



SOUND SCAPE

music
symposium
& masterclass series

youth

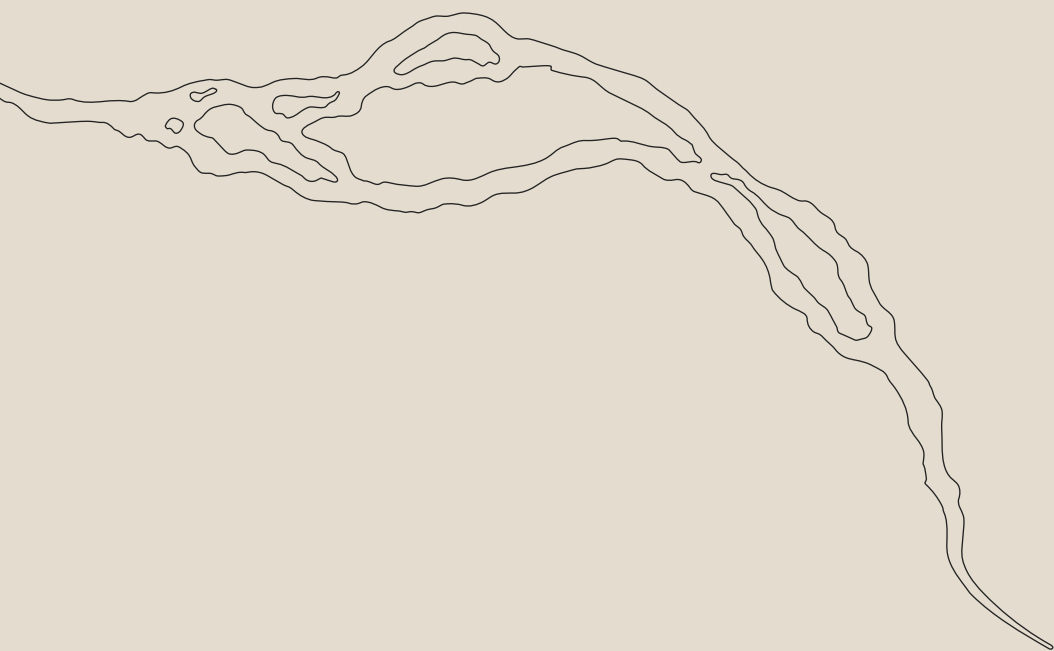
legacy

future



SOUNDSCAPE 2025 PROGRAMME

Contents:



01 About SoundScape and Our Values

Page 03

02 Schedule

Page 07

03 SoundScape Sessions

Page 11

04 Contributor Profiles

Page 22

About Soundscape

SoundScape is the British Council's flagship music programme which brings together artists, educators and industry leaders to celebrate Pakistan's vibrant music ecosystem through learning, dialogue and international collaboration. Launched in 2023, the programme provides a space for curiosity, reflection, playfulness and connection. The inaugural edition, co-curated by Mekaal Hasan and Natasha Ejaz, featured a diverse group of contributors including Maanu, Azfar Hussain, Natasha Noorani, Daniel Panjwaney, Sana Nasir, Hassan and Roshan, Talal Qureshi, Gumby and Arieab Azhar. Building on the success and learnings from the inaugural edition, SoundScape 2025 brings together current and future stakeholders from British Council music programming to focus on the most pressing conversations emerging from Pakistan's music sector today.

Pakistan's music industry, rooted in centuries of rich tradition yet open to constant reinvention, presents a unique space for intergenerational dialogue. This programme celebrates legacy artists, spotlights emerging talent, and builds bridges between the two, fostering a collaborative and forward-looking musical future. At SoundScape, we aim to honour the many people who keep this dynamic, ever-evolving sector alive.

Our Values

SoundScape has been designed as a space where every voice is valued and differences in identity, culture and creative approach are embraced as a source of enrichment. This commitment to inclusion and integrity flows naturally into the programme, ensuring that learning, reflection and creative engagement take place in a safe and supportive environment.

We prioritise the wellbeing of venues, staff, volunteers and participants. As a community built on trust and safety, we do not tolerate discrimination, hate speech or harassment. The SoundScape team is always at hand to offer support whenever needed.



James Hampson **Country Director Pakistan, British Council**

Welcome to the second edition of SoundScape.

I'm really pleased that you're able to join us in Karachi, whether you've travelled from the UK or another place in Pakistan, for what is obviously going to be a great few days together. We were proud of what happened two years ago and everything which has taken place since.

For us at the British Council, that's included playing a role in bringing Chain of Light into people's lives and maintaining my commitment to supporting new talent from Pakistan by connecting it with the UK.

We all know that the creative industries are an important part of the British economy, adding £8billion, contributing much more to the global good, through what is undoubtedly an optimistic pursuit.

The British Council is in the optimism business and it's because of this, our commitment to connecting the whole of Pakistan to all four nations of the UK through arts, culture and education that we're here. Supporting artistic exchange and creative collaboration across multiple art forms, connecting UK and Pakistani artists through programmes that strengthen skills, foster innovation, and build long-term cultural partnerships is who we are, and what we do.

So, whether you're a musician, producer, engineer or a student of music, then there's something here for you over the next few days. Thank you to my own team from British Council Pakistan and it's great to see Tom Sweet from our HQ back in Karachi. I'm grateful for the continued partnership of Saffron UK and Natasha Ejaz's curation of Soundscape 2.

Like all sequels, we want it to be different and better than its predecessor while respecting what made last time so good that we wanted to do it again – and most definitely not the difficult second album.



Natasha Ejaz **Curator, SoundScape 2025**

When I first came onboard to co-curate the inaugural edition of SoundScape in 2023, I didn't see it as a "job" in a strictly professional sense. I saw it as a chance to step away from my everyday routine and bring my eyes, ears, mind, heart and body into a space where musicians are trying - often quietly, often against the odds - to make sense of their craft and their place in the world.

Coming back in 2025, I've realised that SoundScape isn't just a series of music events, it's a temperature check. It's a way of asking: Who are we becoming as a music community? What are we learning? Where do we still feel stuck? And what tools, voices and questions do we need to invite in so we can move forward honestly? It is with this intention that I return to curation. Not as an authority, not as someone claiming to represent the entire sector, but as someone who cares deeply about the individuals who make up this sector. Designing SoundScape 2025 has been an up-close and personal reflection for me, on a small but deeply meaningful corner of Pakistan's music ecosystem.

I have of course had the help of many esteemed and skilled practitioners and presenters of the arts. To James Hampson, Laila Jamil and Tom Sweet - thank you for trusting me and my vision, and for placing me in the capable hands of the SoundScape lead Haider Ali Khan and British Council Arts Team colleagues Fatima Mullick and Ahsan Abbas. Their leadership gave myself and my team the space to build this year's programming collaboratively and openly.

To my curation team - Almitra Mavalvala, Saad Mazher, Shahmir Hashmi and Samiya Asim - your curiosity and hopefulness brought this vision to life. I couldn't be more grateful to learn and grow alongside you.

To those within the sector who shared their time, thoughts, frustrations and excitement with us: thank you. You know who you are. If SoundScape 2025 makes any impact at all, it is because of your generosity.

We tried to gather as many perspectives as we could in the symposium, but I want to emphasise that this is in no way an exhaustive representation of Pakistan's music community. What you see here is simply the closest spark we could find in the months leading up to SoundScape to fan the beginnings of a fire we hope to encourage with intention and imagination.

In conclusion, our hope is that SoundScape 2025 offers artists not just information, but relief, connection and the reminder that they are part of something larger than their own struggle.



Haider Ali Khan **Arts Programme Manager, British Council**

SoundScape begins from a simple truth: Music is not just performed and heard in Pakistan, it is lived. It is found in our stories, our celebrations, our traditions and our identities. From folk music and classical forms to independent artists and digital creators, music is how we express who we are and how we belong as Pakistanis.

Built from this powerful legacy, the SoundScape programme is designed to support the next generation of musicians, producers, educators and cultural leaders by creating opportunities and enabling access. It responds to a moment of real momentum in Pakistan: a generation of artists ready to define new futures, record labels and producers pushing boundaries, new educational pathways emerging, and a growing appetite among global partners to collaborate meaningfully. It also acknowledges the gaps, including access to training, infrastructure, networks, safe creative spaces and opportunities to connect beyond borders.

The masterclasses, talks and performances have all been curated with the intention to build confidence, share skills, strengthen community and encourage new ways of thinking and making. Everyone involved brings a unique perspective, and it is this diversity that makes the programme meaningful.

At its heart, SoundScape is about growth. Growth for the sector, growth for the artists and growth in how Pakistan connects with the world through music.

SCHEDULE:

26 NOV 2025



Saffron Meet & Greet

Saffron UK, British Council

5:00 PM — 7:00 PM



Opening Dinner and Performance

British Council, APMC

7:00 PM — 10:00 PM

27 NOV 2025

MASTERCLASS PROGRAMME

11:30 AM - 2:30 PM



**Recording the Unrecorded:
Preserving Pakistan’s Living Music Traditions**

Sameer Khan, Faizan Ali

11:30 AM — 12:30 PM



**Worldbuilding in Music:
The Power of Style & Image**

Nael Hafeez, Haiya Bokhari

11:30 AM — 12:30 PM



The Art & History of the DJ

Bill Brewster, Lyla

1:00 PM — 2:30 PM



**From the Ground Up:
A Homegrown Model of Learning with Saffron Music**

Sophia Ahmed, Raphay Shehzad, Mahnoor Shah

1:00 PM — 2:30 PM



**Audio Engineering in the Wild:
Recording Music in Remote Locations**

Asteria, Adeel Tahir

1:00 PM — 2:30 PM

2:30 PM Arrivals

3:00 PM Welcome Speeches
British Council, Natasha Ejaz

Sound Bath 3:15 PM — 3:35 PM
Israa Shafi

3:35 PM Ice Breaker
Natasha Ejaz, Hassaan Bin Shaheen

Meesha Shafi in Conversation with Haroon Rashid 4:10 PM — 4:55 PM
Meesha Shafi, Haroon Rashid

Educating the Next Generation: Music Policy & Practice 5:00 PM — 5:45 PM
Arieb Azhar, Zainub Khawaja, Hamza Jafri, Nishant Shakya, Zara Madani [Moderator]

Language, Sound & Creative Inspiration 5:50 PM — 6:35 PM
Natasha Baig, Jimmy Khan, Adeel Afzal [Moderator]

6:35 PM Break

Activity: Mapping the Pakistani Music Scene 6:50 PM — 7:50 PM
Natalia Gul, Tom Sweet

7:50 PM SoundScape Exchange & Dinner
Everybody!

