

# BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



## **Bombay Dub Orchestra**

### *3 Cities*

Step inside the sound of **3 Cities**, **Bombay Dub Orchestra's** sophomore release, and experience the crossroads where **Mumbai**, **Chennai**, and **London** musically meet. Since the release of their self-titled debut, the name Bombay Dub Orchestra (consisting of composer/producers **Garry Hughes** and **Andrew T. Mackay**) has built quite a reputation. From main-stage performances at the UK's **Big Chill Festival** and Djing across the globe, scoring feature films to remixing such world-renowned artists as **Bob Marley**, **Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan**, and **Bebel Gilberto**, fans and critics have been eagerly awaiting their next album. For **3 Cities**, both Hughes and Mackay traveled to Mumbai and Chennai to record with the cities' premier musicians and vocalists before returning to London to mix the album. **3 Cities** is where their cinematic soundscapes meet Indian Classical and electronica featuring a huge cast of over 75 musicians.

The second installment in **Bombay Dub Orchestra's** ongoing East-West fusion project is sure to impress fans of their debut; at times it's lush and relaxed, and at others it takes the listener on a rollicking ride down the Ganges from the Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal with sounds both new and old. The duo says that they "didn't set out to do anything that different on this album. We just continued doing exactly what we wanted to do without any borders, boundaries or restraints. We of course wanted to increase our palette of sounds further than the first one – but we had to let it grow organically so nothing was forced or contrived. We did however use a lot more acoustic instruments."

**Mumbai (formerly Bombay)** is where the majority of **3 Cities** was created and is central to the Bombay Dub Orchestra project. The people, the music, the colours, the buildings, the smells, the food and life in the heart of the city has been integral to the inspiration behind their work. Both Hughes and Mackay have been traveling to Mumbai since the early 90's and first worked together there in 1998. Mackay elaborates, "We have a great rapport with the musicians and technicians in Mumbai and have built strong relationships over the last ten years." Mackay adds, "The soloists are amazing and there is a great selection of musicians, some veterans of the industry who have played on the biggest film scores and records in the last thirty years. Then there are the new breed of young players who are coming up and have great enthusiasm for music and have learned so much from the masters before them. **3 Cities** proudly features both."

The second city represented on the album is **Chennai** (Madras). Although both Hughes and Mackay had visited Chennai before, this was their first time recording there. They immediately made a real connection with the musicians, recording at the studios of revered composer and musician **A R Rahman**. This is where they worked with some of the most dedicated string players and soloists. As Hughes states, "The string players that we recorded with worked extraordinary hours - something you would never find in the UK or US. They were recording from 7am until 2pm with AR Rahman and then we would record with them from 3pm until 9pm. By this time as you can imagine they were pretty tired but it never showed. The players were amazing, especially considering we had never worked with the majority of them before."

After extensive recording sessions in Mumbai and Chennai, Bombay Dub Orchestra returned back home from their apartment in Lokhandwala, Mumbai to the United Kingdom. They recorded in various parts of the UK including **London** where the vocals of singers Kartik and Meneka were recorded as well as some sitar and percussion. The biggest UK sessions were recorded at Rockfield Studios, located on a farm near the hamlet of Rockfield on the Welsh border. A legendary music studio set up in the 1960s, the facility has the vibe left from five decades of recording with the likes of Queen, Black Sabbath, Simple Minds, Echo and the Bunnymen, Robert Plant and Oasis. Here BDO recorded live drums, percussion, tablas, Rhodes and piano. The Bosendorfer Grand piano that was used on **3 Cities** is the very same one that Freddie Mercury recorded 'Bohemian Rhapsody' on.

**3 Cities** opens with "**Egypt by Air**," an imaginary journey from India to Egypt inspired by a 1930's travel poster - an intriguing track layered with sweeping strings and built on a heavy dance beat fused with ouds, darabukas and the group's synthesizer sequences. "**Journey**" is based on two Indian Raags (scales) featuring singer Kartik, along with Ashwin Srinivasan's bansuri (flute), Sunil Das' beautiful sitar, a santoor (a kind of hammered dulcimer) played by Ulhas Bapat, and a slow but heavy trip-hop groove. "**Strange Constellations**," an immediate electro-pop melody driven 'Love Song' (according to Hughes - the only love

song he has ever written) hits home from the first beat with an overwhelmingly beautiful and simplistic melody.

“**Junoon**,” featuring the vocals of Meneka could almost hail from a classic Indian film with its mix of Hindi/Urdu lyrics. Virtuoso bansuri, with cinematic strings mix with squelchy synths on a slow Indian percussion led beat. “**Spiral (3 Cities)**” is a collage of the sub-continent with its south Indian percussion, North Indian Vocals again by Kartik, dilruba and tarshennai by Chennai based musician Saroja, tough beats and electrically charged strings! “**Map of Dusk**,” is dreamy and atmospheric with ambient guitar and flute atop live drums and percussion. Shimmering strings rise from the ambience creating another exotic cinematic landscape.

“**Fallen**” features the vocals of Mumbai based singer Hamsika Iyer. Her haunting voice is supported by Abdullah Mufa’s brushed drums and Mackay’s jazz-inflected piano. Mysterious bansuri lines weave amongst the vocals and evocative strings. “**Greenish Blue**” is a vast and dynamic cinematic piece, which, according to Mackay “is a gentle nod to the soundtrack of the classic Indian film ‘Ram Teri Ganga Meli’ by blind composer Ravindra Jain.” “**Monsoon Malabar’s**” multiple male vocals build up layers of harmony leading into a strong electro-dance groove with washes of live Indian percussion. The result is one of the album’s most dynamic and energetic tracks.

“**Feasting with Panthers**” features bass clarinet clusters, dark melodies, chilled beats and restrained strings and is followed by album closer “**Amina**,” with an episodic arrangement that starts out quiet and contemplative, then gradually turns beat-heavy (courtesy of young UK based drummer Will Brown).

“We now have a core group of musicians who we have recorded with over the last two albums and who have played live with us over the last two years,” say Mackay. “We’ve been blessed to be working with some of the finest musicians in the world.”

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