

TAGORE FESTIVAL

MANY HUES OF RABINDRANATH

নানারঙের রবীন্দ্রনাথ

A CULTURAL EVENING IN OBSERVANCE OF 150th
BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF NOBEL LAUREATE
RABINDRANATH TAGORE

September 25, 2010

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Many Hues of Rabindranath (“Nana Ranger Rabindranath”)

Mita Kundu
Founder, Director
SARGAM-USA

We have gathered tonight to commemorate 150 years since Tagore’s birth in this far Northwest corner of the world. I am excited to get the chance to share Tagore’s work with you, and honored by the support you all have shown us by joining us today.

Tagore’s work is so vast that in Kolkata, India, the celebrations for Tagore’s anniversary started in the spring of 2010 and will end on Tagore’s birthday in 2011 (the 25th day of *Baishakh* in May of 2011). Thus, when it was first suggested to me to do “something” to pay our tribute to Rabindranath here in Oregon, I was elated and then overwhelmed. I thought to myself, it is quite a formidable challenge for the full-time intellectuals and professional performers to demonstrate even a millionth of Tagore’s contribution to arts and literature, what can we, the full-time homemakers and amateur performers, possibly do to pay our homage to this multi-faced genius? After several days and nights of pondering, I thought to myself “No matter what we do it hardly will provide a glimpse of his genius”. So, I decided to put together a variety of events and pick several “colors” from Tagore’s vast pastel of works and make it as colorful as possible. This prompted our efforts of the night: *Nana Ranger Rabindranath* (“Many hues of Rabindranath”).

Tonight we will touch upon a few areas of Tagore’s musical creations, including a few new *taals* [12.13] (beats), his views on the traditional education system through a drama based on his short story (“The Parrot’s Training” [5]), and a musical drama (“*Valmiki Pratibha*”[9]).

Lastly, I want to say a **big** thank you to all my brother and sister performers, our sponsors, well wishers, volunteers and PCC Sylvania’s Performing Arts’ Center staff members for their untiring efforts to make tonight’s program a great success.

Thank you very much and enjoy the program.



Panel of Advisers:

Mr. Jaisen Mody, President, ICA

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Mrs. Krishna Ganguly, Principal Bharat Nritya School of Dance,
Kolkata

Mr. Mahendra Shah, President, Kalakendra

Mr. Aniruddha Kundu, Founder, Aniruddha Consulting LLC

Program Concept, Compilation and Music Direction:

Mita Kundu

Music Arrangements:

Bhaskar Ganguly

Program Organizing Committee

Cultural	Logistics
Krishna Ganguly (Dance)	Alok Prakash
Mita Kundu (Vocal)	Anil Sahu
Sandeep Chattopadhyay (Music)	Aniruddha Kundu
Bhaskar Ganguly (Music)	Ashish Chatterjee
Tania Chatterjee (Dance)	Jayanta Banerjee
Sharad Ketan (Drama)	Udayan Mukherjee

Blessings from Swami Shantarupanandaji

Minister and Spiritual Leader Vedanta Society of Portland

It is, indeed, heartening news that some Indians in Portland are organizing a program to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. He was the first Asian to win the Nobel Prize for Literature (1913). He was a versatile genius, singer, composer, painter, literary artist, educator, and actor. He brought a new dimension into Bengali Literature and music. His songs are sung not only in India but all over the World. His great works sprang from intense feeling and profound vision. His “Visva-bharati” is a University, where the World makes a home in a single nest. He was a World citizen, as Dr. Radhakrishnan has pointed out.

Tagore’s influence on literature is felt in many countries of the world, including China. Out of his deep admiration for Gandhi, he gave him the name ‘Mahatma’. *Gitanjali* (Song Offerings), *Gora* (Fair-Faced), and *Ghare-Baire* (The Home and the World) are his best-known works. Tagore was the only person who composed National Anthems of two countries: India and Bangladesh : “Jana Gana Mana Adhinayak Joy-o Hey” (“Hail to the commander of peoples’ mind”) and “Amar Shonar Bangla Ami Tomay Bhalo Bashi” (“I love you: My Golden Bengal”) respectively.

Rabindranath told Romain Rolland, a French writer and a Nobel Prize winner for literature (1915), “If you want to know India, study Vivekananda. In him everything is positive and nothing negative.” Eventually, Rolland was strongly influenced by the Vedanta philosophy of India¹, primarily through the works of Swami Vivekananda.

I join you in offering my salutations to Tagore, popularly known as ‘Gurudev’.

I wish you all success in this noble endeavor.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.