Closing Performance 8:30 PM — 9:15 PM
Sameen Isfahany, [Athena] (Adeena Sabir), Almitra Mavalvala

Sunny Side Up! 9:30 PM — 1:00 AM
Bill Brewster, Lyla



Instrument 101: Sitar

Rakae Jamil

11:30 AM — 12:30 PM



Instrument 101: Voice

Aizaz Sohail

11:30 AM — 12:30 PM



Instrument 101: Piano

Nishant Shakya

11:30 AM — 12:30 PM



Making Sense of the Data

Maria Unera, Pasha Aslam

1:00 PM — 2:30 PM



Galvanising for Global Reach

Umnia Iftikhar, Abdullah Siddiqui

1:00 PM — 2:30 PM



Songwriting 101

Schumaila Rehmat Hussain, Nadir Shehzad

1:00 PM — 2:30 PM



2:30 PM

Arrivals

3:00 PM

Ice breaker



**Between Spotlight & Solitude:
Fame & Mental Health**

Meesha Shafi, Sharmeen Khan, Abdullah Siddiqui, Sabah Bano Malik [Moderator]

3:25 PM — 4:10 PM



Music as Resistance

Saif Samejo, Shams Mansur, blal bloch, Hassaan Bin Shaheen [Moderator]

4:15 PM — 5:00 PM



**Authenticity & Image in the
Modern Media Landscape**

Faris Shafi, Haroon Rashid [Moderator]

5:05 PM — 5:55 PM

5:55 PM

Break



Activity: Building Ecosystems of Support for Artists

Arieb Azhar, Tom Sweet

6:10 PM — 7:40 PM

7:40 PM

SoundScape Exchange & Dinner

Everybody!

9:00 PM

Closing Performance

Saakin, Uzair Jaswal



Saffron Meet & Greet

Date: 26 November 2025

Time: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Venue: British Council

Hosted by Sophia Ahmed [Saffron Music UK], British Council

If you are a female or non-binary music maker, this meet and greet is designed just for you! Saffron UK and the British Council have been collaborating for the last four years to create a safe and supportive environment for female and non-binary music creators in Pakistan. Join us to connect with the Saffron PK 2025 Cohort, meet this year's Saffron UK delegate, Sophia Ahmed, and network with fellow artists and producers.



Opening Dinner & Performance

Date: 26 November 2025

Time: 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM

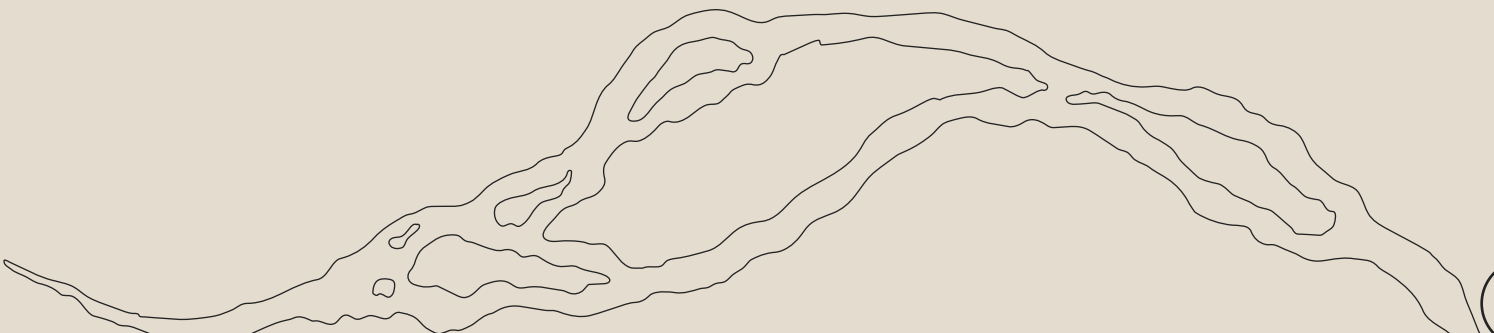
Venue: British Council

Hosted by British Council

Join the students of All Pakistan Music Conference (APMC), Karachi's Darsgah Project, piloted this year, as they present their graduating recital. This ground-breaking initiative has quickly become a cornerstone of APMC's vision, redefining how subcontinental classical music is taught, learnt and experienced today.

The Darsgah Project also opens new pathways, making classical training more accessible to students beyond traditional gharana lineages, and nurturing a new generation of artists with fresh perspectives.

This recital celebrates the dedication and artistry of the first cohort of students who have thrived under the generous mentorship of esteemed Ustads: Ustad Raza Ali Khan, Ustad Ashraf Sharif Khan, Ustad Sabz Ali Khan and Ustad Shahbaz Hussain. The performers include Meesam Abbas Jafri, Zain ul Hassan, Mujtaba Ashraf, Ayla Raza, Ayaan Saqib, Shahsawar Yusufzai, Sadaf Habib, Rumaysa Iqbal, Azalan Haider, Zarr Hassan, Arsalan Abbas and Hasnain Raza.



Recording the Unrecorded: Preserving Pakistan's Living Music Traditions

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Sameer Khan [SOC Films], Faizan Ali [SOC Films]

What happens to musical tradition when only a few voices remain to carry it forward? This session explores SOC Films' Pakistan Music Vault, a digital archive on Google Arts & Culture preserving Pakistan's living musical heritage through performances, oral histories and craftsmanship. Drawing on fieldwork across Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and the wider Pakistani landscape, it highlights a story-driven approach to keeping olden music alive as an evolving, shared tradition.

Worldbuilding in Music: The Power of Style & Image

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Nael Hafeez [Collected XX], Haiya Bokhari

Led by stylists who work at the intersection of fashion and music, Nael Hafeez and Haiya Bokhari conduct this forward thinking masterclass on how artists translate their musical ideas into a clear brand direction. They will dive into the art of visual storytelling through personal style, unpacking how what you wear and how you present yourself can become a powerful extension of your sound and identity. Participants will be guided towards developing a visual language that feels authentic without losing the joy of experimentation and self-discovery.

The Art & History of the DJ

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Bill Brewster, Lyla

Over the last 40 years, Bill Brewster has secured legendary status as a DJ, music historian, label head, producer and promoter. He has co-authored four books exploring the concept of a DJ and the history of dance music. Bill will be sharing his knowledge during a pivotal moment in Pakistan's underground dance history. The talk will be followed by a discussion and Q&A facilitated by Lyla. This event is highly recommended for DJs, promoters, dancers, and anyone curious about the culture.



From the Ground Up: A Homegrown Model of Learning with Saffron Music

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Sophia Ahmed [Saffron UK], Raphay Shehzad [Saffron PK], Mahnoor Shah [Saffron PK]

This session unpacks the creative learning journey at the heart of Saffron Pakistan 2025, a collaborative programme with Saffron UK designed to support young women and non-binary musicians. Structured in three stages, the programme began by building confidence and artistic identity, progressed into songwriting and lyric development, and culminated with music production and composition. Together, these stages form a holistic and inclusive model that empowers emerging artists to find and amplify their voice.



Audio Engineering in the Wild: Recording Music in Remote Locations

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Asteria, Adeel Tahir

From mountains to deserts, villages to open fields, recording in the wild sounds...WILD. Fresh off her first season of Musaafir TV, Asteria pairs up with veteran producer and engineer Adeel Tahir to explore the art and craft of working in environments that tell their own sonic stories. Discover how natural acoustics and environmental sounds come together with the desire to record music in remote locations, generating works that wouldn't be the same if recorded anywhere else. Audiophiles, recording and preservation enthusiasts, as well as documentarians, are invited to participate in this technical engineering masterclass.

Sound Bath

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 3:15 PM - 3:35 PM

Venue: British Council

Moderator: Israa Shafi

Led by Israa Shafi, our programme will start with a sound bath, an ancient meditative practice that involves being 'bathed' in the resonant sound waves of instruments like singing bowls, gong and tuning forks.

Educating the Next Generation: Music Policy & Practice

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 4:20 PM - 5:05 PM

Venue: British Council

Panellists: Arie Azhar [Art Langar], Nishant Shakya [Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory], Zainub Khawaja [Har Sakhiyaan], Hamza Jafri [NAPA]

Moderator: Zara Madani

In the absence of formal music education policies in Pakistan, how are we nurturing the next generation of artists? This panel brings together voices in music education from Pakistan and Nepal to explore current teaching practices and the informal networks sustaining music learning in South Asia.

Meesha Shafi in Conversation with Haroon Rashid

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 4:10 PM - 4:55 PM

Venue: British Council

Panellist: Meesha Shafi

Moderator: Haroon Rashid

Step into the creative world of Meesha Shafi as she sits down for an unfiltered conversation with the BBC's Haroon Rashid. They will trace her journey from their formative years to performing on stages around the world. Expect to hear insights on the evolution of Meesha's craft, stories behind some of her most iconic tracks and how she continues to push boundaries in Pakistan's music industry today. This is a rare glimpse into the rebellious artistry of one of Pakistan's most dynamic musical voices.

Language, Sound & Creative Inspiration

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 5:50 PM - 6:35 PM

Venue: British Council

Panellists: Natasha Baig, Jimmy Khan

Moderator: Adeel Afzal

This session dives into the profound connection between language and sound. Drawing from a range of vocal traditions and modern experimentation, it explores how artists navigate across multiple languages and how a multilingual creative process influences melody, rhythm and tone.

Activity: Mapping the Pakistani Music Scene

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 6:10 PM - 7:10 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Natalia Gul, Tom Sweet [British Council]

This interactive session invites symposium participants to co-create a visual map of the Pakistani music sector today, covering music creation, training, production, publishing, distribution, policy, funding and community-building. The map will be envisioned as a potential tool for collaborations and resource-sharing among artists.



