

# Government, media 'should promote' classical music

By Bonnie James

**THE Indian government and media, especially TV channels, should promote classical music more actively, well-known sitar player and vocalist Ustad Irshad Khan, urged yesterday.**

Considered among the world's best sitar players and finest instrumentalists, Khan, a descendant of a legendary musical family heritage dating back to 400 years, was in Doha to give a concert hosted by the Music Lovers Group on Friday.

"Good classical music and musicians must be encouraged in this age when the very concept of music has become like a circus and full of gimmicks," observed the musician who has performed in 40 countries, starting with his first international performance at the age of 13.

Khan, nearing 40, stated that Indian classical music is the most sophisticated, because of the research that has gone into it and the most complicated rhythms.

"A good Indian classical musician can perform with any musician from any part of the world without rehearsing," claimed Khan, who gave his first recital at the age of seven in Kolkata.

The musician, renowned for his mastery of the intricate 'gayaki-ang' (vocal



**Irshad Khan performing to the accompaniment of Rudranarayan Kalyani.**

and 'tantra-ang' (instrumental) styles, and also the leading Surbahar (bass sitar) player of his generation, has given well over 2,000 concerts and brought out over 20 international albums.

Khan is equally well known for his 'Raga Yoga' workshops, which combines the healing powers of music and yoga, and promises to the participants a spiritual journey far beyond the anxiety, stress and strains of life.

In his first concert in Doha, Khan proved his prowess as the torchbearer of the Imdad Khani Etawa Gharana (musi-

cal heritage), credited to his great grandfather, and the most influential and authoritative school in the world of Sitar.

"Using his inimitable style and technique, the strings of his sitar created blissful music, enhanced further by some splendid intermittent vocal fare by the great artiste himself," a music lover recalled, describing the concert as truly wholesome.

At Khan's initiation, the entire audience was singing the notes with ease, showing true involvement.

"The concert started with a popular composition *Thore Bin Laage Na*, in the racy Piloo to move onto a full fledged rendition of more than one hour of the Raag Yaman in Rupak Taal," another member of the audience said.

Adding a different dimension to a popular poetry in this Raag, Khan demonstrated his school's traditional style with a unique gat (sitar composition).

"The exposition, movement and treatment of this Raag echoed feelings of peace and romance leading to an electrifying climax, which won a resounding and unanimous applause," the listener said.

The second session commenced with Kirwani moving into *Aaye Ne Balam* in Raag Jangla. Here too Khan invited the listeners to participate in the gayaki which they gladly did. The Mand 'Mujhe Dheemi' that followed was brilliant.

The concluding Bhairavi proved to be a class apart played with great feelings and expressions and included small doses of an array of other Raag Bahar, Basant, Lalit, Todi, and Kedar prompting the audience to break out into a standing ovation.

"Rudranarayan Kalyani on the tabla was superb too and lent some impeccable support evident by the on stage musical chemistry and synergy between the two artistes," another member of the audience added.