



JAHTA BEATS: CHANTING WITH TIGERS /CD

BY DJ DREZ

BLACK SWAN SOUNDS

Chanting with Tigers is the most recent album released by sound ambassador DJ Drez. As one of the yoga community's hardest working artists, Drez offers a smooth blend of downtempo, heavy hip hop, and high vibes from India that take you on a journey bridging the best of modern beats in the West with the timeless instrumentals of the East.

Keeping with the sangha spirit, the album is a brilliant collaboration with cameos from kirtan artists such as Arjun Baba that also features up-and-coming world music collective The Kirtanias.

The first track stirs the soul with a slow low blend of harmonium and bass carried by the celestial voice of Jahnava who offers the opening song to Radha. The tempo picks up through the next few tracks with deep hip hop backbeats balanced with jazzy notes.

R&B inspired sounds smooth the journey back into easy listening midway through the album, adding impact to the thumping pulse of the following tracks that incorporate the signature style of The Kirtanias: BassMantra.

The closing songs invoke a meditative mood with mystic musings of a hypnotic hang drum and the viscous vocals of The Kirtanias' lead singer Vijay. Drez serves our musical souls once again with his master-crafted sound creation that is Chanting with Tigers.

Reviewed by **Bernadette Ignacio**, a freelance journalist, travel junkie and yoga student.
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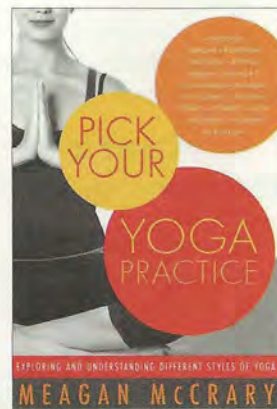
OJAS /CD
BY DAVE STRINGER
MAGNETIC MELODIES

Los Angeles-based Dave Stringer is known for headlining international festivals, for his exuberant and uplifting live shows, and for infusing a variety of musical influences and genres into his Kirtan performances. True to form, his most recent album, *Ojas*, is powerful, soulful, and energetic; one can hear the infusion of a variety of musical styles – classical Indian, rock, jazz, and gospel, to name a few.

It is clear that Stringer wanted to capture the live experience of his shows in *Ojas*. Effortlessly transporting listeners into attendance at one of his rousing kirtans, it is as if we are surrounded by the ecstatic group chant of mantras in a room swaying with devotional passion, joy, and lifted spirit. Stringer achieved this by performing with a group of exceptional musicians, recording vibrant call-and-response with a choir one hundred strong, including the likes of featured singers C.C. White, Suzanne Sterling, Joni Allen, and Allie Stringer.

The album was collaboratively produced by Dave Stringer and acclaimed teacher, healer, spiritual activist, and kirtan artist Saul David Raye. The Sanskrit word 'Ojas' translates to 'life force' or 'vigor,' and this title perfectly captures the feeling of this seven-song album. Press play, close your eyes and be uplifted by the surge...

Reviewed by **Joe Kara** who leads a double life of teaching Yoga in Hollywood and the Valley and working in the music business.
FACEBOOK / TWITTER: JJKARA



PICK YOUR YOGA PRACTICE /BOOK
BY MEAGAN MCCRARY
NEW WORLD LIBRARY

Here in Los Angeles, we are fortunate enough to live in a city where yoga studios are as ubiquitous as coffee houses. Yet to the beginner, navigating the world of yoga can be daunting. *Pick Your Yoga Practice* offers an honest and thorough look into various styles of yoga to help illuminate the vast practice that falls under the yoga umbrella.

With the gentle voice of an instructor, LA-based author Meagan McCrary gives an eloquent and succinct overview of the physical and spiritual practice, highlighting the essence of where the two meet, "Yoga is the practice of arriving in the present moment full of peace and grace." She then dives into seven of yoga styles (Ashtanga-Vinyasa, Iyengar, Kundalini, Integral, Kripalu, Bikram, and Jivamukti) explaining the lineage, foundation, and philosophy of each, dropping fascinating tidbits along the way. She concludes the book with a section titled, "Best of the Rest," where she offers a quick but complete look at ten more styles worth trying.

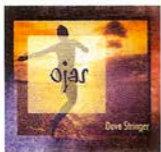
The book is a great companion to the yoga curious, complete with a style guide chart, which explains the approach and physical experience of each yoga style at a glance. Yoga teachers to-be will find it an informative resource to broaden their understanding. Yet it can also provide a road map for anyone interested in changing the course of their practice.

Reviewed by **Jazmine Aluma**, a Los Angeles-based writer and yoga instructor.
JAZMINEGREEN.COM

soul power

Ojas | Dave Stringer

Magnetic Melodies



If you have ever heard musician Dave Stringer lead a call-and-response kirtan at a yoga studio or a music festival, you'll

know that he often whips his audiences into a chanting, dancing frenzy with his gospel- and rock-influenced rhythms and fierce vocals. His seventh album, *Ojas*, captures the soulful, hair-raising essence of his live kirtans in six long tracks running for 7 to 18 minutes each.

Produced by yoga teacher Saul David Raye, the album was recorded live in Los Angeles with Stringer and a choir of 100 singers backed by an electric rock band. Guest vocalists such as Suzanne Sterling and C. C. White add riveting, bluesy harmonies and improvisational melodies, while instruments such as Indian tablas and harmonium cavort with electric bass and guitar, trumpet, and cajón.

The album follows the structure of a live kirtan, starting with a few mellow chants and slowly building momentum until the last few songs morph into high-energy, ecstatic chanting at its best. Each song has a different color: “Kali Durge” has an Indian flair, while “Gaja Nana” evolves into Jewish klezmer with a playful clarinet lightening the mood.

Ojas is pure American kirtan. When you need a dose of Dave Stringer's mantra medicine, pump up the volume and let yourself sing (and dance) along with him. SHANNON SEXTON ❖