¹ Romain Rolland's thoughts on Vedanta (<http://www.iwise.com/RUR4q>)

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An Introduction

Dr. Narasimha P. Sil
Professor of History
Western Oregon University

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) of Kolkata is truly a cultural icon for the whole world and not just for Bengal or India. His intellectual and literary repertoire is characterized by his abiding love for humanity at large. In his literary enterprise he was deeply influenced by his own cultural heritage dating back to the Vedic Age as well as by the finest intellectual traditions of the West he admired and appropriated. His contributions to music—lyric and melody alike—is as colossal as it is cosmopolitan, because its inspiration came from a variety of sources: his native baul [itinerant troubadours of Bengal’s village] songs, the Vaisnava kirtan [devotional song], the Perso-Islamic classical music and Western musical tradition. This magisterial eclecticism resulted in a magnificent musical genre that bears his name: Rabindrasangeet [songs of Rabindranath]. Likewise, Tagore is one of the pioneers of Bengali novel and short story.

Tagore abhorred politics but adored his country. Nevertheless, his patriotism transcended the narrow national boundaries and concerns. His antipathy toward the West’s aggressive and adamant nationalism was wonderfully balanced by his admiration for Western civilization. He had little qualms rejecting the offer of knighthood by the British government in 1919, protesting against the gratuitous massacre of unarmed Indians in Punjab in that year. By the same token, he unhesitatingly recognized the merits of Western contact and impact and could express his gratitude to the Lord of the Universe with disarming candor:

“Kato ajanare janaile tumi, kato ghare dile thain—

durke korile nikat bandhu, parke korile bhai.....

Tomare janile nahi keho par, nahi kono mana, nahi kono dar,

sabare milaye tumi jagitechho— dekha jeno sada pai.

[Thou hast made known to friends whom I knew not. Thou hast given me seats in homes not my own. Thou hast brought the distant near and made a brother of the stranger.

When one knows thee, then alien there is none, then no door is shut.

Oh, grant me my prayer that I may never lose the bliss of the touch of one in the play of the many.]

In anticipation of the sesquicentennial birth anniversary (that falls in 2011) of this “myriad-minded” poet-laureate of the world [“Bishvakabi”], we have arranged a humble offering of love and gratitude to the memory of Nana Ranger Rabindranath—the multi-hued Tagore.



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Freedom Redefined

Alok Prakash
Member, Tagore's Festival
Organizing Committee

As a child in India, I heard stories of the struggle of Indians to get freedom from the British colonial rule. I also saw a few *jatras*² (plays) depicting struggle of Indians. And I was attracted to stories where the figures were militant like Bhagat Singh, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Binoy, Badal, Dinesh. At that age I perceived the approach of other leaders such as Gandhi weak and enervated. Then as a teenager, I read a poem by Rabindranath Tagore and suddenly my perceptions changed.

Tagore defined freedom in such large, universal terms that the mere removal of British rule seemed suddenly insignificant. Tagore's poem demands deep reflection and forces a reluctant admiration even from the most militant of people. To me, this poem is like a mantra, a form of meditation. The poem is reproduced here for your reflection.

“Where the Mind is Without Fear

Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high;
Where knowledge is free;
Where the world has not been broken up
into fragments by narrow domestic walls;
Where words come out from the depth of truth;
Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection;
Where the clear stream of reason
has not lost its way into the dreary desert sand of dead habit;
Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action---
Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake.”

The poem above is excerpted from “*Gitanjali*” [1], originally written in Bengali, later translated into English and published as a book in 1912. One year after the book, “*Gitanjali*”, was published, the poet was awarded Nobel Prize for literature.

Tagore has given us a definition of freedom based on universal morality and personal freedom of every citizen. We must strive to achieve this ideal, have a mind without fear, and hold our heads high, and to promote this freedom for all citizens of the world.

² Jatra (meaning procession or journey in Sanskrit) is a popular folk-theatre form of Bengali theatre.

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Reflections on Tagore

Mita Kundu
Founder, Director
SARGAM-USA

I always get humbled by the sheer thought of the unfathomable greatness of Rabindranath Tagore and his works. In one lifetime, Tagore has offered so many enlightening gifts to our world. Each day as one studies his works; there is something new to be celebrated. As the Sun continues to astonish with new colors for us to see everyday, Tagore's works bring with them new realizations with each reflection. I fundamentally believe that one would need to live several lives just to grasp a small fraction of the credence that is in the beauty and finesse of Rabindranath Tagore's offerings to the artistic universe.

