

## About this recording:

Divas & Devas is a CD of East Indian bhajans, sung as male-female duets, in Sanskrit, Hindi and Marathi. The overall feeling is romantic, with the intimate interplay of masculine and feminine gesturing toward the larger relationship of the human and the divine. The arrangements also echo this duality, employing traditional Indian instruments such as tablas, sarangi and santoor, along with Western instruments such as vibes, cello, trumpet, flute, mandolin and lap steel.

You can play the CD for spiritual effect if you like, but it also works great as a soundtrack for making love.

The songs are a collaboration between me and a different diva (I use this term with great affection and respect): Donna Delory, Dasi Karnamrita, C.C. White, Kim Waters, Sat-Kartar, Suzanne Sterling, Wah!, Allie Stringer and Joni Allen. Each singer is evocative of different qualities, with my voice as the through-line. The opening song is an ensemble piece on which all of the divas sing with me.

I was first exposed to the tradition of Indian devotional song when I lived at Gurudev Siddha Peeth in Ganshpuri, in the Indian state of Maharashtra. Many notable bhajan and qawaali singers passed through the ashram, and I was very moved by the ecstasy and the stillness that radiated from them. The words they sang were written in India centuries ago during the era of the bhakti poet-saints, but they still spoke to me in a voice that seemed clear and modern, and these words continue to inform my thinking and my practice. In this recording, I have set some of these poems to my own original musical compositions. Other songs come directly from the rich musical tradition that has been transmitted to me through the lineage of Siddha Yoga.

The English word *diva* conveys a number of shades of meaning, some complimentary and some pejorative, ranging from accomplished artist through demanding ego. The origin of the term, however, is the Sanskrit word *deva*, which means luminous, shining, god, or heavenly one. And it is toward this original meaning that much artistic expression ultimately points. For me then, the title of this CD, 'Divas and Devas', refers to the relationship of our limited sense of self to the expansive awareness that we call divine love, as one reaches toward the other.