

72nd death anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore

In tune with Tagore melody

TULIP CHOWDHURY

"Tumi kemon kore gaan koro hey guni Ami obak hoye shuni...kebol shuni..." ("How you sing your songs, O gifted one....")

Amazed am I as I listen on....") Here I sit in Ludlow, Massachusetts, looking at the splendorous summer sky where the deep blue seems to be competing with the whiteness of the clouds that lazily float in the infinity. The wind passes by with hissing sounds while the leaves tremble in joy on the tall trees surrounding me. Squirrels scamper around, bushy tails moving up and down, throwing alert glances at me. Red, blue, black birds fly around singing to their hearts' content. Crickets go off to their serenading song. I sit, a spectator to the wonders of nature around me. I hum the above song and am amazed. How Rabindranath Tagore had seen the unseen in these unique nature! These indeed are the songs to the Creator, the giver of life Tagore had found in his heart and rendered his respect.

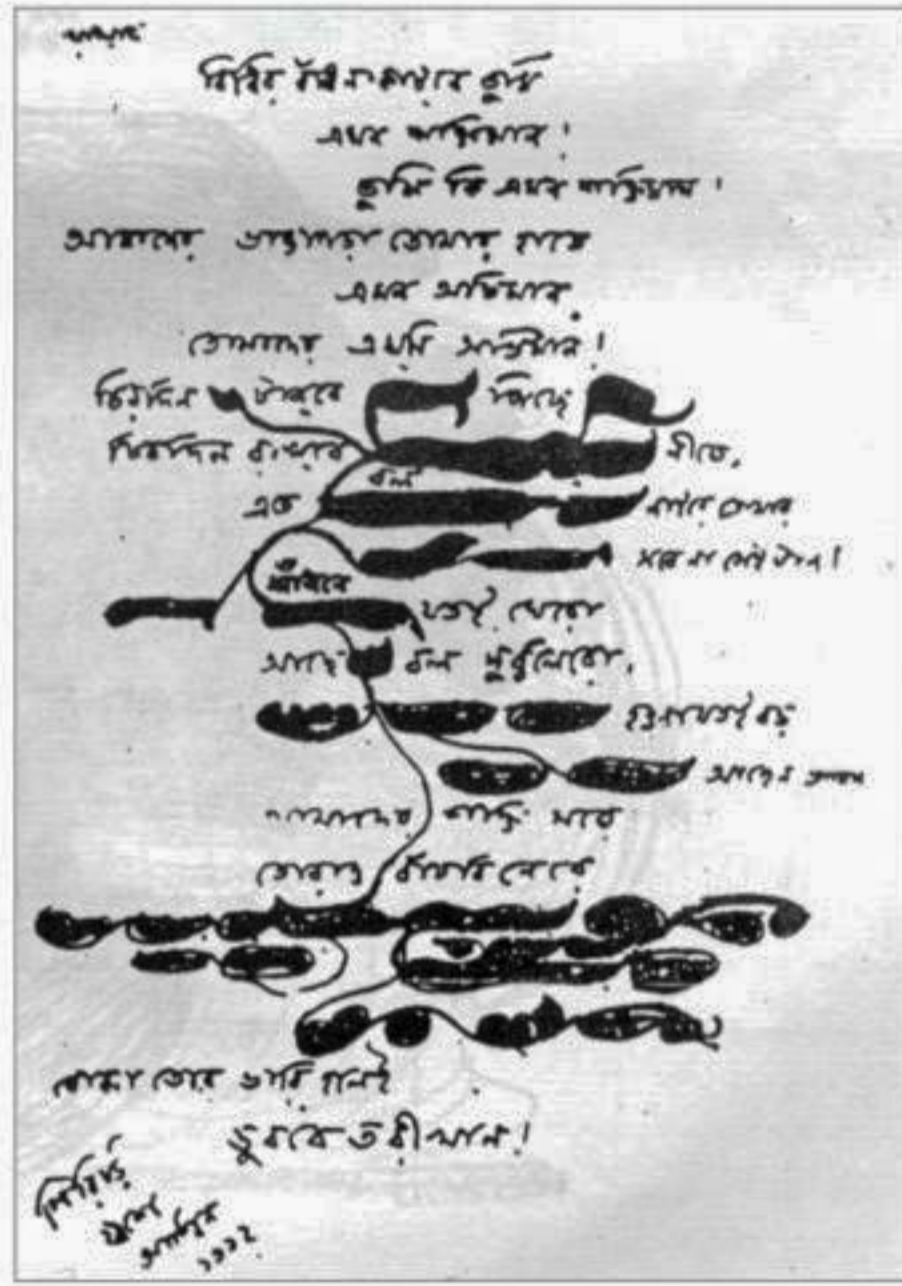
"Eije tomar prem ogo hridoyo horono Eije patay alo nache shonar borono...amar hridoy aj chuyeche tomaro chorono..." ("I surrender my love to you the winner of my heart Here dances light on the leaves in golden hue...")