Rabindranath, a "myriad minded" genius, is primarily known to the world as a poet, a "World Poet". I am awestruck as I read his poems, attempting to study his notations and the synthesis of his tunes and lyrics used to bring out real meaning. It is beyond the likes of Indian classical music, ultra modern pop or swinging folk, truly deserving a genre of its own. It is simply beyond the limitations of my expression! It has, and always will be a source of eternal bliss for me! In his own words, his songs are "songs for all seasons and occasions." [14]

Tagore once said "every human have a few things of their own to boast about, for me it is my songs.... I will be able to make Bengal sing my songs. I have supplied all of the material necessary, with no shortcomings or gaps left behindif all my poetry is forgotten, my songs will live with my countrymen and have a permanent place... I live then as a Legacy". [14]

His conviction has been proven to be true. The world has accepted and embraced his genius. I am blessed to have the opportunity to salute him on this joyous occasion. "Gurudev", I salute you a million times!



**I am proud to help celebrate
the 150th anniversary of the
birth of Rabindranth Tagore**



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Biographies:

Krishna Ganguly:



Krishna Ganguly, a double major of Dance and Music from Rabindrabharati University [15] in the 60's. In her professional career as a performing artist, she has toured with her troupe nationally and internationally, promoting the message of peace and harmony. As the Principal of *Bharata Nritya School of Dance*, in Kolkata, India, she is now devoting herself in bringing out natural fine-arts talents in young Dance and Music artists. She visits Portland regularly and is a continuous source of inspiration for us. She guides us from behind the "curtain" for all the cultural programs that we organize.

Mita Kundu



Mita Kundu, an internationally acclaimed singer, graduated in Rabindrasangeet (with Honors) in 1985 from Rabindrabharati University [15], Kolkata. Mita is a recipient of "Sangeet Prabhakar" and "Sangeet Bibhakar" degrees from Allahabad Prayag Sangeet Samiti³, a renowned music school in Allahabad, India.

Manna Dey, the living legend of Indian music, was greatly impressed by Mita's "awe-inspiring" presentation of Rabindrasangeet in the album "Robir Aloy Mita". This CD was released in 2008 and marketed by Sagarika Music Company in India.

Mita regularly performs in Kolkata, India, all over U.S.A and Canada. She is a regular on all major TV and Radio channels in Kolkata (All India Doordarshan TV Channels, Tara Bangla TV, ETV Bangla, Akash Bangla, All India Radio, Radio FM (FM 107MHz), Radio Snap). She has also performed as an invited artist on Atlanta Radio Network WRFG (FM 89.3) and Portland Radio Networks (KBOO-FM 90.7 and KKEY-AM1150).

Mita is the director of Sargam-USA⁴, a music school in Portland, Oregon helping the Indo-American population learn Rabindrasangeet and Indian vocal.

Bhaskar Ganguly:



Bhaskar Ganguly, a software Solutions Engineer and Technical Architect by profession, is one of the most enterprising rhythmists and music arranger as well. Bhaskar has been performing at various forums in Kolkata, India, with his percussion team until he moved to USA. He has organized, directed and performed in several group programs in Portland and in other cities of USA. He is one of the founding members of *ShatoRoop*, a free form music group in Portland Oregon, that made their presence felt in an international arena, performing at the North American Bengali Conference⁵.

³ http://allahabadinfo.com/prayag_sangit_samiti.html

⁴ <http://www.sargamusa.org/>

⁵ North American Bengali Conference organized by Cultural Association of Bengal

Tania Chatterjee:

Tania Chatterjee, has learned dance since the age of 3. She first completed her 10 year dance diploma from the renowned, Children's Little Theater of India. After that she started Odissi. She learned from Guru Giridhari Nayak and Alok Kanungo, both renowned teachers and direct disciple of Padmashree Kelucharan Mahapatra. Tania has innumerable stage and TV performances to her credit both in India and abroad. She has started an Odissi dance school three years back in greater Portland area. For Tania, dance is her passion, and she gets excited and thoroughly enjoys anything that has dance in it.

Sharad Khetan:

Sharad Khetan, originally from Kanpur, India has been living in Portland since 2003 with his wife (Vandana) and son (Utkarsh). When he is not busy managing software projects at Intel, he likes reading and playing chess. He has contributed in various cultural events organized by Hindi Sangam as an actor, writer, director, and MC. He also likes to hear Indian music, watch movies, and to hang out with friends. He can be reached at s_khetan@yahoo.com.

