



Shashara
by Sada Sat Kaur
reviewed by
bette timm

Sada Sat Kaur's sophomore album, *Shashara*, is a triumphant

follow-up to her debut, *Angel's Waltz*. While *Angel's Waltz* is a mesmerizing chant album, *Shashara* is an album for anyone who likes music. Sada Sat has managed to blend the joy of the naad with the joy of contemporary music. It is an ode to guerilla tactics: you will

be singing along whether you have set an intention or not.

In the tradition of all great teachers, Sada Sat Kaur has set the intention. She has chosen mantras that enable the listener to soar. Starting the album with *Adi Mantra*, the tuning in mantra for all kundalini classes, will allow the openness for the rest of the music to gain entrance to your heart. The continuous circularness of the *Mul Mantra* (known as the highest of all mantras) and *Sat Siri* allows the listener to float in the universal flow of truth – truly giving an inner peace to anyone that practices these simple meditations. Naam Kumaree,

Hay Gobinda will raise you up – celebrating the acknowledgement of your connection to the universal oneness. Gobinday Mukanday is a mantra that celebrates the creator by chanting eight aspects of that creator.

Produced by Jeremy Toback and Chad Fischer, *Shashara* is a step above the rest in production quality, and some of the musicians on the album are the best in the business, particularly Greg Leisz and Paula Cole who sings as a guest on the CD. This is a record with a heart and a budget, or at least a lot of people who believe in the power of *seva*.
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Dakshina
by Deva Premal
reviewed by
bette timm

A voice as gorgeous as Deva Premal's must be a gift from

Saraswati, the goddess of music, art and creativity. It is fitting, then, that Premal begins her new recording by singing to this very goddess. Premal's voice softly and gently draws you into the song. It is instantly calming and simultaneously euphoric.

Many believe that the Sanskrit language reflects the very essence of the words spoken. When Premal sings in this language, it is as if the divine is made manifest. Her voice seems to embody the divine. Her gentle melodies, the sensitivity she brings to the words, and her own emotional longing are palpable and moving. This is matched and enhanced by Miten's precise instrumentation. Their partnership, in music and in life, might also very well be a blessing from Saraswati.

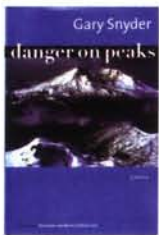
Premal's voice accompanied by lush harmonies and overtones grace each of the eight

tracks on *Dakshina*. Some pieces begin mostly in a cappella, with a gentle highlight of strings that serves to simply enhance the song. As Premal's voice builds, so does the instrumentation; flute, keyboard and strings from India and the West create a rich listening experience. Percussive instruments are kept at a minimum. Here, it is the voice and light melodies that enjoy the spotlight.

A tour will follow the release of *Dakshina*, which will come to various locations in California in May 2005.

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book reviews



Danger on Peaks
written
by Gary Snyder
reviewed by
pamela biery

Gary Snyder's *Danger on Peaks*

is both a surprise and a pleasure: surprising since the Pulitzer Prize winning poet spent thirty years on his last work "Mountains and Rivers without End" – published in 1996. This led many to suspect it might be a while before another Snyder work would be available, and yet a pleasure, because the unexpected is sometimes most satisfying. Released in September 2004, *Danger on Peaks* is a compilation of prose and poetry,

derived largely from Snyder's personal journals and notes. The book deals thematically with four events – the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945, the eruption of Mt. Saint Helens in 1980, the destruction of the great Buddha in Bamiyan near Kabul Afghanistan in 2001, and the destruction of the Twin Towers on September 11, 2001. The bombing of Hiroshima and Mt. St. Helens are tied together in Snyder's experience, since he had just descended from a Saint Helens climb when he learned the bomb had been dropped. Nature wrecked a powerful blow to the pristine beauty of Saint Helens some forty years later. There is a disquieting undertone to our tenure here on earth. Snyder describes with Zen-like precision

trends in nature and man that leave one with an uneasy feeling – destruction is part of our world.

In *Danger on Peaks* there is a strong undercurrent of Oriental feeling, partly expressed by the use of haibun, a lesser used epistolary form consisting of prose followed by a haiku or by a short, often ironic or contemplative poem. Snyder assumes the role of an impartial (and sometimes curiously amused) observer of events described with sparse language. The collection of writings can be taken separately, or treated as a cycle. Either way, these reflections are both deeply subjective and universal – the gift of a poet.

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