

tarun nayar

22° of beatitude



This album is an ode to my roots, my travels, and those who have influenced me along the way.

It's a really personal work for me - basically the story of my last 10 years. In my early-mid 20s I partied lots, and became obsessed with electronic music. It took me a long time to even begin to figure out what i was doing - anyone who's been through this knows what I'm talking about!

Now that I'm doing this for a living, writing music and touring the globe with Delhi 2 Dublin, I figured I should polish off a bunch of the tracks that were sitting on my hard drive. It's funny, cause they're not necessarily the songs I would have written had I started the album today... But I like them a whole lot and I hope they mean something to other people too.



1. Rising Up

Dilshaad Khan: sarangi
Arun Solanki: percussion
Tarun: tabla, programming


I wrote this song for a show in 2004, took it to India with me in 2006 and recorded layer upon layer of percussion with my friend Faizan in a steamy one-room studio in Andheri. All the percussion is live, no samples here. We were joined later in the session by one of the best young sarangi players in the country, and the nephew of the great Ustad Sultan Khan, Dilshaad Khan. All I can say is 'wow'. He recorded all of his parts in 2 takes. I've edited nothing.

The background features a dark, textured surface adorned with various decorative elements. In the upper left, there are several concentric circular patterns in shades of blue, green, and orange, resembling traditional Bhutanese motifs. A vertical gold-colored decorative element runs down the left side. At the bottom, there are large, stylized floral motifs in white and pink. The overall aesthetic is rich and traditional.

2. Kezang La

Tashi Nencha Company:
drumgyen, zither, flute, vocals
Tarun: programming

This is a traditional Bhutanese folk song I recorded in the rooftop monastery of family friend, Tashi Nencha, in 2008. Tashi runs the only professional performing arts company in the country, and is a true supporter of Bhutan's folk arts. The musicians I recorded in that little room had never recorded with a 'click' before, so it took us nearly a day to get all the parts recorded in tempo. Tuning is not nearly such a 'big deal', and rather than spend hours auto-tuning Bhutanese zither, I decided to let the rawness speak for itself. The bells at the very start of the track were recorded at a high altitude pass in Bhutan as our hiking party was passed by a horse train; the bells jingled around each horse's neck. The track closes with the rhythmic ringing of a water 'prayer wheel', that sheds prayers into the atmosphere as water runs through it.

The background of the entire page is a vibrant, circular, fiery tunnel. The colors range from deep reds and oranges to bright yellows and whites, creating a sense of intense heat and motion. In the center of this tunnel, there is a dark silhouette of a mountain peak. On top of the peak, a person is standing with their arms outstretched, as if embracing the scene. The overall effect is one of a journey through a fiery, ethereal space.

3. Daybreak

Dilshaad Khan: sarangi

Tarun: programming

Strings arranged and
performed by Neville Franco
and his orchestra

Chris Suen: guzheng

Tarun: tabla, programming

This track is inspired by my grandmother's apartment in South Delhi. I've spent months of my life there, at various stages, hiding from Western Civilization, soaking up the heat, and eating really really good ghar ka khanna. It's impossible to sleep in tho, cause the vendors start their rounds WAY too early... One morning, I gave up trying to sleep in and got up at 5 with the first sounds of the vendors outside. I stood on the balcony for hours, recording all the activity outside. The subzi (vegetable) vendor is my favorite.

4. 808s and Sheikh Sarai

Tarun: Programming

Another track inspired by my grandmother's neighborhood in South Delhi. I was out in Malviya Nagar market in the evening a few years ago and got trapped under an awning in a tropical downpour - that's the sound that opens the piece. I had my recorder with me, so I just let it roll. Next is the early morning sound of bhajans, devotional songs, being sung in the park next to my grandmother's apartment. These ladies are so talented, it's really moving to hear them singing in the mornings in a big group under the trees. Finally, the sound of the laughing yoga - no better way to wake up than at 6am to the sound of a gang of old men laughing their heads off!