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Program Details

“Joy-O Tabo Bichitra Anando” (Glory to Thy Multitude of Delights):

This is a “*Brahmo Sangeet*” [16], a genre⁶ that evolved in the 19th century in Bengal, to inspire spiritual practice and liberate humanity from religious differences and idol worship. In this song, Tagore hails the ultimate power for happiness, pity, bliss, sadness. Essentially, for everything that happens around us, including death!

This song was written in 1909 when Tagore was 48. The tune is based on raga *Vrindavani Sarang* [11] and set in *taal Tewra* [12].

“The Parrot’s Training” (Tota Kahini):

This is one of Tagore’s finest satires where he expressed his strong reservations about the contemporary education system. Tagore wrote, “I have not had myself the full benefit of a regular education...I myself had suffered when I was young through the impediments which were inflicted upon most boys while they attended school and I have had to go through the machine of education which crushes the joy and freedom of life for which children have such insatiable thirst.”[2]

In this short story, Tagore showed how a jolly, yet “ignorant” parrot, which used to sing, dance and hop around, was crushed by the “pundits” and their unwavering desire to “teach” the parrot. Tagore’s choice of a parrot as the student is especially significant, since parrots are known for their ability to regurgitate what they are told. However, in Tagore’s view, traditional education is so stifling that even a parrot could not thrive in this environment. Tagore’s words about the traditional education system of a century ago are still unfortunately true of much of the education system today.

The story was published posthumously in 1944. The drama is staged by the members of Hindi Sangam of Portland, Oregon.

Video on Visva-Bharati University:

“I was brought up in an atmosphere of aspiration, aspiration for the expansion of the human spirit. We in our home sought freedom of power in our language, freedom of imagination in our literature, freedom of soul in our religious creeds and that of mind in our social environment. Such an opportunity has given me confidence in the power of education which is one with life and only which can give us real freedom, the highest that is claimed for man, ...In my institution I have attempted to create an atmosphere of naturalness in our relationship with strangers, and the spirit of hospitality which is the first virtue in men that made civilization possible.”[6]

Tagore established Visva-Bharati University, an international university where east and west could come together. In his own words: “Visvabharati represents India where she has her wealth of mind, which is for all. Visvabharati acknowledges India's obligation to offer to others the hospitality of her best culture and India's right to accept from others their best” [10]. Tagore donated all his money from the Nobel Prize to this university. He said “My object in starting this institution was to give the children of men full freedom of joy, of life and of communion with nature.”[2]

Here, we present to you a short video on Visva-Bharati University to show a glimpse of how Tagore’s vision of “communion with nature” is realized.

⁶ First named by Raja Ram Mohan Roy

Aamaar Mukti Aloy Aloy (I Find My Salvation in The Light of Awakening):

In this song Tagore offers all the sufferings of his life to the ceremonial fire for the world-creator and through this act finds salvation. In his words he finds deliverance in the midst of the openness of the sky and in the light of awakening and knowledge. This song is based on raga *Mishra Kedar* [11] and set in *taal Tewra* [12]. “Aamaar Mukti..” is taken from devotional section (*Pooja Parjay*) of Tagore’s songs. It was written when Tagore was 65.

Valmiki Pratibha (The Genius of Valmiki):

Valmiki (ca. 400 BC) is considered to be the first poet (“Adi Kobi”) in Sanskrit literature and the author of the epic Ramayana. In his early life, Valmiki (alias Ratnakar) was a highway robber, and terrorized the vicinity. Once, the robber Ratnakar, tried to rob the divine sage Narada, whose wisdom made the robber realize the “truth of life”, that everyone has to suffer for his own sins. Dejected, *Ratnakar* followed *Narada*’s scriptures and meditated for many years till anthills grew around his body. Finally, divine grace bestowed him with knowledge and named him “*Valmiki*” (one born out of anthills). One day while strolling in the serenity of the forest, Valmiki witnessed a hunter shooting a singing bird. Outraged by the killing of the bird, Valmiki spontaneously uttered the following verse:

“*mā nishāda pratisthāng twamagamah śhāśwatīh samāh
yat krauñchamithunādekamawadhīh kāmamohitam*”.

This means “you will find no peace and rest for the long years of eternity, for you killed a bird in love”. This verse is regarded as the first verse (“sloka”) in Sanskrit literature. Valmiki Pratibha, is based on this story of Valmiki.

Rabindranath wrote: “When I went to England I did hear some of the Irish melodies sung, and learnt them too....From this mixed cultivation of foreign and native melody was born the Valmiki Pratibha.... It is not what Europeans call an opera, but a little drama set to music. That is to say, it is not primarily a musical composition. Very few of the songs are important....they all serve merely as the musical text of the play.” [3]

This is the first musical play written by Rabindranath Tagore and it was published when Tagore was only 19 years old. In this drama, instead of sage *Narada*, Tagore used *Saraswati*, the goddess of music and arts, as the enlightener of Ratnakar.

