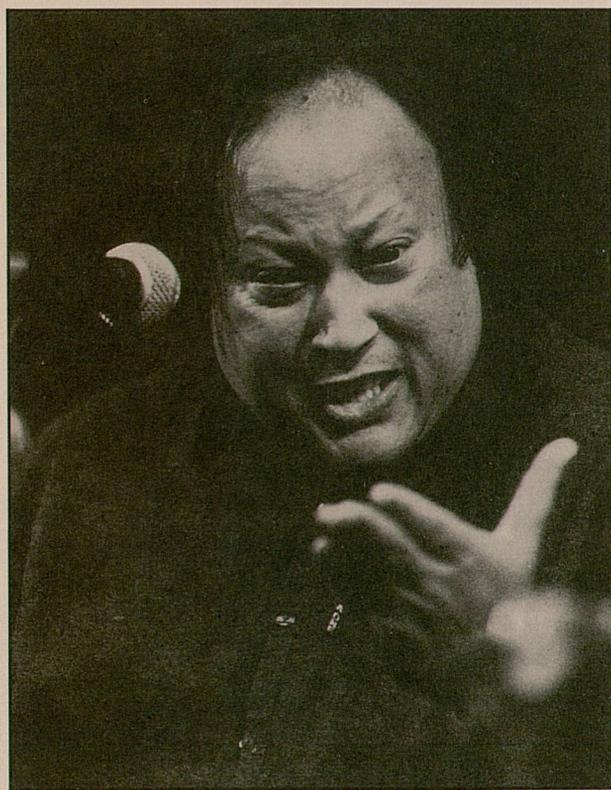


UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

Nusrat Fateh Ali Kahn

Monday Evening, November 29, 1993 at 8:00
Rackham Auditorium, Ann Arbor, Michigan



Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's U.S. tour is made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts Folk Arts Program. This program is also funded in part by a generous grant from the Lila Wallace/Readers Digest Fund to World Music America, World Music Institute's touring program.

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Thanks to Mr. Ali A. Amiri of Persian House of Imports for the fine Persian rugs used in this evening's performance.

PROGRAM NOTES

Qawwali is an art that is transmitted orally. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's songs are drawn from ancient Persian sufi poetry as well as from more recent Punjabi literature. They are sung in Farsi, Urdu and Punjabi. Since songs for a Qawwali performance audience are chosen according to the mood of the artists there is no set program. To give the audience some idea of what to expect we have reprinted translations of some of the songs as they appear in the Occora recording C559072.073.074.

A Qawwali recital generally begins with a *Hamd*, a poem in praise of God.

“O, Living and Eternal God”

The world was created for man,
Man was created for the world.
All praise is a hidden call to God.
In the face of your goodness, oh Lord
How can I recall my sins.

For you are but goodness,
And man but sin.
Oh, you are the One that angels and men adore and revere.
Everything reveals you, you are the One revealed.
Every being has your praise on his lips and calls you.
You are present in all fervor, in all harmony,
 O God, *living and eternal!*

O, kind and merciful God!
 Allah!

O, almighty and rewarding God!
 Allah!

O, God, unique and so forgiving!
 Allah!

O, protecting and hidden God
 Allah!

O, God, master and provider!
You are the creator of all that exists.
You know all secrets.

 O, *living and eternal God!*
You are like to none, how true this is.
 Allah!

You are purity. You are perfection.
 Allah!

You are the title of all that exists.
 Allah!

.....
The essence of You is grandeur and majesty.
You are the solution to all problems.
Your ways are impenetrable.

 O, *living and eternal God!*
Ask for a sign of His merciful care!
O, Lord!
Never ask the world for the way of God!
The words of the world are deceitful and its help misleading.

Ask only Allah for Allah's help!

O, *living and eternal God!*

Covet neither rank nor riches!

You who are worthy of love, ask for love!

Happy in all circumstances,

Ask Allah for Allah's mercifulness!

O, *living and eternal God!*

Fill man's heart with everlasting fervor,

O Lord!

That each breath may be a waft of mercy,

O Lord!

I do not desire a martyr's throne.

To be a slave of Muhammad is enough for me.

O, *living and eternal God!*

O you, the first of all the Prophets,

Allah!

You whose authority reigns over all the worlds

Allah!

You are the instrument, He is the voice,

Allah!

You are the secret, He is the One who listens

Allah!

You are a word, He is the dictionary.

You are the king, He is the throne.

You are necessary, He is indispensable.

O, *living and eternal God!*

I tend to overdo things,

O Lord!