Instrument 101: Sitar

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitator: Rakae Jamil [NCA, Red Brick Music Studios]

Ethnomusicologist, producer, multi-instrumentalist and veteran music practitioner Rakae Jamil leads this immersive introduction to one of South Asia's most iconic instruments: the sitar. Participants will learn how melody and rhythm converge in its distinctive sound, while exploring its evolution, scales and playing techniques. From classical ragas to modern fusion, this masterclass offers an opportunity to experience how the sitar continues to inspire musicians across genres and generations.



Instrument 101: Voice

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitator: Aizaz Sohail

With years of experience to his name, Aizaz Sohail leads this insightful session on the mechanics and artistry of performing with the human voice. Participants will explore how breath, pitch and intonation work together to cultivate control and expressive depth, while finding more comfortable and explorative places within their own bodies through vocal practice.



Instrument 101: Piano

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitator: Nishant Shakya [Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory]

Veteran performer, instructor and producer, Nishant Shakya, joins us all the way from Nepal for this one-of-a-kind piano masterclass. Nishant will teach the foundations and expressive potential of the piano, including technique, posture and musical phrasing. Expect to come away with a deeper appreciation for how the instrument can be used to create harmony and composition across genres.

Making Sense of the Data

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Maria Unera, Pasha Aslam [Shangrila Resorts, Skardu; Musaafir TV]

Exploring the bigger picture of Pakistan's evolving digital music landscape, Maria Unera (musician, songwriter and social media influencer) and Pasha Aslam (entrepreneur and co-creator of Musaafir TV) bring together their complementary perspectives and diverse backgrounds for this conversation on real-world insights. Participants will gain a clearer understanding of how analytics can inform creative choices and strengthen an artist's digital presence across platforms.

Galvanising for Global Reach

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Umnia Iftikhar [SIREN], Abdullah Siddiqui

How can artists grow internationally while staying true to their roots? Umnia Iftikhar, a veteran music producer and consultant, and Abdullah Siddiqui, a pioneering singer-songwriter and producer, lead this session on taking creative work global. Participants will explore strategies for building networks, navigating international opportunities and presenting Pakistan's contemporary sound and story to the world.

Songwriting 101

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitators: Schumaila Rehmat Hussain, Nadir Shehzad

Schumaila Rehmat Hussain and Nadir Shehzad are two remarkable songwriters whose styles, on the surface, couldn't be more different. Yet, both share a deep commitment to truth-telling through their craft. In this session, they will share how they search for the right words, and how those choices shape melody, arrangement and structure in service of one central goal: the song itself. Participants will leave with new insights into their own creative process and, hopefully, a little closer to their natural flow and inspiration.

Between Spotlight & Solitude: Fame and Mental Health

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 3:25 PM - 4:10 PM

Venue: British Council

Panellists: Sharmeen Khan [BeMe Global], Meesha Shafi, Abdullah Siddiqui

Moderator: Sabah Bano Malik

In this open and reflective conversation, artists share their experience of living and creating under constant visibility. They will offer honest insights into the push and pull between public expectation and private reality, and what it means to stay well while staying seen.

Music as Resistance

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 4:15 PM - 5:00 PM

Venue: British Council

Panellists: Saif Samejo [Lahooti], Shams Mansur [FT.WA STUDIO], blal bloch

Moderator: Hassaan Bin Shaheen

From protest songs to underground anthems, music has always carried the weight of struggle and the spark of change. This conversation looks at how music continues to speak truth to power in telling untold stories, uniting communities and keeping hope alive in the face of social and political challenges.

Authenticity & Image in the Modern Media Landscape

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 5:05 PM – 5:55 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitator: Faris Shafi

Moderator: Haroon Rashid

Haroon Rashid and Faris Shafi come together for a no-holds-barred conversation about navigating the modern media landscape. This session explores the do's and don'ts of celebrity interviews, the craft of building a public image, and the strategies needed to handle PR crises when the spotlight becomes uncomfortably harsh.

Faris has repeatedly reinvented himself, collaborating with major producers and even crossing borders, all while bringing a fiercely unapologetic perspective. As one of Pakistan's most provocative rappers, he's known for tackling social and political hypocrisy with razor-sharp lyrics. This conversation unpacks what it means to stay authentic while navigating a culture that both celebrates and condemns outspoken artists.



Activity: Building Ecosystems of Support for Artists

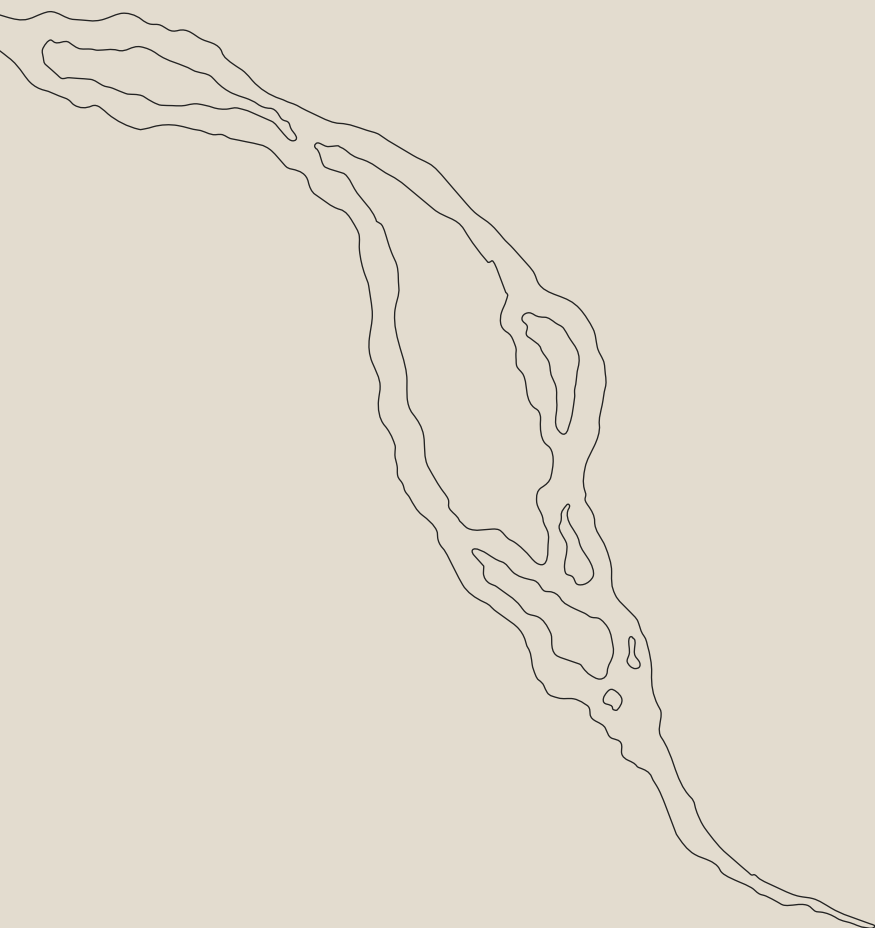
Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 6:10 PM - 7:40 PM

Venue: British Council

Facilitator: Arieb Azhar, Tom Sweet [British Council]

How do we support the people and systems that keep our music culture alive? This roundtable brings together representatives from UMAP, legacy artists and key industry figures to discuss what such support can look like, from infrastructure and funding to visibility and mentorship. Participants will review findings from the inaugural edition of SoundScape in 2023, and outline collaborative strategies for long-term growth.



SoundScape Exchange & Dinner [Both Days]

Date: 27 & 28 November 2025

Time: 7:50 PM onwards

Venue: British Council

After a full day of deep-dive discussions and creative exploration, we're opening up SoundScape 2025 with dinner and The SoundScape Exchange: a mini festival by and for musicians and artists!

SoundScape Podcast

At SoundScape, we want the conversations to keep flowing and what better way to capture them than through the SoundScape Podcast? Hosted by Sabah Bano Malik, this nightly series invites musicians to take 10–15 minutes to chat about upcoming releases, tour dates, life as an artist, or anything that's inspiring them at the moment.

SoundScape Styling

A dedicated styling booth designed to help artists make thoughtful fashion choices for every occasion. Nael Hafeez will guide participants through a selection of local brands, offering advice and tips on how to put looks together. You can try pieces on the spot, get personalized styling suggestions, and even purchase items that inspire you during the session.

SoundScape Vinyls

Karachi Vinyl will be at SoundScape both nights with a curated collection of records for sale. Browse at your own pace, discover the stories behind the music or just take a moment during the festivities to enjoy that special crackle as the needle touches the record, rediscovering the joy and importance of deep listening.

Museum of Music - by SOC Films

Featuring SOC Films' Pakistan Music Vault, a digital archive on Google Arts & Culture preserving Pakistan's living musical heritage, this small-scale installation will be showcasing preserved instruments, film excerpts and archival materials that offer a glimpse into Pakistan's music heritage and the craftsmanship that sustains it.

Closing Performances

Saffron Cohort 2025

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 8:30 PM - 9:15 PM

Venue: British Council

Performers: Sameen Isfahany, [Athena] (Adina Sabir), Almitra Mavalvala

Saffron UK unites three distinct voices - Sameen, Athena and Almitra - for a soulful, genre-blending showcase. Each artist brings her own creative flair: Sameen and Athena with their ukuleles, and Almitra accompanying with guitar and piano. Their performance will weave together original compositions and reimagined covers, offering an intimate yet uplifting experience that celebrates individuality, collaboration and the joy of making music together.

Sunny Side Up!

Date: 27 November 2025

Time: 9:30 PM - 1:00 AM

Venue: British Council

Performer: Bill Brewster, LYLA

We're bringing the legendary Bill Brewster to the decks for an exclusive, electrifying DJ showcase. You don't wanna miss it!

Saakin

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 9:00 PM - 9:30 PM

Venue: British Council

Performers: Usman Shakeel, Ali Hamdani

Saakin is a band from Islamabad, Pakistan. Formed in 2011, the group's line-up consists of drummer Ibrahim Akram, guitarist Ali Hamdani, vocalist Usman Shakeel, pianist Varqa Faraid and bass guitar Parham Faraid. Saakin won the Lux Style Award for Best Emerging Talent in Music in 2019.