Tagore played the character of Valmiki when the play was first staged in Kolkata in March of 1881. Here we present to you tonight’s musical drama “Valmiki Pratibha” acted by our young artists!

Aamar Praner Manush Ache Prane (He Resides Deep in My Heart):

This presentation is derived from the *Baul* sub-section of Tagore’s songs. Tagore was influenced by the simplistic philosophical expressions of *Bauls*. In Tagore’s own words: “some songs which I have often heard from wondering village singers belonging to a popular sect of Bengal called *Bauls*, who have no images, temples, scriptures ceremonies, who declare in their songs the divinity on Man, and express for Him an intense feeling of love” their “central idea is yoga, attachment to and communion with the divine and it’s manifestations as means of realization”[4]. The lyrics of this presentation express that realization: “He is omnipresent, instead of searching for Him all over, look inside yourselves”. This song was written when Tagore was 49. The song is set in “*Dadra*” [13] and will be sung by Madhumita Gangopadhyay.

Tagore and Western Music “Ye Banks and Braes o’ Bonnie Doon”:

Tagore wrote “There, outward embellishment must be perfect in every detail, and the least defect stands shamed and unable to face the public gaze.what little of it I came to understand from the outside attracted me greatly in one way.... that whenever I have been moved by European music I have said to

myself: it is romantic, it is translating into melody the evanescence of life” [3]. Here is one of his favorite Scottish folk songs “Ye Banks and Braes o’ Bonnie Doon” written by Robert Burns, describing a love-lost girl as she wanders by the banks of the river Doon in Ayrshire. The song will be sung by Mr. Toby Pollack.

Phule Phule Dhole Dhole (Slowly Swinging Wind in the Midst of Flowers):

The tune for this song was adopted by Tagore from the Scottish folk song “Ye Banks and Braes o’ Bonnie Doon”. Tagore composed this song for his musical drama *Kaal Mrigaya* [9]. It was composed when Tagore was just 21. It is set to *taal Khemta* [12, 13]. This song is sung by Aditi Mukherjee, Debashree Banerjee and Suchismita Ghosh.

Go Where Glory Waits Thee:

This song was composed by Thomas Moore (1780-1852) an Irish poet and music composer. Tagore adopted this tune for at least four of his compositions in: *Mayar Khela*, *Robir Chaya*, *Valmiki Pratibha*, *Kaal Mrigaya* [9]. This song is sung by Anushna Prakash and Hiya Banerjee.

Aha Aaji A Bashonte (Aha! In this Time of Spring):

Tagore composed this song for a dance drama *Mayar Khela* [9] when he was 27 years old. The tune for this song was adopted from the Irish folk song “Go Where Glory Waits Thee”. It is set to *teen taal* [12, 13] and will be sung by Sujoy Sen.

Arj Suno Gopal Haamari (Listen To My Prayer, Oh Lord Gopal)

This is a short *prayer*, composed by Mita Kundu. It is based on raga *Yaman* [11] and set to *teen taal* [12, 13]. It is sung by Anushna Praksah and Hiya Banerjee.

Kaaler Mondira Je, Sadai Baaje (Cymbal of Time Keeps Ringing Forever):

This is an awesome expression of life by Tagore. In his view, life is a stage where the supreme power plays the cymbal to create the rhythm of life with different feelings, moods and conflicts. For eternal bliss, one has to follow this rhythm and be prepared for the final call when it knocks on the door.

This song is based on raga *Yaman* [11] and set in *Keherwa* [12, 13] Tagore used shades of *Yaman Kalyan* [11] to emphasize his lyrics. This song was written when Tagore was 61. It will be sung by Rajeeb Hazra.

Dara Dim, Dara Dim:

This is the original *tarana* composed by a poet by the name of Manarang. Rabindranath adopted the tune for his composition “*Shukha Hin Nishi Din...*” This song based on raga *Nat Malhar* [11] and set to *teen taal* [12, 13]. The song will be presented by Mita Kundu.

Sukho Hin Nishi Din Paradhin Hoye (Roaming Unhappily in Pity and Inhibition):

This song was written in 1900 and it is a devotional song (*Puja Porjay*). In this song Tagore says that we are roaming unhappily in pity with our heads bowed in inhibition, without knowing that we are always protected all around by the ultimate power of His valiant protection (“*abhoy ashray*”). Tagore suggests in this song to Lift your bowed down head, shed fear and always look at His loving face with simplicity.

