



Taj Mahal Foxtrot

The Story of Bombay's Jazz Age

Naresh Fernandes

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Fernandes is among the best narrative historians working in India today, and his new book is a triumph of storytelling. *Taj Mahal Foxtrot's* got the beat.
Suketu Mehta

The pictures match the words, producing this jewel of a book, which I read with pleasure, profit, and, above all, admiration.
Ramachandra Guha

ROLI BOOKS

- An intimate look at a period of modern Indian history that has shaped the music of the subcontinent today
- Features detailed sections on several important Indian and American jazz musicians, including Chic Chocolate, 'the Louis Armstrong of India'; and Teddy Weatherford

In 1935, a violinist from Minnesota named Leon Abbey brought the first 'all negro' jazz band to Bombay, leaving behind a legacy that would last three decades. In a decade, swing found its way onto the streets of India. It influenced Hindi film music: the very soundtrack of Indian life. The optimism of jazz became an important element in the tunes that echoed the hopes of newly independent India. This book tells a story of India, especially of the city of Bombay, through the lives of a menagerie of geniuses, strivers, and eccentrics, both Indian and American, who helped jazz find a home in the sweaty subcontinent. They include the burly African-American pianist Teddy Weatherford; the Goan trumpet player Frank Fernand, whose epiphanic encounter with Mahatma Gandhi drove him to try to give jazz an Indian voice; Chic Chocolate, who was known as 'the Louis Armstrong of India'; Anthony Gonsalves, who lent his name to one of the most popular Bollywood tunes ever; and many more. *Taj Mahal Foxtrot*, at its heart, is a history of Bombay in swing time.

Naresh Fernandes is the editor of *Scroll.in*, a digital daily. He was previously editor-in-chief of *Time Out India*, and has also worked at *The Times of India* and the Associated Press in Mumbai, and the *Wall Street Journal* in New York. His journalism has appeared in the *Hindustan Times*, the *New York Times*, *India Magazine*, *Man's World*, *Outlook Traveller*, *Seminar*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Art and Thought*, *Wespennest*, *Letras Libres*, *Transition*, *Culturefront* and *Citylimits*, among other publications. He is the author of *City Adrift: A Short Biography of Bombay* and the co-author of *Bombay: Then and Now*, a photo-led record of the city's historical and contemporary concerns. In 2003 he was the co-editor, along with Jerry Pinto, of *Bombay Meri Jaan*, an anthology of writing about Bombay. First published in 2012, *Taj Mahal Foxtrot* was shortlisted for the Economist Crossword Book Award in the non-fiction category and the Tata First Book Award.