Uzair Jaswal

Date: 28 November 2025

Time: 9:45 PM - 10:15 PM

Venue: British Council

Performers: Uzair Jaswal, Yusuf Ramay, Aizad Hashmi, Melwin Arthur

Uzair is one of Pakistan's most electrifying performers, bringing his powerful vocals and unmistakable stage presence to SoundScape alongside his dynamic band. Rising from Islamabad's vibrant music scene, Uzair has carved a celebrated career with anthemic hits like Tere Bin, Jaanvey, Mere Rooh, Bolay, Nindiya Ke Paar, Sajna and Na Bhulana - with several of these becoming breakout favourites through Coke Studio Season 5.

A multi-award-winning artist, Uzair's debut album Na Bhulana earned the Lux Style Award for Album of the Year, cementing his status as one of the industry's most versatile and commanding voices. Audiences can expect a performance that's bold, heartfelt and utterly unforgettable.

SOUNDSCAPE 2025 TEAM

BRITISH COUNCIL:



Laila Jamil

Director Arts, British Council



Ahsan Abbas

Senior Arts Manager, British Council



Fatima Mullick

Senior Arts Manager, British Council



Haider Ali Khan

Arts Programme Manager, British Council



Khadija Hussaini

Arts Programme Coordinator, British Council



Tom Sweet

Senior Relationship Manager Music,
British Council

CURATORIAL TEAM:



Natasha Ejaz

Curator



Shahmir Hashmi

Assistant Curator



Almitra Mavlvala

Curatorial Support



Saad Mazher

Curatorial Support



Samiya Asim

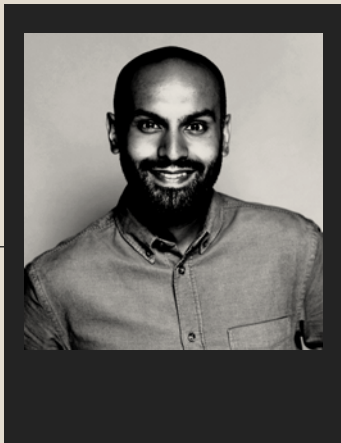
Designer



Zahra Paracha

Sound Engineer

SOUNDSCAPE 2025 CONTRIBUTORS:



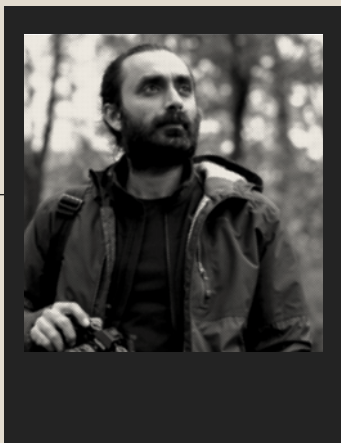
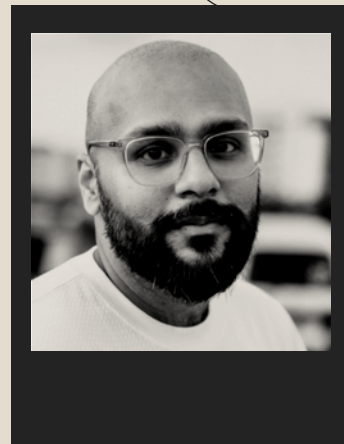
HAROON RASHID

Haroon Rashid is a British broadcaster who has become a familiar voice for fans of South Asian entertainment. He hosts a lively weekday afternoon show on BBC Asian Network, where he plays the biggest tunes loved by British Asian audiences and chats with some of their favourite stars. Known for his warm on-air presence, sharp entertainment knowledge and deep connection with South Asian culture, Haroon has built a career centred on storytelling, representation and celebrating the creative worlds he grew up loving.

Over the years, Haroon has sat down for in-depth interviews with some of the biggest names in Bollywood and Pakistani entertainment - from Shah Rukh Khan and Alia Bhatt to Mahira Khan and Atif Aslam - bringing out thoughtful, often revealing conversations that go beyond the headlines. His interviews with international celebrities including Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Riz Ahmed and Diljit Dosanjh have garnered millions of views online and made news for their honest revelations about the challenges they have faced in their respective industries. Beyond radio, Haroon has hosted major cultural events around the world, including Eid on the Square at Trafalgar Square, Mirchifest in The Hague, and concerts featuring powerhouse performers like the Nooran Sisters and Satinder Sartaaj.

HASSAAN BIN SHAHEEN

Hassaan Bin Shaheen is a writer, lawyer, performer and content creator. His background in law and comedy has enabled him to develop a deep understanding of the interplay between creative and critical thinking. He is also an Acumen Fellow. As a stand up comedian, Hassaan has performed in multiple cities in Pakistan as well as the US and UK comedy circuits. He currently creates content blending music and comedy, which can be found on his channels under his name across all

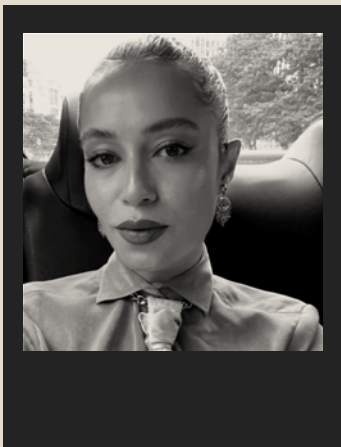
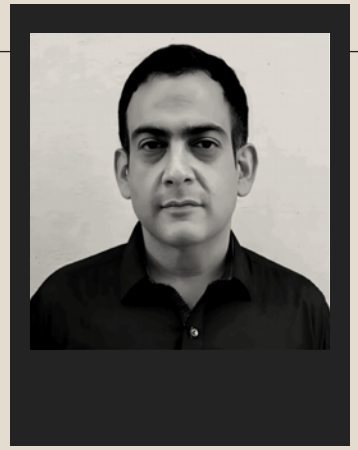


FAIZAN ALI

Faizan Ali firmly believes in the close relationship between human emotion and cinema, using observational and poetic elements to encourage social discourse. His Masters in Documentary Filmmaking (DocNomads 2019-2021) led to acclaimed short films across Europe, including a Yugo BAFTA Student selection (2022), premieres at Budapest IDFF (2021) and Ji.hlava IDFF (2021), and a Portuguese Film Academy Award (2021) for excellence in cinema. He has recently directed and produced two multi-part short documentary series on climate change and hate speech in Pakistan, both addressing critical social issues around marginalised communities. As a cinematographer, his diverse work includes VR documentaries, an Emmy-nominated series 'Fundamental' (2021), and the Netflix animated short 'Sitara: Let Girls Dream'

SAMEER KHAN

Sameer Khan is an experienced sound engineer and producer with a diploma in audio engineering and extensive experience across the UK, India and Pakistan. Passionate about recording, mixing and editing music, he has worked on numerous films and advertising campaigns. From 2002 to 2005, he worked at Purple Haze Studio in Mumbai before joining Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy from 2005 to 2011, contributing to over 40 films including Salaam-e-Ishq, Taare Zameen Par, Rock On!, My Name is Khan, and Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara. He also recorded and mixed the score for the Oscar-nominated Peepli Live. Sameer has also collaborated with the Sachal Jazz Ensemble, recording three albums and producing a live DVD. Since 2017, he has been with SOC Films, producing 'Pakistan's Museum of Food' for Google Arts & Culture and projects for the British Council and the National History Museum. Trained in both Indian and Western classical music, he has studied Tagore's songs for over 20 years.



HAIYA BOKHARI

Haiya Bokhari is a multidisciplinary creative, working as a freelance stylist, producer and creative director. She is an erstwhile fashion and entertainment journalist and her styling projects have ranged from fashion shoots, runway shows, celebrity styling, film and TVCs. She has spent over a decade observing and understanding the Pakistani fashion identity and has helped countless brands and artists to translate their vision into a visual language that appeals to global audiences.

NAEL HAFEEZ

Nael has been an active member of the South Asian music industry since 2019. As a music manager, he has led concert programming, brand collaborations and label partnerships for emerging artists while shaping the creative direction behind their albums and concerts. He is also a co-founder at Collected XX, where he oversees brand strategy, styling and campaign direction. His work as a freelance stylist for celebrities across India and Pakistan has been featured in Forbes, GQ Australia, Variety, Dawn Images and Express Tribune among others.

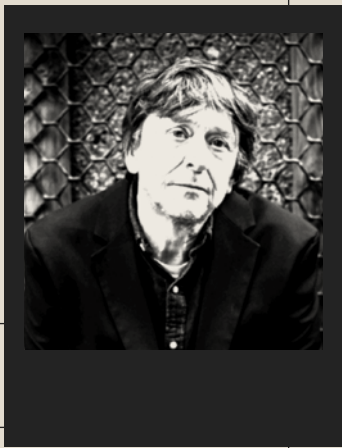


APMC

We are delighted to present seven students of The Darsghah Project, piloted this year in collaboration with All Pakistan Music Conference [APMC], Karachi.

This landmark project has been at the centre of APMC's activities for the past several months. Students from across Pakistan were mentored by local and international Ustads while in residence in Karachi. The project has aimed to transpose traditional methods of teaching and learning subcontinental classical music in contemporary times.

This performance celebrates the dedication and artistry of the first cohort of students who have thrived under the generous mentorship of esteemed Ustads: Ustad Raza Ali Khan, Ustad Ashraf Sharif Khan, Ustad Sabz Ali Khan and Ustad Shahbaz Hussain. The performers include Meesam Abbas, Zain ul Hassan, Mujtaba Ashraf, Sadaf Habib, Ayaan Saqib, Zarr Hassan and Arsalan Abbas.

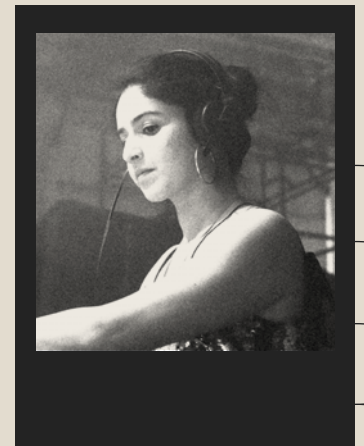


BILL BREWSTER

Whether he's taking the roof off a club with deep and tough house music, spinning genre-bending sets of disco, Balearic, rock and hip hop, or playing chillout tunes on a Croatian bay, Bill Brewster is the man for all occasions. A former punk rocker, chef and co-editor of 'When Saturday Comes', Bill began DJing in the 1980s and came into his own in 1990s New York while running DMC's office. Nights at the Sound Factory and time with Danny Tenaglia shaped the sound still present in his sets today. He later became a founding resident at Fabric, holding the position for five years. Alongside Frank Broughton, he co-wrote 'Last Night a DJ Saved My Life, How to DJ (Properly)', and 'The Record Players', and co-founded DJhistory.com and the legendary Low Life party. Still as eclectic and dedicated as ever, Bill continues to DJ, write, produce, and care for his dog, Mavis.