This song is based on raga *Nat Malhar* [11] and set in *teen taal* [12, 13]. It is sung by Jayanta Banerjee.

Swapne Amar Mone Holo: (In My Dreams I Felt The Knocks On My Doors):

This song was written when Tagore was 78 years old and has been catalogued under “nature”, as part of the rainy season. Rainy season is Tagore’s most favorite season. He composed about 118 songs on rainy season alone. In his own words: “This rainy day, is not only an occurrence for one single evening. It is, as if, a reflection of my entire life’s unceasing down pour.” {Translated from [16]}

Although, the lyrics of this song translate to: “In my dreams I felt that you knocked on my doors. I did not wake up and you faded away in the dark”, the inner meaning of this song, as I understand, is certainly more subtle than this. Here Tagore seems to hint at our inability to recognize Him, during the “rainy season” of our lives.

This song is based on raga *Hambir* and set in *taal shawsh-tthi*, [12] created by Tagore [see Reference section] and will be presented by Indrani Sinha.

Manna Dey about Tagore (An Interview, A Video Presentation):

Many renowned Indian composers and musicians, as well as, many western musicians, expressed their utmost respect about Tagore’s unfathomable mastery over his musical compositions. Here we present a short clip from an informal conversation with legendary singer Manna Dey. According to Manna Dey⁷, no other composition that he knows about comes close to Tagore’s. In his own words “a genius like Rabindranath will never be born again!”

Jodi Tare Nai Chini Go (If I Fail to Recognize Him [Spring]):

This song was written when Tagore was 61 years old. This song has been catalogued under “nature” and as part of spring. This song was written for his drama, *Basanto* [9] (Spring). In this drama, Tagore explained, that unless one can relieve himself of the burden of material wealth, he will never be able to enjoy the beauty of nature around him. This song is set in *taal Tewra* [12] and will be sung by Debashree Banerjee and Nilabrata Goswami.

Tere Mere Milan Ki Yeh Ryana (This Night of Our Togetherness):

This is a very popular Hindi film song from the movie *Abhimaan*. This is a masterly adaptation of Tagore’s song, *Jodi Tare Nai Chini Go Seki*, by the legendary music director Sachin Dev Burman. This song is also set in *taal Tewra* [12]. The song is sung by Nagmoni Krishnakumar and Jayanta Banerjee.

Tomar Holo Shuru, Amar Holo Shara (You Start Where I Finish):

Rabindranath Tagore wrote this song when he was 54 years old. This is a song about the cycle of life, and speaks to the balance that exists in the world. The song is set in *teen taal* [13] and will be presented by Chaitali Chattopadhyay and Sandip Chattopadhyay.

Chukar Mere Man Ko (You Touched My Heart):

This is another popular Hindi film song from the movie *Yaraana*. This is another example of an unforgettable adaptation by music director Rajesh Roshan, who took the tune from Tagore’s “*Tomar Holo Shuru, Amar Holo Shara*” and transformed it by a very rich music around it! This song will be sung by Sandip Chattopadhyay.

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manna_Dey

Shawano Gagone Ghor Ghana Ghata (Dark Clouds Hanging Over Monsoon Skies):

This song is taken from *Bhanu Singha-r kobita* (poems of Bhanu Singha). Tagore wrote these poems under the pen name of “Bhanu⁸ Singha”. It was first published in 1877, when he was only 16 years old, in a magazine named *Bharati*.

“I was a keen student of the series of old Vaishnava poems. Their language, largely mixed with Maithili, I found difficult to understand; but for that very reason I took all the more pains to get at their meaning. My feeling towards them was that same eager curiosity with which I regarded the ungerminated [sic] sprout within the seed, or the undiscovered mystery under the dust covering of the earth. My enthusiasm was kept up with the hope of bringing to light some unknown poetical gems as I went deeper and deeper into the unexplored darkness of this treasure-house” [3]. The song is set in *teen taal*. The solo part is sung by Madhumita Gangopadhyay.

Recitation of “Thou Hast Made Me Endless”:

This is the first poem of *Gitanjali* [1] (“Song Offerings”) that was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1913 for literary excellence.

“Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.

This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new.

At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable.

Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine. Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill.”

The first English translation was done by Tagore himself in 1912. *Gitanjali* has been translated in almost all major languages of the world. This poem is recited by Tulsee Doshi.