I don't know how to wait,

O Lord!

We are all beggars, we celebrate your grace.

Do not put us to shame, O Lord, on the day of the resurrection!

O Lord!

O *Living and eternal God!*

I am the painting, You are the painter.

Allah!

You are the master and I, a poor, luckless fellow,

Allah!

I am a worshipper, You are the Worshipped One,

Allah!

I lie down before you. You are the One before whom we prostrate ourselves,

Allah!

I am the body and You are the Breath of Life,

The repetition of Your name cures all suffering.

Why should my heart suffer?

O, *living and eternal God!*

What am I, why should I seek reward,

O Lord?

Could I wish for anything that would be against Your will,

O Lord?

Could I wish for anything that would be against Your will,

O Lord!

I have only tears of repentance.

From what mouth could I wish to hear the forgiveness of my failings,

O, *living and eternal God!*

The next song is usually a *Nat-I-Sharif*, in praise of the Prophet Muhammad

“O Mustafa Light of the Right Path”

When one has received a blessing from the Prophet's family
Everything that was going badly begins to go well.
Muhammad's family received the ultimate blessing,
For He who has no partner, became their partner.
Become, each of you. A messenger of Muhammad's love!
Effacing yourselves, live out your lives in love!
If there is a sovereign who reigns over both worlds,
Then come friends, commit yourselves to Muhammad's service!
We behold the splendor of Allah.
We behold the immense beauty of He who comes to our aid.
When you repeat “Allah, bless Muhammad's family!”
Understand that the Arab Messenger is watching you.
Even for He who cannot be described, Your name is great,
For God Himself wanted you.

Thanks to you, Adam's prayer has been heard.
Your light was shining on the first day.

*O Mustafa, light of the Right path,
You are without equal
There is no other morning sun but you,
Nor other black night's moon but you.*

*O Mustafa, light of the Right path.
You are without equal.*

Lord of the black cloak, you are unparalleled.

Ah, other Messengers have passed through the world, but,
You Lord of the black cloak, are without equal.

Who could rival

With your beauty, O king of Medina?

Roses do not bloom quite so.

They do not have this color, this scent, this freshness,

This infinite charm, this new perfection.

These touching graces, this simplicity.

You have never been equalled, You can never be.

I devote myself to You, O Prophet!

Lord of the black cloak, you are without equal.

Each lock of your hair sets the lovers' heart on fire.

How can I describe your beauty? Because of it, the Infidel declares his profession of faith.

He says, Lord of the black cloak, you are without equal.

My eyes have scanned the wide world over but

Lord of the black cloak, you are without equal.

Since time began, at all corners of the earth, we have seen in you an image of Unity.

We have seen beautiful men, superb men, but such as you, there is only you.

Lord of the black cloak, you are without equal.

In the course of time there have been beautiful men like the distinguished Yusuf,

But, they too, could have taken alms from your beauty.

Lord of the black cloak, you are without equal.

O Mustafa, light of the right path,

You are unparalleled.

There is no other morning sun but you.

Nor other black night's moon but you.

The Messengers' seal, you are the first of the good,
You have no equivalent.

Mirror of the beauty of pre-eternity.
Besides you, there is no one.

All the Messengers are revered,
But nowhere in the two worlds
Is there a king of all the peoples
Or a treasure of mankind.
We who have nothing, where are we to go,
Lord, if not to Your door?
There is no refuge for us
Who have no one, O Mustafa.
O Ahmad, light of God,
Where is there someone such as You?
You are the guide of the Prophets,
There has never been anyone like You.
O Mustafa, light of the Right,
You are without equal.

After the first two praise songs, the artist will choose from various mystical texts

"I Don't Know Where I'm Going"

(Poem in Persian by Amir Khusrau, 1254-1325)

Meditating on Him, I have reduced myself to nothing.

I don't know where I am going.

Uniting with Him I have drowned myself.

I don't know where I am going

I have met Him,

I have pledged myself to Him,

I have annihilated myself in Him, totally.

I don't know where I am going.

Ah, His face enslaves me,

I am tied to His hair

I am the dust of His street.

I don't know where I am going.

I am a lost soul repeating the name of Ali.

I become light-headed at the sound of my friend's name.

My heart has fallen for him.

I don't know where I am going

The dust of his foot-steps is fragrance to my heart.

A devoted suitor is approaching on horseback.

I was told tonight

That you were coming, my Love:

I lay down my head in sacrifice on the path

Which you will ride, my cavalier.

Without hesitation, I have laid the Jewel of my life as a carpet for your arrival.

