

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



KARSH KALE

Cinema

Karsh Kale (pronounced Kursh Kah-lay) is widely regarded as a pioneer of global fusion and electronica as his music has inspired and defined the worldwide club phenomenon known as “Asian Massive” or “Asian Underground” in the early part of the decade. Today Karsh’s music has travelled far past the underground club scene and has been featured on stages from Lincoln Center to the Burning Man Festival, and from the Barbican Center to the Hollywood Bowl.

Karsh’s diverse musical talents – whether as a world-class tabla player/drummer, producer, composer, songwriter, remixer or DJ – have led him to working with some of the world’s leading artists such as **Pandit Ravi Shankar, Sting, Zakir Hussain, Herbie Hancock, Lenny Kravitz, Anoushka Shankar, Yoko Ono, Bill Laswell, DJ Spooky, Shujaat Khan, Vijay Iyer, Chaka Khan, Paul Oakenfold** and many others.

As if his existing list of accomplishments and talents were not enough, Karsh has established himself as a cutting edge film composer in India’s fast paced “Bollywood” film industry while continuing to score independent and crossover films in the West. Kale and his production partners (MPKK) have also recently composed original music for a musical directed by Academy Award-nominated director **Shekhar Kapur** (*Elizabeth: The Golden Age*).

In the past ten years, Karsh released 4 critically acclaimed solo albums and has toured the world with various ensembles including Cinema Live, Timeline, Realize Live, Tabla Beat Science (w/ Zakir Hussain), Breathing Under Water (w/ Anoushka Shankar) and live with the Midival Punditz.

Describing the effect of having so many platforms at his disposal, Karsh states, *“Having many outlets for my sound has opened up the possibilities of what that sound can actually be for me. I often find myself moving quickly between a live set with my band to composing strings for a film to DJing a dirty dance set to writing an acoustic song within a short period of time. My sound comes from finding inspiration from those moments in between all of that madness.”*

Cinema is Karsh’s most ambitious album to date. Despite the myriad of influences pulsating through him during the two years it took to produce **Cinema**, many of the compositions were written on an acoustic guitar or piano – often while Karsh was either on the road, or in a studio. But as the title **Cinema** suggests, the process of scoring films has had as much impact on this album’s sound as Kale’s usual palette of progressive electro-rock and fusion influences. **Cinema** is the aggregate of these diverse inspirations, experiences and musical expressions within one cohesive vision.

The album begins with the enigmatic **“Island.”** The track retains both a retro and progressive feel borrowing from both nu-school electronica and an 80’s new wave guitar sound. The track features Kale on vocoded vocals and acoustic guitar as well as master flautist **Pandit Ajay Prasanna** on what sounds like an instrument straight out of a Frank Zappa composition. This track was inspired and born out of the film scoring sessions of **Ashes** (a film directed by and starring accomplished actor Ajay Naidu).”

Other tracks like **"Supernova," "Man On Fire"** and the title track **"Cinema,"** though disparate in their stylistic approaches, were also created and inspired by some of Kale's film-related world. **"Supernova"** – created while Karsh and his long-time collaborators the Midival Punditz undertook the commissioned rescoring of the 1973 Bruce Lee classic, *Enter the Dragon* – brings together an urgent santoor line with Kale's signature electric tabla sound, driven by a powerful breaks groove and glitched out production that could only be inspired by Bruce Lee himself. **"Man On Fire"** is an ambient wash of blissfully distorted sitar performed by **Pandit Sunil Das** and keyboards performed by Kale. It plays like an oasis from the otherwise loud and sometimes aggressive sound on the record, and is inspired by sounds of cremation of a human being on the banks of the Ganges.

The title track **"Cinema"** starts off with ambient guitars and bansuri flute almost as if to start a calm peaceful journey, only to then be taken into a different world all together. Prog-rock guitars collide with orchestral strings as a psychedelic odd time electro rhythm creates a bed for the serene classical vocals of **Vidhi Sharma**.

