

Following on the insights provided by Tabor's work on 18th-century Mughal India, in this paper I discuss how the *adab* of listening to classical Urdu poetry can be adapted to public *musha'iras* in contemporary Pakistan. While the "subject" of the classical ghazal is generally understood to be romantic, modern poets and their audiences have proved adept at re-working its conventions and employing the power of its rhetoric to make the "subject" of poetry political. In this paper I show how two poets, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Habib Jalib, create powerful political messages while ostensibly staying within the rhetorical boundaries of classical poetry.