

EPK

Sandeep Raval releases Mosaic in Motion

Mosaic: 'a combination of diverse elements forming a more or less coherent whole'. When used to describe music it's a strong word, and only really suits something very special.

For Sandeep Raval it's fitting to say the least. He straddles genres from Indian folk to Intelligent Dance Music. And with Mosaic In Motion, he shows a deft production hand by bringing seemingly disparate parts together. A convergence of sound and place, just don't call it a fusion!.

That the nine tracks nod toward drum n bass, Arabesque, jazz and classical is beside the point. For Raval, to create the music of a nation you must first understand the culture and the context behind the compositions. Simply learning a native instrument isn't enough.

That's why you can hear London, his point of arrival into the UK, providing the liquid breakbeats behind Digu. In contrast, Lunar Breathing takes us directly to West India. Raval has immersed himself in these contrasting locales, and has been influenced by each in turn.

Both feel believable, and boast seals of authenticity in the same way Raval's passport carries so many stamps. And because his story contains chapters set against the landscapes of different continents, it's clear how he arrived at these truly global compositions.

The music itself has taken an equally epic, though far more grounded journey on its way towards becoming part of this collection. Session artists were invited into the studio, and allowed to jam freely. As Raval puts it: "just like they were performing in the pub". From here the recordings were edited and arranged into coherent structures. Like a sonic photograph, tracks were captured from these fleeting moments.

The result is a release that offers up so much to so many. From rare time signatures of 9/4 to double-bass backed, hypnotic sarod moodiness. Comparisons with the likes of Thievery Corporation, Venetian Snares, and anything from the depths of WOMAD's fantasy line up are possible. But none really come close to what Raval has created.

Like a plane jetting off to unknown destinations, the only way to understand this adventure is to buy a ticket, and take the trip. From Southampton to Northampton, Leicester to London, UK audiences have already jumped on board Raval's live concept, featuring tracks from Mosaic, backed by the Arts Council. After all, who doesn't want the opportunity to explore the world's sounds, in full stereo?

Here is Mosaic In Motion 2010 Nationwide Tour - Show Reel Includes Audience Feedback.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFSCd277iBM>

About Sandeep Raval

How do you begin to succinctly summarise a multifarious percussionist, meditative producer, and multi-instrumentalist composer? Perhaps it should be by stating the obvious.

Sandeep Raval is a man of many talents. But, fundamentally, he's a musician with a constant hunger for new aural adventures. His broad palate of drums and deft scores seamlessly meld syncopation with vivid imagination, grand theatricality, and a mischievous sense of humour.

There are his two albums, *Worship Through Sound* and *Mosaic in Motion*. Then he played an invaluable part in the production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's acclaimed musical, *Bombay Dreams* (scored by A R Rahman- *Slumdog Millionaire*).

Elsewhere, *The Guardian* heralded another stage blockbuster in receipt of Raval's rhythms, *The Far Pavilion*, as an outright success. And this is before you get to his Arts Council England backed 2010 *Mosaic* tour.

Whatever point in his story you start from, glancing back over the pages of Raval's life reveals a myriad of musical influences. From urban UK bass music, to traditional folk and Central Asian classical, chapters spanning continents contribute to his sonic compendium.

Born a British overseas citizen, he spent most of his formative years in India, before relocating to London. But well before arriving in the UK full time, circa 1991, Raval had already realised his destiny in the spotlight. With performances everywhere from Delhi to Moscow, and film work to boot, so much had been achieved by the tender age of 13.

This early success was a sign of things to come. Determinedly Raval began striving to push the boundaries of sound as he crossed the globe's borders. Soon there was a home studio and a move to Northampton, followed by countless hours spent playing the perpetual insomniac.

Whether it's 5am or 1pm, in the studio or on stage, Raval's passion for production and performance leads to standout results. His second *Mosaic* tour, which saw conceptualised soundtracks played by a large ensemble to packed venues across the UK in 2011, left critics describing shows that were 'like nothing you've ever seen'. Meanwhile, work with acclaimed world music producer James Asher explains even more.

