

Reviews / Brink

“Stunning and otherworldly.”

“Brink” Reviewed in NAPRA Review

<http://www.napra.com/>

Stringer has already proved his mettle on the live performance circuit and is enjoying some well-deserved popularity with the spiritual and yoga crowd. With this debut album, his music is now accessible to a larger audience. Evoking real-life imagery, these pop, jazz, and Eastern-influenced original compositions are thoroughly entertaining. This incredibly varied album was inspired by Stringer's experiences during time spent in India and reflects his innermost mosaic. Some songs have lyrics in English and Sanskrit while other tracks contain emotionally charged vocalization that transcends language. Instrumentation and guest artists are just as diverse. All these elements combine to create a fresh and delightful album that should appeal to a huge section of the living, breathing, thinking, and listening audience.

“Brink” Reviewed by Lloyd Barde / Backroads

http://www.backroadsmusic.com/reviews/s_reviews.htm

An amazing supporting cast & some of the deepest vocal, chant-oriented music in a long time. There seems to be a revival of interest in vocals, and especially chant-style artists like Deva Premal, Jennifer Berezan, Rasa, Krishna Das, and Jai Uttal. "Brink" is stunning, and not surprisingly, comparable to the other-worldly music of Vas or Thomas Barquee's outstanding debut, "Temple." Greg Ellis from Vas plays percussion and serves as co-producer here, & Azam Ali adds supporting vocals along the way. Hans Christian (from Rasa) helps out, with co-producer duties plus brilliant cello and sarangi playing, as so do Suzanne Teng, Donna DeLory, John Loose, and David Zasloff. But it is Stringer's voice and compositions that stand out.

“Brink” Reviewed by Debi Winston-Buzil / Yoga Chicago Magazine

<http://www.yogachicago.com/sep00/music.shtml>

Dave Stringer's "brink" is a beautiful recording—one of my favorites this year. His voice, resonant and luxurious, moves the record. The music of brink goes well beyond traditional yogic chanting. There is a pop sensibility to his arrangements, as well as jazzy chord structure. The tracks are instrumentally lush, including Dave on harmonium, dulcimer, tampurra, accordion and guitar. Hans Christian (Rasa) adds cello to most tracks, and Greg Ellis (Vas) brings a wide array of percussive sounds. Azam Ali (Vas) adds her vocal flavor as well. Dave Stringer's music is modern and accessible, capturing a devotional flavor while reflecting an American consciousness. Modern, solarized photography adds to the artistry of the cover and liner notes. The title track "brink," which closes the CD, is a beautiful instrumental featuring Hawaiian steel guitar and trumpet. The beautiful thing about the music of Vas, Rasa, and Dave Stringer, is that these musicians, all hailing from California, support each other's music, play on each other's recordings, and create a sense of community.

“Brink” Reviewed by Ma's India

<http://www.mas-india.com/davstrinbrin.html>

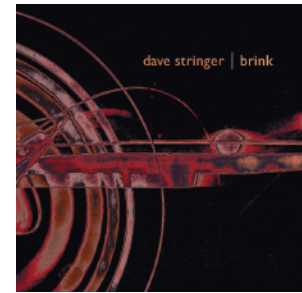
A chanting force to be reckoned with, husky-voiced Dave Stringer fuses the essence of the east with the pop sensibilities of the west on this remastered rendition of his acclaimed E.P., BRINK. In addition to enhanced audio, Stringer increases the amount of cuts on the album by four, which means more hypnotic bliss, Sanskrit style. The album features a variety of supporting players including Greg Ellis and Azam Ali of Vas, Suzanne Teng and Hans Christian, each of whose exotic instrumentation provides a folk/jazz-friendly vibe with a devotional twist. Among the album's achievements is "Sleep," a song that sounds like an Asian spin on a Dave Matthews Band tune. An alternative is the beautifully acoustic "Ganashyama," one of the album's more traditional numbers.

“Brink” Reviewed by All Music Guide

Dave Stringer has integrated his interest in Kirtan, an Indian tradition of devotional chanting, with his masterful grasp of Western popular music, creating an exciting style of psychedelic pop as informed by traditional Eastern music as the Beatles

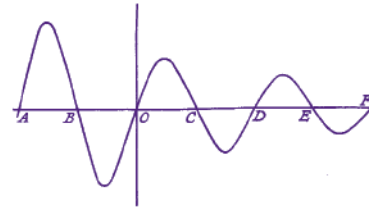
“Brink” Reviewed by Music Connection

The long-awaited release from one of L.A.'s top world music producers/composers is a refreshing blend of American-based folk-rock tunes with traditional North Indian influenced mantras. Stringer's devotional touches as a singer tend to really shine on the more spiritually rich tunes like "Shivo' Ham, Shivo' Ham" and "Ganashyama." The production is clear and sweet bringing out some impressive performances by many of the great players of today's jazz, world and new age music communities."



