

Sama: A Mystical Evening of Sufi Music

17th December, 2011

7:00 pm onwards

**At Y.B. Chavan Auditorium, Nariman Point
Mumbai**

Project Report

Prepared by



**Sufi Kathak Foundation
J-237, Basement, Saket,
New Delhi- 110017**

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पारदिस
PRESENTS

Sama

A MYSTICAL EVENING OF SUFI MUSIC



THE QAWWALI PROJECT

The Qawwali Project is a initiative developed by the Sufi Kathak Foundation to preserve the 700 year old tradition of Sufi and Qawwali Music that spreads across the Indian Subcontinent, as a unifying spiritual force connecting man to the almighty.

It seeks to bridge the gap between tradition on one hand, and the evolving society on the other, by documenting the music and self narrated stories of the Qawwals in their lived reality.

CONCEIVED AND CONCEPTUALIZED BY
MANJARI CHATURVEDI
(Founder of Sufi Kathak)

Featuring: QAWWALS FROM AWADH
Janab Nurul Hassan and group from the Dargah of Hazrat Deva
Sharif, Awadh

Saturday 17th December, 2011. 7:00 PM
at Y.B. Chavan Auditorium, Gen. J. Bhosale Marg,
Opp. Mantralaya, Nariman Point, Mumbai- 21

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An initiative by
 SUFI KATHAK
FOUNDATION

A registered society
All donations are exempt from tax under section 80g

Sama: A Mystical Evening of Sufi Music

About the Festival:

Conceptualized by Manjari Chaturvedi, Sufi Kathak Foundation presents “Sama: A Mystical Evening of Sufi Music”, an evening of Qawwali featuring Qawwal Group from Awadh, Uttar Pradesh led by Janaab Nurul Hassan, **representing the unique syncretic traditions of the Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb of Awadh, singing in praise of Hazrat Ali as well as Lord Krishna** with their voices reaching out to the Almighty. Sufi Kathak Foundation presents this annual concert for the first time in Mumbai.

Introduction to Manjari Chaturvedi:

MANJARI CHATURVEDI is a leading exponent of the Indian classical dance **and is acclaimed for being the creator and ONLY performing artist of Sufi Kathak. She has combined the mysticism of Sufi traditions with classical Indian dance to create a stunning new school of performance called Sufi Kathak,** thus, setting a historical step in the field of performing arts through the creation of a completely new art form which remains original and yet follows the precedents of mystical traditions. In the last decade, **Manjari has performed in more than 250 concerts all over the world in more than 20 countries** including Europe (France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, U.K. & Ireland), the Middle East (Dubai, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Kuwait), South East Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Sri Lanka) and Central Asia (Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan) along with Australia and America.

Sufi Kathak Foundation:

The Sufi Kathak Foundation is a non-profit registered society (exempt from tax under sec 80g) founded by Manjari Chaturvedi, to create awareness about Sufi Kathak and other related ancient performing art traditions. Registered under the Indian Societies Act (XXI) of 1860 (Regd. 61883), the foundation has been into existence since April 2008. The aim of Sufi Kathak Foundation is to promote and preserve spiritual dance and music and a world of cultural unity, by initiating children and orienting the youth to become self-employed through arts - dance and music, and thereby, evolve a humanist outlook. The main objective of the foundation is to create centers for spiritual dance and music, folk & classical dance and organize training classes, workshops and musical concerts to promote ‘Sufi Kathak’ and *Qawwali* music in India as well as across the world.

Ms. Manjari Chaturvedi and Sufi Kathak Foundation have been constantly involved in preserving the original identity and content of *Qawwali* Music through several initiatives developed by Sufi Kathak foundation to preserve and at the same time revive the traditional dying arts and this has become one of the main objectives of Sufi Kathak Foundation. The foundation strives to promote and preserve *Qawwali* as form of traditional music and dance form, to provide a sense of culture and belongingness to the future generations of India and most importantly to provide employment and income opportunities to the Qawwali singers.

Apart from the above, it works towards providing assistance and support to needy artists, in order to enable them to pursue their craft, by providing scholarships to

students pursuing classical music and dance and also providing pensions and medical insurance to retired needy artists. It is with the same idea, that festivals and concerts are organized by Sufi Kathak Foundation, to provide these traditional musicians with sources of livelihood apart from their usual performances at the local Sufi Shrines. These festivals and concerts also help bring these marginal artists to the forefront and interact with others who are interested in the traditional arts.