5. Love in the Morning

Neeraja Aptikar: vocals

Ivan Tucakov: guitar

Sameer Rao: bansuri

Tarun: tabla, programming

On my first trip to India to seriously study tabla, mornings were a very special time of the day for me. I was up quite late every night practicing, and would wake up to the gentle and sunny clamour of the Bandra neighborhood in Mumbai where I was staying. Often I would find myself most productive at these times, with melody upon melody just popping into my head. This song is the result of one of those moments. I later recorded Neeraja in Vancouver, and added in Ivan's guitar and Sameer's flute to round out the sound.

6. Innocence

Nadia Chaney: vocals

Sameer Rao: bansuri

Chris Suen: guzheng

Tarun: tabla, programming

This track was born in 2001/2002 as I played around with simple melodies on a flute in Kitsilano, Vancouver. I played the beat and melody for my friend Nadia, and she ran with it, turning a simple idea into a rumination on the nature of childhood and growing old. It's peppered with the bansuri of Sameer, recorded in yet another small, steamy recording studio in Andheri, Mumbai. And finally, the icing on the cake is the sweet guzheng of my friend Chris Suen.



7. Call to Prayer

Neelamjit Dhillon: flute
Thomas Tumbach: violin
Tarun: programming

A track I started almost a decade ago and had long since forgotten where the initial vocal sample came from. When I completed this album, I sent it around to a few labels and Joel Davis from White Swan wrote back saying that he was really happy to hear one of his recordings on the album. It turns out, he had made the recording at the opening of the Fes Festival in 1996. I was a little embarrassed at first, but Joel assured me he was happy that the recording was being used. So thanks, Joel.



8. Turkish Spice

Tarun: programming, tabla

David Starfire: bass

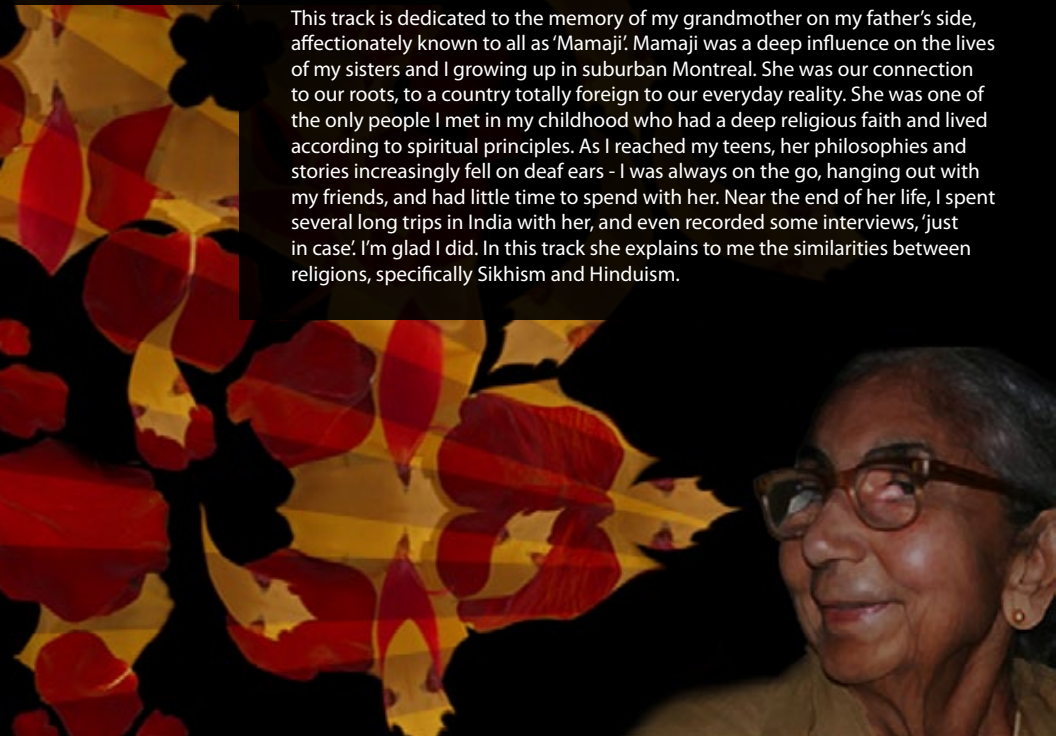
This is one of the first electronic music tracks I ever worked on, and was initially inspired by chopping up an oud sample and listening to Bassnectar. Ten years later, I revisited the track, tidied it up, and added in a vocal sample from the depths of my library. I couldn't get the bass just right though, so I phoned up my good friend David Starfire, and he went where I couldn't.



