|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |
| Rabindranath Tagore :  The Founder |
| **Poet, Writer, Painter, Musician, Educationist, Nobel Laureate.** |
|  |

*"Whatever fate may be in store in the judgment of the future for my poems, my stories and my plays, I know for certain that the Bengali race must needs accept my songs, they must all sing my songs in every Bengali home, in the fields and by the rivers... I feel as if music wells up from within some unconscious depth of my mind, that is why it has certain completeness." \_ Rabindranath*

NOBEL AWARD

Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913 by the Nobel Committee "because of his profoundly sensitive fresh and beautiful verse, by which, with consummate skill, he has made his poetic thought, expressed in his own English words, apart of the literature of the West."

**Tagore's Music**

Music, like all other arts in India, had stereotyped patterns. There was and is the classical tradition, whether of the north of the south, which has behind it centuries of devoted discipline, and which has within its limits, attained near perfection. It is music, pure and abstract, and like all abstract art its appeal is limited to those who have taken pains to understand what may be called its mathematics. For them it can be very beautiful, hauntingly so, in the hands of a master, but ordinarily its appeal is limited. Its counterpart for the popular taste was the traditional religious and folk music, now rivaled by film music. The position was not dissimilar in literature where, before the nineteenth century, there was either the great storehouse of Sanskrit classics or the popular religious lyric and ballad.

What Rabindranath was doing in literature he also tried to do in music. While caring for both the traditions, classical and folk, he respected the inviolable sanctity of neither and freely took from each what suited his purpose. He was not even averse to borrowing from western melodies, although he did very little of that and made his own whatever he took from other sources. If his creative contribution in music has not received the same recognition as his contribution in literature, it is because, in the first place, the classical tradition of music in India, unlike that of literature, is still very alive and vital and there was no vacuum to be filled.

In fact Rabindranath did not attempt creation of new forms in abstract music. What he did was to bring it down from its heights and make it keep pace with the popular idiom of musical expression. In the second place, his own music is so inextricably blended with the poetry of words that it is almost impossible to separate the mood from the words and the words from the tune. Each expresses and reinforces the other. Hence his songs have not the same appeal outside the Bengali- speaking zone as they have in his native Bengal.

In Bengal, however, each change of season, each aspect of his country's rich landscape, every undulation of human heart, in sorrow or in joy has found its voice in some song of his. They are sung in religious gatherings no less than in concert halls. Patriots have mounted the gallows with his song on their lips; and young lovers unable to express the depth of their feelings sing his songs and feel the weight of their dumbness relieved.

**Tagore's Paintings**

 A multi-faceted personality, Rabindranath took to painting seriously in 1928 when he was in his late sixties. It was shortly before this that he was seized with an urge to experiment in what was for him a new medium of creative expression. He had always been drawn to this art and had occasionally cast furtive and longing glances at it, ever since as a young boy he had seen his elder and versatile brother Jyotirindranath draw.

Later, when his nephews Abanindranath and Gaganendranath discovered their talents in painting he encouraged them in their pursuit and helped in founding what came to be known as the Bengal movement in Indian art. But he himself did not take the brush in hand. But though he did not wield a brush, he doodled freely with his pen. His manuscripts bear ample and fascinating testimony to these playful exercises interwoven with his verses.

Most of these exercises were induced by what he has called 'casualties in my manuscripts', deletions and erasures which he hated to leave alone as desultory scratches on his page. They seemed to him like 'widowed gypsies' in frantic search of mates, calling to him piteously to rescue them with the self-same pen and connect these various 'solitary incongruities' into some kind of rhythmic pattern, fanciful or grotesque. Gradually, his pictures won their right of independence from his manuscripts. From now on he painted not to provide rhythmic patterns to the erasures in his writings, but as he liked. He painted fast and with a sure hand, in between the intervals of his literary activity, finishing each picture at one sitting, and has left behind nearly 2500 paintings and drawings, all done in the last fifteen years of his life.

He himself described his paintings as 'my versification in lines' and confessed in a letter that he was '.. .hopelessly entangled in the spell that the lines have cast all around me'. There is no doubt that many of these drawings are marked by a strong feeling for rhythm, but apart from this affinity there is little in common between his poetry and his painting. It would seem that some other self of his, if not deeper, at any rate more hidden, were seeking expression through this new medium. When he painted, it was like someone who was sure of his step without seeing, driven by an urge of which the direction is outside his control. The grotesque, the bizarre, the cruel, the sardonic, all that he scrupulously kept out of his writings peeps out of his drawings.

Nandalal Bose, writing on Rabindranath's pictures, said *"We need to be reeducated in the fundamental values of art and can do it better than he who is creating before our very eyes forms whose vigour baffles our classifications and compels the admiration of the artist. If Rabindranath seems rough and destructive, it is because he is breaking the ground anew for us that our future flowers may be surely assured of their sap."*

**WRITINGS**

|  |
| --- |
|  |

[BENGALI](http://www.visvabharati.ac.in/Bengali.html)|| [POSTHUMOUS PUBLICATIONS](http://www.visvabharati.ac.in/POSTHUMOUS_PUBLICATIONS.html) || [COLLECTED WORK](http://www.visvabharati.ac.in/COLLECTEDWORKS.html)S || [ANTHOLOGIES](http://www.visvabharati.ac.in/ANTHOLOGIES.html)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

[TRANSLATIONS FROM ENGLISH](http://www.visvabharati.ac.in/TRANSLATIONSFROMENGLISH.html) || [ENGLISH](http://www.visvabharati.ac.in/ENGLISH.html)|| [BOOK BASED ON TAGORE STORY](http://www.visvabharati.ac.in/BOOKBASEDONTAGORESTORY.html)