LYLA

Lyla is a selector whose sound is shaped by movement across the world. From spinning cuts in Glasgow basements to hosting radio shows and playing at festivals worldwide, her sets explore rhythm, history and emotion. Raised in multiple countries, her sonic journey was diverse, developing in nature, record shops, and in deep historic listening cultures around the world. She's been making waves from being part of the line-up at Pakistan's first-ever Boiler Room to curating her own charity club night, Sunny Side Up!, that supports local grassroots initiatives. Her energy behind the decks is commanding yet joyful, with a growing knowledge of music that flows seamlessly through her fluid selections. The infectious smile and pure happiness she radiates make every set feel like a celebration. Expect Lyla's events to be filled with authenticity and positivity.

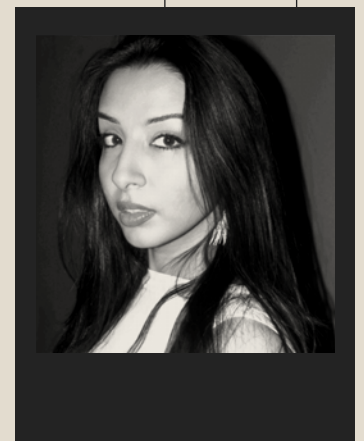


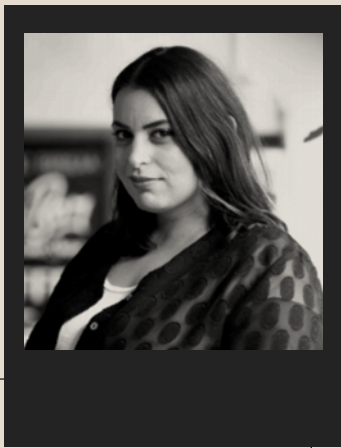
ADEEL TAHIR

Adeel Tahir is primarily an audio engineer and music producer. He has recorded, produced and mixed hundreds of songs with artists and bands in the indie, rock and metal community such as Kashmir, Tamaasha, Gentle Robot and Takatak. Adeel has most notably worked with a lot of commercial pop, rap and hip hop music in recent years, including with Maanu, Taha G and Annural Khalid. Adeel was also the main recording engineer for the latest Coke Studio season, and has been performing and recording music with many of the acts he produces.

ASTERIA

Asteria is a Pakistani multi-instrumentalist, producer, solo artist and audio engineer. Her sound is authentic, fresh and unapologetic, and her desire is for her music to make people feel alive. A theoretical physics graduate, she switched to music full-time in 2021 after teaching herself production, audio engineering and mixing in her spare time. Her indie rock sound and skills as a guitarist/producer led her to be quickly noticed in the local music scene. Asteria co-engineered, co-produced and mixed the Musaafir Music series, an audio-visual album featuring music recorded live in the wild in Skardu. Her other accolades include featuring as a guitarist on tracks such as 'Jhol' on Coke Studio 15, being announced as a Spotify Equal Ambassador for Pakistan in 2023, and producing and mixing for several local artists.





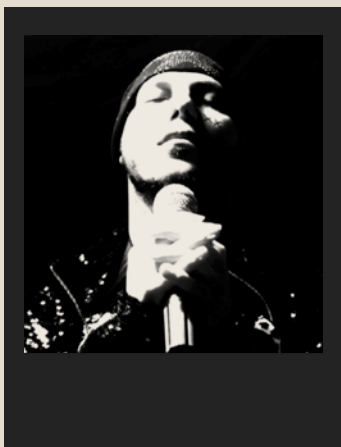
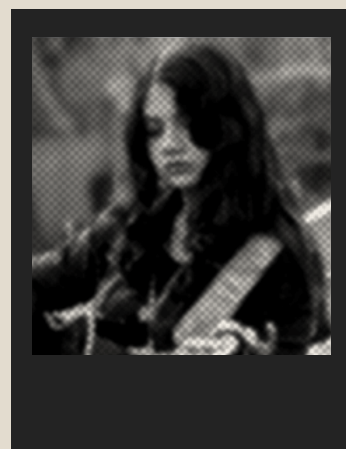
SOPHIA AHMED

Saffron is a non-profit organisation dedicated to advancing gender equality in music technology by creating safer spaces for marginalised communities to learn, create and grow through music tech. Since launching in Bristol in 2015, Saffron has made a measurable impact across the UK and globally, providing opportunities for women, trans and non-binary people to build tangible careers in the technological arts.

Sophia leads Saffron's educational arm, running beginner courses in DJing, music production, sound engineering and radio broadcasting across multiple cities. These fun, inclusive and creative spaces often serve as people's first steps into music and technology. With over a decade of experience in youth and community work, Sophia brings deep insight into designing and delivering projects that build connection, confidence and creative skills that help individuals grow personally and professionally while fostering a collaborative and empowering community.

MAHNOOR SHAH

Mahnoor is a musician and aspiring producer based in Lahore, Pakistan. Guided by a belief in music's power to connect and inspire, she aims to create compositions that bridge diverse audiences and cultures. Alongside her artistic pursuits, Mahnoor works in the music industry, where she contributes to artist development, A&R and creative strategy at Giraffe, an independent record label, partnered with Warner Music South Asia.

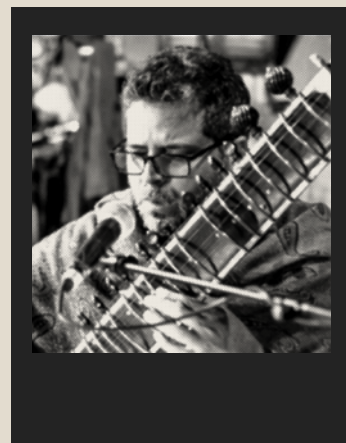


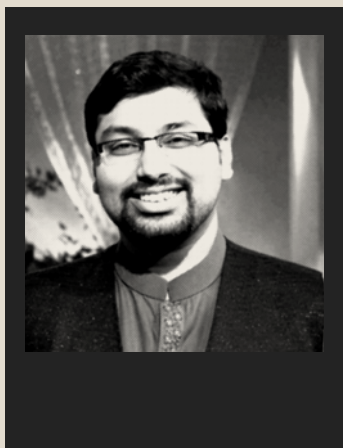
RAPHAY SHEHZAD

Raphay is a self-producer from a tiny home studio in Pakistan, collaborating with producers and musicians worldwide to make each song feel alive in its own genre. Every song begins on paper, and then entire worlds are built around it. Each of their tracks chooses its own form: a jazz ballad feels like it came from a smoky club, a circus song puts you under the big top, a rap track explodes into EDM. They are a spokesperson for Queer Representation in Media, representing Pakistan internationally in Nepal (2022) with Friedrich Naumann Foundation. Their debut song was "Whiskey Shiskey" which tackled the taboo topic addiction in an unflinching manner. They have participated in various queer documentaries including 'Raphaydonna' (2013) which outlines their personal and artistic journey in a tough landscape like Pakistan, particularly for gender minorities. Additionally, they also continue to be a part of Saffron UK's mentorship programme, which is a worldwide initiative for women and gender non-binary musicians and artists.

RAKAE JAMIL

Rakae Rehman Jamil is a musician, music producer and professor based in Lahore. He holds a B.A. in Musicology from the National College of Arts (NCA) and a Master's in Humanities with a concentration in Ethnomusicology from the University of Chicago. He currently serves as Assistant Professor in the Musicology Department at NCA. He is a founding member and sitar player of Mughal-e-Funk, established in 2017, and runs his own production company, Red Brick Music Studios. Trained extensively in South Asian classical music in Pakistan and India, he spent eight months at the ITC Sangeet Research Academy in Kolkata in 2010 studying with renowned maestros. Rakae has performed globally across Canada, the UK and the USA, including as sitarist and vocalist in 'When Mountains Meet' (2023–24), a gig-theatre show blending South Asian and Scottish music. Rakae is currently producing Mughal-e-Funk's second album featuring leading Pakistani vocalists.





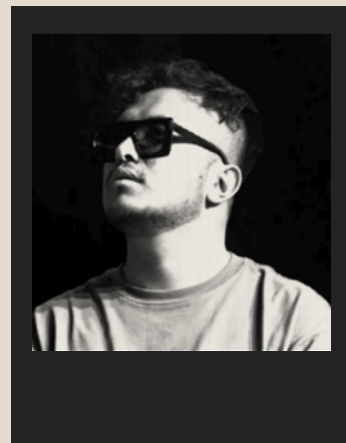
AIZAZ SOHAIL

Aizaz Sohail is a classically trained Pakistani vocalist, composer and educator whose work bridges the deep tradition of khayal with contemporary musical expression. Featured on Coke Studio (Season 13, Raag Megh), Aizaz has become one of Pakistan's most respected voices in classical and semi-classical music. Beyond performance, Aizaz is a dedicated teacher and vocal coach who has mentored some of the country's leading musicians and rising talents. His teaching focuses on voice culture, interpretation and the subtle connection between sound, breath and feeling. Whether on stage or in a classroom, Aizaz brings a rare combination of technical mastery and creative sensitivity that inspires singers to discover their own voice within tradition.

NISHANT SHAKYA

Nishant Shakya is a music educator, pianist and producer dedicated to advancing contemporary music education and performance in Nepal. His work celebrates cultural synthesis, blending Nepali folk and contemporary styles with the rhythmic drive of rock 'n' roll and the harmonic richness of jazz. As Academic Coordinator at the Kathmandu Jazz Conservatory (KJC), Nishant focuses on curriculum development, student performances, and juries within the Foundation in the Music department. A long-standing piano instructor at KJC, he teaches students of all ages and abilities, including differently-abled learners.