Amare Tumi Ashesh Korecho (Thou Hast Made Me Endless):

This is the poem in Bengali, written by Tagore in 1912. The tune is based on raga *Chayanat* [11] and is set in *Jhampak taal* [12] [see Reference section] that was created by Tagore. This song is sung by Mita Kundu.

Aloker Ai Jharna Dharay Dhuiye Dao (Bathe Me in the Shower of Light):

We conclude tonight’s program with a prayer written by Tagore. Loosely translated in English it means: “Get us out of our internal pity, clean up our mental filth, awaken the elixir of life that exist within us, bathe us all in the shower of light”. This song set to raga *Bhairavi* [11] and set in *Dadra* [12, 13].

Let’s all pray together:

“Asato maa sadgamaya,
Tamaso maa jyotirgamaya,
Mrityor maa amritam gamaya,
Om śānti śānti śāntihih”

this means: “Lead us from untruth to truth; lead us from darkness to light; lead us from death, to immortality, Om let there be peace, peace, peace”.

⁸ “Bhanu” and “Rabi” both mean Sun.

A Century Later
Aniruddha Kundu
Member, Tagore's Festival
Organizing Committee

Year 2010 marks the centenary year of the first publication of the Bengali volume of *Gitanjali*. Sir William Rothenstein⁹ was the first Englishman to read Rabindranath Tagore's manuscript of *Gitanjali* and was delighted by the poems. He introduced Tagore to the authors, poets and thinkers of the West and arranged for publication of the book. The first limited edition was published by the India Society of London on 1st November, 1912 and it came out in "pure white and gold covering" [1]. The next publication came from Macmillan & Company in March of 1913. *Gitanjali* was awarded the Nobel Prize on the 13th of November, 1913. The citation on the Nobel Prize medal says: "Because of its profoundly sensitive, fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, part of the literature of the West"¹⁰.

The English anthology of *Gitanjali* and the poems featured in the first Bengali edition of *Gitanjali* are not the same. The Bengali edition had 157 poems and the English compilation has 103. The 103rd English "prose" is a combination of two Bengali poems.

Gitanjali has a different place in the minds and hearts of the western intellectuals that can only be described by two famous quotes: "Rabindranath Tagore has stirred my blood as nothing has for years....I read Rabindranath every day, to read one line of him is to forget all the troubles of the world", wrote W.B. Yeats, another Nobel Laureate, in his introduction to *Gitanjali*, [1]. Paul Nash¹¹ once said "I would read *Gitanjali* as I would read the Bible for comfort and for strength". In his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Tagore said: "I translated those poems into English, without having any desire to publish them, being diffident of my mastery of that language" [3]. Luckily for us, Tagore overcame his hesitation, and his self-translated works were published for the enrichment of generations to come.

I feel so blessed and fortunate that I can read the original poems in Bengali, and even then, I am so diffident in my mastery of realization of his works! Even almost a hundred years after it was first presented to the world, we are still being enriched by his work.

⁹ Sir William Rothenstein, (1872 –1945), was an English painter, draftsman, an official war artist in both World War I and World War II and writer on art. He was knighted in 1931.

¹⁰ http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1913/

¹¹ Paul Nash: Paul Nash (1889 –1946) was an English landscape painter, surrealist and war artist. He is widely considered one of the most important English artists of the first half of the twentieth century.

References:

Rabindranath Created Rhythms (Tals):

Tagore created several *taals* (rhythms) to enrich his musical compositions. A couple of them were used in our presentation tonight. Those were:

1. *Shawsh-tthi taal* used in “*Shawano Gagone Ghor Ghanaghata*” sung by Madhumita Gangopadhyaya. This *taal* has a beat cycle of 6 beats but is played in non-traditional style:

Traditional 6 beats goes as follows (1 *Tali*, 1 *Khali* with division 3/3)...

I	1	2	3		4	5	6	I	1
I	Dha	Dhi	Na		Na	Ti	Na	I	Dha
x					o			x	

Yet, *Shawsh-tthi taal* will follow the same 6 beat rhythm cycle as (2 *Tali*'s with division 2/4)...

