

I want to compose music for Hindi films: Ustad Amjad Ali Khan

Contributed by IANS
Monday, 31 August 2009
Last Updated Monday, 31 August 2009

He has been the face of sarod across the globe for years, created new ragas and collaborated with international orchestras, but now music legend Ustad Amjad Ali Khan says he would love to create tunes for Hindi films movies as well.

'I would love to compose music for a Hindi films. There haven't been any talks as of now, but that's something I am open to and willing to do,' Khan told IANS in an interview here.

He however denies reports that acting in films is on his wish list.

'I read articles saying that I wanted to act in a film. That is completely untrue... all I had said was that I am open if someone wants me to be in a documentary where I am not required to be anyone else. But I don't want to act in a full-on film... I was clear,' he said.

The legendary musician is still smitten with the melody of old Hindi movie songs and believes film music these days focuses on fast-paced dance numbers.

'The songs of the 1960s and 70s appeal even today because of the melody they had... With due respect to all the talented music directors, the songs today lack melody and the emphasis is more on fast tempo and dance numbers because of the change in values. That's why I feel old music is still a favourite among many,' Khan said.

Khan, a Padma Vibhushan awardee, was only six when he gave his first sarod recital. There are not many countries he hasn't travelled to with his sarod. The maestro is happy that youngsters are still interested in pursuing a career in classical music, but stressed that there were no 'shortcuts' in the field.

'There are a lot of young talented classical musicians today, so I can say that the future of Indian classical music is very bright. But one has to realise that there are no short cuts in this form of music. One has to struggle a lot to gain knowledge,' Khan said.

'Classical music is like entering a dark tunnel with the hope of sun rays some day. It is a long journey which needs patience, peace and serenity,' he added.

Married to Subhalakshmi, a Bharatnatyam danseuse, Khan has two sons, Ayaan and Amaan, who are carrying their father's legacy to the next generation of classical musicians.

'They are very hardworking... Both have different styles of playing the sarod. I am glad they receive appreciation, love and blessings from people all over the world. They are on the right track and I am happy that they are so dedicated,' he said of his sons.

The maestro recently collaborated with Grammy nominee and Iraqi Oud player Rahim Alhaj for an album called 'Ancient Sounds', which released in the US in June and is set for an Indian release in two months.

The collaboration brings together the musical heritage of their respective ancient cultures in a contemporary way.

'All tracks are written and composed by me, except the fifth one. The album, which also has influences of percussion, is sublime, powerful and passionate,' said the 63-year-old.

The veteran was part of the Indian Independence Day celebrations in Sydney and Perth and paid a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi through his music.

'I started the evening with two of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite songs - 'Vaishnav janato' and 'Ram Dhun' - followed by traditional ragas. Sarod is not very popular in Australia unlike Europe and the US; so I want to do more shows there,' he said.

'I agree that sarod needs some impetus and popularity among people. I'm trying that it becomes as popular as the guitar and violin.

'We are doing more and more shows so that people come to know about this stringed instrument because I know one thing for sure, if anyone listens to sarod once, then he gets completely attracted to it,' Khan said.