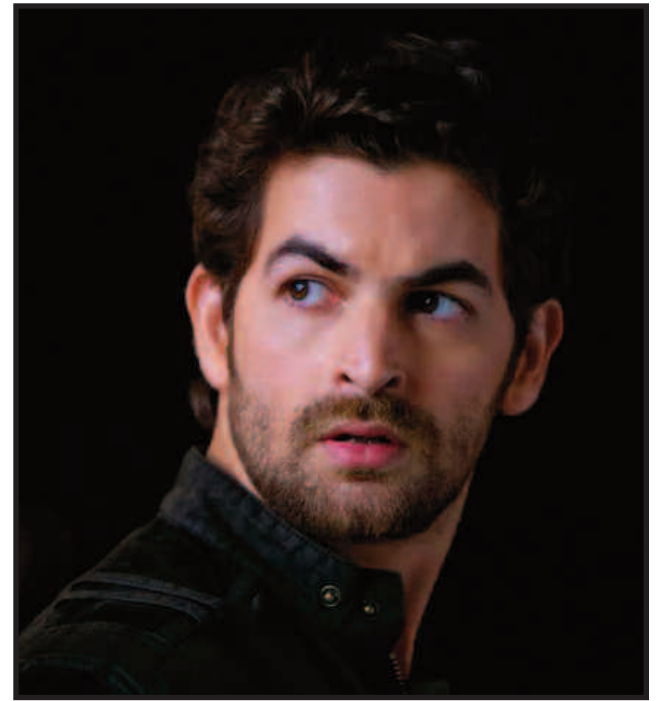
— A QUICK GLANCE OF THREE GENERATIONS —



Mukesh Chand Mathur



Nitin Mukesh



Neil Nitin Mukesh

Neil Nitin Mukesh.

Neil Nitin Mukesh Chand Mathur, known professionally as Neil Nitin Mukesh or Neil Mukesh, born on 15 January 1982 in Mumbai, was named by Lata Mangeshkar after astronaut Neil Armstrong as his father was a big fan of Neil Armstrong. After schooling at Greenlawns High School in Mumbai, he graduated from HR College with a Bachelor's degree in Communications. He did a 4-month workshop with Kishore Namit Kapoor and also at Anupam Kher's institute during his college vacation. He also assisted Aditya Chopra in his film *Mujhse Dosti Karoge* while still in college.

As a child, Neil appeared in *Vijay* (1988) and *Jaisi Karni Waisi Bharni* (1989). He received several offers

as a lead actor before his acting debut as an adult, but as he did not want to debut with a love story, he chose to wait for the right role. It was then that Sriram Raghavan offered him *Johnny Gaddaar*. Although the movie did not do well at the box-office, his acting was appreciated. His next films were *Aa Dekhen Zara*, *New York* and Madhur Bhandarkar's *Jail*. He also appeared in Yash Raj's *Lafangey Parindey*.

Neil Mukesh's filmography includes -1988-*Vijay*, 1989-*Jaisi Karni Waisi Bharni*, i2007-*Aa Dekhen Zara*, Johnny Gaddaa (Nominated, Filmfare Best Male Debut Award) ,2009-*New York* (Nominated, Filmfare Best Supporting Actor Award), *Jail*, 2010-*Lafangey Parindey*, *Saat Khoon*, 2011- *Maaf*

In 2008, he was the Fresh Face of the Year,¹ got the Filmfare Best Male Debut Award-*Johnny Gaddaar*, Stardust Superstar of Tomorrow - Male; *Johnny Gaddaar* and Star Screen Award for Most Promising Newcomer - Male; *Johnny Gaddaar*. In 2010 he received the Filmfare Best Supporting Actor Award-New York.

His upcoming films include, *Italian Job* and *Saat Khoon Maaf*, directed by Vishal Bharadwaj, stars Priyanka Chopra alongside John Abraham, Irrfan Khan, Naseeruddin Shah and Annu Kapoor. Priyanka plays the role of a woman who has seven husbands of which the youngest one is being played by Mukesh. He is also set to appear in a Malayalam film titled, *Kandahar*.



Ramesh D. Kalicharran in conversation with Niti Mukesh at an elegant functin sponsored by FIA in New York City, extreme right Pam