

## Ambar Gurung's Musical Odyssey

Abhi Subedi

Ambar Gurung (1938-2016)

This essay is about Ambar Gurung's musical strength and personality and heroic journey of achievements as well as hardships.

His music attracted people of various classes: king, the poor, labours, writers, artists, film makers, politicians. As a great musical artist, he saw power only in his 'karma. He introduced the culture of taking the art seriously. He taught people to respect and love music. Various articles appeared in the Kantipur daily after his demise on 7 June 2016.

The senior poet Madhav Ghimire - Nepali music is promoted to the present height either by Amber Gurung or Natikaji.

Bairagi kanhila - his search and knowledge about what is happening in the world brought him to this position. He became what he was by self-education.

Devendra Bhattarai (journalist and essayist) has made writings and interviews available.

Ambar Gurung became what he was by struggle, dedication and love. He believed that suffering or difficult times have been the share of the artists especially of musicians. He always saw the renowned senior writer Indra Bahdur Rai as his guru figure who inspired him to follow the path to greater success. He received Rai's guidance and companionship in Darjeeling for many years.

Ambar Gurung received support also from Shankar Lamichhane, Uttam Kunwar and Bhupi Sherchan. King Mahendra was influenced by his song Naulakha Tara Udae. This song was written by poet Agam Singh Giri of Darjeeling and set to music and sung by Amabar Gurung. The song represents the feeling of the Nepalis living in India. Amabar Gurung frequently visited Nepal from Darjeeling and finally settled here taking up the responsibility of the music department at the Academy.

Ambar Gurung gave a musical performance at Kirtipur on Abhi Subedi's request. At that time Subedi was a student at TU. His disciples Gopal Yonjan and Peter Karthak, who had come to Nepal for higher studies, stayed in Nepal.

Ambar Gurung introduced a western classical narrative musical form known as cantata. He received over two-dozen awards for his musical achievements. He gave music to Madhav Ghimire's Malati Mangale and Devkota's Muna Madan. He gave music to Rato Ra Chandra Surya written by Gopal Prasad Rimal. He composed music for Sayaun Thoonga Phulka Haami written by Byakul mahila.

There are publications to his credit: samaalera Rakha (1969), Aksharka Awajharu (2003) and Kaha Gaye Ti Dinharu (2006).