



RAMOOZ

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Ramooz is a Kashmir-based band formed by Zeeshaan Nabi on lead vocals, guitar, keyboards and electronic instruments, Ayan Joe on bass, guitars and backing vocals, and Srinath S. Kumar on drums and percussion. Both members accompany Zeeshaan Nabi during live performances of their original songs while also combining forces on improvisational pieces on stage.

Since July 20, 2019, the band spent five months in Kashmir under complete lockdown working on their first studio album (with work shifted to Delhi in November 2019), while remaining together as a musical unit for over the last five years. Their first official performance was at The Piano Man (Gurugram) on January 5th, 2020. Their debut music video from their upcoming album was released on 06-06-2020

THE BAND

Zeeshaan Nabi

Zeeshaan is a music producer, composer and singer-songwriter based in Kashmir. He completed his foundation major in western and Indian classical vocals, diploma (major composition) along with music production and preparatory course specialising in music composition (level 4,5,6 in western classical composition) from the A.R. Rahman founded K.M. College of Music and Technology (Chennai). He did further specialisation from Sir Zelman Cowen School of Music at Monash University (Melbourne, Australia) where he studied experimental music and composition. Zeeshaan moved back to Kashmir in November 2017 and started building his studio, Meerakii.

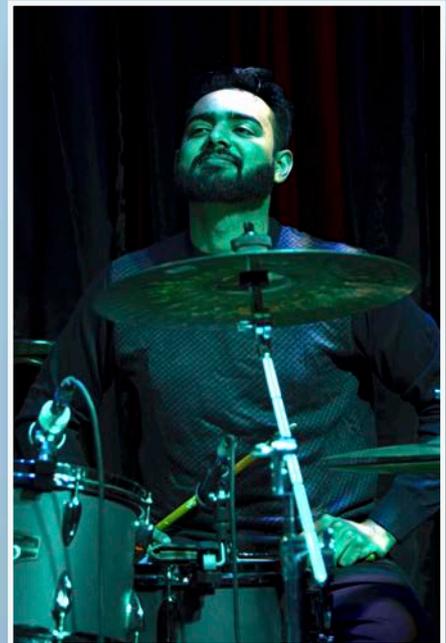


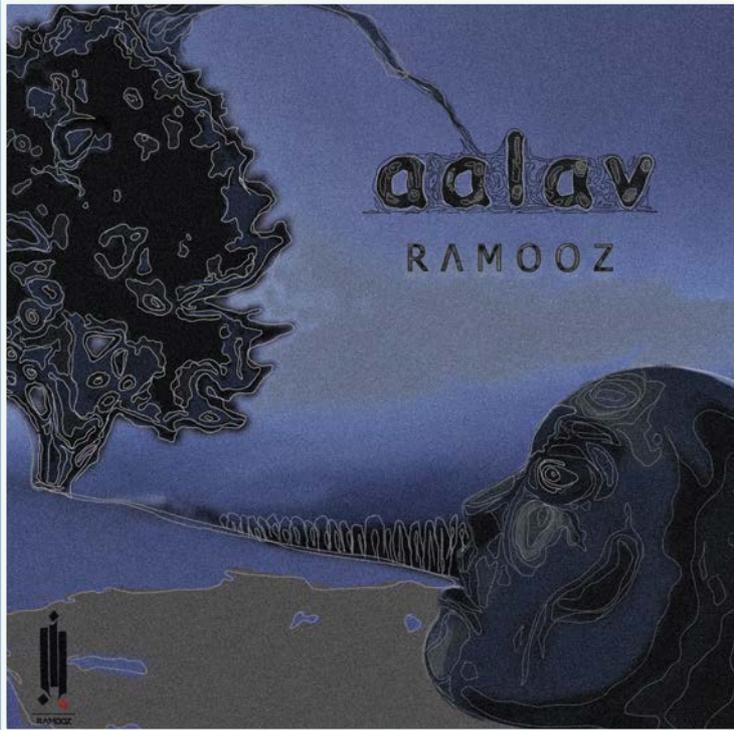
Ayan Joe

Ayan is a trained bassist and guitarist who studied music in Swarnabhoomi Academy of Music in Chennai. He has been playing stringed instruments since the sixth grade to the extent that he decided to pursue advanced academic studies in music later on in life.