As an active performer, Nishant collaborates with bands such as Grasstunes, Satish Sthapit Blues Explosion, and What the Funk, and has played at festivals like Katjazz, Jazzmandu, and Echoes in the Valley. His former band, Nanashi, earned the Kaleidoscope Emerging Artist Fellowship in 2022. Internationally, his arrangements were featured through the Gyan Residency 2025, and he continues to collaborate with artists like Natasha Humera Ejaz and Ultraromance.

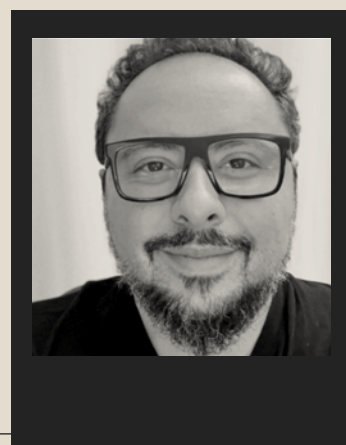


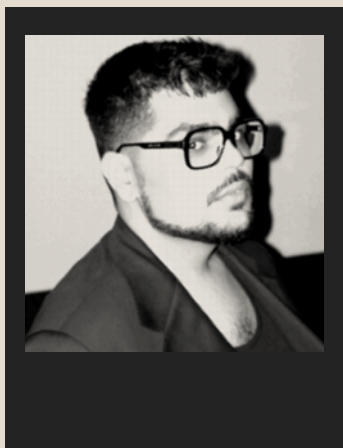
MARIA UNERA

Maria Unera is a Pakistani-Filipina singer-songwriter whose voice turns everyday emotions into shimmering pop moments. Born to a Pakistani father and Filipino mother, she grew up surrounded by karaoke nights and music covering genres from Whitney to MJ, so naturally, saying "I'll sing" felt less like a choice and more like destiny. From grassroots cafe jams in Islamabad to joining Pakistan's first all-girls band on the viral cover of John Newman's 'Love Me Again', her early years were filled with hustle, hope and a promise to her mother that if she didn't "make it", she'd try something else. It didn't take long. Her music blends indie-pop vibrance with a modern celebratory edge on tracks like 'Feel', which was selected for the Spotify EQUAL Pakistan playlist and lit up Times Square, showing how she's grown from local stages to global platforms.

PASHA ASLAM

Currently heading Shangrila Resort in Skardu, Pasha Aslam is an entrepreneur and cultural curator whose work spans hospitality, music, education, food and travel. His mission is to create meaningful spaces and experiences that inspire people. Most recently, he applied his expertise to Musaafir Music, a multi-episodic live music series filmed and recorded entirely in the serene environment of Skardu. Whether through The Treehouse School, his family's compassion-driven educational movement, or his ventures in travel and culture, Pasha's work is anchored in



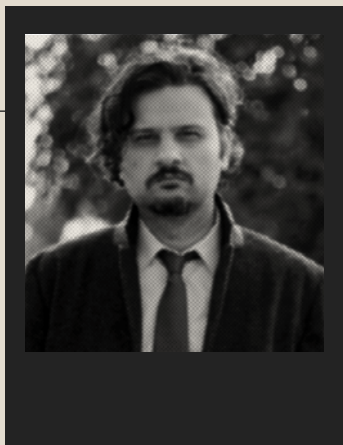
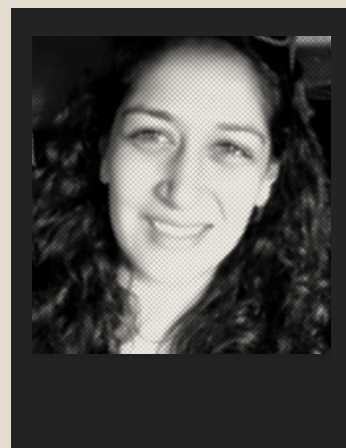


ABDULLAH SIDDIQUI

Abdullah Siddiqui, a 25-year-old singer-songwriter and producer hailing from Lahore, made his mark in the music industry at a young age. Starting his journey in English-language electronic music production at just 11, he independently released his work at 16, earning recognition as a music trailblazer. His mainstream breakthrough came in 2019 with the song 'Resistance' on Nescafe Basement, leading to collaborations with multinational giants like Pepsi, Samsung, Fanta, Coca-Cola, Hyundai and more. With four albums and numerous successful singles, Siddiqui is credited with revitalising album releases in Pakistan and engaging a diverse global audience. At just 20 years old, Siddiqui was featured in the Forbes 30 Under 30 list in 2021.

UMNIA IFTIKHAR

Umnia is a media producer, music industry consultant and one of Pakistan's foremost advocates for intellectual property in the arts. With over two decades of experience, she has helmed landmark productions including Coke Studio Pakistan, Spotify's RADAR documentary series, Spotify ICON, TEDxKarachi and the 75th-anniversary re-recording of Pakistan's National Anthem. As co-founder of Aikman Road Studios, she has overseen sound, licensing and supervision for global projects such as Ms. Marvel, Qatil Haseenaon Ke Naam, and major brand campaigns, as well as live experiences like Spotify RADAR Fest, the first of its kind in Pakistan. Through SIREN, her music and artist management company, Umnia is building sustainable models for artist development, equitable royalties and global distribution. Her work continues to bridge creativity and commerce, championing an ecosystem where Pakistani artists can create, own and thrive both locally and internationally.

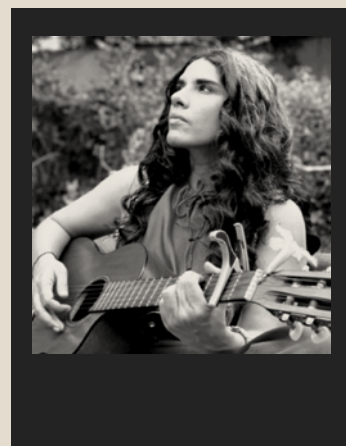


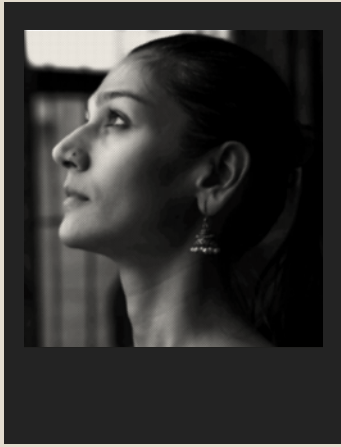
NADIR SHAHZAD

Nadir Shahzad Khan is a Pakistani musician and filmmaker whose work bridges alternative rock and cinema. Currently the frontman of Dulhay Mian and formerly of Sikandar Ka Mandar, Nadir has been a defining voice in Pakistan's contemporary indie scene and is known for his expressive live performances and a songwriting style that blends emotional honesty with structural precision. Writing primarily in Urdu, Nadir's lyrics explore love, identity and disillusionment in urban Pakistan, but his songwriting approach is deeply Western in form which is anchored in the traditional verse, chorus, bridge, outro architecture of classic rock and pop. This hybrid sensibility gives his songs both cultural intimacy and universal accessibility, allowing them to resonate across language barriers. He has also composed music for films, extending his storytelling into the cinematic realm through sound design and original scores.

SCHUMAILA REHMAT HUSSAIN

Schumaila Rehmat Hussain stands as one of Pakistan's most compelling musical voices, blending classical tradition with contemporary expression. Renowned for her versatile vocals and spellbinding performances, she navigates genres with finesse, delivering soul-stirring classical compositions and chart-topping modern hits. Her collaborations span visionary directors and celebrated musicians, including Sarmad Khoosat, Asim Azhar, Javed Bashir, Yasir Hussain and Yasra Rizvi, showcasing her ability to elevate every project she touches. A highlight of her career is the seven-year album 'Jaani Gulmohar Se', inspired by Jaun Elia's poetry and created in collaboration with Jai Singh, reflecting her dedication to preserving and reinterpreting Pakistan's cultural heritage. Schumaila's impact extends to international live performances, such as her acclaimed Dubai show, and her music features in hit television dramas like Jindo and Churails. With a growing digital presence and mentorship from Anwar Maqsood, she continues to evolve, bridging classical roots and modern soundscapes for audiences worldwide.





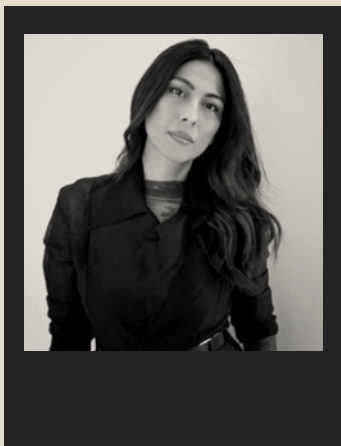
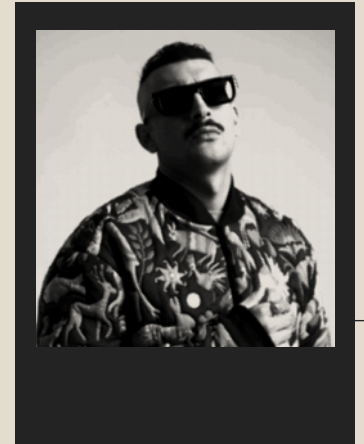
ISRAA SHAFI

Israa Shafi explores holistic wellness through practices that nurture both inner and outer balance. Drawing from over 500 hours of yoga training in the serene mountains of Nepal, she weaves ancient wisdom into modern practices that support both body and spirit. A certified Face Yoga Teacher through Danielle Collins' renowned method, Israa empowers individuals to revitalise their appearance naturally through mindful movement and facial techniques. She also offers Neolifting which is a non-invasive face sculpting method rooted in myofascial massage to support natural lifting and deep relaxation. Certified in sound healing in Nepal, Israa integrates therapeutic sound to promote emotional release and inner calm. Her mission is to help others reconnect with their natural vitality and radiate well-being from within.

FARIS SHAFI

Faris Shafi is a pioneering Pakistani rapper, songwriter and actor known for his unique blend of Urdu, English and Punjabi lyrics. His bold and honest style addresses a wide range of topics, from personal experiences to social issues, making him a stand out figure in the music industry. His music resonates deeply with young people in Pakistan and has also found a strong following among the diaspora in the US, UK, Canada and UAE.

As a leading figure in Urdu rap, Faris Shafi has inspired a new generation of artists and expanded the genre's global reach. His contributions have left a lasting impact, earning him admiration and respect for his ability to connect with listeners through his powerful and relatable lyrics.

