



Exclusively on the GQ India iPad app: The full interview + videos from Revolt TV

Pop merchant

Amrit Singh, music and culture editor of Sean 'Puffy' Combs' Revolt TV, on the relevance of TV channels today and what it means to be indie

He's the coolest guy in the indie music scene you've never heard of. As editor of Stereogum.com – the music junkie's go-to destination – Amrit Singh not only has a loyal fan following among hipsters, he's also pals with musicians like jazz pianist Vijay Iyer, ex-Das Racist rapper Himanshu Suri and Vampire Weekend's Rostam Batmanglij. Now, he's bringing his pop culture knowledge to Sean Combs' latest Internet/social media/television venture.

There was a time when labels like "indie" and "mainstream" were easy to define and there were few crossovers. How has that changed?

The last decade has radically altered the meaning of "indie" – I've had my fair share of hand-wringing and fraught existential dialogues over just this issue. Some people will tell you "indie"

as a concept is meaningless in 2013, and that's not fair. The word still has import. It no longer has a direct relationship to label status, sure – plenty of bands that scan as "indie" are on major labels, and even more are on major label subsidiaries, which are often smoke-and-mirror operations to make bands seem as grassroots, underfunded and aesthetic as truly independent artists.

Instead, "indie" is now all about mindset, posture and a deeply codified, nearly inarticulable set of aesthetic values and judgments. Perhaps the most succinct and meaningful way to express what makes something "indie" is also the most vague: "I know it when I see it."

Would you agree that Revolt TV is competing with Joseph Gordon-Levitt's HitRECord, a certain energy drink's Red Bulletin and vice.com for attention?

On a fundamental level, any content creator today is engaged in an intense competition for attention; every single person with a social media account is in the game. It's a content glut, to be honest. This doesn't mean there isn't a need for new voices – it just means we need ones with more credibility and authority, steeped in experience and vision. More than ever, we need filters.

Revolt TV is distinct from web operations in that it's a proper television channel, with all the resources and production infrastructure that implies. It's distinct from old-school television networks in that it's a multi-platform network created in the age of the Web. And it's distinct from the concept of "music television" in that it's about real journalism, real voices, with a commitment to breaking news in a real-time environment. If I wasn't involved, I'd be watching.

Do you have another project of Indian interest lined up, something like *Dosa Hunt*, your film about the best dosa in New York City?

One of the saddest facts of my existence: I haven't been to India in over 13 years. Making *Dosa Hunt* was, in part, an attempt to feel closer to India; screening it there has been a dream from the start. And I have some very specific ideas for projects focused on India.

There's the *Dosa Hunt* sequel, which at this point is nothing more than an in-joke between me and the rest of the guys – but then, that's how *Dosa Hunt* started in the first place. For this theoretical next installment, I want to reunite the cast for a hunt through the motherland. But I want to do this after some years have elapsed, so that we're again exploring these cross-cultural issues, while also discovering how our heroes have evolved. Sort of like what Richard Linklater's done with his brilliant *Before Sunrise* trilogy – just much less white. ☺

Watch Amrit Singh chat with some of the biggest names in pop music on youtube.com/revolttv

Five things Amrit Singh is into this month

Arcade Fire's new album *Reflektor*



Martin Scorsese's *The Wolf of Wall Street*



A new essay by American novelist **Jonathan Franzen**



Stand-up comic **Reggie Watts**



Election Day November 5 in America