Radio Review

“A fascinating and distinctive record!”



“Brink” Reviewed by George Graham / WVIA-FM

<http://georgegraham.com/reviews/stringer.html>

This week, we have a fascinating recording that combines Western musical values with Indian influences, though less the familiar sounds of Indian classical music, but instead is based on what is called kirtan, or chant singing. It's a CD by Los Angeles-based Dave Stringer called Brink. Brink, while showing a good deal of Eastern influence is hardly an album of traditional music. The CD mixes Eastern and Western influences easily, often with traditional Indian instruments like the tamboura and tabla drums mixing with music in Western 3/4 or 6/8 time, with unexpected combinations of instruments including harmonium -- a pump organ -- cello and trumpet.

The CD has a mix of pieces with English lyrics, along with traditional chants and poems in Sanskrit, in one case dating back to the 9th Century. But despite the traditional material, the sound is contemporary, with enough domination by Western influences that it does not come across as a particularly exotic world music album.

Leading off is one of the pieces with original English lyrics, Checking the Arithmetic. The piece is quite interesting lyrically, while the musical setting spans influences ranging from folk singer-songwriters to the Eastern sound with the tabla drums and tamboura.

Very much in the traditional Eastern sound is Shivo'ham Shivo'ham, with lyrics from around 800 AD. The refrain translates from the Sanskrit "I am consciousness and bliss." After the meditative beginning, the piece gains momentum, in the tradition of the kirtan singing, though the added elements bring a more Western sound to the piece.

One of the most eclectic pieces on an already wide-ranging album is The Homing Instinct, with memorable lyrics about the impulse to return home among the creatures on the earth, including people. The track features a fascinating mix of instrumentation combining Eastern and Western sounds.

Ganashyāma is perhaps the most meditative piece on the album. It is a masterful combination of sonic beauty with subtle textures that add lots of interest. The 16th Century Sanskrit lyrics are about being lost in love.

My favorite piece on the CD is The Satellite Sky, which is one of the more Western-sounding songs on the album. It's a very attractive piece, on which the Eastern influence is more subtle, taking the form of percussion and the general atmospheric texture, while harmonically, Stringer's jazz background becomes evident.

Dave Stringer's Brink is a fascinating and distinctive record in the way it mixes Indian and Western sounds. That concept was something of a cliché in the 1960s psychedelic era, mixing sitars and tablas with electric guitars, but in the current period of interest in World Music, there have not been that many Indian fusion efforts, and Stringer's emphasizes a rather different facet of Indian music, the kirtan singing tradition, together with the meditative aspect. While the CD can approach new age at times, a distinguishing feature is that the Western music side contains a lot of interesting and artistically substantial ingredients, while the instrumentation is a wonderful eclectic blend with skillful arrangements and first-rate musicianship. This is music that one can not only use for meditation, but also makes edifying foreground listening.

Our grade for sound quality is rather close to an "A." The music is well recorded, and mix engineers Hans Christian and Thomas Barquee resisted the temptation to get overly spacey with the reverb effects, avoiding the hackneyed overly atmospheric sound of much new age music. The dynamic range, the scope from loudness from softest to strongest, is also better than average.

There are those purists for whom anything less than strict authenticity in styles is reason to dismiss a work as unworthy. Brink does not pretend to be authentic, and drawing as it does on both intelligent composition in the Western tradition, and the ambience of the Eastern sounds, the result is a fine album that rewards listening on a number of levels.

yoga

JOURNAL

BY DERK RICHARDSON

DAVE STRINGER: Brink. Valley Entertainment: www.valley-entertainment.com; \$16

QUITE WELL KNOWN as a *kirtan* singer in the worlds of yoga and devotional music, California musician Dave Stringer makes his debut as a folk-rock singer-songwriter with 11 songs that unite his spiritual and secular interests in a surprisingly seamless blend. Following a path parallel to that of Jai Uttal, Stringer moves back and forth between original pop songs performed in English and traditional Sanskrit chants, thus gently obliterating any doubt about these two forms belonging on the same record.

Continuity is provided by ingenious arrangements that incorporate a fluid mix of Eastern and Western acoustic and electric



instruments - a combination of various guitars (including dobro and Hawaiian steel), dulcimer, piano,

accordian, harmonium, tabla, sarangi, cello, violin, flute, trumpet, drums and a plethora of ethnic percussion and backing vocals.

An accomplished record producer as well (Axiom of Choice, Suzanne Teng), Stringer has organized the diverse sounds into a sequence of elegant aural rainbows, retaining an Eastern cultural resonance even when fleshing out unabashedly pop melodies.

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