Yet there is so much still to learn. Raval's constant evolution references everything from jazz, IDM, Giles Peterson, Kruder & Dorfmeister, and LTJ Bukem, to century old Indian roots and experimental alternative, which is what makes him so vital. Enigmatic and wonderfully unpredictable, but unquestionably talented and consistently impressive, new avenues are nothing more than business as usual, leaving most musical fusions sounding like simple combinations.

In 50 words

Sandeep Raval is a multifarious percussionist, acclaimed producer, and multi-instrumentalist composer. He's also constantly evolving. So two albums, *Worship Through Sound* and *Mosaic in Motion*, jazz, IDM, Eastern folk, work with Andrew Lloyd Webber, world music star James Asher, and performances from London to Delhi, barely summarise his global career.

In 100 words

For most musicians, the term 'fusion' means combining a number of styles from across the world into a coherent arrangement. For Sandeep Raval, it's about transforming a life spent performing everywhere from Moscow to Delhi, into dazzling stage shows and critically acclaimed studio work.

Taking in a range of influences, whether that's European jazz and contemporary electronica, or Indian folk and roots, his spellbinding tours have left audiences speechless, and collaborations with Andrew Lloyd Webber, and world music producer James Asher, bolster his reputation as an innovative aficionado. Meanwhile, constant evolution ensures his work is consistently fascinating, but always impressive.

Mosaic In Motion Review

Multi-instrumentalist Sandeep Raval has brought together myriad influences and music styles on his latest genre-bending album *Mosaic in Motion*. The title is extremely apt for the musical conglomeration that converges on the record's nine energetic and deeply creative tracks. Constantly moving between inspirations, genres, grooves, time signatures, keys and modes, Raval and company span the musical landscape on this epic journey of highly entertaining interactivity. While this album may be labeled by some as modern jazz, world music or modern funk, these songs rise above classification to stand on their own as portraits emerging from Raval's inner ear, manifesting themselves on the ensemble's sonic canvas.

The album kicks off with a diversely composed and performed piece, "Digu," which showcases the many different elements that weave their way through Raval's music. Based on a drum and bass kit beat, layered with Indian drumming and topped off with a killer jazz-saxophone solo by Frasier Allibone and an enchanting vocal line, the song builds to an ecstatic climax as voice and sax trade melody lines, feeding off each other's creativity until both instruments seem to be emanating from the same musician. It is this level of creative expression, within the context of a formal framework, coupled with the ensemble's high level of interaction that combine to make this song, and the rest of the album, so successful. These musicians understand that it takes more than just great chops to bring together music on this level. It takes musicianship and an openness to work with those around them, with both aspects soaking every track on the record.

Besides the more modern sounding grooves, Raval also digs into classic funk based rhythms for songs such as "A Jostel." Here, the song's introduction sounds more folk-based than others on the record, with its repetitive note groupings that help set up the saxophone-vocal melody line that kicks the musicians off into their respective improvisations. As was the case with the album's opener, this track features strong saxophone work, though this time by Stephen O'Gorman, as well as some seriously funky piano fills by John Bowman.

The track is also defined by the interaction between the ensemble's members, with piano, vocals and saxophone taking center stage. After listening to this, and other, tracks, one gets the impression that the conversational aspect of these pieces rivals the compositions themselves in regards to their level of importance in the minds of each performer. Focusing on this aspect of music is something that many jazz and world music artists attempt in their recordings and live shows, but few will ever reach the level that Raval and his compatriots achieve on this album, a testament to the creative nature of their music.

Mosaic in Motion is an album that can't, and shouldn't, be fully absorbed in one listening session. This music was written with such depth and detail, and performed with such creativity, that it something new will jump out of each song upon every new listen. Melodies that weren't previously heard will now be brought into focus. A new rhythmic variation in the drums, which previously hung in the background, will suddenly leap to the front of the stage. This is the true test of an album with this amount of improvisation and interaction, can it stand the test of time and does it hold up to extensive listening. In both cases the answer is a resounding yes. This is an album of the highest quality and musical caliber that is sure to bring sonic enjoyment to any fan of modern improvised jazz and world music.

Review by Matthew Warnock (Editor in Chief for Guitar International Magazine)

Rating: 4 stars (out of 5)