I lay down my head in sacrifice on the path

Which you will ride, my cavalier!

Living only with your memory

Has brought me to the point of death.

Of what use will your coming be,

Once I am dead?

The power of love is so strong

That its privileges cannot be taken away.

If you don't come to the funeral,
You will come to the grave!
In only coming once you stole
The heart, religion and patience of Khusrau.
Whatever will happen if you come in this way
Two or three times more?
I was told tonight
That you were coming, my Love!

The following is a *Kafi*, a Sufi poem usually sung in local dialect (Punjabi, Sindhi, etc.)

"I Fell In Love With A Heartless Man, And Was Forced To Weep In Secret"

When we meet the Friend, Protector of our honor
It is a great thing to become friends with Him.
He who, once a close friend says:
"I've had enough!", is a heathen
If you sacrifice yourself, you meet the Friend.

.....
"Sacrifice yourself and do not demand fidelity",
So says Pir Farid.

My Friend had promised to come quickly.
But he forgot the dates.
He did so much to build up my Love,
And now he makes me wait!
My girl-friends make fun of me,
My companions speak ill of me.
So many monsoons have come and gone,
And I am still waiting for my Friend.

*I fell in love with a heartless man,
And was forced to weep in secret.*

My beloved had promised me to come,
He has not, nor has he sent me word.
My life has been crushed by such great affliction!
Both death and sleep have forsaken me.

*I fell in love with a heartless man.
All happiness, peace and sleep left me.
And I was forced to weep in secret.*

Having broken the ties, he departed.
O my friend, how uncaring you are!

*Happiness, peace and sleep deserted me.
And I was forced to weep in secret.*

He looked into my eyes, then broke my heart,
he left, the darling of my heart,
Hurting me so very deeply.

Without my friend, now all is barren.
He looked into my eyes, then broke my heart,
he left, the darling of my heart,
Hurting me so very deeply.

Without my friend, now all is barren.
He looked into my eyes, then broke my heart.
I no longer wish to live.

*The lord took down the separation in my register,
And I was forced to weep in secret.*

Garbarck have contributed further to the influence that qawwali is having on other musical and extra-musical genres.

It is rare, however, that these secular forms of the music achieve the power of qawwali in its traditional format. Even if one does not know the language being sung it is difficult not to be moved by this expression of devotion especially if one is in the presence of initiates who are fully conversant with the texts.

These texts are taken mostly from the great Medieval Persian mystical poet such as Amir Khusrau, Hafiz Nizam ud Din Auliya and from local poets such as Bulleh Shah (Punjab—18th Century). Rarely is a complete poem recited — rather the singer will join segments from different poems or add lines from another text to emphasize a point or change the meaning. As has been mentioned, many of these poems are allegorical and charged with symbolism. The often used term “Beloved” refers to divine love (for God or his Prophet). Terms such as “face” and “tresses” signify the spiritual qualities of the master, building a “house” signifies the pursuit of material well-being. Much use is made of such terms as “wine” and “tavern”. “Wine” is the knowledge and love of God which intoxicates the initiate. The “tavern” refers to the spiritual master or Sheikh, whose heart is said to be the repository of God’s love. Qawwali is essentially a folk art. While Hindi film music and Western pop have both had an enormous impact in South Asia, qawwali remains immensely popular in Pakistan. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan’s contributions to its continued popularity is considerable. Perhaps more than any other artist he has united the great classical tradition of the Subcontinent with simple folk songs appealing to a wide cross section of people.

by Robert H. Brouning is the Artistic and Executive Director at World Music Institute

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is from a family of distinguished musicians. His grandfather, Maula Bakhsh, had four sons, two of whom, Fateh Ali (Nusrat’s father) and Mubarek Ali Khan, became famous Qawwali singers. Nusrat was born in Faisalabad in 1948. He began to study classical music with his father and later became a master of the family Qawwali ensemble. His recent meteoric rise to fame in Pakistan and Europe as a qawwali singer is unprecedented. While he is less well known as a classical singer, he is acknowledged for his great knowledge of classical ragas and his extraordinary ability to sing fast *tans*. While he is open to experimentation, he is always guided by his early training in classical music. He has recorded more than 60 albums on a range of labels and has collaborated with European pop and jazz artists such as Peter Gabriel and Jan Garbarek. His music was used in the soundtrack of the film *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Besides concert appearances throughout Europe, Asia and North America he has been involved in various educational projects. In 1992/93 he was Artist in Residence in the Music Department at the University of Washington, Seattle.

