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Islamabad

**Jashn-e-Qawwali with Imran Aziz Mian**

ISLAMABAD: As the final event of its 20th anniversary celebrations, Islamabad Serena Hotel hosted a Jashn-i-Qawwali with the legendary Qawwal Imran Aziz Mian. The beautifully organised musical event began with Sufi melodies and ended with a lavish sehri.

Imran Aziz Mian said: “The word Qawwali derives from the Arabic word qaul which means to speak, to deliver, to give a message. Before it was called Qawwali, the name for such a gathering was a Mehfil-i-Samaa. Samaa, which is listening as a spiritual practice, has a much longer history, while this version of the Samaa, that is Qawwali, originates with Hazrat Amir Khusrau. I thank you all and the Serena Hotel which is celebrating its 20th anniversary. I’ll begin tonight’s recitation with Qawl.”

Speaking of his late father, the extraordinary Qawwal Aziz Mian, he said: “The title of Shehanshah-i-Qawwali was given to him by the Shah of Iran.”

Imran Aziz Mian performed many of the traditional favourites including Man Kunto Maula, Nabi Nabi Ya Nabi Nabi, Tajdar-i-Haram, Bhar Do Jholi Meri Ya Muhammad, and Jhoolay Jhoolay Laal Dam Mast Qalandar.

He also recited some of his father’s work, such as Mein Sharabi, Haye Kambakht Tu Ne Pi Hi Nahin and Teri Soorat. He also demonstrated his command over Persian by performing the Farsi Qasida Dam Hama Dam Ali Ali.

Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels, said: “We must promote our culture otherwise our young generation will never become familiar with our immensely rich heritage. Moreover, without encouragement, through platforms and by audience, this talent will not flourish.”

He said: “Like the performers and artists, the audience also matters.”

The event was attended by members of the diplomatic community, the corporate and development sectors, and people from various walks of life.

Imran Aziz Mian’s powerful voice enthralled the audience with the intensely moving devotional music, much in the style of his late father. Interestingly, the Qawwali party included two stringed instruments in addition to the more typical harmonium, lending a modern note to the age old refrains, of “Nigah-e-shauk ki hai inteha Madine mein, Gham-e-hayat na khauf-e-kazaa Madine mein, Namaz-e-ishq karenge ada Madine mein.”

The grandeur of the Sheesh Mahal, delicate foliage and suspended candle-like lights on the stage, traditional floor cushions and sheets for seating, combined to create an ambiance well-suited to both the Holy month of Ramazan and the devotional music of Qawwali.

Following the performance, an elaborate buffet of traditional and continental food was served with live stations for eggs, assorted breads and beverages, parathas, aaloo bhujia, chicken handi and halwa puri with other continental dishes.