

four movement suite from

# PREY

- I. YOU ON, GOD? (4:20)
- II. GREED/MASTERS (5:36)
- III. BROWN APE.WMD (4:56)
- IV. THE CONQUEST (FT. GW MAXXED) (2:34)

FOR ELECTRONICS, CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, ELECTRIC GUITAR,  
& BAKUDI SCREAM

COMMISSIONED BY THE MATT MARKS IMPACT FUND  
**ROHAN CHANDER / BAKUDI SCREAM**  
2025  
DURATION: 17' 28"

## **COMPOSITION NOTES:**

*Prey* marks the completion of a multi-year project commissioned by the chamber group Alarm Will Sound via the Matt Marks Impact Fund. The work was written through a recursive process of improvisation, recording, and re-sampling of both the ensemble and my own solo work over the course of five years. The following is a four movement excerpt of what is a 10 movement, 40 minute long performance piece, which can be listened to here: <https://bakudi-scream.bandcamp.com/album/prey>

*Prey* is a confrontation of South Asian and European imperial legacies. The work attempts to compress the distance between their respective histories to highlight continuums and reverberations of violence, as well as possible etymologies. It does so by engaging with the languages of faith, worship, and ritual, yet mostly through sounds, from both heritages, that are superficially secular. Within that secularity however lies appeals to higher powers or confrontations with our limits of personal understanding, all of which create vacuums for the assertion of authority, control, and manipulation.

Juxtaposition becomes the essential mechanic in exposing those forces. However in *Prey*, juxtaposition can occur on global scales. Shifting between the formal trappings of industrial punk, dhol tasha, Christian rock, dub, orchestral music, and hip hop, the work employs genre as a supercharging of micro-overlays. Histories extending from each genre become part of a "treated" perspective on the sounds I choose to embed within them, creating what I hope to be a layered depth of field on a South Asian and diaspora identity.

As a performance experience, *Prey* concentrates those layers into the BAKUDI SCREAM cyborg. Donning my full-body suit and mask, I move erratically through the crowd, using a microphone and pair of wirelessly amplified manjira. From within the audience, I perform a collection of sacralized rituals, sometimes engaging the audience with questions or a dance. In that choreography, I try to seesaw the viewer between being witnesses to participants, akin to what it would be like to participate in an organized religious service. However, a sense of danger is maintained throughout this act, as if the appeal to a supreme being might snap back at you any moment.

The first piece for this suite is *you on, god? (0:00)*, the third movement of *Prey*. This movement introduces the essential cultural dichotomy of the work. Orchestral, choral, dhol, and vocal acapellas overlay in a semi-improvised form before breaking into an accelerated dhol and choir duet. Across this transition, sonic overlays shift from functionally juxtapositional to homogenized, as if trying to push their liturgical, political, or expressive histories together. This process is punctuated by a Kanye West acapella: "Lord and Saviour I replied, i'mma ride, that's on god" from his record "JESUS IS KING."

*Greed/Masters (4:20)* resamples text from two culturally disparate songs, Fugazi's "Greed" and Anirudh Ravichander's "Vaathi Raid." "Greed" speaks plainly to the exploitative nature of a higher power; however "Vaathi Raid" is a song sequenced to an action set piece of the 2020 Tollywood film, *Master*. In that film, "Vaathi Raid" (which translates to *master's raid*) cues a sequence for the film's protagonist, a school teacher (addressed in Tamil as *vaathi*, or master) as he goes on a vengeful attack to protect his students. In an isolated context, the translation of *master's raid* suggests numerous historical and colonial implications, but within the context of Tollywood cinema, the lyrics glorifying the

singular action hero reflect an endemic reality. In attempt to critique the South Asian obsession with savior types, I frame these two songs against each other, housing them within a post-hardcore vision of dhol tasha, a South Asian marching tradition with military ties.

In *BrownApe.wmd* (**09:56**), the framing narrows to a single song – “Fable of the Brown Ape” by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds. The lyrics of the original song are more abstractly presented, telling the story of a farmer, who upon seeing a serpent and a “brown ape” in his barn, decides to capture and care for them until an angry mob discovers his act and kills the snake, freeing the ape. Loosely inspired from an Aesop fable (among other Asian folktales), the original lyrics speak to pleasing a corrupt power and perhaps Cave’s own relationship to faith. In my composition, all the lyrics are removed aside from one: “and the brown ape clanking a heavy chain,” which appears as a loop only at the end of the movement. The racialization of the ape was interesting to consider given that I’m a brown man, who in the past, has been described like a monkey given my “excess body hair.”

In *BrownApe.wmd*, lyrics are traded in for insistence. The central beat is a dub-ified version of the original groove of the song and prominently features members of Alarm Will Sound in a structured improvisation. Echoes of bansuri flutes, feedbacked multiphonics, and the blues blossoms into “praise break” moments that pull the sound of classic rock into the dialogue of heritage. This culminates in a competing improvisation between the electric guitar and flute, both drawing from respective traditions of classic rock and hindustani bansuri. Occasional interjections of Del The Funky Homosapien comments on the nature of that interaction, framing it as rhythm that is owned: “you either have it or you don’t.”