.....my heart today is at your feet in respect....") The songs I sing may not be in "puja" section of the Geetobitan but to me heart's songs of love are for the one who has captured the heart -- "hriodyo horono". This is the seat of physical and spiritual being of a human, the giver of life. This love is humble enough to touch the feet of the beloved. Love does not

come with arrogance; it touches the soul with gentleness that together unites to strengthen the bonds of affection. I am in awe. How did the bard find the doors to the hearts of all who come in touch with his aesthetic being?

At times, Tagore surrenders to the will of the giver of his aesthetic being,

"Tai tomar anondo amar por Tumi tai eshecho niche...."



He depicts himself as an instrument of the superior being to the playing of his music. So passionate is the giver of life to play his songs that he humbles himself before his own creations -- (tumi tai eshecho niche...).

I sit watching the sun sinking low in the western sky and know that the day is coming to its end. Who is that great force at the helm of the sun, the moon, the

nature in its full? The soul searching thoughts hear Tagore singing in my heart,

"jibono moroner shimana charaye Bondhu hey amar royecho daraye..." ("Beyond the limit of life and death You wait, my friend....")

The Creator is also the soul mate in spiritual sense who fills the aesthetic being and this thirst of beauty has no boundaries, it reaches life and beyond.

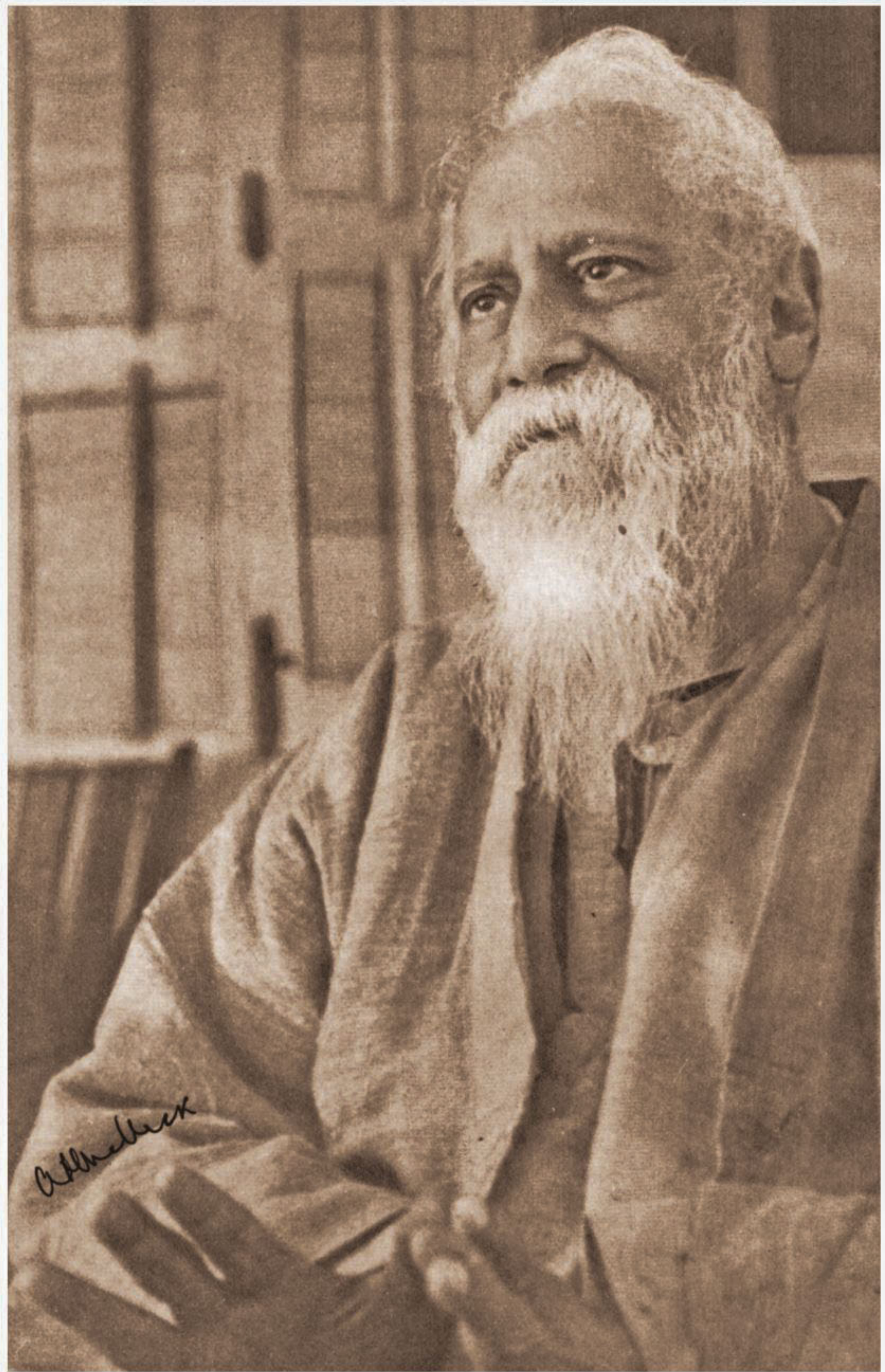
It is summer in this east coast of the USA and the shortness of the warm days has nature and people rushing to gather the beauty of the days. I hear laughter and chattering of children out in the sun. Gusts of wind blow my hair and kiss my face as if this unseen love of nature knows how much I am in love with the day. The wind whistles by as if to acknowledge the musician of life who is beyond the vision of the living world but continues to make hearts dance to his versatile works of music and other creative presentations of nature and man!

