

# Daily OM

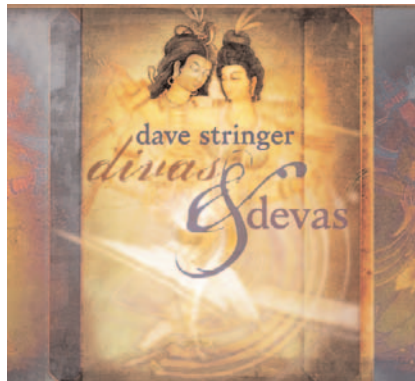
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## **Divas & Devas**

*Dave Stringer*

Spirit Voyage Records 2007



Eloquently mixing the spiritual mysteries of the East with the grooving rock of the West, Dave Stringer is more than just a devout seeker of musical wisdom and beauty—he’s a unifier. For *Divas & Devas*, Stringer celebrates and explores the mysteries of the feminine—as incarnated in women and in the shadow psyche of the male—with a series of devotional bhajan duets sung in Hindi and Sanskrit. The “deva” vocalists he’s gathered to help him run an astonishing gamut: Donna De Lory, Dasi Karnamrita, C.C. White, Kim Waters, Suzanne Sterling, and others. The instrumentation is an airy and eloquent blend of Indian tablas, sitars, and tambouras with Western guitars, cellos, and trumpets. Whether the songs melt into you like smooth Sarah McLachlan-flavored balladry—as on the gorgeous “Gunghata”—or power up your lower engines with hot rock steam and black orchid incense, the unshakable foundation of faith and bliss remains intact.

After an opening track on which all the female singers join with Stringer’s sweet but distinctly masculine baritone, he settles into singing duets with one singer per track. Letting their range of styles and vocal timbres weave whatever magic spells they wish around his steady, anchoring vocals, Stringer’s own voice seems to change from track to track, illustrating the quantum mechanical law of complete subjectivity, as even ourselves change as those around perceive us. Instrumental solos weave through the tapestry as well as in the mournful violin on the gorgeous and grounded “Shri Ram.” Other tracks, like “Aja Uttama,” incorporate traditional Eastern elements in original ways such as with the droning tamboura and spine-tingling sitar, but all elements in all tracks flow seamlessly, with perfect attention and no need to show off.

In describing his album, Stringer notes that the term diva has some negative connotations, associated with grandiosity: “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.” By the time you’ve reached the final, blissful “Saraswati Ma,” with its gently strummed guitar, slow percussion, and gorgeous harmonies—evoking the lonesome but gorgeous sounds of alternative American adult contemporary music with its simplicity and melodic “realness”—you should find yourself relaxed and confident in Stringer’s ability to steer the course no matter what odd direction you may think he’s taking. When music is performed in devotion to something higher than ego and paycheck, even a conventional Western pop song sound can take off into the celestial realms of timeless, perfect love.