Srinath S Kumar

Originally from Kerala, Srinath was possessed by the art of percussion from his birthplace since an early age. At seventeen, he formally started playing drums to then pursuing an academic degree in music. In 2019, he relocated to Kashmir in order to record the album for Ramooz.





(Cover art: Khytul Abyad)

The debut music video for the song *Aalav* is part of the band's upcoming concept album, which was pre-recorded in Srinagar and with parts re-recorded in New Delhi. The band released this first track on June 6, 2020 and within the first week, the song's music video had already crossed 100k views.

Aalav was produced and recorded at Meerakii Studio (Kashmir) during the lockdown post August 5th and later on, parts of this first track were re-recorded at Seven point studios (Delhi). From its conception, *Aalav* as a first official release from the album marks a two year long journey, since first being written by Zeeshaan Nabi on a guitar back in 2017 with the music video finished this May.

Conceptually, the lyrics of the song sung in Kashmiri are a poetic expression of longing and lamenting for a mother who is also a metaphor for an estranged motherland. The visuals for the video amplify a surreal layer over the music that marks the beginning of a journey where a protagonist is seen wandering about trying to decipher the eerily familiar yet elusively strange homely space around him

as he enters into a world beset by grief and devastation. As such, *Aalav* as a song of lament and longing, along with its music video, marks the beginning of a journey that is carried forth through the subsequent songs in the rest of the album.

The song was written back in 2017 while Zeeshaan was studying at Monash University in Australia. After moving back to Kashmir, he recorded the song at his studio inviting three Kashmiri folk musicians to play Santoor, Rabab and Nout. Such a compositional choice was intended upon matching the poetic lyricism of the song in Kashmiri with a traditional Kashmiri instrumental element. Yet, even then the song did not fulfil the vision of its composer who relied on the musical sensibilities of his two bandmates, Ayan Joe on the bass and Srinath S. Kumar on the drums and percussion.

Ayan Joe had an idea in mind for the bass parts grounded in the open-ended approach to composition that Zeeshaan had arrived with, approaching composition for such bass parts from a contemporary lens, and not simply as additions to a fusion or rock song, with a discrete and specific mode of playing, a set of orthodox melodies and musical style. Upon hearing the pre-recorded track in Zeeshaan's Meerakii Studio, Ayan submitted two drafts for a potential bass tracks. A Carnatic style of sound was not intended, but given Ayan's vast exposure, one can hear a certain influence from his native culture. From there a specific set of melodies and licks were discussed and demoed, with five to six improvised bass solos ready, and the final one selected with the melodies that made the final cut.

Srinath arrived to play on drums through a process in two tiers. The pre-recorded track at Meerakii Studio integrated pre-programmed drums, with a dummy track for cajon, from which an actual cajon part was incorporated. Srinath also worked with syncopation, finding concrete and ideal ways to play in the space of the song, until a process of refining led to a first draft of the drum track. In this first track, it felt the first section where there was a cajon did not have the intensity it required since the band by then had performed live versions of the song with Srinath on the drums bringing in more power and greater intensity into his percussive canvas. Srinath set upon testing an unconventional idea to experiment with a polyrhythmic

groove between a high-hat and snare-bass combination, eventually completing the track as it is heard in the studio album version of *Aalav* that is featured in this new and first music video release.

The song eventually progressed into the creation of a music video that goes beyond what is usually produced from Kashmir, in terms of non-linear plotlines, multiple stories congealing into one script and micro-narratives that can be seen on a thematic plane or as a visual patchwork. Collaborating with young filmmaker Mirum Quazi on a storyboard to him eventually directing the video, the video captured a memoryscape on screen. In that memoryscape, the immediately visible is embedded in the haziness of dream or the awakening into a world that seems strange yet familiar at the same time. The only figure without a mask on in that world is the one of the protagonist, who navigates that space, almost in a trance as if re-encountering a world that he once knew.

