

September 1, 2021
For Immediate Release

**USTAD SAAMI ANNOUNCES NEW ALBUM, *EAST PAKISTAN SKY*, OUT
OCTOBER 1ST ON GLITTERBEAT**

LISTEN TO "[PRAYER FOR PEACE](#)"



Photo Credit: Marilena Umuhoza Delli

77-year-old musician **Ustad Saami** announces his new album, *east Pakistan sky*, out **October 1st on Glitterbeat**, and today presents "**Prayer for Peace**." Saami devotes his life daily to keep alive his customized microtonal, pre-Islamic, multilingual (Farsi, Sanskrit, Hindi, the ancient and dead language of Vedic, Jibberish, Arabic, and Urdu) music. Handed down by his ancestors for over a thousand years, he is the only vocal practitioner of Surti left in the world and when he passes, this music will die with him as well. His third album, *east Pakistan sky*, is his most immersive yet. It consists of just two songs, reflecting his live performances which often consist of a single, uninterrupted song that can stretch to over an hour in length.

As a child, Ustad was the chosen one from his family and his master forbid him to speak for years. During this period, he was only allowed to express himself vocally, not

verbally. He studied for thirty-five years to perfect this system before he ever even stepped onstage. Ustad explores the subtlety of human emotion through microtones, an attempt to turn “negatives positive” through the reclamation of those tones deemed out-of-tune. “To sing is to listen.” These are the words of the master. The translation of his own last name, Saami, even means “to hear.”

For Ustad, everything centers on one note. From that, all else grows and music is seen as a sixth sense for people to better communicate with each other. With great precision, Saami utilizes 49-notes versus the West’s mere seven. The scale was founded by a mixed-race royal whose lifelong endeavor was to make peace with duality through art. This predecessor of Qawwali music is called Khayál, the Arabic word for “imagination” and in it the melody carries the meaning. The lyrics are almost incidental during these call-and-responses. Urbane media-moguls repeatedly told the master that he didn’t know how to sing since his notes failed to align on a sanitized and dumbed-down grid. Engineers, unable to see his notes on their Pro Tools system, assumed that it was the artist not the machine that was mistaken. But it is precisely the uneven pitches that the master values as being the most searching, while those with even numbers tend towards being too stable. Following Saami’s recent debut album at the age of 75, a World Music “expert” in Los Angeles was flummoxed that she could not find any reference to the master’s system on the internet. Ironically, this absence of reference actually stands as proof rather than refuting his rarity. It cannot be found elsewhere precisely because it is his system— a customized work of recovery— with Ustad the only living vocal practitioner.

east Pakistan sky was produced by Grammy Award winner [Ian Brennan](#), known for his work with **Tinariwen**, **The Good Ones**, **Zomba Prison Project**, and more. Brennan’s forthcoming book, [Muse-Sick](#), features details on his extensive work with Saami and over 30 other international artists, and features a Foreword by legendary filmmaker, **John Waters**.)

[Listen to Ustad Saami’s “Prayer for Peace”](#)

***east Pakistan sky* Tracklist**

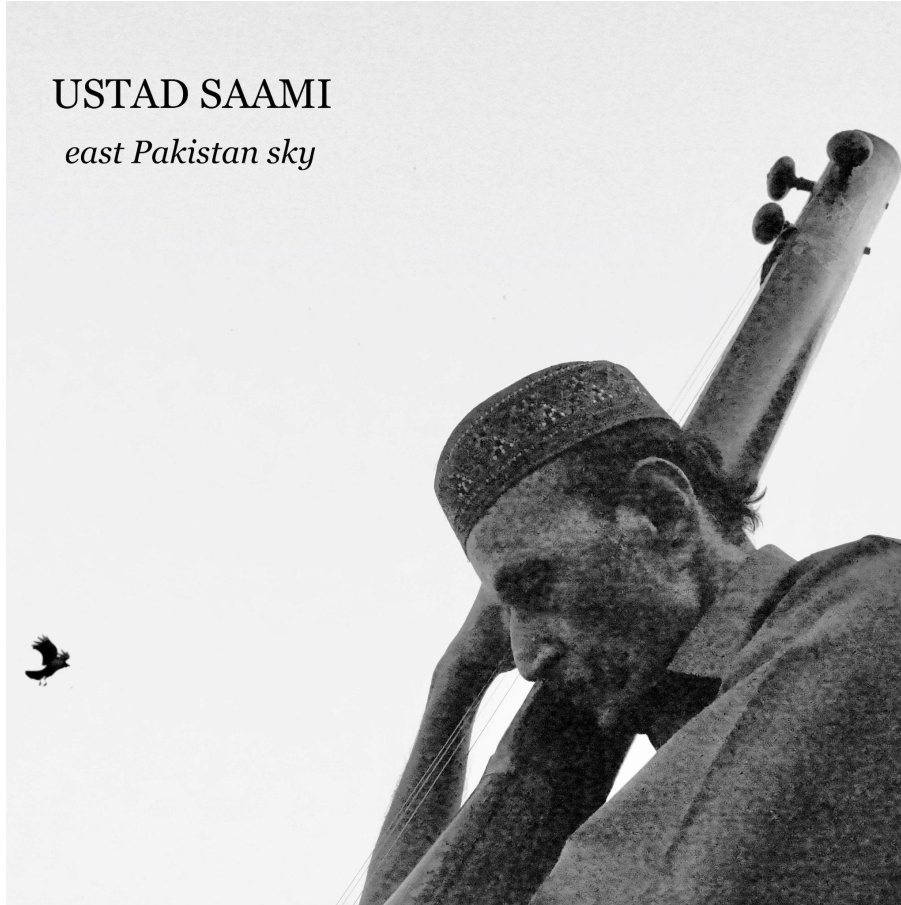
1. Night Falls (Desert Melody)
2. Prayer for Peace

[Ustad Saami on Bandcamp](#)

[Download hi-res images and jpegs of Ustad Saami](#)

USTAD SAAMI

east Pakistan sky



east Pakistan sky Cover Artwork

PRAISE FOR USTAD SAAMI

"His hypnotic voice leaps from octave to octave as he homes in on the precise microtones of the 49-note scale of which the 76-year-old is the world's last surviving practitioner." - ***The Guardian***

"Saami is the embodiment of a century-old musical tradition passed on by his ancestors. A tradition that's fiercely repelled by fundamentalists within Pakistan's Islamic communities. Though Ustad Saami has passed on his wisdom to his sons and students, he is still the only soul on earth with the knowhow to perform all forty-nine notes that encompass the astonishingly intricate khayál-technique." - ***The Quietus***

"Extraordinary recordings ... Backed by tanpura, harmonium and tablas, Saami sings with multiple accompanying voices, rising in front of them with electrifying force and terrifying beauty. Precious, melancholy valedictions for a 1000 years of sound." - ***The Wire***

“Ustad Saami’s electrifying vocal style may be rooted in the 13th century, but it sounds as fresh and experimental as the latest hotly tipped avant-rock act.” - ***Uncut***

For more information, contact: Jacob Daneman | Pitch Perfect PR -
jacob@pitchperfectpr.com, 773-271-6844

###