



LATE NIGHT AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

Film Screening: *Dilli Breakbeat: Asian Electronic Music in India's Capital*
DJ session: *MIDIval PunditZ*

Date: Friday 20 May 2005, 8:00 p.m. onwards

Venue: Theatre and Charbagh, British Council, New Delhi

All are Welcome

Cultures in harmony

As part of the Late Night programme British Council will host the premiere of Dhiraj Murthy's film *Dilli Breakbeat: Asian Electronic Music in India's Capital* followed by a DJ session by MIDIval PunditZ. Dhiraj talks about the making of his documentary on Asia's beats.

The Asian Electronic Music 'scene' originated in the UK with the rise of British Asian musicians such as Talvin Singh, Ges-e, TJ Rehmi, Badmarsh and Shri, State of Mind, Aref Durvesh and Asia-dominated acts such as Outcaste, Nasha, and Swaraj. It has now spread to Melbourne, Singapore, New York, Mumbai, Delhi and other metropolitan cities. At its most simplest form, Asian electronic music is characterised by a mix of some of the following: electronic manipulation; one or more traditional Indian instruments such as *tabla*, *sitar*, *sarangi*, *shehnai* and *veena* (or samples of these); vocals, lyrics and samples broadly relating to India; samples of Bollywood tracks; and generally a rhythm line similar to Bollywood, downtempo and jungle. These unique combinations of electronic music that is very distinct and different from traditional Bhangra and Bollywood remix. British Asian electronic music in many ways, has been an expression of being Asian in the UK, addressing everything from anti-racism to second generation identity.

This music is the focus of my PhD in Sociology (which I am studying at the University of Cambridge). My research is focussed on the electronic music subculture in London and Delhi. I am interested in the individuals involved in both scenes and the complex links between them such as: technology (including both software and hardware) made by British electronic musicians to India based ones, how localised Delhi based Asian electronic artists has directly and indirectly influenced the London Asian electronic music scene and vice versa; sharing of musical methodologies and ideas and how the London Asian electronic scene (e.g. *Nasha*) and the Delhi scene (e.g. *MIDIval PunditZ*) are working with the same class of individuals such as the highly acclaimed *sarangi* musician Ustad Sultan Khan. Whilst conducting my research regarding the subculture I decided that this vibrant scene and the interesting individuals involved in it would also be an excellent basis for a documentary.

The film *Dilli Breakbeat* explores Asian electronic music in Delhi - a city which the vast majority of Delhiites agree has changed remarkably over the last 10-15 years. The film starts in Delhi and explores the Asian electronic music scene within the city, and somehow, despite its rapid modernisation, still has deep roots with its rich history. Perhaps the Asian electronic music scene and the individuals involved are in many ways a reflection of the city's history.

- ▶ WOMENS FILM FESTIVAL
- ▶ FIRST PROOF BOOK LAUNCH
- ▶ LATE NIGHT AT THE BRITISH COUNCIL IN MAY05
- ▶ NEWTON'S PLAYGROUND - NATURE WALKS
- ▶ ARCHIVES

the other hand, are they more than just products of time? Dilli Breakbeat attempts to tackle these questions heading back to the many factors that have given rise to the Asian electronic music scene in Delhi. It explores how the scene has been influenced by the UK, the contemporary cosmopolitan identities of the individuals involved and how the scene can be considered products of cultural exchange among other things. Through footage from live performances such as Elevate and Fabric and interviews with musicians like MIDival PunditZ and Bandish Projekt, DJs such as Sur and a variety of individuals who are involved in the scene, the film shows how electronic music in Delhi is not only introduced, but that it has become a theme that is delved into.

Ultimately the film, like my research, considers the meaning of electronic music and the scene surrounding it. Some argue that India has lost touch with its traditional musical background and that Asian electronic music is a beautiful fusion of traditional elements such as *sitar* and modern and contagious beats such as drum and bass. Some claim that the music makes them proud to be Indian. Others, on the other hand, argue that the music is just something to do on a Friday or Saturday night. Regardless of one's opinion, the film shows that an electronic music scene exists in Delhi and the film tries to explore it.

For further information contact the Arts team at ext 3

We are registered in England as a charity. Our [privacy](#) and [copyright](#) statements. [Our Freedom of Information Publications Scheme](#).

[India Home](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Sitemap](#)