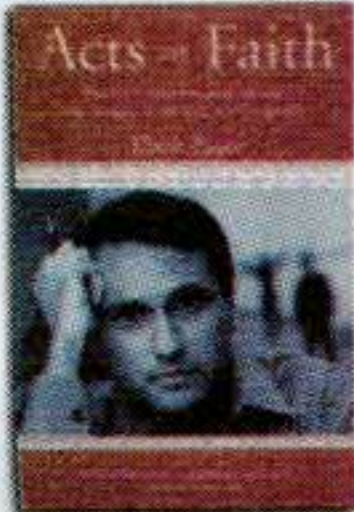


# Reviews



## **Acts of Faith (Book)** **By Eboo Patel** **(Beacon Press)**



Eboo Patel, founder of the Interfaith Youth Core, beautifully chronicles his struggle for Muslim, Indian and American identity in his book *Acts of Faith*. He tells the story of a young Muslim growing up in America learning that he is at once alike and different from those around him. Patel talks of the complex choices that one must make in everyday life in response to different levels of racism. He tells his childhood story where a Jewish friend was berated and humiliated by other children. And yet Patel did nothing in response. But at the moment the seeds of religious pluralism were implanted. "My adolescence was a series of rejections, one after another, of the various dimensions of my heritage, in belief that America, India, and Islam could not coexist within the same being. My struggle to understand the traditions I belong to as mutually enriching rather than mutually exclusive is the story of a generation of young people standing at the crossroads of inheritance and discovery, trying to look both ways at once."

The central thesis of the book is one of fostering positive interactions with young Muslims, here in America as well as around the world. Through the influence of "elders" around them a young Muslim has the chance to become "good" as well as "bad." The outcome is largely dependent upon whom they are influenced by.

But Patel is not simply writing another book touting the positives or negatives of Islam, rather he is "centrally focused on embracing differences by reaching across religious lines. His response to racism has not been to "go inward and become racist reactively" but to "begin working with those different from him in order to make a difference." And thus he created the Interfaith Youth Core, a Chicago-based international non-profit that promotes interfaith cooperation.

*Acts of Faith* is a must read for everyone. In today's explosively changing religious and cultural climate, Patel is a breath of fresh air that is actually making a difference rather than pointing them out.

- Himanshu Desai

## **Kiran Ahluwalia (CD)** **Wanderlust** **(Times Square/4Q Records)**



Kiran Ahluwalia, born in India, raised in Canada and now making New York City her home, is fast emerging as a ghazal catalyst and historian. On her recent recording *Wanderlust*, Ahluwalia blends Portuguese fado with the timeless

music of her Indian heritage, namely ghazals and Punjabi folk music. There's a distinct jazz undercurrent on some songs thanks to her husband and music collaborator Rez Abbasi, the Pakistan-born jazz musician. *Wanderlust* is a blend of Punjabi folks songs, ghazals and Portugal's ghazal-like music called fado where Ahluwalia's voice is slowly poured into the music. Her work is somber, yet the music and delivery are full of joy. She is able to genuinely project the longing and sadness required in singing ghazals and continues to build her reputation as one of the few people in the Western hemisphere composing new music for ghazals. Singer Shahid Ali Khan guests on the song "Mere Mathay," supporting her authentic folk melody. The Electric guitar, harmonium, accordion and tabla converge with fado guitarists as Ahluwalia instills new energy into ghazals.

- Samir Shukla

## **The Fall (CD)** **Live at the Knitting Factory** **(Hip Priest)**



The revolving doors of the British Band the Fall only have one constant. That's singer/composer and frontman Mark E. Smith. The legendary band, led by the iconic Smith since the late 70s, performed at the Knitting Factory in L.A. in late 2001. This disc is the recorded version of the concert. Smith and the band are their usual abrasive and eccentric selves but the recording quality is fairly poor. But long-time fans will be satisfied to have another document of the band in ragged musical regalia. Began in the late 70s, the post-punk ethos of the Fall was more in line with Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground and the German art band Can. Smith's spoken-sung vocals and widely cynical yet witty words have given the band a small but intensely loyal following. They've experimented with myriad musical styles and can be frustrating to most listeners but enlightening to those who come with open ears.

- Samir Shukla

## **Bill Bruford's Earthworks (DVD)** **Video Anthology Vol. 1** **(Summerfold Records)**



For almost four decades drummer Bill Bruford has instilled his inimitable percussion into rock, films, jazz and numerous other genres. Bruford began his storied career in the late 60s with rockers Yes. He completed his British art-rock trilogy by doing a short stint with Genesis in the 70s and playing with King Crimson for 25 years. This DVD is a collection of videos and unreleased concert performances with his jazz quartet Bill Bruford's Earthworks, which he formed in 1986. The the group has performed and recorded ever since. Bruford's signature percussion work has made Earthworks one of the most innovative contemporary jazz ensembles. This DVD collects concerts recorded this century in Germany, Argentina and New York City.

- Samir Shukla