

Just for the Record

Vishwas Kulkarni meets Andy Jupp of Charity Shop DJ, a cultural initiative that finds your old records and takes them to unexpected places. The *Mughal-e-Azam* soundtrack is key to his India 'tour'

For a man who has spent 12,000

kms across India playing vinyls on a portable turntable, to local bystanders, DJ Andy Jupp is not weary at all. In Mumbai currently, on the last leg of his 'tour', the 39-year-old is brimming with high-voltage energy as he explains his cultural initiative called Charity Shop DJ.

"The idea started when my uncle died and left behind what I call 'the world's worst record collection'. It featured random cover versions of singers, populist songs from the cheapest labels, non-mainstream funk that wasn't Beatles or Rolling Stones but rather a personalised emotionality," he says. Accidental exposure to this easy listening underbelly had Jupp tracking down charity shops across the UK where he began archaeologising 45 RPMs, cheesy covers, memories of another day—all to remix them in his own studio.

"Once I had a repertoire ready, I'd organise a gig at a charity shop or old age homes. One of the reasons that I chose old age homes is that these vinyls are from their era." This awkwardness of hosting a gig at an old age home ironically worked in Jupp's favour, with the Arts Council of England stepping in to promote what was turning out to be a promising "cross-generational" meeting ground. "The idea of a gig instinctively attracts a younger crowd. However, I didn't

want to perform these at a nightclub or a warehouse or some such cliché. So it turned out that young hipsters were hanging out with senior citizens," he offers.

Jupp has taken the individualised nostalgia associated with the record into a visual realm as well. Many of the gigs that he has been hosting across the UK and the world also feature photographs of people holding a record of their choice, melodies that define their identities to some degree. The results are portraits of various people alongside a token of the pop of their times.

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Culture is about ordinary people

When Jupp first visited India 12 years ago, he wasn't expecting to have an Indian version of his audio experiments. That is until he discovered punters selling second-hand vinyls at VT. "The more research I did over the years, the more I realised that there was in fact a link, or rather a pattern to vinyl consumption." For example, *Acchha Abba* by a duo comprising Punjabi sisters is an easy listening gem that would strike a chord even amongst desis. If *Abba* covers in Hindi are your thing, that is.

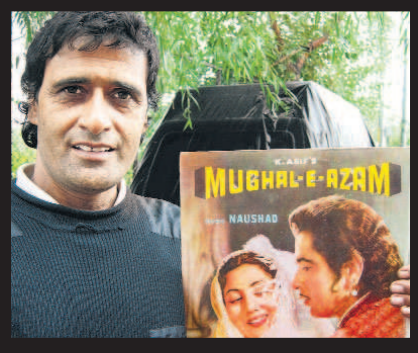
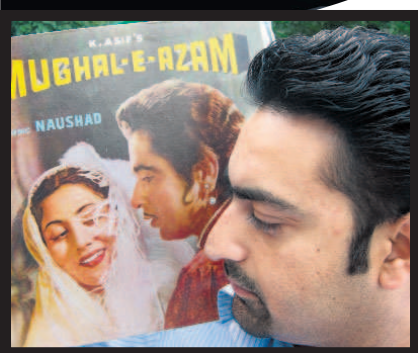
Jupp's quest for bizarre funk has garnered much support. Back home, the Arts Council of England has funded Charity Shop DJ for

a while now, aside from an academic tie-up with Nottingham Trent University. In India, Jupp has connected with a coterie called The Society of Indian Record Collectors. "They have an amazing catalogue of old records. It is a treasure trove of information on the subject. I am working on a project with them too."

For his Indian tour, Andy Jupp decided to stick to the *Mughal-e-Azam* OST. "The film has a resonance across generations. Its re-release four years ago has only anchored it even deeper within the popular consciousness." The highest Jupp has played to the public is at Taglang La in Ladakh—this was a gig at 15,000 feet above sea level. This was mid-point for a journey that started in Udaipur, then cut an arc northward, and then moved clockwise down to Goa.

The photographs shot on this journey have become part of something Jupp keeps referring to as the "Charity Shop picture show". "I hang up the photographs and often screen some films as well. I have been sourcing experimental, funky films from the sub-continent. I like transferring cultures to unexpected places."

Jupp's philosophy vis-à-vis the 'place' as a construct is this: "Art is about being democratic. There is no point in rummaging through charity shops, rubbish heaps and what have you and then exporting the cool-th to some cold, clinical gallery. Culture is about ordinary people, the clamour of *chai* shops, happy local exchanges, cozy tents, small town cults. I'd like to keep it that way," says the musician who returns to England tomorrow. Because next on the cards is an Australian version of the Charity Shop DJ. And Jupp better collect a brimful of *Asha* for it.



SNAPSHOTS FROM A MUSICAL TRAIL: Portraits documenting Jupp's 12000-km run