

Issue Date: October 2012, Posted On: 10/23/2012

Bollywood singing sensation Ghoshal mesmerizes New England audience

By Shuchita Rao



Bollywood music singing star Shreya Ghoshal shone bright at the Mohegan Sun Casino on Oct. 12. The concert began at 9 p.m. and featured three hours of non-stop entertainment led by Ghoshal and her talented orchestra comprising instruments such as electric guitar, synthesizer, a variety of Western and Indian percussion instruments, as well as a team of four male and four female dancers that enhanced the show with splashes of rich visuals and dynamic movement.

The show was presented by Nanking Restaurant Group, Shri Balaji Entertainment, Zee TEV, Zinc, Ambika Entertainment and AAPI.

Dressed in a black western jacket, skinny, tapered gold legging-style jeans, shiny dangling earrings and multi-layered gold strand necklace, young and pretty looking Ghoshal wore a wireless microphone device and effortlessly traversed the large stage from left to right and engaged viewers in every corner of the semi-circular indoor stadium style auditorium setting. Creative lighting bathed the stage in vivid colors — shocking pinks to deep purples. Two large television screens suspended from the ceiling projected closeups of her and the artists on stage. A team of dancers presented orchestrated dances in folk, ballroom, English twist and Middle Eastern styles. From flowing white lehengas to black tights with broad gold belts, daffodil yellows to silver sequins, an array of eye-catching colors feasted the eyes of the viewers while high-energy, passionate dancing breathed life to the musical presentation.

Velvet-voiced Ghoshal rendered pitch perfect, rhythmic songs and energized the audience with her occasional dance moves and theatrics. At times, she spoke in Western accent and at other times in an Indian accent. She also imitated a male voice and a child's voice with great finesse. "The audience provides a great source of energy to me. I just need to interact with the audience to give my best," Ghoshal said to India New England after the show. She dedicated the song "Dola Re Dola Re Dola" to the audience for making her into a successful Bollywood music singer.

More than 20 film songs were rendered one after another by Ghoshal without any visible signs of fatigue. Songs in half a dozen North Indian languages such as Hindi, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Gujarati and Bengali in

popular, semi-classical and sufi style song formats were presented. Ghoshal built the presentation around the theme of love and romance, a universal emotion that all members of the 3,000-plus audience could relate to irrespective of creed, nationality or religion. "You can say that I have a Ph.D. in romantic songs — I have a song for every heart," she announced, building an instant rapport with the audience. Her ability to connect with concert attendees through her informal style of dialog, her physical expressiveness and body language, her flawless singing and star-like stage presence showed off her talent in entertaining audiences in large scale shows.

Favorites from yesteryears such as "Badey Achchey lugtay hain," popular duets "Tere mast mast do nayan," composer Madan Mohan's immortal semi-classical composition "Shaayad phir is janam mein mulaqaat ho na ho," and traditional gujarati folk garba songs had members of audience singing, dancing and clapping hands in a celebratory, party like atmosphere. The presentation included several duets with upcoming singer Prithvi Gandharva who also sang a few solo songs that reflected his training with veteran Bollywood singer Hariharan. Gandharva's sufi song rendition of "Laal Mori Puth," in particular, drew applause from the audience. Emcee Jeffrey Iqbal who is SaReGaMaUSA winner from 2008 won the hearts of the audience with renditions of a Mohammed Rafi quawwali "Pardah hai Purdah," "Mitwa" and his spontaneous and effervescent commentary that gave Ghoshal a well-deserved break from back-to-back presentations.

Several families and fans from neighboring New England states traveled to Connecticut to watch Ghoshal as she winded up her U.S. tour and headed to Trinidad. Reema Chandra from Sharon, Mass., said "My husband Amitabh and I have been to other Bollywood concerts earlier. We thought her enunciation was crystal clear, she could travel multiple octaves with her voice and her singing was comparable to Lata Mangeshkar's. Our children Aeshna and Neil also loved the concert too and enjoyed Shreya's singing to the fullest. Neil loved Jeffrey Iqbal as a performer. She was indeed a great performer who catered well to Bollywood music lovers."

At the end of the show, the event organizers thanked Ghoshal on stage and shared an interesting fact - starting a month before her scheduled performance, the Mohegan Sun management had been playing a song rendered by her at the casino everyday. Ghoshal shared with the audience that she made \$20 at a slot machine at the casino and declared that she will likely indulge in gambling with higher risk in her next visit to the casino. Bringing top-ranking Bollywood singer Ghoshal from India to New England involved a sizeable risk, and at the end of the show, there was little doubt that the investment paid out well — both, in terms of attendance as well as audience satisfaction.