"Anondo loke, mongol aloke Birajo shotto shudoro Mohima tobo udbhashito Moha gogono majhe...." ("In this joy and purity Are you the Lord and Master (shotto shundoro)

Your splendor spreads In the infinity...")

I realize how much blessed are we by the Creator to listen to souls that praise him in their own ways. All living beings have the birth right to sing in praise of the Creator in their own ways regardless of race and creed. To join them and sing our own songs is to join the flow of life with millions of hearts that come in union!

Tulip Chowdhury writes fiction and poetry.



Waking up to music beyond life...

Milia Ali reflects on Tagore

AFSANA TAZREEN

Music has always fuelled her innate passion and Rabindra Sangeet has been her lifelong inspiration. Milia Ali, Tagore singer and former World Bank education specialist, is now settled in the US. She is undertaking the delicate task of introducing the cornucopia of Tagore songs to adult students through her music school, Geetali, in Virginia.

Milia stepped into the music world early on in life--partly because her family was musically inclined. She received music lessons from classical exponents Munshi Raisuddin, Phool Mohammad and Mithun De; and studied Rabindra Sangeet at Chhayanaut under the tutelage of stalwarts Waheedul Haque and Sanjida Khatun. During the 1971 freedom struggle, Milia spent some time in Tagore's ashram in Santiniketan where she was tutored by music legends Kanika Banerjee and Nilima Sen. Later she completed a certificate course in Rabindra Sangeet from Viswa Bharati University in Santiniketan.

"A true artiste must be able to communicate at both levels, spiritual and temporal," said Milia Ali, who has unwavering passion for Tagore's works. "Kanika Banerjee always said that technique is important for singing but there is something beyond -- which resonates from the innermost core of our beings," she recalled. "I learned more than just music from these legendary Tagore singers. Through their lifestyles they taught me the virtues of humility and dedication which characterise Tagore's own works."

While talking to Milia, her reverence for Tagore and his songs became apparent. "Tagore has been more of a mentor, a guide to me. The scope and intensity of his works are so vast that it is impossible to comprehend him in one lifetime."

Speaking on Tagore's songs, Milia said "Rabindrasangeet is not just about singing Tagore's lyrics -- there is a spiritual element which is closely aligned to a mission or a cause. His songs spawned our Language Movement in 1952 which paved the way to the Liberation War in 1971. His music is not only therapeutic, but it also elevates our consciousness to lofty heights."