*The Conquest (ft. GW MAXXED)* (**14:52**) functions as a formal interlude, using the song form to embody the sound of Christian rock and midwest emo. As a sound so deeply tied to an American nostalgia, I was curious as to what existing within that as an Indian man would imply. What memories do I revisit? And how do those memories fit against what “American nostalgia” is? It then felt only fitting to sing, in Hindi, of the oldest American pastime: colonial violence – the same structures that subjugated my ancestors under British rule. I do this under a pseudonym, GW MAXXED, an abbreviation of both Good Will and George Washington.

In *Prey*, worship is a through line through which imperial machinations can propagate. *The Conquest* however takes faith as a flexing of cultural memory, and specifically, histories we may be unwittingly speaking to when we pray. This idea becomes catalyzed in the song’s outro by a sample from an Oprah interview conducted with a father-son preacher duo. After the son aggressively recites scripture, he is quickly questioned by Oprah: “People want to know, what that means.”

*Prey* was created by recording orally guided improvisations with members of Alarm Will Sound. These recordings were sampled and then used to create additional improvisations, a process that went on for several years. As such, there is no written score for the work. A full theatrical setting of the project with Alarm Will Sound is currently in development, however individual songs from the project are often included in BAKUDI SCREAM solo sets. Additional electric guitars were contributed by Dani Strigi.

## **TEXT:**

### **Greed/Masters**

do what you what you want

You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything

You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything

You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
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You wanted everything  
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You needed everything

You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything  
You wanted everything  
You needed everything

Ulagaththaram ullooru vaathiyaaru  
Thookkippottu saathuvaaru  
thatti-thatti thookkuvaaru

Kettappulla thirundhida sattam dhaandaa edam  
Ulla vandhum thappu senjaaa vaathi raid'u varum  
Vaathi raid'u, vaathi raid'u, vaathi raid'u  
Vandhu wanted'ahvae maattiraadha paathu poidu  
Nanbaa nalla maari sollum podhae kaettu poidu  
Namma vaathi raid'u, vaathi raid'u, vaathi raid'u

Bangam-bangam badhiladi, sandhum-pondhum saravedi  
Annan pannum adhiradi, vaathi yaaru?, Thalapathy

Ulagaththaram ullooru vaathiyaaru  
Thookkippottu saathuvaaru  
thatti-thatti thookkuvaaru  
Kettappulla thirundhida sattam dhaandaa edam  
Ulla vandhum thappu senjaaa vaathi raid'u varum  
Vaathi raid'u, vaathi raid'u, vaathi raid'u  
Vandhu wanted'ahvae maattiraadha paathu poidu  
Nanbaa nalla maari sollum podhae kaettu poidu  
Namma vaathi raid'u, vaathi raid'u, vaathi raid'u

### **Greed/Masters (tamil translation, approximate)**

the local master has an international level  
he'll beat up the bad guys  
he'll punch and carry  
the bad ones to court, where the reform takes place  
if you enter you've made a mistake  
master's raid will be there  
master's raid  
master's raid  
master's raid  
if you don't want to get arrested  
you move carefully  
when you are advised to by a friend, you leave  
it's our masters raid master's raid masters raid  
master's raid  
master's raid  
master's raid  
when you take his support, don't change sides  
don't fight this master, step aside  
it's our master's raid, master's raid, master's raid  
  
there is constant back and forth  
there is constant fireworks nearby

so brother take's immediate action  
who is this master  
he is the commander, Thalapathy

*(Vijay Thalapathy is the actor playing the main character)*

the local master has an international level  
he'll beat up the bad guys  
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the bad ones to court, where the reform takes place  
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master's raid  
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if you don't want to get arrested  
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when you are advised to by a friend, you leave  
it's our masters raid master's raid masters raid  
master's raid  
master's raid  
master's raid  
when you take his support, don't change sides  
don't fight this master, step aside  
it's our master's raid, master's raid, master's raid

### **The Conquest (ft. GW MAXXED)**

mein shayyad khud kamane  
lekin main nahin karta  
agar hinsa aasaan hotee aur  
agar main sab bhool gaya

jab mein kamare mein aaya  
ek ajeeb see muskaan thee  
Meine likha ek kahaani  
ek ya do maa mar gayee

it's the power of The Conquest

ek devta ne kaha  
yeh duniya kamzor hai  
kya hum kheth ko jala

ko ek naya pyaar sab ke lie

yah manzil poochtha kya  
kya khidkee banaane ki  
vah kehta hai naksha  
jaanta hai  
jab hum daudte bhi

Yeh vijay ki shakti hai  
it's the power of The Conquest

**The Conquest (ft. GW MAXXED) (hindi translation, approximate)**

i probably could earn it  
but i can't talk myself back in  
the casualness of violence  
or if memory was a sin

when I walked into the map room  
i could feel a creepy grin  
my history was made here  
where you left my mom for dead

it's the power of the conquest

every story that was made up  
is the world just not enough  
when will earth blow up again  
so we'd have something new to love

how many thousand people  
does it take to build a view  
he swears the map will tell us  
just before we all run loose

it's the power of the conquest  
it's the power of The Conquest