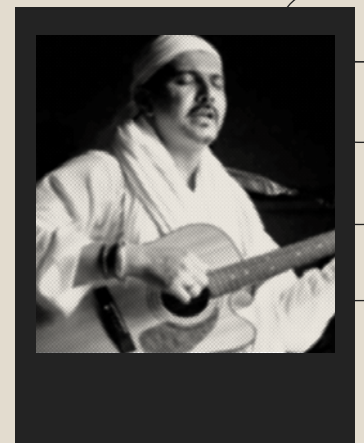


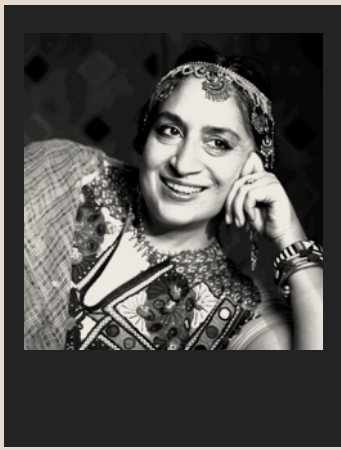
MEESHA SHAFI

Meesha Shafi is a celebrated, multi-hyphenate, award-winning Pakistani-Canadian cultural icon known for her acting, music and activism over the course of an illustrious career that has spanned over 2 decades. Her avant-garde art has gained her recognition from fans and critics across the globe while her trailblazing fight for women's rights has established her as an inspiration for girls in Pakistan and diaspora communities abroad.

ARIEB AZHAR

Arieb Azhar is a celebrated Pakistani musician, producer and cultural curator renowned for fusing mystic poetry with global sounds. After years in Croatia as a musician and philosophy student, he returned to Pakistan to reinterpret Sufi poetry for modern audiences. Arieb has spearheaded cultural platforms like Art Langar, Music Mela, The Second Floor and kohQaf Summit, while producing acclaimed documentaries (Indus Blues) and theatre plays (The River's Daughter). In 2024, he wrote the National Cultural Narrative for the National Heritage and Culture Division of Pakistan alongside the Hashoo Foundation. This document is in review and is getting ready to be disseminated.





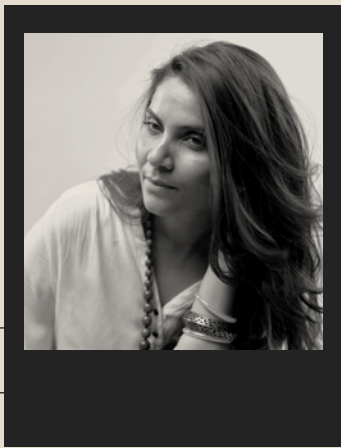
ZAINUB J. KHAWAJA

Zainub J. Khawaja is a Lahore based artist with a practice of music that is continuously evolving. She has trained within various indigenous apprenticeship traditions of the Indian subcontinent, namely Khayal Gayaki with Ustad Naseeruddin Saami, Gurbani Sangeet with Bhai Ghulam Muhammad Chand of the Rabbabi tradition and Seraiki Kafi with Riaz Ali Qadri. She is a composer/director and member of Harsakhiyan, a group which includes her two sisters and mother (appeared on Coke Studio Pakistan Season 12).

Zainub has been working towards recording her solo songs and reinterpreting her favourite folk and classical melodies, as well as writing her originals. Some of these are now available on Spotify and all other major streaming platforms. Her recent performances include 'Ang Sang' at the WOW Festival, Lahooti Melo and the 10-year celebration of Olomopolo, Folk Soul at Olomopolo and a talk for TEDxYouth at TNS Gulberg titled 'Rilli: Transforming my Praxis from Personal to Universal'. She has been awarded a Saffron UK grant for emerging artists by the British Council for the year 2023/24, through which she aims to expand her knowledge of music production and promotion.

HAMZA JAFRI

Hamza Jafri is a renowned musician, educator and arts administrator currently serving as Acting Chief Operating Officer at the National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA), Karachi. He founded The Guitar School Lahore and co-founded MAD School Karachi, initiatives that have trained and mentored hundreds of young artists over the last two decades. His rise to notoriety began as a founding member of the rock band Co-VEN and creator of Braadri Orchestra, a 32-piece folk ensemble that showcases musical traditions of all provinces of Pakistan. His community work in music has been the central focus of an award-winning Al Jazeera documentary. Hamza's work focuses on institutional leadership with the ambition to develop Pakistan's next generation of artists.

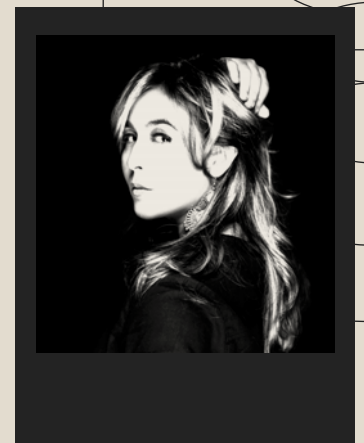


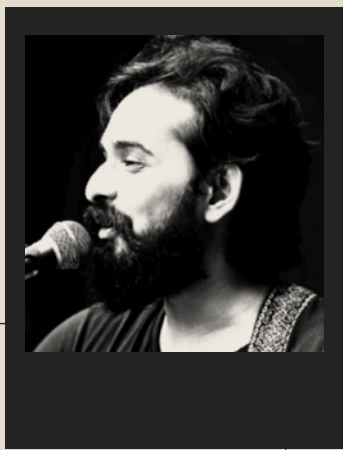
ZARA MADANI

Zara Madani is gifted with an innate talent and nurtured through years of training in diverse musical gharānās from the Subcontinent, including Gwalior gharānā and Delhi gharānā, and under the supervision of Akhtar Ali Khan saheb who was the student of Barray Ghulam Ali Khan. Zara's vocal prowess transcends the ordinary. Each note she breathes into existence paints vivid emotions upon the canvas of sound, evoking a symphony that leaves the soul spellbound.

NATASHA BAIG

Born and raised in Karachi, Natasha Baig is a powerhouse singer, songwriter, and performer whose blend of rock energy and Sufi depth has made her one of Pakistan's most distinctive voices. Hailing from Hunza, she is the first female artist from the region to break into the country's mainstream music scene. After debuting on Cornetto Music Icons and performing with Sounds of Kolachi, she launched her solo career in 2017 with 'Kesaria' and 'Ya Maula', proudly representing her Burushaski roots. Her breakout Coke Studio performance of 'Shikwa/Jawab-e-Shikwa' cemented her place as the voice of modern Sufi rock. Beyond music, she co-founded Laal Series, a creative studio producing films and music videos. With two acclaimed albums - 'Zariya' (2020) and 'Khirad' (2022) - and a Lux Style Award for Best Live Performer, Natasha continues to evolve. Her latest project, a tribute to poet Parveen Shakir, carries her legacy of passion, poetry and power.





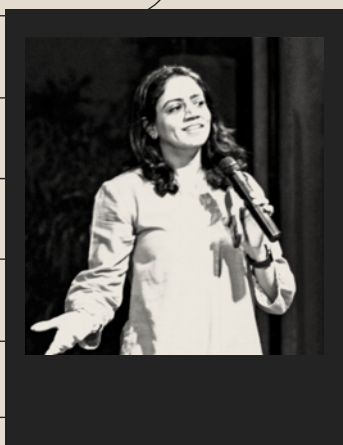
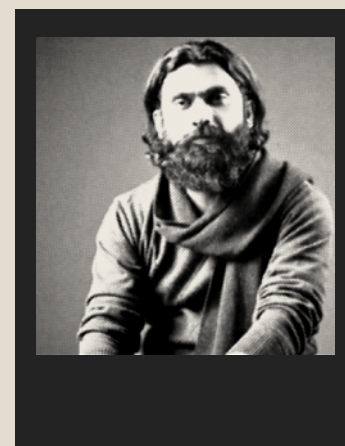
JIMMY KHAN

Hassan Jamil Khan, better known by his stage name as Jimmy Khan, is a Lahore-based singer-songwriter whose signature indie-pop sound has become a vibrant part of Pakistan's contemporary music scene. As the founder and frontman of Jimmy Khan & the Big Ears, he quickly drew attention for his effortless ability to captivate listeners, a quality that shines through in both his studio recordings and live performances. Jimmy's work has expanded into film, with his songwriting featured in *Ho Mann Jahan* (2015), *Dobara Phir Se* (2016), and *Parey Hut Love* (2019).

His collaborations have earned international acclaim, including *Madam* with the transgender community and *Dilri Lutti*, a tribute to inspirational Pakistani women. His live folk album *Tich Button* reimagines essential classics played over the years, and he has performed on *Coke Studio* Seasons 7 and 11. Today, Jimmy continues to travel the world, connecting with new collaborators and sharing his music wherever it finds a home.

ADEEL AFZAL

Adeel Afzal is a writer, actor and practicing storyteller - a film graduate from the National College of Arts and an award-winning performer known for his nuanced presence in *Parizad*, *Sang-e-Maah*, *Zindagi Tamasha* and *Kamli*. As the co-founder of the panel writing company *Amtul Shaahida*, Adeel has written *Standup Girl*, *Shaami Ki Shaadi*, and *Mithu*, bringing wit and cultural sensitivity to contemporary narratives.



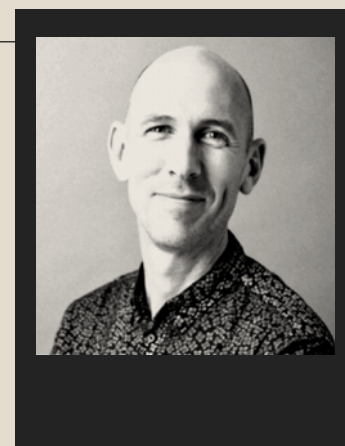
NATALIA GUL

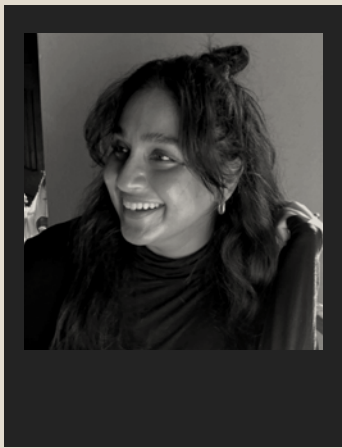
Natalia Gul is a multidisciplinary artist and entrepreneur, driven by her passion for cultural heritage and performance arts. Despite holding a degree in dentistry, Natalia has always been deeply connected to the world of artistic expression. Her diverse talents range from acting in theatre plays, television and commercials, to creating thought-provoking viral content through her stand-up performances. Natalia's artistic prowess extends beyond acting and comedy. She is also a skilled DJ, leveraging her music to promote and celebrate her cultural and Sufi background. Recognising the need for more engaging entertainment events, she founded her startup, *The Jungle PK*, which quickly gained popularity for hosting some of the most captivating commercial events that combine comedy, art, music and wellness.