I	1	2		3	4	5	6	I	1
I	Dhi	Na		Dhin	Dhin	Dha-Ge	Te-te	I	Dhi
x				2x				x	

2. *Jhampak* used in “*Amare Tumi Ashesh Korecho*” performed by Mita Kundu. This *taal* has an unusual rhythm cycle of 5 beats. The traditional way of playing this *taal* as (2 *Tali*'s with division 3/2):

I	1	2	3		4	5	I	1
I	Dhi	Dhi	Na		Dhi	Na	I	Dhi
x					2		x	

Works by Rabindranath Tagore:

- [1] *Gitanjali*, Visva-Bharati, Santiniketan, 1999.
- [2] Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, May 26, 1921.
- [3] *My Reminiscences*, The Macmillan Company, 1917.
Available online at : <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22217/22217-h/22217-h.htm>
- [4] *Religion of Man*, Monkfish Book Publishing, 2004.
- [5] *The Parrot's Training and Other Stories*, Rupa & Co., 2002.
- [6] *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Sahitya Akademi, 1996.
- [7] *Basonta*, Visva-Bharati, Kolkata, India, 1989.
- [8] *Mayar Khela*, Visva-Bharati, Kolkata, India, 1904
- [9] *Gitabeetaan*, Visva-Bharati, Kolkata, India, 1904.

Other Sources:

- [10] Visva-Bharati University website:
<http://www.visva-bharati.ac.in/Rabindranath/Contents/RabindranathContents.htm?f=../Contents/education.htm>
- [11] *The Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati*, Vol 1-12, Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, Deepayan, Kolkata. 1999.
- [12] *Tablar Byakaran*, Dr. Prashanta Bhattacharya, Howrah, West Bengal. 1996

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◆ Musicians:

- Anushna Prakash, Avi Banerjee, Bhaskar Ganguly, Dhruva Chattopadhyaya, Raj Botika, Rajeeb Hazra, Niloy Mukherjee, Prabhat Agrawal, Suravi Ganguly, Toby Pollack, Utsav Ghosh, Wrik Sinha

◆ Singers:

- Aditi Mukherjee, Anushna Prakash, Chaitali Chattopadhyaya, Debashree Banerjee, Hiya Banerjee, Indrani Sinha, Jayanta Banerjee, Madhumita Gangopadhyay, Mita Kundu, Nagmoni Krishnakumar, Nilabrata Goswami, Nupur Sinha, Prachee Bhatnagar, Rajeeb Hazra, Sandeep Chattopadhyaya, Sneha Sinha, Suchismita Ghosh, Sujoy Sen

We apologize for any omission and all errors in this publication.

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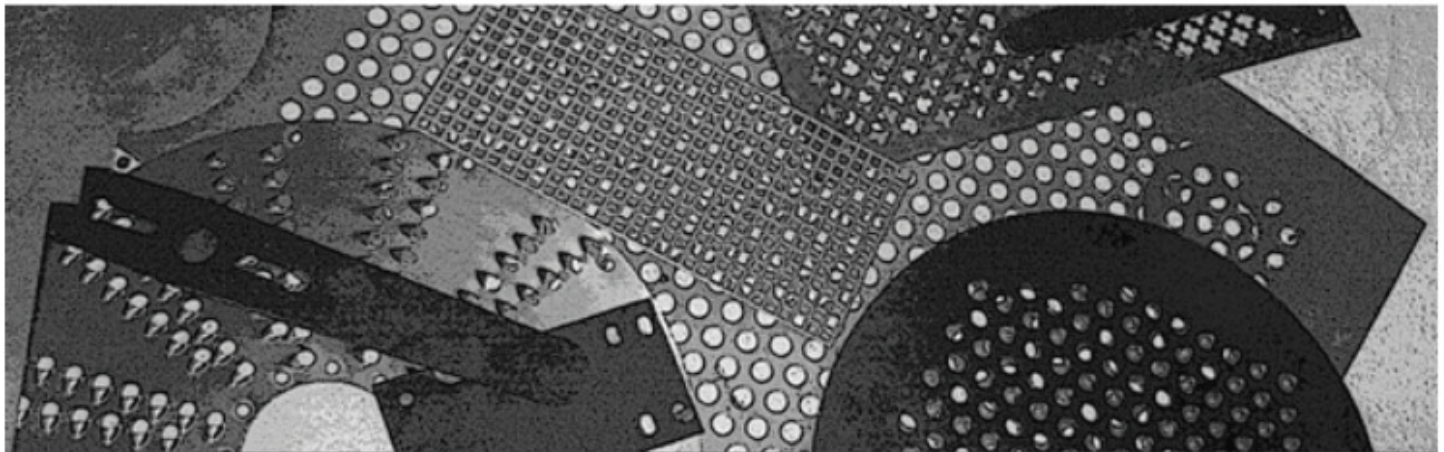
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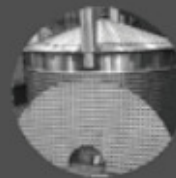
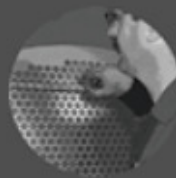
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