9. Mamaji

Tarun: programming, tabla
Strings arranged and performed by
Neville Franco and his orchestra

This track is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother on my father's side, affectionately known to all as 'Mamaji'. Mamaji was a deep influence on the lives of my sisters and I growing up in suburban Montreal. She was our connection to our roots, to a country totally foreign to our everyday reality. She was one of the only people I met in my childhood who had a deep religious faith and lived according to spiritual principles. As I reached my teens, her philosophies and stories increasingly fell on deaf ears - I was always on the go, hanging out with my friends, and had little time to spend with her. Near the end of her life, I spent several long trips in India with her, and even recorded some interviews, 'just in case'. I'm glad I did. In this track she explains to me the similarities between religions, specifically Sikhism and Hinduism.



10. Water

Jen Miller: vocals

Aditya Verma: sarod

Tarun: programming

Another song inspired by the sounds and atmospheres of my one room Bandra studio apartment in 2005, Mumbai. Soft and languid. My friend Jen was passing through Mumbai at the time and I invited her to put something down on it, which she did - on a terrible mic with no professional gear. Later, when my friend Nick wanted to feature the song in his poi-spinning video, I had my guru bhai Aditya record sarod to complete the picture.

Thank you so much to all the people, places, and synchronicities that have allowed for the inspiration and completion of this album. To my family: Mom, Dad, Anu, and especially Kiran - who has to put up with my noise and erratic habits every day. To Mamaji and Papaji for opening doors to other worlds. Essop for always believing and supporting, Aungiji for picking me up when I've fallen. To the family of Ustad Allarakha, Ustad Zakir Hussain, and my Guruji, Narendra Verma. Thanks to all the artists I worked with on the album, especially Adham for his gentle mixes. To Rup Sidhu, the D2D crew (Sanj, Ravi, Ky and Hondrew), Beats Without Borders (Nils, Adrian and Lady Ra), Chaiwalla's Boombbox (Umar), Graham Stairs, Denis McCready, Wendy Champagne, Eoinn and Insiya, Dave Sharma, Jimmy Little, Vicki Virk, Jacob Cino, Tim Wisdom, Chris Deckker, Martin (Dragonfly), Jason Guille, Rowan Sentesy, Vig, Pathaan, the CBC, Radio-Canada, the BBC. Thanks to the people who make me laugh, including the west 7th crew (Chungito, Angie, Tony, Ross, Kate, Ivan, Dan, Juice, Muneera - and all of their families), the kids i grew up with (Biff, Peach, Jon, Dan, Fred, Nico, Matt - and their families), and Marialuisa.

All tracks written, arranged and produced by Tarun Nayar.
Additional writing by Tashi Nencha (track 2), and Nadia Chaney (track 5).

Mixed by Adham Shaikh at Sonic Turtle Studios (Nelson, BC).

Recorded by Tarun Nayar at the Teahouse (Vancouver, BC).
Additional recording at Heat Studios (Andheri, Mumbai). All strings recorded by Avdoot Wadkar at Ajivasan Sounds (Juhu, Mumbai). All samples recorded on streets, beaches, and in temples around the world.

Mastered by Alex DeGrace at Suite Sound Labs (Vancouver, BC). Photography by Raakhi Sinha. Album artwork and design by Josli Rockafella.

Download the free PDF booklet at
www.tarunmusic.com/albumart.pdf

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