NUSRAT FATEH ALI KHAN

A Conversation with Jacques Dupont

“. . . I am a Moslem and I am a Sufi.

“A Moslem is someone who is well acquainted with the law revealed by the Quran, but a Sufi is a Moslem who totally respects all the commandments of Islam. The Sufis are they who best respect the revealed law and stand out from others by their intense inner devotion. What matters for the Sufis is their love for the Prophet Muhammad, the beloved of God. In India Sufis have converted millions of people to Islam and this, thanks to music. So those in the West who believe that Islam is averse to music are mistaken. Singing or reading the Quran, is a way of making people more aware of its content. Through music the Sufis were able to admire the splendors of the Quran.”

I regret having loved him.
My beloved is unfaithful,
And I had to weep in secret.
No lover's sorrow is trivial,
Separation always eats away to the very core.
I have gone mad,
And I have had to weep in secret.
I fell in love with a heartless man
And had to weep in secret.

Translated by Jeffrey Grice

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Americans were first introduced to the ecstatic singing of South Asia known as qawwali in 1975 when The Asia Society organized the first tour of the United States by the famed Sabri Brothers of Pakistan. A subsequent tour in 1978 culminating in a sold out Carnegie Hall concert was greeted with wild enthusiasm by devotees and initiates alike. However, while the Sabri Brothers and other qawwali ensembles have visited these shores from time to time since then, they have performed mostly for Pakistani and Indian communities and have gone largely unnoticed by the American audience at large. It was not until Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan was invited to perform at Brooklyn Academy of Music's Next Wave Festival in 1989 that Americans were reintroduced to the art of qawwali. Nusrat was then invited to teach at the University of Washington in 1992.

Qawwali means literally "utterance" in Urdu. The word stems from the Arabic *qua'ol* meaning an axiom or dictum relating to religious subjects and history, the recitation of which helps to purify both thought and deed. Associated particularly with the Sufi Chisti Order it has its origins in the Medieval mystical practice of *sama'* (Arabic-listening, audition). *Sama'*, like *zikr*, the Sufi ceremony of remembrance, in which the name of God is repetitively invoked, is an essential vehicle for revelation and union with the divine. Both *sama'* and *zikr* may also be seen as instrumental in advancing the great classical music traditions of the Muslim world – the Turko-Arabic *maqam* and Persian *dastgah* which, in turn, influenced the North Indian *raga* tradition. Thus, while music as a secular pursuit has for the most part been condemned by orthodox Islam, for Sufis of most orders it has traditionally been a fundamental prerequisite.

By the end of the eleventh century *sama'* was a spiritual concert which included sung poetry by soloist or chorus with instrumental interludes. The concert took place under the direction of a sheikh or *pir* (religious leader). The faithful participated by listening in a state of inner contemplation which might lead to a state of trance. The main argument amongst Sufis has centered around the use of music to achieve a state of ecstasy, while some see music and recitation as a means to get closer to God, others see musical trance as an end in itself, implying that the state of ecstasy is a manifestation of the Divine.

Qawwali seems to have originated with the foundation of the Chisti order of Sufis in Khurasan (Eastern Persia) in the 10th Century A.D. The great Persian Sufi poet and composer Hazrat Amir Khusrau is credited with having introduced Persian and Arab musical instruments to India along with Persian musical theory.

The art of qawwali, as with most of the great Asian musical and literary traditions is transmitted orally. While the Bible is the product of a literate tradition the Quran is the last great revelation from a purely oral culture, and is best apprehended through aural criteria. Likewise the mystical verse associated with qawwali or *sama'* is best appreciated and understood by listening. The vehicle of music is used to bring one closer to the experience of the inner truth. The qawwal will dwell on certain words to give them a wider context creating great depth in the apparently simple language of certain Sufi texts. He will often repeat a phrase or sentence incidating both the obvious and hidden content by emphasizing or ruminating upon particular words and syllables taking the audience into the discovery of hitherto obscure meanings. Thus mundane objects are imbued with deeper meaning – a spinning wheel becomes the wheel of life. Such play with language is utilized by the qawwal to induce the state known as *ma'rifat* an inner truth akin to the zen concept of *sunyata* – the formless “void” that is the fountain-head of all possibilities. Repeating a sentence or phrase until all meaning is exhausted and it becomes meaningless, is another technique for bringing the audience closer to *ma'rifat*. Through this technique, as with the Buddhist repetition of a mantra, semantic reality is negated and a new truth emerges that transcends linguistic barriers.

