

TARIQ

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<http://beatrouteab.files.wordpress.com/2013/06/tariq-m.jpg>)MULTI-TALENTED BRASSTRONAUT MEMBER GOES MOONWALKING

BeatRoute meets Tariq Hussain at a coffee shop to talk about his new EP, Moonwalker, which came

out this April and follows four full-length solo albums. It's a great little collection of songs which explores themes of isolation, regret and mortality.

Tariq says that, when making the EP, he tried to mix some of his usual folk/country elements and organic sounds with synthesizer sounds. The result still sits in the singer-songwriter camp but with a bit of an atmospheric twist.

Tariq just got back from a five-week European tour with Brasstronaut, with whom he plays lead guitar and lap steel. It was their fourth tour of duty across the pond, and he says this was the best trip yet. The history of Europe, playing in an Old Hitler bunker in Hamburg, Germany and being treated like a big fish with lavish dinners and buckets of beers were some of the high points of the trip. The all-ages audiences, he remembers, were "very enthusiastic in a very interesting, almost controlled way. They would listen attentively to every song till the very last note before erupting in applause." Touring Europe was an amazing experience, one he is writing into a thesis/memoir about his personal experiences with music for his Masters degree in creative writing at UBC. He hopes to publish this upon completion.

He joined up with Brasstronaut in 2009 after they had been playing together for a couple years and needed to fill out their band for a show at the Biltmore. The show was a great success and when they asked him to join the band, Tariq didn't think twice. He wanted the experience of being in a democratic collective. They've been together ever since.

If you look up Tariq online you will not only find all of his musical pursuits, but the webpage for his CBC satellite radio show Tariq Hussain on Air. He has been a guest host with the CBC for 5 years – something that started in his Calgary days and followed him out west to Vancouver, where he is now based. He also writes an accompanying blog where you can get a taste of his quirkily funny writing style and his points of view on bands, their music and lyrics.

When asked to look back over the years, he says what's been surprising is how "it just keeps going. How doing it for this long things become more natural and you get closer to finding ways to continue to make music that satisfies you."

Now that Tariq has finished his EP, he's already looking to start something new. He's toying with the idea of incorporating some samples and sounds from his childhood years growing up listening to Fijian and Hindi music. Brasstronaut is ready to get back in the studio, an experience he looks forward to. Everyone has input. This time around, the process has more structure, with band members bringing in ideas to pitch to each other for songs. It's great to have the balance between sitting in a room alone playing, and then having a full-band dynamic and touring.

Brasstronaut plays Khatsalano! Music + Art Festival on July 13.

By Matthew Anderson

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