

Apart from her spellbinding classics, there are several relatively obscure and lesser-heard numbers by Asha Bhosle that fascinate me. Among them are:

Hoton pe beeti baat aayi hai: This unique ditty of poetic romance laced with the lyricism of mischief from *Angeer* (1982) is one of the unacknowledged gems spawned by the Asha-RD-Gulzar team.

Phir se aaiyo badra bidesi: Another timeless collaboration by the same legendary trio, this vibe-y song from *Namkeen* (1982) conjures mind-numbing visuals of gloom on rain-drenched mornings across misty mountains.

Yeh kya jagah hai dosto: Penned by Shahryar and set to tune by Khayyam, this largely ignored song from *Umrao Jaan* (1981) articulates the gut-wrenching trauma of being uprooted from one's umbilical trappings. As Ashaji plumbs unexplored depths of pain with "Bula raha hai kaun mujhko chilmanon ke uss taraf? / Mere liye bhi kya koi udaas bekaraar hai?" only an unfeeling heart can suppress a spontaneous sigh. (Which are your top 3 Asha Bhosle Hindi film songs?)

Zenith Roy

Mera kuch samaan (Ijaazat):

Ashaji emoted the deep-rooted pain and sense of longing in this song. Its overflowing sense of sorrow and sadness touches the deepest corners of the heart.

Dil cheez kya hai (Umrao Jaan): This song is the essence of that unforgettable movie which so poignantly emotes the life of the protagonist, beautifully enacted by Rekha. Every line of this song expresses sorrow, longing, love and loss in a nuanced manner by which we come to realise and understand the



Rekha in *Dil cheez kya hai* in *Umrao Jaan*

character's harsh reality.

Dum maro dum (Hare Rama Hare Krishna): This iconic song is immortalised by Ashaji's mesmerising voice and her unforgettable style of singing has ensured its enduring popularity.

Mohana Sarker

My top three solo Hindi film songs of Asha Bhosle are *Aao huzoor tumko* from the film *Kismet*, *Dil cheez kya hai* from *Umrao Jaan* and *Mera kuch samaan* from *Ijaazat*.

Indranil Sanyal

While her duets are legendary, it is in her solo excursions that Asha Bhosle has truly revealed the 'chameleon' nature of her genius. Songs like *Chura liya hai tumne jo dil ko* from the film *Yaadon Ki Baaraat* define the sheer class of her legacy. While this song eventually welcomes a male vocal, the opening solo by Ashaji is arguably the most famous 'hook' in the history of Bollywood romance. It is the gold standard of sophisticated pop that feels both innocent and incredibly chic.

Moving away from the cinematic spotlight, she embraces the minimalist beauty of ghazals in *Salona sa sajan hai*, which is technically a solo performance in her collaboration with Ghulam Ali. If this song feels like a whisper of timeless and effortless love, *Dum maro dum* from *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* is a fire of rebellion. This solo performance is a landmark in musical history, representing the moment Indian playback music embraced the global 'cool'. Under the direction of R.D.

Burman, she

infused the track with a rebellious, psychedelic grit that no other singer could touch. It remains a masterclass in how to use vocal texture to define an era, proving she was just as comfortable in the avant-garde as she was in the classical.

Ahana Dutta

My top choice is *In aankhon ki masti*. The song by Asha Bhosle from the film *Umrao Jaan* (1981) is one of the best Hindi film songs ever. *Jawani janeman* from the film *Namak Halaal* (1982) is another hit song of Asha Bhosle. It is still very popular, and was a chartbuster in its time, featuring the gorgeous Parveen Babi. *Yeh mera dil yaar ka deewana*, from the film *Don* (1978), is one of the most iconic cabaret style songs of the 1970s, picturised on Helen.