TOM SWEET

Tom Sweet has a long track record in the music industry, spanning roles in festival and venue programming, project production, fundraising and international touring. As a programmer for *The Big Chill* festival in the UK and India, he also established a dynamic year-round music programme for *The Big Chill* Group's London venues. He held contemporary music programming positions at the Barbican Centre in London and Warwick Arts Centre, developing vibrant programmes featuring UK and international artists across many genres. Tom has developed and produced contemporary audio-visual concerts for venues and organisations including Sydney Opera House, Southbank Centre, Royal Opera House, Brighton Festival, No-Nation, and *Music Beyond Mainstream*, as well as international touring projects with *The Light Surgeons* and *CDR*.

Since joining the British Council in 2015, he has worked extensively in Wider Europe and South Asia, leading on *Envision Sound*, *Selector Pro* and *Creative Producers*. He now manages *Selector Radio* and oversees *Selector Presents* at *The Great Escape* and *SXSW*.



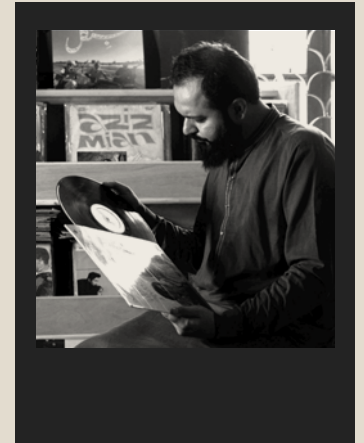


SABAH BANO MALIK

Sabah Bano Malik has been at the helm of Full Disclosure on CityFM89 for nearly 7 years. On the radio she has never shied away from discussing the responsibility of platform and the impact that speaking (or performing) on a mic can have on one's mental health. The comedian, journalist and content creator working across print, digital and radio media for over 10 years, both behind and in front of the camera, has found her voice in smart, sharp cultural critique, especially where culture, patriarchy and misogyny intersect. Known for her humorous and passionate videos where no topic is off limits, Sabah uses her platform to push back against cultural barriers that keep critical conversations from happening.

MHM HUSSAIN

Hussain grew up surrounded by music, thanks to his father's deep passion for record collecting that began in 1985. From childhood, he immersed himself in that world, exploring the sounds that filled their home and gradually expanding his father's beloved collection. Over the years, Hussain has continued this legacy with dedication, selling extra copies and a gift for tracking down rare and missing records. His dream is to build a complete, well-preserved music library that honours his father's love for music while creating a timeless archive for future generations.

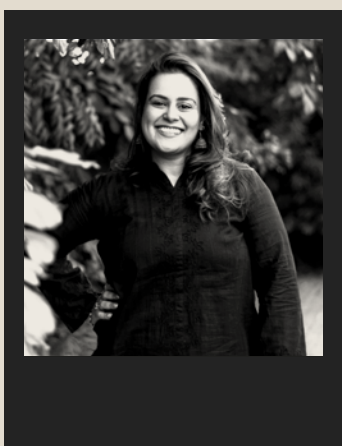
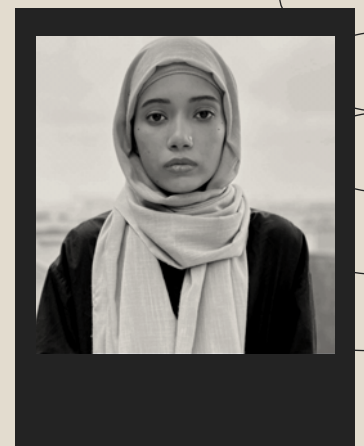


[ATHENA] (ADEENA SABIR)

Athena is a multidisciplinary artist working across filmmaking, curation, music and mental health. Her music is raw and has an expression of vulnerability. Athena infuses her art with empathy and depth, aiming to foster connection and healing through her music. Through themes of healing, love, heartbreak, nostalgia and self love she creates space for listeners to feel deeply and reflect.

SAMEEN ISFAHANY

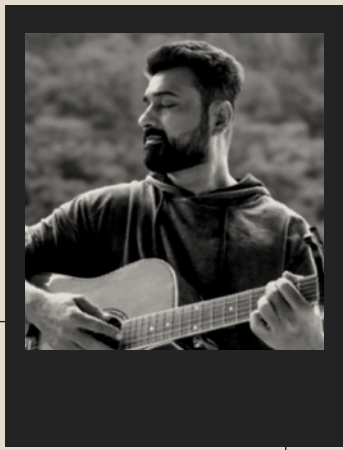
Sameen is a Karachi-based storyteller, singer and Jungian artist. Her work takes many forms: one day it's a song yearning for unrequited love, on another, a fevered-dream fairytale, and on the next, a soundscape of the sea. With her art, she hopes to immerse people in a world she has curated for them. A world she wants witnessed and experienced, a world which moves people as much as it holds them.



SHARMEEN KHAN

Sharmeen is an APA (American Psychological Association) International Affiliate Psychologist and Co Founder of Be Me, with over a decade of experience in mental health and wellness. She is also a public speaker and trainer and has spoken on various platforms including TEDx.





SAIF SAMEJO

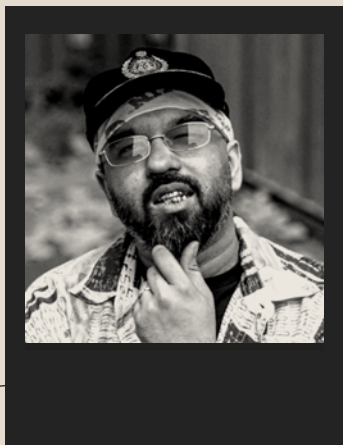
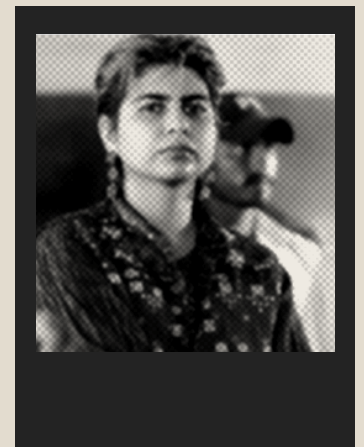
Saif Samejo is a musician, cultural practitioner, and founder of Lahooti, a decade-old evolving grassroots platform rooted in folk knowledge and dedicated to bridging contemporary and traditional art worlds in Pakistan. As the founder of The Sketches, he has spent over two decades preserving and reinterpreting the oral traditions and poetic heritage of Sindh.

Through Lahooti Melo and the Lahooti Music Aashram, Samejo has consistently created equal spaces for artists, poets, policymakers and scientists to enter into dialogue and exchanges that spark conversations toward more inclusive and pluralistic policies. His initiatives move beyond performance, activating culture as a living archive, a space of pedagogy, and a tool for social transformation. He also runs the Lahooti Karoonjhar Commune in Nagarparkar, where residencies, retreats and community gatherings connect artists and local custodians of the Karoonjhar Mountains to explore sustainable relationships with land, memory and cultural

SHAMS MANSUR

Shams is a British-Pakistani director based in Karachi, known for her bold, unconventional approach to storytelling. She studied briefly at St. George's Medical School before completing an English Literature (Hons) degree at Royal Holloway, University of London. With over a decade of experience in top creative agencies including JWT, WCRS, Brothers & Sisters, and ZINC, she has led social change campaigns for organisations such as the NHS, the UN, the US State Department and the British Home Office.

As co-founder of FT.WASTUDIO, Shams shifted her focus to directing and producing films and music projects that amplify marginalised voices. Her work spans documentaries for VICE and Spotify RADAR, music videos for AFUSIC and Hasan Raheem, and initiatives supporting young women in sports. Currently, she is developing a short film exploring the Pakistani female experience through magical surrealism, aiming to enter the festival circuit. Her work has been featured in It's Nice



BLAL BLOCH

blal bloch represents a new wave of Pakistani pop where rap, melody and emotion collide without apology. A self-taught multi-instrumentalist, singer-songwriter and producer, he calls himself a "rap singer", a title that reflects both his versatility and refusal to fit into a single box. His fusion of Urdu and English feels effortless, connecting street narratives with poetic reflection and bridging cultures with ease. Born in Scarborough and raised across the GTA, blal grew up on R&B, Dancehall, Latin music and the South Asian legends his parents loved, including A.R. Rahman and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. These influences shaped his hybrid sound, one that moves naturally between South Asia and North America.

In 2025, he became one of the first Pakistani artists signed to Mass Appeal Records, marking a major moment for South Asian music. His debut album 'Lottery', created with Talal Qureshi, explores instability, ambition and identity, which is a bold, boundary-blurring statement from an artist redefining what Pakistani pop can be.



SAAKIN

Saakin is a band from Islamabad, Pakistan. Formed in 2011, the group's line-up consists of drummer Ibrahim Akram, guitarist Ali Hamdani, vocalist Usman Shakeel, pianist Varqa Faraid and bass guitar Parham Faraid. Saakin won the Lux Style Award for Best Emerging Talent in Music in 2019.

UZAIR JASWAL

Uzair Jaswal is a celebrated Pakistani singer, songwriter and performer from Islamabad. He began his musical journey as a teenager and rose to prominence with hit singles including Tere Bin, Jaanvey, Mereee Rooh, Bolay, Nindiya Ke Paar, Sajna, and Na Bhulana, with Nindiya Ke Paar and Bolay featured on Coke Studio Season 5.

Uzair has earned multiple national awards, solidifying his place as one of the industry's most dynamic voices. His debut album Na Bhulana won Album of the Year at the Lux Style Awards, and Tere Bin Nahi Laage received international

