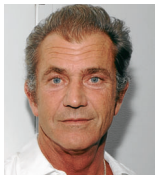


Spotted



A surprisingly relaxed Mel Gibson enjoying dinner and drinks with friends at slick Japanese

hangout Zuma in DIFC and admiring the view from the Burj Khalifa. Filipino actress, model, singer and host of *The X Factor Philippines* KC Concepcion at Al Qasr hotel, The Dubai Mall and Wild Wadi.

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Hot seat Amjad Ali Khan

Regarded as one of India's greatest living classical musicians, the 67-year-old sarod master chats philosophy and Princess Diana with Rob Garratt



Hi Amjad, where are you today?

I'm at home in Delhi. I spend half my time here and half my time in New York – which is beautiful and exciting. New York is the capital of the world. Where is *Time Out* from?

It started in London.

I had the honour of meeting [the UK's] Princess Diana, it was amazing, she was so gracious, so beautiful. Later Prince Charles invited me to Highgrove House and Sandringham Palace to perform. He's a very emotional person, and he liked my sarod.

How was the late Princess?

I met her in Delhi on her first and only visit to India. There was a dinner with the Prime Minister [at the time], so many celebrations everywhere, and

suddenly me and my wife received an invitation – it was only meant for 20 people. The Prime Minister gave so much respect to me he made me sit right in front of her.

I gave Princess Diana a 400-year-old kashmiri shawl

How was the dinner?

There was a big talk because Diana was cold – it was outdoors in February and she was shivering. Fortunately I was carrying a shawl from my forefathers. I felt hesitant, but finally I got up and gave her the shawl – a kashmiri shawl that was 400 years old.

Did she keep it?

As she was leaving she wanted to return it, but I persuaded her to keep it. We Indians, especially musicians, once we give something to somebody we don't want to take it back.

The Dalai Lama is also a fan of yours. Why do you think your music attracts so many important people?

I often say there are two parallel worlds in the universe; one is of sound, the other of words. In our country we say sound is like God. In every religion there is sound. You have the call to prayer in Dubai – isn't it beautiful?

It is.

There's nothing to understand in sound – with sound you can't lie, can't manipulate, if I am out of tune people will realise. So my life is so transparent. I thank God I live in the world of sound. Music is food for the soul.

How so?

Today we have achieved so much as mankind, in technology we're at our highest [point], but in music you have 12 notes. These 12 notes were realised 5,000 years ago, and today all over the world we use the same 12 notes. No one can create a 13th.

True. In Dubai, you'll be performing alongside your two sons Amaan and Ayaan, who also both play the sarod.

It's very rare for us to perform together, but we have a special place for Dubai. The whole world comes to live in Dubai, and because there is such a cosmopolitan audience from all corners of the world, it's a beautiful and very inspiring audience to play for.

Amjad performs at Madinat Theatre on Tuesday May 28

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