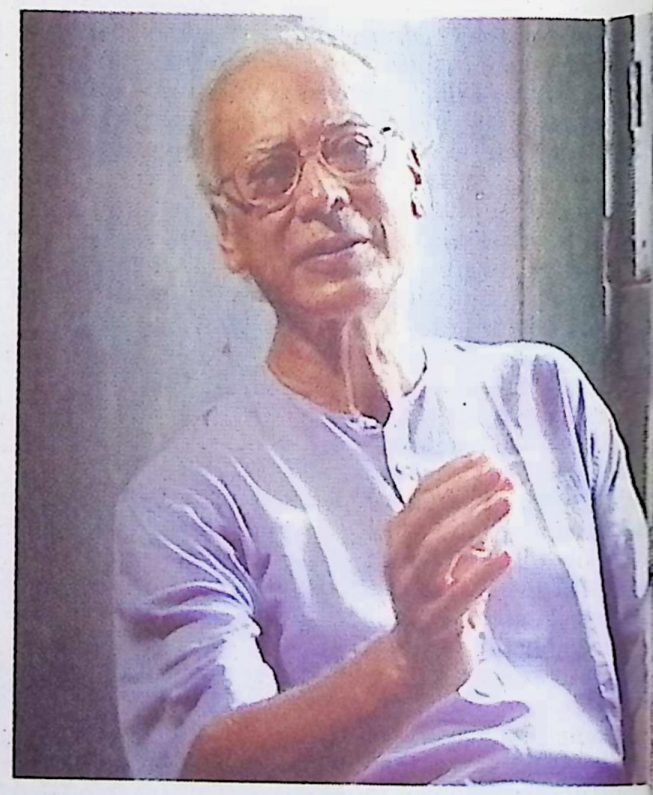


Anisur Rahman c

SHAHNOOR WAHID

Droplets of golden rays of the early morning sun found their way through the leaves and entered his famished soul as he raised his deep voice to its crescendo. Nature held its breath, birds stopped chirping and flowers blossomed in haste. The rays of the sun, *rabi rashmi*, filled his soul to its brim and it was hungry no more. He came out of the trance, looked around, and then slowly walked into the mist that had gathered yonder to hear his voice. It was magical. And the surreal ambience was created in a city park by Anisur Rahman, an exponent of Tagore songs.

The above scene is only one of the many in the documentary film titled "Bhuban Bhora Shur" (Melodies of the Soul) made on him.

Shabnam Ferdousi has made Bhuban Bhora Shur from her heart. It was intense passion that inspired Meghna Guha Thakurata and Shipra Bose to produce the 56-minute documentary film, a project that ended in December 2008. They have plans to release a DVD of the documentary on Pahela Baishakh this year.

I went to the screening of the film with a bit of reluctance as I am more used to listening to Rabindrashangeet by renowned artistes in live performances. But five minutes into the documentary I sat up straight with my eyes and ears totally tuned to every scene that flashed by and every word that was spoken. There was no way one could wander away because Anisur Rahman was already in control of the show. And a little while later, I felt as if the script was following him and not him following the script. His gentle countenance, his eloquence and his graceful manner combined with his unique vocal cadence created an aura of authority that kept the audience seated until the end.

The film helped one to take a peek at the inner most layers of the mind of an unusual man and attempt to understand his ideas, his ideology, his philosophy and his pain and passion. The film was about the never-ending journey of a maverick through the catacomb of *lyrics*, tune and *raagas* of Tagore songs that have captivated his heart and soul. The film depicted in words and images this man's quest for reaching the final destination, home, which often reminded one of the sojourns of Odysseus to reach his home. But the earthly abode was not what was meant by home for Anisur Rahman.

Throughout the film, Anisur Rahman's deep and melodious voice highlighted the finer details of the songs with enviable ease and elegant poise. Enamoured as he was, the exponent sang the mystical songs of Tagore that told tales of man and nature, of man and woman, and of worldliness and asceticism. Through the rendition of the cascading melodies, he often lost touch with reality and the spell was broken when he was asked more questions.

Often in the film, while explaining some nuances of a song, or a *raaga*, or a *taal*, the singer would burst out in laughter, almost in a childlike glee, at rediscovering some thing extraordinary. Often he would cut jokes or mak light of an earthly distress, but even beyond the seren smile one almost discovered the faded flicker of loneliness in his eyes, as he looked out the window at the approach ing dusk. He sang out loud to conquer the engulfin silence.

Then as suddenly he would return to reality and tal about Tagore. In his own words: "I tried to understan Rabindranath from different angles, especially the philos ophy of his songs. It's not easy, and I'm not sure if I ca make you understand. The way I see it: songs are mor than a blend of melody, rhythm and tempo.

Rabindranath also sees it like this. Melody, rhythm tempo they are only the means. Rabindranath says, 'A song is a pathway to transcendence.' A song flows toward transcendence.

But at the same time it is rooted in reality, in conscious ness. From this inner tension the song strives toward transcendence.

And a state of discord results. It cannot move away from the real. But there is that pull of transcendence. This ten sile state gives birth to a pain. It doesn't want to depart, bu still it needs to. Rabindranath terms this pain as the mel ancholia of songs. My conception is: this melancholia i the essence of songs the real song."