

COMMUNITY NEWS



By Preeti Thandi

Ghazals speak out to her in many facets and emotions. Kiran Ahluwalia strings them together in melody creating an enthralling trance of music. An MBA from Dalhousie University and graduate from the University of Toronto, Kiran set out to discover her roots almost eleven years ago. The journey took her across to different levels of vocal music. "Kashish - Attraction", Kiran's debut CD strings together this journey and her vivid experiences.

Born in Patna in the state of Bihar, India, Kiran moved to New Zealand when she was a kid and a few years after to Canada. She recalls growing up in Toronto with friends in high school who listened to different music. Kiran was immensely drawn to Indian classical music right from childhood as she grew up in an atmosphere enriched with music by her Ghazal loving parents. "Ghazals spoke to me," says Kiran, "I got satisfaction from listening to them."

Kiran continued learning Indian classical music on a part time

KIRAN AHLUWALIA

"Ghazals spoke to me."

basis but after she graduated in Industrial Relations from the University of Toronto she thought of studying music from the masters - the 'Ustaads' themselves. This urge took her to India and to Bombay. However at that point in time she was not certain if she was chasing a dream.

With help from her teacher in Toronto, Kiran located Padma Talwalkar. She recalls with perfect clarity the day she first met Padma and heard her singing. "A feeling came over me. I even remember the 'raag' she was singing in," says Kiran. Soon after she was initiated as a student in true Indian tradition, so began the hours of rigorous training in classical music. It was here that Kiran furthered her knowledge and developed voice culture. "Riyaz teaches you how to throw your voice," says Kiran, "I further developed my 'Riyaz' - vocal exercise to strengthen the voice.

This helps in the three hour concerts," explains Kiran.

"Ghazals are about having an actual passion in life, acquiring the passion and celebrating little victories," says Kiran. Instilled with this passion and yearning to learn more Kiran traveled to the historic city of Hyderabad. Here she connected with Vithal Rao, one of the last living court musi-

cians of the Nizam of Hyderabad.

Vithal Rao taught her the intricacies of Ghazal Gaiki - how to improvise in Ghazals. For Kiran it was a different experience.

The lure of exploring her roots and its music also took Kiran to the land of her ancestors. She traveled to the state of Punjab to meet with folk musicians and to explore their style. This journey actually took her further across

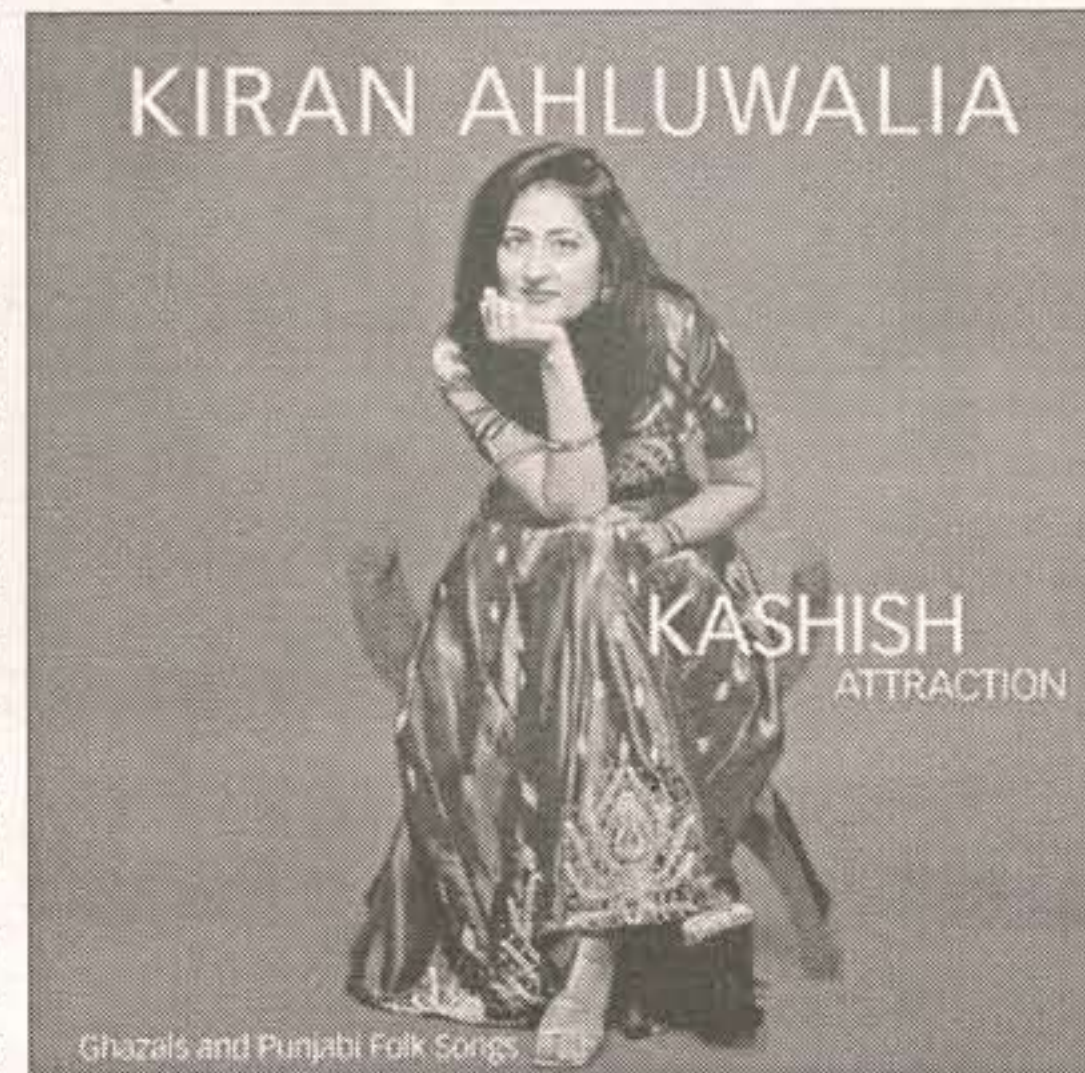
ferent melodies.

"My CD, Kashish - Attractions is a mosaic of all my experiences. It is what I am. It features pockets of my life," says Kiran. Featuring 8 ghazals and folk songs the CD certainly draws the tuneful ear. Some tracks of the CD have been aired on CBC Radio.

Kiran constantly returns to India with her lure to learn music. "There is no end to learning music," she says. In the interim she has worked as Assistant General Manager for Putumayo World Music, a leading North American world music record label and for CBC radio, producing for Global Music, Two New Hours and Stereo Morning. She has performed at a number of festivals and is currently involved in organizing her upcoming concerts in the fall of this year.

"All of us have something to make sense of this world," says Kiran, "to communicate emo-

tion, some people paint, some indulge in crafts, I listen to music and sing..."



the borders to Pakistan, specifically to Lahore where Kiran further experienced Sufi poetry and 'Kaifis' - romantic poetry with an underlying message for society. Comparing the styles across the two borders Kiran feels that Indian Punjabi is more forceful whereas the Pakistani style is sweeter. However they are musically very different and set to dif-

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