



‘Meghablika’ – A Musical Presentation of the Caesurae Collective

*A Review by Manisha Shrestha**



‘Meghabalika’, a Bengali narrative poem by Joy Goswami has been attempted into a musical transcreation, by the Caesurae young group. The poem, is a play of the overwhelming waves of memory, nostalgia, so intensely made humane and feminine. Thoughts in waves of music weave into poetic inspiration that shimmers like a dream. Indian classical violin and the Spanish guitar, with the vocal, using ragas like Megh, and Desh (all monsoon ragas) are delightful in creating conversations. The musical segments always start with the lower *swaras* and a slower tempo, giving the feel of a nostalgic mood. However, as in the narration, even musically, the poet awakens to the present which is represented with the fastening of the tempo to a constant plane and the addition of a steady rhythm. Every instrument including the voice has been used to its full effectiveness.

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The violin remains the main and the most expressive of all. Every movement made on its strings give the feeling of speech – the highs and the lows, the loudness and the softness, sometimes a request, sometimes a consolation and in the end, even a confirmation. The guitar comes rarely but when it does, it comes as a romantic touch with an admirably indigenous flavour. However, the most fascinating aspect is that of the voice whose singing of the *swaras* is like the falling of tiny droplets of rain – childlike, sweet and playful. I was enraptured by the way rain was depicted – through the voice, the raga, and the exact

tempo.

The use of the tempo is quite entralling. It correctly captures the waves in the mind of the poet. When he is dreamy, the tempo greatly wavers and is mostly slow. When he is aware of what he must do, there is a gradual increase in the tempo till it becomes steady, depicting the mental climate. The narration, too, has been done with great effectiveness wherein every word receives its due respect and is articulated with precision, clarity and, most importantly, expression.

The Caesurae collective has made a commendable effort in musically transcreating the emotive content of the narrative poem. The work decisively, falls into distinct segments of narration and music, for relating to the content of the narrative. It is based on poetic inspiration and musically transcreated, needs a gentle uninterrupted flow because the poet is ceaselessly flowing between the world of memory and the world of immediate awareness. The cloud, the rain, are all suggestive of a ceaseless flow. It is due to this that any hindrance in this flow, be it the stops or the sharp segmentation, or the sudden musical ends to give way to narration or the narration beginning without a silent, musical ‘rest’ awakens the listener from the intended dream-like essence of the work. However, the segmentation was possibly an experimentation, and informative for listeners not aware of the poem, it being in Bengali. The English translation, thus was considered essential.

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While colours are many, every individual is gifted with a different 'eye' and thus sees things from one's own angle. The text is like the sky – it has everything yet different things that are supposed to be viewed differently by different people...

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