



THE CONFLUENCE OF MELODIES

Runa Laila on her friendship with Lata Mangeshkar

Embroidered as an evergreen diva, Runa Laila wears the crown of glory with grace and humility. Her charming personality and pleasing voice make her stand out from the others in the industry. She is not only adorned by her fans all over the world but also acknowledged by Lata Mangeshkar herself – the Voice of the Millennium. Lata ji and Runa Laila share a special friendship for a long time now and are very fond of each other. During her first recording with Kalyanji-Anandji for the title song of *Ek Se Badhkar Ek*, Lata ji personally came to hear the new singer and bestow her blessing upon Runa Laila. She says “It was like a dream come true when Lata didi came and blessed me and offered me a bouquet. I couldn't have asked for a better beginning.” During an interview with Rafi Hossian, Runa Laila shares some wonderful stories of their

unique bond.

Rafi: Could share some light on your friendship with Lata Mangeshkar?

Runa: I am very lucky and honored to have a living legend as my friend, my family and my inspiration. Every time I am in town she invites me over to dinner or lunch; we sit and chat for hours. It is an honor that she spends so much time with me.

Rafi: Did you ever feel like proposing her to sing with you?

Runa: No. I do not have the courage to make such a bold proposition. My only wish was to see her in person and that was fulfilled. I have such deep respect for her that the idea of singing with her never came to my mind. Two years back she gifted me a saree for my birthday, so I wore that saree and sent her a picture on Whatsapp. She was so delighted that she edited and framed the picture and resent

it to me. That was so sweet of her! (Chuckles) Last year, on March 26, I was invited by the High Commission of India to a program as a special guest. So Akhi comes up to me and says she wants to go with me and meet Lata ji. She was nearly passing out with joy seeing her in person. Lata ji told me, “Ap ki beti to mujhe sirf dekhi rehi hain”. I replied saying, “Mera bhi yein haal huwa tha phele jab maine dekha tha aapko.” Later she blessed us and also talked over the phone with Tani and made a video message for her. All these little things she does make me feel very fortunate and privileged.

Asha ji is also very dear to me and I bonded with her strongly during a show, *Sur Kshetra*. She used to cook for me and bring the food during the shoot. She is indeed a very good cook. We were asked what we wanted to eat by the facilitators

every day during the shoots. So one day Asha ji comes up and tell me that do not order lunch tomorrow I will cook for you. She knew I loved shrimp so she made that and she even cooked whenever she invited me over to her place. Once we were having our meal when she remembered that she forgot to make me dessert; she ran to the kitchen leaving her meal halfway and brought a dessert called, “Shahi Tukra”. Both the sisters are very down to earth and humble persons and are very close to my heart.

Lata Mangeshkar and Runa Laila share a unique relationship. The beautiful bond between Runa Laila and Lata Mangeshkar represents the true admiration of friendship that has love and respect for one another. May their friendship stretch to eternity.

By Joana Nomrata Mazumder

