

Tamarind Society presents
Ustad Iqbal Ahmed Khan
in a tribute to
Hazrat Amir Khusrau Dehlawi
on Friday, October 10th, 2008 at 8:00 PM
at **151 W Centennial Drive, Medford NJ 08055**



Ustad Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Khalifa of the Delhi gharana of classical music, is widely considered by cognoscenti to be India's foremost authority on Amir Khusrau's poetry and music. At this widely anticipated Tamarind event, Ustad Sahib, an acclaimed proponent of classical *gaekhi*, will weave a brilliant tapestry with the ageless threads of Khusrau's masterpieces. Many of the choicest verses from Khusrau's oeuvre will come to life as the Ustad performs the songs and

explains the nuances of the *sufiyana* lyricism and timeless music. He will also show how Khusrau was a proponent of peace and unity of languages, how he had mastered the craft of words and musical composition, and how he had raised a nursery of *ragas* never heard before.

At this tribute, various dimensions of Khusrau's music - from *kbayal* and *tarana* to the delightful improvisations of musical notes as in *Kalbana's ghazals* and *qanwalis* will be celebrated. The Ustad will reconstruct the life of Khusrau through descriptions of the range of his poetry, the power of his music and the depth of his message.

Ustad Iqbal Ahmed Khan is the recipient of numerous awards for his classical expression and He is a regular feature in all the major Music Festivals organized by different prestigious institutions of India and abroad.

He sings a whole range of Classical and Semi Classical music. His style of classical singing and his renderings of *Thumri*, *Dadra*, *Tappa*, *Bhajans* and *Ghazals* have won him great acclaim.

So come celebrate Khusrau's genius with us in an intimate *farshi* setting at the lakeside residence of Shermeen and Nadeem Ahsan in Medford, New Jersey. Weather permitting, arrangements for fireside smoking of cigars and *hookas* will also be made. If you wish, you may bring your own *gao-takyas*.

Tickets: \$50.

Dress: South Asian Semi-Formal.

Complimentary tea and dessert will be served.

To reserve your seats, **please register early** by contacting **Azfar** at azfarkaleem@gmail.com or **609.410.4541** and send in your personal checks made out to "Tamarind Society" to:



Tamarind Society
c/o Azfar Kaleem
121 John James Audubon Way
Marlton NJ 08053

Your tickets will be waiting for you at the event.

Tamarind is a not-for-profit cultural society that promotes and fosters an appreciation of the wonderfully vibrant South Asian performing arts in the Tri-state region of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York, through the enactment of concerts, seminars and exhibitions. More information at www.tamarindlive.com

Ab'ul Hasan Yamīn al-Dīn Khusrau

(1253-1325 CE), better known as Amīr Khusrau Dehlavī, was a musician, scholar and a poet. He remains an iconic figure in the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent. A Sufi mystic and a spiritual disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya of Delhi, Amīr Khusrau was not only a notable poet but also a prolific and pioneering musician.



He wrote poetry primarily in Persian, but also in *Hindavi*. He has been called the "father of qawwali" (the devotional music of the Indian Sufis). He is also credited with enriching sub-continental classical music by introducing Persian and Arabic elements into it, and was the originator of the *khayal* and *tarana* style of music. He has written *Ghazal*, *Masnavi*, *Qata*, *Rubai*, *Do-Beti* and *Tarkibband*.

A musician and a scholar, Amīr Khusrau was as prolific in tender lyrics as in highly involved prose and could easily emulate all styles of poetry which had developed in medieval Persia, from Khāqānī's forceful *qasidas* to Nezāmī's *khamsa*. His contribution to the development of the *ghazal*, hitherto little used in India, is particularly significant.

Amīr Khusrau was born in Patiali near Etah in Uttar Pradesh. His father, Amīr Sayf ud-Dīn Mahmūd, was a Persian officer (Tajik) under Iltutmish from Balkh, in northern Afghanistan. His Indian mother was a daughter of Rawat Arz, the famous war minister of Balban, a king of the Slave dynasty (1246-87) who belonged to the Rajput tribes of Uttar Pradesh.

Khusrau was a prolific classical poet associated with the royal courts of more than seven rulers of the Delhi Sultanate. He is popular in much of North India and Pakistan because of many playful riddles, songs and legends attributed to him. Through his enormous literary output and his legendary folk personality, Khusrau represents one of the first (recorded) Indian personages with a truly multi-cultural or pluralistic identity. Despite the passage of eight centuries, his poetry is still sung today at Sufi shrines throughout Pakistan and India.

Amir Khusrau is credited with fashioning the *tabla* as a split version of the traditional Indian *dhhol*.

Popular lore also credits him with inventing the sitar, the Indian grand lute, but it is more likely that the Amir Khusrau associated with the sitar lived in the 18th century (he is said to be a descendant of the son-in-law of Tansen, the celebrated classical singer in the court of the Mughal Emperor Akbar). Even this latter-day 18th-century namesake, while making significant contributions to the evolution of the sitar, probably did not actually invent it.

Hazrat Amir Khusrau's spiritualism is based on his philosophy of love, rather *Divine love*, which is a quality he shares with all Sufi *devaishes*. The depth of humanism in his poetry springs from that very love.

His spiritualism is exemplified by the following Farsi poem:

*Kafir-e-ishqam musulmani mara darkaar neest
Har rag-e mun taar gashta hajat-e zunnaar neest;
Az sar-e baaleen-e mun bar khez ay naadaan tabeeb
Dard mand-e ishq ra daroo bajuz deedaar neest;*

*Nakhuda dar kashti-e maa gar nabashad goo mubaash
Ma khuda daareem mara nakhuda dar kaar neest;
Khalq migoyad, ki Khusrau butparasti mikunad
Aare-aare mikunam, ba khalq mara kaar neest.*

*I am a pagan (worshiper) of love;
the creed (of Muslims) I do not need;
Every vein of mine has become (taut like a) wire;
the (Hindu) girdle I do not need.*

*Leave from my bedside, you ignorant physician!
The only cure for the patient of love is the sight of his beloved –
Other than this no medicine does he need.*

*If there be no pilot on our ship, let there be none:
We have God in our midst: the pilot we do not need.
The people of the world say that Khusrau worships idols.
So I do, so I do;
the people I do not need,
the world I do not need.*

**But we, it would appear, do indeed need
Khusrau!**