

# BAKUDI SCREAM LIVE (2025)

FOR BAKUDI SCREAM

ROHAN CHANDER / BAKUDI SCREAM

2025

DURATION: 25'-30'

## NOTES:

The following is a documentation of a BAKUDI SCREAM live performance which occurred in February 2025 at Trans Pecos, NYC. The set was curated as part of the *Heavy Hearts* series and features a collection of pieces from different projects, all of which are formalized into rituals that are performed in costume. Armed with a microphone and pair of manjira, my live performances tend to adapt the trappings of a hardcore show to explore political, spiritual, and social apathy within and around my community.

The rituals each implicate both BAKUDI SCREAM and the audience in different dynamics. In some instances, the audience is directly questioned. At others, they dance with me. These dynamics not only conjure different social rituals, they invite the audience to explore the story of the *hindoo* cyborg- one that is deliberately designed to invite questions instead of answers.

The cyborg costume began as an interrogation of my limits. Having dealt with social phobias and ongoing blood conditions, I wanted to design a suit that could allow me to express myself more freely, and even mosh, without fear of self-perception or injury. In the many versions of this costume, I have explored how certain technologies would enable that freedom while also function as a broader vision for personhood, identity, and emotionality. As of 2025, this pursuit has resulted in a suit comprised of a metallic mask, vocal microphone, manjira, and large red light, which is fixed inside a translucent backpack that I wear throughout the show.

The vision for the red light was to mimic a kind of alien "weak spot" by thinking of it as a heart that lives on the outside of the body. As I move around the space, the function of this "heart light" transforms. When pointed into the faces of the audience, the light forces confrontation, spotlighting them to others in the venue. At other times, the light becomes a guide, directing BAKUDI SCREAM as if a searchlight. However in the penultimate song of this set, the light fully pulses like a heart beat as it is chained and dragged. This gesture culminates in the only reveal of my face during the show, a moment that's accompanied by a lyric from my song *BrownApe.wmd*: "and the brown ape clanking a heavy chain."

In addition, a pair of my grandmother's prayer manjiras are used throughout the set, drawing its spiritual function into a performance practice. I sometimes approach an audience member and strike the manjira patiently in front of them, as if to ward away nearby spirits. At other times, I lunge erratically, as if to capture wayward ones. These moments then become sonified by a small wireless mic affixed to the manjira, which not only amplifies it, but enables it to trigger any sonic event in the work. In this set, they are used to trigger drone passages, generative piano clusters, and chopped up drum recordings, all of which respond to the semi-improvised choreography of the set.

Amidst this interaction of movement and light, my mask and vocal microphone thread an expressive discontinuity. While my face is not visible for most of the show, my voice is exponentialized, often processed into a series of delays, distortions, and reverbs. Drawing from traditions of hardcore, dub, and noise music, the vocal performance lays across this faceless body as if emerging from a place non-human, inviting an interrogation of my identity. This are the same interrogations I reflect in the formal and aesthetic pathway of my set, manifesting in a shift between ritual and song.

The following outlines the rituals of this live show:

(0:20) OPENING PRAYER/ dream ritual pt. 1

(5:17) purification ritual

(07:13) dream ritual pt. 2

(9:07) ghost seeking ritual from "VIOLENT RHYTHM GAMES"

(10:50) ghost summoning ritual from "VIOLENT RHYTHM GAMES"

(13:35) how much do you want? from "Greed/Masters"

(19:41) the heavy heart from "BrownApe.wmd"

(25:33) PIT MOMENT from "Blessed are those who go the way of integrity, Who walk in the law of God."

This set was filmed by Max Nierlich.