The video then expands into this idea of awakening into a world where that awakening is as much a return, a re-encounter, giving way to a grief and a lament of what has been left of that world in its broken fragments and the residue of devastation that becomes more palpable as the protagonist wanders further. The video ends with the protagonist wandering from a homely environment into the open Kashmiri landscape in the stillness of winter, seeking to retrieve something or someone from a grave of snow. That someone is the protagonist himself, who from a distance seems to perform a self-burial that points to a rebirth vanishing in the horizon. There is a distant yet conceivable catharsis and a potential for healing that is not bluntly encoded in the scenography and the scriptline, but somewhere viewers, and particularly those from Kashmir, will find it. At least that is the hope of its creators.

Aalav was performed at the Jamia Kashmir Fest in 2019 (on a thirty minute set) and at The Piano Man Gurugram (on a two hour set) in early 2020.

Link to the music video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNWBZ1LQdB4>

Lyrics - Transliteration

By Zeeshaan Nabi

Baale thangyen, sheen chum pyevaan
Kus aalam, kyah wanai?

Wandich teer yeali, ragan chem
valaan
Galaan chaen kanger tapith

Paigaam choun, hyeth aai Lidder
Czandaan mye chyekh boozum

Brandas bihith, osh chyekh haraan
Wosh chyekh travaan boozum

Aech maeczraevith, gaash yeli aam
Kyah Kyah wuchum, kyah wanai?

Poz tai apuz, soruy dazaan
Suur hai gaczaan, kyah wanai?

Bas akh kaemi hai roozum
Chaeni kaemi hai rozum
Lalnawun su, kati mye baniy?

Chaeni kaemi, Mouji!

Baale thangyen naar logum
Naar logum baale thangyen
Baale thangyen naar logum

Baale thangyen naar logum
(Baale thangyen)
Naar logum baale thangyen
(Naare thangyen)
Baale thangyen naar logum

Lyrics - Translation

By Amjad Majid

Over the peaks of my mountain, the snow pours
What world is this, what shall I say?

When the winter's chill, wraps around my veins
The warmth of your kanger (firepot) melts its
grip

The Lidder (river) arrives with your message
Looking for me you are, I heard

Sitting out on your porch, you're losing tears
Letting out your sighs, I heard

With eyes opened, when my sight caught on
What all I saw, what can I tell you?

Truth and falsehood, it all burns
Turns to ash, what can I tell you?

Just one absence has remained
Your absence has remained
That cradling of yours, where can I seek it?

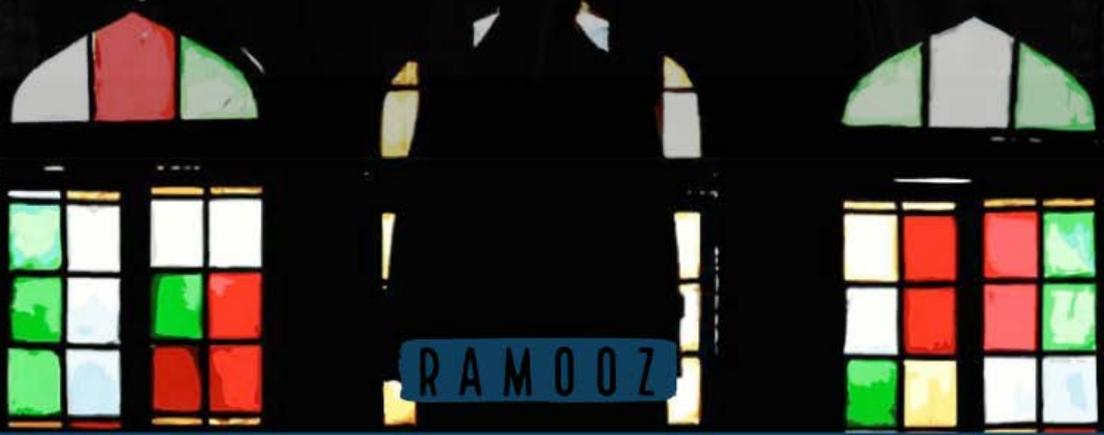
Your absence, O Mother!

My mountain peaks set ablaze
Set ablaze my mountain peaks
My mountain peaks set ablaze

My mountain peaks set ablaze
(Mountain peaks)
Set ablaze my mountain peaks
(Burning peaks)
My mountain peaks set ablaze

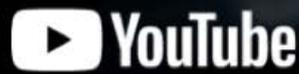
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