

# Blind teacher leads kids into world of music

By Meena Menezes

MUSIC is the language of the heart and no one understands it better than Amina Zaki Al Murshidi, a music teacher with the Bahrain Saudi Institute for the Blind.

As her hands glide over the keyboard, Amina's face is a picture of serenity and she is lost in her own little world. The beautiful composition that she plays with such grace and expertise makes you forget that she is actually blind.

Amina, an Egyptian who has worked as a music teacher at the institute for the past 15 years, says the institute is her home and the students her children.

Although she was born blind, her love for music got her learning at the tender age of six when she was taught how to listen and write music at the Institute of the Blind in Cairo, after which there was no turning back. With the support of her family, she went on to complete her higher studies in music at the Cairo faculty of Arts and has also studied English, French, Farsi, Turkish and other languages.

"For a blind person, learning braille is most important because it is the window to the world outside and once you master it, the rest is easy. A lot depends on personal interest too," she said.



**Amina on the keyboard.**

As a music teacher, she teaches a total of 35 students how to play all keyboard instruments as well as the guitar and drums.

"Being blind makes it easier for me to understand the difficulties that these children face because I have experienced it all myself at their age. Therefore we share a better understanding."

"All the students are different, those who are talented pick up faster while those who are average take a longer time, but I teach them in simple steps. They have to first listen to the music and learn to love it, only then will they be able to play."

Amina loves classical, romantic and Arabic music and her favourite composers are Beethoven, Mozart

and Hayden among others. Encouraged by their compositions, she has also composed her own music, which she calls 'Memories'.

"It will be a dream come true if I can have my compositions recorded professionally and sold, but such a project would need funds and sponsorship, which I don't have."

She is proud of the fact that under her training, the institute has won first prize for three consecutive years in competitions among preparatory schools in Bahrain. She was also responsible for composing the melodies for one of the primary schools that performed on stage at the institute.

"Composing music can take me anywhere between five minutes to a day, depending on how difficult the piece is. The music I compose reflects my mood at the time," she said.

Amina said that being blind is not a detriment to learning music and it is all about having a love for music.

"It is definitely a great way to de-stress and express oneself through music and for me it means everything."

Amina also enjoys reading as a pastime but says her life's passion is her music. She says it will give her utmost happiness when she sees that the children she now teaches will one day excel in music in the years to come.