“Through the Sufi Kathak Foundation I am committed to spread this message of communal harmony through music and dance to preserve art & culture of *Qawwali* for future generations.”- Manjari Chaturvedi, founder and president of Sufi Kathak Foundation

For the past fourteen years, Ms. Manjari Chaturvedi has contributed single- handedly, to bring *Qawwali* music and dance to the forefront as a classical art form. This 700 year old, oral tradition of *Qawwali* music has been on a decline due to its intangible nature. Often ignored as a strong symbol on Indian culture and arts, special efforts need to be directed towards the promotion of *Qawwali* music and dance



Sama: A Mystical Evening of Sufi Music

Artists

Janaab Nurul Hassan and Group from Awadh

Time Duration

2 hours (Short Documentary film followed by performance of the Qawwal Group)

Documentary Film

The Qawwali Project, Directed by Mr. Amit Mehra

Attendance

Over 300 guests attended, with invites only

Lighting of the Lamp

Ms. Manjari Chaturvedi, President, Sufi Kathak Foundation

&

Mr. Amit Mehra, Treasurer, Sufi Kathak Foundation,
Also Director, The Qawwali Project

Compere for the evening

Ms. Pooja Sharma

Sama: A Mystical Evening of Sufi Music is a part of one of the initiatives called “The Qawwali Project” undertaken by Sufi Kathak Foundation to preserve the 700 year old tradition of Qawwali music. The evening began with the lighting of the Shama, paying homage to those Sufi Saints, who have long left the vicinity of this world, but left behind their pure spirit of peace, love and knowledge, through their centuries old compositions of Sufi Music.

Ms. Manjari Chaturvedi, founder and president of Sufi Kathak Foundation and Mr. Amit Mehra, Treasurer, Sufi Kathak Foundation lit the Shama, and as a symbol of their tribute to the Almighty. Ms. Pooja Sharma, the compere for the evening introduced Mr. Amit Mehra, a vital member of the organization and also the Director, for the film, showcased at the festival titled, “The Qawwals.”

The Qawwali Project:

“The Qawwali Project” is an initiative developed by the Sufi Kathak Foundation to preserve Sufi and Qawwali Music that spreads across the Indian Subcontinent, as a unifying spiritual force connecting man to the almighty. It seeks to bridge the gap between tradition on one hand, and the evolving society on the other, by documenting the music and the self narrated stories of the Qawwals in their lived reality. It focused on the lives of traditionally Qawwali Musicians, who have been preserving, performing and carrying forward this seven hundred year old traditional art form of Sufi music, through the familial heritage and lineage.

However, through the years the value and significance of these smaller artists have declined, leaving them with hardly any income. Very often, they have to cater to the demands of mass and popular culture. The Qawwals face a threat of survival, as the practice of traditional Qawwali is not sustaining enough, compelling these talented musicians to opt for other vocations, such as carpenters, auto rickshaw drivers, peons etc. This has impacted the survival of this traditional art form, leaving no or few successors behind for the further practice and continuity of Qawwali music. Through



this project we hope to provide the musicians and the people associated with this art form suitable opportunities and support to ensure the continuation of Qawwali in future.

The film raises these issues mentioned above in the voices of those, who face these troubles along with live performances, recorded in their rickety old houses, whose walls speak more than they represent. This film has been

made as a part of the initiatives of Sufi Kathak Foundation and will be showcased for more such events in New Delhi and other events.

The Music

Qawwali is one of the most well known forms of Sufi music, common to both India and Pakistan. Popularized by the Chisti school of Sufism, it was traditionally performed at the *Dargah* Shrines. Qawwali can be understood as a medium through which the Sufi tradition of *mehfil-e-sama*, or "assembly for listening," is expressed, where believers create a link to religious ecstasy and to God for the performer and listener alike. *Samas* are spiritual concerts which have been into existence since the beginning of times, before Islam took its shape.

The evening of the festival was carried forward by performances by the Qawwal groups from the Dargah of Awadh in Uttar Pradesh. The listeners were left possessed by the purity of the music and the lyrics of the Sufis. The devotion to the Divine lies in the simplicity of the words used in the Sufi Poetry. The 700 year old Sufi Tradition is revived and relived through the age old compositions in the divine praise of the Lord, sung in the soulful tunes of the Qawwali singers. The auditorium was enchanted with the powerful vocal melodies of the singers and this was further enhanced by the rhythmic clapping received from the audience in every number performed. The listeners relived the Sufi mystics' vision through the music that charmed them. The unique feature of the event was the Qawwali written and composed by Muslim Poets spoke of the lives of not only known Sufi saints, but also of the Hindu god Lord Krishna. This represents the unity in diversity of Indian culture and traditions which is inherent in Qawwali.

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Audience Responses

Dear Manjari,

*The concert was beautiful and powerful.
This was my first qawwali concert, and I learned
tremendously about the art form.*

Thank you for sharing this with the audience.

*Please do keep us informed of more events, such as
this one.*

*Wishing you and the performers all the best,
Darshini*

*To,
SUFI KATHAK FOUNDATION*

*Wonderful program yesterday at Chavan,
Mumbai! THANKS.*

*Do put me on your mailing list and email
invitations to forthcoming programs and
activities.*

*Regards,
Shyam Idnani*

Below: A still from the documentary film "The Qawwali Project"



The Sponsors

This festival has been possible without the kind contribution and support of our sponsors. Our sponsors are the backbone of any event organized by the Sufi Kathak Foundation. Their contribution goes directly to the artists involved, and provides them with a platform to showcase their talent and provide suitable income generating avenues. Our sponsors by contributing to Sufi Kathak Foundation, not only contribute to the organization of the festival, but also towards the preservation of centuries old traditional arts and culture, that we at Sufi Kathak Foundation, strive to preserve in their original form and ensure its continuity for the future generations of this country and the world.

Our sponsors for our current festival include:



Power Grid Corporation of India Limited

Event organized and managed by:



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