

## Star Power Draws Attention and Money for a Charitable Cause

Ghazal Maestros Anup Jalota, Ghulam Ali, and Talat Aziz, along with legendary cricketer Kapil Dev help collect \$143,000 at the Sada-e-Ghazal pre-event for the benefit of Robin Raina Foundation.

Four men who are arguably the most well-known and influential names in their respective fields - and 1,100 invited guests - turned out to support the Robert Raina Foundation in its charitable efforts on Thursday, 15th September at the Impact Conference Hall in the Global Mall.

Three ghazal maestros, Ghulam Ali, Anup Jalota and Talat Aziz performed at the charity concert held by the foundation and India's foremost cricketer Kapil Dev pitched in by signing bats for an auction. Dev's own charity organization Khushi (joy) has been very active in helping support good causes and raising funds.

The pre-event dinner was celebratory and showcased up and coming local talent in both music and dance that wowed the audience. The Impact Conference Hall at the Global Mall glowed as much from the presence of India's star

performers as from the light of the candles adorning each table in tall brass lamps and the spotless white linen. The dinner catered by Chandrakant Patel of Mirch Masala added spice to an evening of food and fun but there was no doubt that the focus of the evening was on pitching in and helping. And many local artists did so along with the celebrities. The pre-event dinner included performances by many of them, setting the stage for the evening's finale.

The evening began with karaoke renditions by Mahesh Patel and Tanvir Mian. One picked an old-time classic by Mukesh, the latter, a popular new hit from "Kal Ho Na Ho."

While Aarti Pandya may not have share the fame of some of the more well-known guests, she proved that she certainly did not lack talent. Her ghazal rendition was just as charming as Pandya herself as was her harmonium playing and the tabla accompaniment by Niraj Sharma.

Adding variety to the evening's presentation - and stealing some of the audience's admiration and applause - were Kumudini

Savla's Kathak students. The beautifully choreographed Kathak performance to the tunes of one ghazal of each of the three maestros was perfectly followed by Silent Killer, another local dance group.

For Savla, it was all in the family as her husband Sandeep Savla provided the sound for the evening as well as the main performance the day after.

Reminding everyone of why they were there were video clips presented by the Raina Foundation highlighting the need for charities through testimonies from beneficiary organizations. The foundation supports many charities and projects on an-going basis, providing steady, continuous support rather than sporadic funding. In true recognition of the fact that need sees no boundaries and recognizes no distinctions, one of the causes the Raina Foundation supports is the Shaukat Khan Memorial Cancer Hospital in Pakistan. The hospital was built and is managed by Imran Khan, cricket's other celebrity and Kapil Dev's well-known rival.

In the spirit of leading by



Cricketer Kapil Dev at the Robin Raina Foundation fundraiser.

example, Raina himself donated \$116,000. Talat Aziz contributed not just by donating his time and talent but also pitching in \$3,100 for a bat signed by Kapil Dev.

Each one of the guests also addressed the audience and emphasized the need to support organizations like the Raina Foundation. Dev also spoke of Khushi. They challenged the audience to reach into their hearts and wallets and donate generously. Each of the celebrities also spent time mingling with the invited guests.

Whether it was the moving audio commentary and video clips, the speeches made by the guests or simply the star power, the message got through. The event raised \$143,000 including \$7,900 from the auction of two signed bats, one by Kapil Dev and the other by all four stars.

- Viren Mayani