One of the objectives of a qawwali is to induce trance in a group of listeners in a communal ritualized setting. Qawwali transports the audience to another plane of consciousness bringing the elusive *ma'rifat* to the common person. Regular participants in qawwali sessions often use the concept of travel or flight to describe their experience. This is a phenomenon well known to shamans and practitioners of religious ceremonies involving trance-like states throughout the world. Flight is also the imagery used by Sufis in their endeavor to achieve divine union. One of Nusrat's favorite verses attributed to Amir Khusrau proclaims: “it is the courage of each, it is the power of flight, some fly and remain in the garden, some go beyond the stars.” The external manifestation of this transportation is known as *hal* (literally “state of mind”) a term that is often used to denote musically induced ecstasy. This ecstasy can range from rhythmic moving of the head or swaying of the body to violent convulsions. As, when a member of the congregation at a gospel revival meeting is “possessed by the Holy Spirit,” friends will shield him from harm until he is eased back into a state of “normalcy.” The musically induced state of ecstasy is closely watched by the qawwal who will find the combination of music and content responsible for the state repeating it with increasing intensity until a climax is reached, often creating enough resonance to pull in other members of the audience. The great masters of qawwal are able to move entire audiences to a *hal* even if they do not understand a single word of the language.

Westerners not conversant with mystical poetry may be confused by the seeming erotic or romantic nature of qawwali songs. Essentially, as A. W. Sadler has pointed out, the lyrics of the qawwali are in the style of the biblical song of songs. When a qawwal sings of the love of man for woman and woman for man he is celebrating divine love through allegory. The reference is to the selfless love of God for humankind and humankind for God. Yet the profane world is never denied – for what is human is divine and what is divine is human. To the puritan the notion of the sacred and profane being two sides of the same coin is unacceptable to those who participate in gospel services or in the various Afro-Caribbean syncretic religious ceremonies, however, it is perfectly normal. The analogy of qawwal to African-American gospel is valid in more ways than one, for out of both idioms a secular form has evolved.

American soul music grew out of the music of the African-American church, in recent years qawwali-style music, albeit with different (contemporary) lyrics may be heard in movies as disco or as background music for television, theater and radio throughout the Indian subcontinent. Nusrat's own experiments with Western artists such as Peter Gabriel and Jan

Sufism was introduced into India by the great Chishti saints such as Hazr Muin ud Din Chishti in the 12th century, and then by his disciples Hazrat Baba Farid ud Din, Hazrat Nizam un Din Auliya and others who came from Iran. Baba Farid ud Din was one of the greatest Sufi masters of the 13th century, an ascetic, it is said that having fasted for twelve years he put stones in his mouth to fight against hunger and that God, moved by his devotion, changed them into sugar. This is why he is sometimes called "Ganj Shakar, Heap of Sugar."

"My father, Ustad Fateh Ali Khan, who passed away in 1964, belongs to this lineage. He was a very great singer. I learned everything from him, his music is in my heart. I listened a lot to his recordings and compared to him, I am a very ordinary musician. My father was so involved in his music that, after having sung, he could be in tears for several days without speaking to anyone, lost in himself. My only contribution has been to adapt what I learned from him to the conditions in which I sing today."

"For example, in the past, singing was accompanied on the sarangi because people had all the time in the world. So, after having sung a text in a certain raga, you took time out to retune the sarangi. But today the public is no longer prepared to wait a half-hour between two qawwalis, so we have replaced the sarangi by the harmonium which is better suited to today's listening conditions. In any case, the harmonium has long been used in the important Sufi centers like Ajmer in India or Pak Patan in Pakistan, so in those places it is very closely linked to the poems sung."

"When we sing in Pakistan the public is very varied, with diverse motivations. Some come for the music, some to hear the message, and others to find a solution to their problems. Those able to understand the message and its depth will react to the message and to the music, but for those others the exact effect sought by the master's words will be created by the music alone. A recited text will not have the same effect as the same text sung. Depending on the audience and the message I wish to convey, I choose a raga, a particular melody, and the musical backing will give the text all its majesty. If the poem is not sung it remains in the book and cannot get out. It can only really reach people if it is sung. People may consider me an artist. Art is, in fact, something very important, but for me it is simply a means of conveying the message I have inherited from my great ancestors. When I give a concert, it's as if the public were not there for me. As soon as I begin to sing I am immersed in my music and nothing else exists."

"I do not sing to become famous. Thank God, I lack nothing. But if I sing it's because I have learned this from my great ancestors. Thanks to them, I can impart the message that they themselves imparted and be of service to you in making you aware of this message. But what counts for me is my total immersion in my art."

Paris, March 21, 1988

