

The Khazana Festival of Ghazals - 2009 dedicated to the Late Madan Mohan

This year's 'Khazana Festival of Ghazals' has been dedicated to the Late Madan Mohan.

The top Ghazal singers of India, over two days, regale Ghazal lovers in Mumbai at an event that is held every year in the month of July at the Oberoi Hotel in Mumbai.

Bhupinder and Mitali Singh, Rajendra Mehta, Talat Aziz, Rita Ganguly, Ahmed and Mohd. Hussain, Penaaz Masani, Anup Jalota and Pankaj Udhas are the top draws at this prestigious event.

This year, the organizers, the Oberoi Group and the Cancer Association, along with the artistes, have dedicated the event to the memory of the Late Madan Mohan. This treasure of Ghazals will unfold on 25th and 26th July

An 11 minute film on Madan Mohan will be screened at the event and each Artiste will sing a Ghazal composed by the Late Madan Mohan as part of their performance

A fitting tribute to the legendary composer on the occasion of his 85th birth anniversary



Tears and cheers

It's that time of the year again, when musical melodies from the Indian classical genre soothe harried Mumbaitees. The annual *ghazal* festival 'Khazana', tirelessly put together by Pankaj Udhas, Talat Aziz, Anup Jalota and a number of other *ghazal* veterans, was announced the other afternoon. While last year's festival was dedicated to the late Begum Akhtar, this year is a tribute to the legendary Madan Mohan.

Veterans in the field like Rita Ganguly (a disciple of Begum Akhtar), Penaaz Masani, Bhupinder and Mitali Singh as well as youngsters like Raavi More and Neha Chimmalgi were present; father-son duo of Ajay and Abhijit Pohankar are also part of

this year's concert in aid of cancer patients. Madan Mohan's son Sanjeev Kohli showed vignettes of his father's life, which brought tears to the artistes' eyes. But then, isn't emotion the foundation of all great music?



Bhupinder Singh can't hold back his tears



Penaaz Masani

IN MEMORY OF MADAN MOHAN

Pankaj Udhas dedicates his festival of ghazals, Khazana, to the music director who was instrumental in making ghazals popular through Bollywood



KEVIN LOBO

The stronghold of ghazals might have been vanquished from the electronic landscape Bollywood has become today. But there are people who want to keep the tradition alive. Pankaj Udhas's efforts after seven years have met with some success with his festival, Khazana.

The two-day festival will feature established singers like Rajendra Mehta, Bhupinder, Rita Ganguly, Anup Jalota, Talat Aziz, Pankaj Udhas among others. "Every year we give two to four upcoming singers a platform among the established singers. This year, the festival will feature ex-Indian wicketkeeper, Kiran More's wife, Raavi More who sings very well and two other new artists," says Pankaj Udhas.

The festival also has a tradition of honouring the memory of a famous personality. This year the legendary music director Madan Mohan is honoured on his 85th birth anniversary. A prolific artist, along with Begum Akhtar, he is responsible for popularising the form through his songs for Bollywood. The best of his music has been sung by Mangeshkar. Pankaj says, "I was too young to have met him, but I have colleagues in the industry who have. I remem-

ber his son had made a short film, about ten minutes long, on his father's life. A lot of people from the industry were present. After the movie, I saw that everyone's eyes were moist. Bhupinder Singh couldn't control himself, he was crying like a small kid. Bhupinder recorded his first ever track for the Hindi film industry with Madan Mohan."

To celebrate the singer's life, each musician will sing at least one track composed by Madan Mohan in his or her interpretation. The most interesting among the performances promises to be Pt Ajay Pohankar who will be accompanied by his son, Abhijeet Pohankar. With a classical background, the senior musician will present ghazals in the style thumris are sung in.

The present state of ghazals in pop-culture is a matter of concern. That's probably the reason why Pankaj's next album will fuse modern sounds with ghazals as its base. "The rise of reality shows has given many talented singers a shorter road to fame. Most people don't want to devote time to exploring the various styles in which ghazals can be sung in. I am not pessimistic about its future though. Maybe, all that Bollywood needs is another Madan Mohan," he smiles.

Catch the concert on July 25 and 26 at Oberoi hotel, Regal room 7 pm onwards. Entry is Rs 2500. Call 22842835 for tickets.