Milia is encouraged to see the influx of new talent in the Bangladesh musical scene. According to her, the new generation artistes are much more professional in their approach since they have been more exposed. She attributes this to the fact that, today, there are no cultural borders or prejudices and opportunities for studying music or any form of art are limitless. However, Milia expressed her disappointment at how money and glitz have overtaken the spiritual and creative aspects of art. "Introspection is necessary in any art form; through introspection the artiste may approach divinity, I mean



divinity in a wider sense," she added. "The conflict between artistic growth for money or accolade and growth to fulfill the inner yearning is not new. But the journey has many pitfalls. The first path may tempt one to deviate from true art and the second may not lead to professional perfection. Hence an artist must learn to balance and unify these two paths. This has been my lifelong endeavor and I am still trying..."

Milia has traveled to many countries around the world such as Armenia, Romania, Egypt, Indonesia and the USA. But wherever she went she carried Tagore's universal message of humanism. "I taught Tagore songs to the street children in Armenia, organised a Tagore concert in Romania with local artistes and performed in Tagore's dance drama 'Chitrangada' in Indonesia. Wherever I was, Tagore kept me rooted to my origins."

Any regrets? "Sometimes when I have an internal dialogue, I do have regrets about my music career which couldn't fully blossom because I spent most of my adult life outside Bangladesh. However, if you ask me if I would change anything, I would say: 'Not really.'"

Any plans for the future? She reflected for a while and said, "At a tangible level I would love to create a think tank on Tagore's school of thoughts that would propagate his core message of humanity. But at an emotional and mental level I am content to be where I am -- I am happy to sing for a small audience or a group of friends. I have also discovered a new avenue for expressing myself through the weekly Columns that I write for The Daily Star. But music will always be my first love." She paused and added, "And, I do have one last wish. As I remember my guru on his 72nd death

Why Tagore still resonates within us

In conversation with Azad Hafiz

KAZI ANISA MOQUIT

As the 72nd death anniversary of Bengali Nobel Prize winning writer, composer, philosopher and polymath, Rabindranath

Tagore draws closer, we are able to observe the enduring impact Tagore's work has had on today's culture. His work has forever changed, and moulded Bengali culture for the better part of a century and has still not lost its influence. Though 72 years have elapsed since the poet's death, Tagore's works have withstood the test of time, and have encompassed and transcended generations of music lovers, literary enthusiasts and the likes. They have been hailed as innovations in Bangla culture due to the modern nature of Tagore's work, which are deep explorations into the universal themes underpinning human nature.

Well known Tagore artiste Azad Hafiz, who graduated from Chhayanaut, explains that the reason Tagore still resonates so profoundly within us is simply because his work is timeless.



One cannot help but become enchanted with the poignant verses and rich melodies found abundantly in Rabindra Sangeet, and how they seamlessly blend the feelings characterising the daily

trials and tribulations encountered in each stage of a person's life. Tagore's work is an echo of the human consciousness. Each of his songs appeals personally to the listener and yet is universal in dimension.

Tagore's collective works have become such an integral part of our culture today that it can be said that our Bengali sense of being has been heightened by the quality and reach the works of the poet, Hafiz adds.

Tagore's ability to evoke such strong emotions and identify so thoroughly with almost every reader and/or listener through his work is a testament to his genius and keen and insightful understanding of the human condition. His short stories, plays and songs are still being enjoyed today and are sure to be enjoyed for ages, concludes Hafiz.

NEWSbytes

Tapan Mahmud to perform at Jorasanko

A CORRESPONDENT

Eminent Nazrul Sangeet artiste Tapan Mahmud is due to perform at Jorasanko Thakurbari -- the ancestral home of Rabindranath Tagore -- on the occasion of "Baishey Shrabon", the death anniversary of the bard. The programme, organized by the Rabindra Bharati University, will be held tomorrow (August 8). The other featured artiste of the programme will be Shraboni Sen (India). Tapan Mahmud told The Daily Star. He also informed that he will be presenting mostly songs of devotion and monsoon.

It's True!

At sixty, Rabindranath Tagore took up drawing and painting; successful exhibitions of his many works--which made a debut appearance in Paris upon encouragement by artists he met in the south of France -- were held throughout Europe. Tagore was influenced by scrimshaw from northern New Ireland, Haida carvings from British Columbia and woodcuts by Max Pechstein. His artist's eye for his handwriting was revealed in the simple artistic and rhythmic leitmotifs embellishing the scribbles, cross-outs, and word layouts of his manuscripts.



Knorr শাদে ও সুশুক্কে

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ETV, Gtv, 9, SATV, etc.