

DAY TO DAY is Jazz in Migration

ALBUM REVIEW

ZOHEB MASHIUR

Yes, *Day to Day* is an album about migration and mixing, about life lived each day at a time. These are true statements, but first and foremost it is a beautiful thing to listen to.

Day to Day is brought to us by Sarathy Korwar who is a jazz composer, a producer and percussionist with experience of life lived in three countries (the USA, India and the UK – specifically London, a world in itself.) Any competent musician with such a background can be trusted to create something at least interesting, if they can avoid the trappings of generic fusion sounds.

What makes *Day to Day* stand out is what went into its recording. Sarathy Korwar spent time among the Siddis, a group of Indo-Pakistani Sufis descended from the Bantu of Southeast Africa. Field-recordings of a troupe of Siddi musicians provide both the structure around which *Day to Day* is built and also half of the album's soul. The body of the music is provided by Korwar's friends – a guitarist, a pianist and a bassist – who were in India at the same time as him. Their relaxed recording sessions at Korwar's Pune home, alongside Korwar's percussions, surround and complement the organic sound of the Siddi troupe.

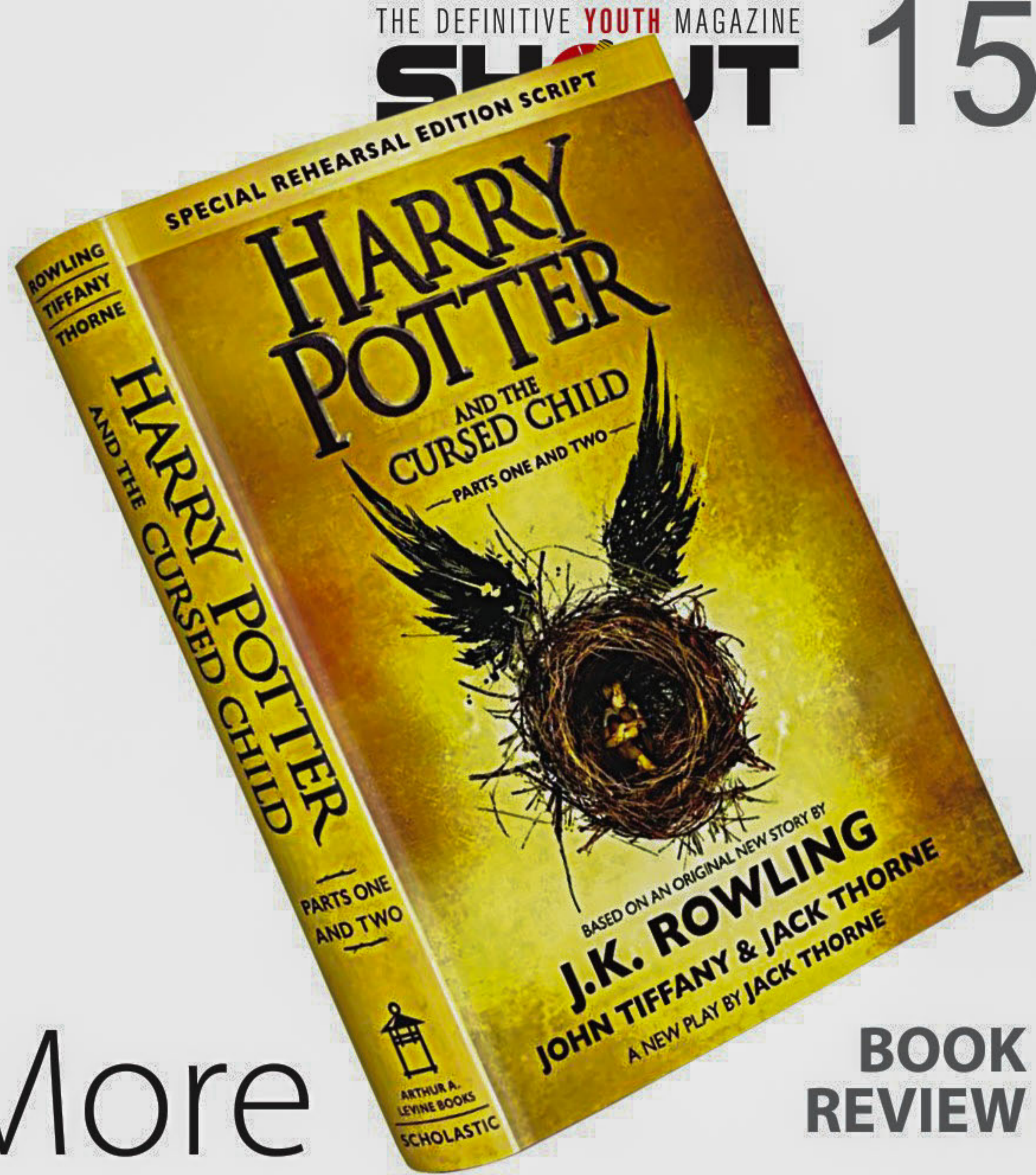
There is a timeless, universal quality to the music, not least because the Siddi often sing in the Swahili of their ancestors, a language whose words they no longer understand. Listen to the

