

SUNNY JAIN'S *Wild Wild East*

BIOGRAPHY

Sunny Jain's *Wild Wild East* (Smithsonian Folkways 2020) encompasses myriad facets of Jain's identity both as a first-generation South Asian–American and as a global musician, from his own family's immigration story to his eclectic musical upbringing. In recasting the immigrant—steeped in the courage to leave a familiar homeland for a new beginning—as the modern-day cowboy and cowgirl, Jain sources musical inspiration from the scores of Bollywood classics and Spaghetti Westerns, Indian folk traditions, jazz improvisation, and rollicking psychedelic and surf guitar styles. Sunny Jain's *Wild Wild East* is rooted in the contemporary global soundscape, singing in a new voice, “I am large, I contain multitudes.”

The beating heart of the vibrant and varied career of composer/drummer Sunny Jain is a celebration of cultural diaspora: deep-rooted tradition that ripples outward, changing – and being changed by – the cultures that it touches. Jain deftly blends the modern and the traditional, the personal and the communal, the inventive and the festive. He's most known for founding the band Red Baraat, a frenzied fusion of bhangra, hip-hop, jazz, rock, and sheer, unbridled energy that NPR has called “the best party band in years.”

On May 21, 2021, Jain released *Phoenix Rise*, a collaborative effort featuring over 50 artists, such as Arooj Aftab, Vijay Iyer, Michael League (Snarky Puppy), Adrian Quesada (Black Pumas), Endea Owens (The Late Show with Stephen Colbert) and Joe Russo (jam band darling). Accompany the full digital album is a 72-page book that combines music, art, photography and planet-based recipes, all in the name of social justice. As executive producer and music producer, Jain partnered with Center for Constitutional Rights to fundraise and advocate for the work they do.

As a jazz drummer, he has worked with the likes of Norah Jones, Marc Cary, Kenny Wollesen and Kyle Eastwood. He toured the world with the acclaimed Sufi rock band Junoon, recording the single “Open Your Eyes” with Peter Gabriel and performing at the Nobel Peace Prize concert. He's also collaborated with rapper Himanshu Suri (Das Racist/Swet Shop Boys), tabla player/producer Karsh Kale, saxophonist Donny McCaslin, and producer Andres Levin, among countless others.

NPR commissioned Jain to premiere a piece for “Make Music New York” day in 2014. Jain's “100+ BPM” convened more than 350 musicians on the steps of the Brooklyn Public Library, including drum lines from the New York Jets, New York Knicks and Brooklyn Nets. He musical directed Lincoln Center's 60th anniversary celebration in 2019. Jain has served as musical director to the OBIE award-winning London-based theatrical show, *The Jungle*, since 2019.

VIDEOS

All Things Considered interview w. Ari Shaprio

<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/02/811253034/sunny-jains-wild-wild-east-is-a-western-inspired-ode-to-an-immigrant-father>

Sunny Jain's *Wild Wild East* [Official video]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxFgHKGrqQo>

The Making of Sunny Jain's *Wild Wild East* for Smithsonian Folkways Recordings
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HLHS9RNJ3-w>

SOCIAL MEDIA

Website: www.sunnyjain.com

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/jainsounds>

Instagram: @sunnydrums
<https://www.instagram.com/sunnydrums>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sunnyjainfans/>

Twitter: @sunnydrums
<https://twitter.com/sunnydrums>

Spotify:
https://open.spotify.com/album/44nAny2j7tMjqr4yaGEPBK?si=-F58SkqhQcadKmWZ05oziw&dl_branch=1&nd=1

PRESS

“Sunny Jain, the drummer who leads the Red Baraat brass band, vastly expands his palette on ‘Wild Wild East,’ a furiously propulsive song. Bollywood meets New Orleans, new age, rock and whatever else it takes to make this five-minute track hurtle forward with a new fusion at every junction.”

- **The New York Times**

Best Albums of 2020. 5/5 star review. “Epic in every sense. One of the leading figures in North America’s burgeoning Asian music scene. A global musical alchemist and cultural agent provocateur.”

- **Songlines (UK)**

“Taking on immigrant and diaspora experiences, this is Jain's chance to represent himself, his family, and countless other Americans made to feel out of place because of their ancestry. He seizes the opportunity and soars.”

- **PopMatters**

“Creatively and ideologically, this is a perfect storm for Jain. Even in his already formidable body of work, *Wild Wild East* stands out as an album that not only deserves to be heard, but needs to be listened to. An understanding of the stories he tells here

with such musical brilliance is liable to change hearts and minds for the better. Sunny Jain is the cowboy we need today, blazing new trails ahead into a sonically marked sense of community.”

- PopMatters

“Many of these composition are intellectually thrilling to unravel. In *Wild Wild East*, shimmering walls of sound feel like floating face-down in a pool and watching light patterns dance on the floor.”

- Pitchfork

“Jain manages to find a work that in some way demands the listener and in that interaction he is able to give notions of truly novel music and soundscapes.” 9/10 stars

- Mondo Sonoro (Spain)

“Jain makes everything fire and flow, roll and combust. His drumming is never static or simply ‘in the pocket’; it’s in constant go mode: rolls rattling, beats careening, grooves always pressing, pushing for ecstatic release.”

- Modern Drummer

“Sunny Jain paints a rich canvas...whether mingling rhythms from Pakistan film soundtracks with spaghetti western motifs (‘Immigrant Warrior’) or spicing ragas with twisting, turning time signatures (‘Osian’; ‘Baaghi’) the energetic, groove-riding results prove utterly compelling throughout.”

- MOJO (UK)

"Red Baraat frontman Sunny Jain is back with his first solo album in nearly a decade, *Wild Wild East*, out now on Smithsonian Folkways, and this time he’s paying special attention to the concept of American westward expansion. Jain, whose parents are Indian immigrants, pulls from his heritage as well as a wealth of influences to mold *Wild Wild East*, a record that spans Bollywood to the Wild West to crowded jazz clubs.”

- Paste Magazine

“It sounds like the middle ground between a Western score and a Bollywood score, with a little free jazz in the mix too, and Sunny Jain fuses these things to the point where they sound like one focused style of music.”

- Brooklyn Vegan

“Jain breaks open the image of the swaggering American cowboy with his acidic, twangy, propulsively hypnotic songs. It's an inspired cinematic concept that conjures kaleidoscopic images. Jain has crafted a masterful, robust celebration of America's immigrant cowboy soul.”

- All Music