

# Aziz Peerzada

Pakistan: musician, ghazal singer

Object: harmonium

دارم ےب بددا ےب دارم اب بددا اب.

(Urdu)

*[If you respect everyone, people will respect you; and if you disrespect anyone, people will disrespect you.]*

*-A saying of Master Inayat Hussain Shah*

I come from Rawalpindi, in the Punjab region of Pakistan. I first was playing tabla for singers around 1974 or 1975, when I was about my son's age, 13 years old. I noticed that the audience was paying so much attention to the singer and paying little attention to me, the tabla player. That is when I decided to learn harmonium. First, I taught myself by practicing from morning to evening. Then I used to sit with a popular harmonium player, Master Ijaz Hussain Hazravi, in his academy, and I studied his harmonium style just by looking at him play. He was named after the Hazro village in Pakistan. He taught me so much and was model teacher for me. I studied with him for 10 years. After the death of Master Ijaz Hussain Hazravi, I became a student of another great music composer, Master Inayat Hussain Shah. He was a Pakistani television and radio music composer and singer. He was a master of his work and played 10 music instruments.

After 8 years of me performing on Pakistan television and radio, I came to the United States on March 26, 1987. I had been working in the American Embassy in Islamabad. My two elder brothers were in the United States and were already settled in Brooklyn, New York. I came as a visitor but I liked the USA and then I decided to stay here. When I came to the United States, I brought my harmonium.

When I first arrived, I did not see many people playing the harmonium or tabla professionally. If you are a folk and ghazal singer, or a classical musician, the harmonium is a must. If I am playing harmonium, my fingers are going with my voice and my mind. It is connected to my process of making music. In Brooklyn, I currently have ten students including my son Saboor. I teach harmonium, tabla, and singing.



## Bio:

Aziz Peerzada, originally from Rawalpindi, came to the U.S. in 1987 for better life and to be closer to his family. In the U.S., he has been performing on various platforms, ranging from family weddings to performances in embassies, and has performed in almost 25 states to date. Along with singing, Aziz plays tabla and harmonium. His repertoire is versatile; although most of his work is classical-oriented and based on older renditions of ghazal sung poetry, he also plays Punjabi folk songs with equal ease and talent. Aziz has also been involved in promoting Pakistani culture and heritage in New York. He was the first singer of the Brooklyn Pakistani Festival [Mela] and was involved in managing it for years. His organization Pak Music and Cultural Society Corp has been active in organizing public cultural events to promote Pakistani music.