Mallicka Mukherjee

Aankhon se jo utri hai dil mein from *Phir Wohi Dil Laya Hoon* (1963) is one of the earliest renditions of Ashaji in collaboration with O.P. Nayyar. The song has a cascading effect on romanticism with a rhythmic evolution of the guitar, coupled with small pieces of santoor, especially during: "*Duniya meri badal gayi, banke ghata bikhar gayi.*"

Phir se aaiyo badra bidesi from *Namkeen* (1982) is one of the best collaborations of Ashaji with R. D. Burman, complemented by the soulful lyrics of Gulzar. The picturesque song captures the serenity and calmness of the hills with a thin fog underlying the emotional waves. Romanticism through singularity attained its peak, with Shabana Azmi delivering emotions at her best.

Naina bole naina dil ki ye baate dheemi se from *Aur Ek Prem Kahani* (1996) is one of the most underrated and least popular musical masterpieces composed by the musical genius Ilayaraja and rendered by Ashaji. This song has two versions in the film, one happy and the other sad. Both were rendered with equal emotional elan by Ashaji and portrayed brilliantly by Heera Rajagopalan. The musical composition with the instruments used soft Carnatic raga, and the soulful voice of Ashaji leaves a mesmerising effect even after the song ends.

Prosenjit Sen

My first choice is *Raat akeli hai*, a melodious cabaret-styled number from the film *Jewel Thief* which stood out in its time

and is popular even today. The second is a soulful number, *Dil cheez kya hai*, from *Umrao Jaan*. Asha Bhosle's sensuous singing gave her a new recognition. The third is *Rangela re* from *Rangela*. The vigour and energy with which the then 60-year-old singer sang this number left everyone awestruck. She is that versatile singer who will remain immortal through her innumerable iconic numbers in the coming years.

Kakali Mukherjee

Asha Bhosle's satin-soft voice, cross-cultural vocal dexterity and knack for experimentation establish her as one of the most timeless titans of Indian playback singing. Out of her prolific collection, *Dil cheez kya hai* (1981), *Yeh mera dil yaar ka deewana* (1978) and *Dum maro dum* (1971) rule as my favourites.

Aayman Anwar Ali

Most Asha Bhosle's songs are close to our hearts, but three favourites of mine would be *Dil cheez kya hai* and *In aankhon ki masti* from *Umrao Jaan* and *Sajna hai mujhe sajna ke liye* from *Saudagar*.

Pallabi Chatterjee

Apart from those mentioned in t2, other memorable Asha Bhosle solos include *Radha ke pyare* (*Amar*, 1954), *Aa dil se dil milale* (*Navrang*, 1959), *Jahan mein aisa kaun hai* (*Hum Dono*, 1961) and *Sakhiyaan aaj mujhe neend nahi aati hai* (*Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam*, 1962).

If Asha Bhosle's duets with legends like Mohammad Rafi, Kishore Kumar, Mukesh, Manna Dey, Talat Mahmood, Mahendra Kapoor and others are taken into account, apart from her other solos, the list would be endless.

S Balakrishnan

I choose *Aage bhi jane na tu (Waqt)*, *Aaiye meherban (Howrah Bridge)* and *Piya tu ab to aaja (Caravan)*.

Partha Banerjee

Jhumka gira re (Mera Saaya), 1966): The song was Asha Bhosle's highest charted song that year. It became such a big hit that the name of the city Bareilly has been synonymous with the song.

Mere angna (Naram Garam), 1982): A great playback singer can acquire the personality of any character he/she's singing for. Asha embraces the girl-next-door humility of Swaroop Sampat in this song.

Yeh mera dil (Don), 1978): One of the most iconic cabaret-style songs of the 1970s. The song carries glamour, seduction and suspense all at once. Asha Bhosle's sensuous voice adds irresistible charm. Even decades later, the song remains a dance-floor favourite and a classic representation of 1970s Bollywood glamour and thrill.

Dayita Chakraborty

My top three Asha Bhosle solo Hindi film songs are *Kali ghata chhaye mora (Sujata)*, *Koi shehri babu (Loafers)* and *Aaiye meherban (Howrah Bridge)*.

Sourish Misra



Asha Bhosle