Begum Khurshid Mirza

Begum Khurshid Mirza (Urdu: بیگم خورشید مرزا) (a.k.a. Renuka Devi (Hindi: रेणुका देवी)) (1918–1989) was a Pakistani television actress and film actress before the independence of Pakistan in 1947.

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Early life

Begum Khurshid Mirza was born as Khurshid Jehan to Sheikh Abdullah and Waheed Jahan Begum, the founders of Women's College, where she had her education. Her father was a practising lawyer and philanthropist who was keen to bring education and enlightenment to Muslim women. Khurshid grew up in Aligarh and married in 1934 to a police officer Akbar Mirza.[1]

Film career

Khurshid Mirza's left the cloistered world of Aligarh and pursued film career in Bombay.[2] Mostly associated with Bombay Talkies, she acted in few of their films including Bhakti (1939), Badi Didi (1939), Jeevan Prabhat (1937), Bhabhi (1938) and Naya Sansar (1941), under the screen name Renuka Devi. She moved to Lahore film industry and played leading roles in box-office hits Sahara (1943), Ghulami (1945) and Samrat ChandraGupta (1945). Besides acting, she also used to sing for her films.

She announced her retirement from the Indian film industry in February 1944.[3]
Television career

After the independence of Pakistan in 1947, she migrated to Pakistan. Several years later when Pakistan Television Corporation began its transmission and its drama serials started earning household fame, there was a need for professionals to the young media crew. It was a Haseena Moin's serial, entitled Kiran Kahani, which rediscovered Khurshid. Her performance gained her rave reviews, even though she said in a later interview that it was slightly off-key.[4] The next serial she worked in was Zer Zabar Pesh, also written by Haseena Moin. Her performance was regarded by many as one of the finest acting performances in that role, and this set the tone for the rest of her acting career.

She remained a character actress for Karachi television centre and had a dozen of popular series on her credit, including Parchhain, Uncle Urfi and a special play Massi Sherbate written by Fatima Surayya Bajia. She retired in 1985, with her last performance coming in Ana. She moved to Lahore permanently to be with her daughters and their children.

Literature

Begum Khurshid Mirza penned her autobiography in 1982, which discussed the life of a literary person in British India, journalism education and work in Lucknow, married life, Indian film industry, migration to Pakistan, adjusting to Karachi, and working on television.[5] The autobiography was originally appeared in Pakistani monthly magazine Herald as a nine-part serial, from August 1982 to April 1983, under the title The Uprooted Sappling. Later, the collection was compiled in 2005 as a book under the title A woman of substance: the memoirs of Begum Khurshid Mirza.[6]

Social works

After migration, Khurshid Mirza worked for the All Pakistan Women's Association (APWA) as a volunteer helping destitute women.[7] When her husband was transferred to Quetta, she took charge of an APWA centre for healthcare in a rural area called Ismail Kili. She has also aired programmes on women's issues on radio.

Awards

She was awarded Pride of Performance in 1985.

Dramas

- Kiran Kahani
- Zer Zabar Pesh
- Uncle Urfi 1972
- Parchaiyan
- Rumi
- Dhund
- Choti Choti Baatein
- Shama
- Afshan
- Ana
- Aagahi
- Massi Sherbate
Books

- A Woman of Substance The memoirs of Begum Khurshid Mirza. Edited by Lubna Kazim. Delhi: Zubaan 2005

External links

- A Few Rare Pictures of Renuka Devi: https://www.flickr.com/photos/rashid_ashraf/31821508491/in/dateposted/

References

1. ^ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4f04CGfXLFO
3. ^ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVTAQzeNHbM

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