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### Songs of glitter, voice of the heart

JITENDRA PRATAP

The Ghazal Festival in New Delhi had some high moments, some low ones.



**WITH FLYING COLOURS Radhika Chopra**

The two-day ghazal festival presented by the Delhi Government's Sahitya Kala Parishad at the Shri Ram Centre witnessed a record turnover of ghazal

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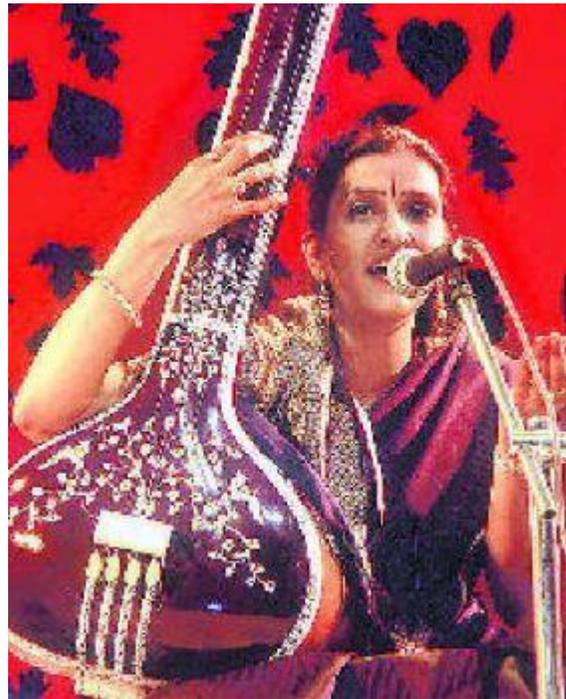
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lovers with every available place in the auditorium, including the galleries and the aisles, fully occupied by the audience, many of them standing. Interestingly, all the three female participants, Peenaz Masani from Mumbai, Radhika Chopra and Pooja Goswami (both from Delhi) are the grand disciples of the late legendary Ghazal Queen, Begum Akhtar. However, the ones to come out with flying colours were the two young female ghazal artistes from Delhi - Radhika Chopra and Pooja Goswami.

Radhika Chopra gave a befitting curtain raiser to the festival. Commencing with Jigar Moradabadi's "Dil gayaa rounake hayaat aayee, gam gayaa saari tainaat aayee". She went on to render Mirza Ghalib's "Koyee ummidvar nazar nahin aatee", Qatil Sifai's "Door tak chhayee thi badal, aur kahin saayaa na thaa", Faz Ahmed Zaiz's "Dono jehan teri mohabbat mein haar ke, wo jaa rahaa hai koyee shabe gam guzaar ke" and Momin's "Asar usko zara nahin hotaa, ranz raahat sazaa nahin hota", besides an evocatively rendered couplet in Bhairavi. Most of her renderings came with tunefulness and feeling. However, she did seem to be at her best with the ghazals of Jigar, Ghalib and Faiz.



**Pooja Goswami.**

#### Fatigued voice

The noted female ghazal singer from Mumbai, Peenaz Masani however failed to come up to her usual form this time, particularly with her voice indicating signs of fatigue and at times even somewhat shaky. Of about half-a-dozen ghazals sung by her, the ones to impress most were Sayeed Rahi's "Dil jalaane ki baat kaise ho", Dagh's "Kahaan the raat ko humse zaraa nigaahen milen" and Navarang's "Jaane kaun apne aapse sharma rahen hai log, is zindagi se aaj kyun ghabraa rahen hai log".

The concluding evening commenced with yet another Delhi-based female artiste, Pooja Goswami's mellifluous renderings. Incidentally, Pooja has been a two-time Sahitya Kala Parishad scholarship holder, respectively, in Hindustani classical vocal music and in light classical music. She has a melodious voice with a wide vocal range and renders ghazals with intense tunefulness and total involvement with the poetic contents as well. Of the several ghazals presented by her, the ones to impress most were Sudarshan Fakir's "Ahale ulfat ke hawalon pe hansee aatee hai, Laila Majnu ke misaalon pe hansee aatee hai", Adi Laknavi's "Socha naa samjha, naa seekhaa naa jaanaa" and Zauq's "Ab to ghabara ke yeh kahete hain ke mar jaayenge, mar gaye par pata naa lagaa ki kidhar jaayenge". The young Pooja was certainly the star performer at this festival.

### Overdose of glitter

One very much wished this ghazal festival had concluded on a sombre and a reposeful note instead of an overdose of glitter and showmanship by the singing duo of brothers Ahmed and Mahmud Hussain along with a plethora of instrumentalists. The performance of this group had the semblance of khayal, tappa, with scores of taans, sargams and gamaks, besides an overdose of too frequent and over-prolonged solo interludes by the sitar, violin, guitar and tabla players, all of which seemed quite uncalled for in a ghazal recital. And what irked further were the scores of qawwali type renderings that did not go well with the sentiments contained in the lyrics. Coming after the soothing and highly melodic renderings by Pooja Goswami, the performance by the Hussain Brothers and their team of instrumentalists was nothing short of an anti-climax to the ghazal festival, which is indeed a pity.

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