opening track, 'Bhajan', as the singer's plaintive calls are joined out of nowhere by a flamenco guitar and the track bursts open into the beautiful, meandering performances that only happy jazz musicians can play. New sounds join the fray as Korwar reveals just how much is on his palette: the train recording on 'Mawra' is such a flourish. Every note is carefully picked, played and brought to your attention by Korwar's production; there is never a dull moment.

A listener would be forgiven for thinking, into the second track, that this sound and this quality could not be maintained for 40 whole minutes. More promising albums have been quicker to turn stale. No fear, for Korwar maps the tracks out with a great care, showing a sense of pacing that is often neglected by musicians who can only think about making each track great in isolation. While there are inevitably a few stand-out winners, each composition shows Korwar doing something interesting with the variety of sounds at his disposal. Just check out the murky tablas on 'Lost Parade'. You only put something like that in if you have ambitions.

Jazz and Sufi devotionals are two things that would never naturally inhabit the same space; Korwar's genius is in making the merge sound not only natural but inevitable.

Zoheb Mashiur is a prematurely balding man with bad facial hair and so does his best to avoid people. Ruin his efforts by writing to zoheb.mashiur@gmail.com



BOOK
REVIEW

More Fan Fiction THAN SEQUEL

SARAH ANJUM BARI

We were sceptical, but that didn't stop us from grabbing the first copy of *The Cursed Child* we could find. While I wasn't hoping to be blown out of my mind, it's disheartening how my only sentiment towards the story is an indifferent "Meh".

The sequel opens with the Platform 9^{3/4} scene that *The Deathly Hallows* finishes on. With a nod to the fateful train ride that brought our favourite trio together, Harry's younger son Albus finds a best friend on the way to Hogwarts in Scorpius Malfoy. Albus struggles under the immense pressure of being Harry Potter's son, especially as best friend to a Malfoy descendant who has some questionable rumours colouring his own past. Things get truly worrying, however, when Harry's scar starts hurting again. Voldemort may have left behind a lineage more traditional than Horcruxes, and the ensuing damage control involves a lot of time travel and alternate realities.

Sounds exciting, right?

The plot is heavily inter-textual and it takes us back to iconic moments of Harry's history that still strike a blow to the system. Cheeky and adventurous, the premise is classic Rowling. What lets you down is that it doesn't feel like Rowling's universe. Even taking into account that Harry, Ron and Hermione are now middle-aged adults with responsibilities, they don't feel like the characters we grew up with. Harry's sense of empathy and respect for others is blaringly absent; and Ron is an irrelevant, de-glorified stay-at-home dad who appears to be there simply as a not-so-humorous comic relief. Almost

all the characters appear one dimensional – as if someone compiled a PowerPoint presentation highlighting their famous traits in bullet points.

Almost equally annoying is the treatment of Lord Voldemort. The Dark Lord is one of the most elegant villains to have lived in the pages of literature. His glamour lies in the terror he commands; his passion for solitude that blotted out his entire ancestry and his ego so large that his more ardent worshippers could only come as near as kissing the hem of his robes. He Who Must Not Be Named was untouchable. The revelation of such a mundane act on his part is as disenchanting as watching him hug Draco Malfoy and jump off a tower holding Harry's face close to his own.

There are, of course, plus points. The story does start to feel more real towards the end and one of the final scenes is almost as heart-rending as the ones we grew up crying over. At its core, it's a story about father-son relationships and the permanence of friendship through the ages. Having saved the world and defeated evil, Harry now has to master being a father – something he has no reference point for; it's touching to watch.

Finally, what we need to keep in mind is that *The Cursed Child* isn't a novel; it's the rehearsal script for a play. While the reading experience may feel bland, some truly impressive stage directions indicate that the actual play must look magnificent. But Harry Potter's stories are famous above all for feeding readers' imagination, and it shouldn't need visual aid.

Unfortunately, it simply feels like reading fan fiction.