Karsh Kale honed his talents as a songwriter and penned songs with **Sting, Norah Jones, Anne Rani, Ed Kowalczyk** and the **Midival Punditz**. (Kale co-wrote and co-produced much of the Midival Punditz release *Hello Hello* in 2009). Writing on an acoustic guitar forced Karsh to start "writing songs based on changes and chord structure rather than modes and raags (Indian scales)." **"Avalanche"** is such a track – a dark cautionary tale that starts in what feels like an organic forest of piano, acoustic guitar and percussion only to then get uprooted into the modernity of flowing breaks and cinematic strings. The song features the earthy vocals of long-time Kale collaborator **Shahid Siddiqui**.

Another stand out collaboration comes in the form of **"Mallika Jam,"** which features the vocal stylings of Danish Pop sensation **Anne Rani**. The track quickly moves from dubstep inspired percussion and heavy Zeppelin style guitar riffs to a serene acoustic landscape where raag and pop vocals intermingle. The track also features sarod master **Pandit Mukesh Sharma**. **"Peekaboo,"** a dark ballad featuring the eerily sexy vocals of **Monica Dogra** (aka Shaair from India's critically acclaimed independent band Shaair n Func and the costar of the hit independent Bollywood film *Dhobi Ghat*). **"Peekaboo"** tackles the subject of obsession and stalking. The lyrics were penned by Kale and **Tapan Raj** (one half of the Indian electronica supergroup The Midival Punditz) who also added production on the track.

Karsh's wide palette of musical inspiration manifests itself in his collaboration with the lead singer of indie-rock darling, **Todd Michaelsen** of **My Pet Dragon** on the track **"Phoenix Rising."** The track evolves into a larger-than-life sound pinning power chords against drum and bass beats and growling synth bass lines.

For fans of early Karsh Kale albums *Realize* and *Liberation*, Karsh does not disappoint as tracks like **"Sunbeam," "Ma"** and **"Absence"** retain that old school Karsh Kale quality; merging classical Indian forms like Ghazal, Hindustani and film music with Kale's electro-rock inspired aesthetic. Guest artists **Vishal Vaid, Papon** and **Shruti Pathak** bring a fresh and nuanced approach to traditional Indian vocals. Each is a master in their own right but is framed to maximum effect by Karsh's production, arrangement and composition skills.

Two songs featured on *Cinema* were inspired and created days after returning from the annual **Burning Man** festival – a seven-day experimental artistic gathering in the desolate and extreme Black Rock Desert of Nevada with over 50,000 people experiencing some of the finest electronica musicians and visual artists from around the world. *"I was super inspired and full of music after returning from a challenging yet moving experience at Burning Man. I wrote **"Joy"** as an ode to the sunrise set...and **"Sandstorm"** as an ode to harsh nights. For those who have been there, I think these sounds will ring true....but they are not really finished till I get to drop them on the Playa."*

The sonic landscape of ***Cinema*** was created with Karsh's tried and true team of collaborators: **Gaurav Raina** of the **Midival Punditz** co-produced the album while Indian film composer **Salim Merchant** also makes an appearance – this time as a co-writer on “**Ma**,” which also features a vocal hook sung by Kale's daughter **Milan Xai**. Kale also employed good friend and master producer **Lasse “Illinton” Jensen** for the final mixes. An album inspired by his film-related musical endeavors required a strong visual statement to compliment the music on ***Cinema***. As such, Karsh collaborated with award winning visual artist **Archan Nair** from New Delhi to give the album a strong visual statement.

With ***Cinema***, it is clear that Karsh's sources of inspiration have expanded – from Indian classical, to electronica, to rock and now to music for film. Challenging himself to write songs with an ear for Western modalities, Karsh further pushes if not blurs the boundaries of rock, world and electronic music.

FOR MORE PRESS INFO PLEASE CONTACT:

Six Degrees Records: **Jeremy Valencia, 415.626.6334 (ext. 114), jeremy@sixdegreesrecords**