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VEDIC CHANTS: RUDRAM

Sanskrit traditional vocal recited by Shri Yanamandra Nagayagna Sharma and Shri Hari Achutharama Shastry. A 1994 re-release on compact disc, 62 minutes. us\$14.99.

The Master Recording Company, Madras, India. Produced and distributed worldwide exclusively by Asia One Stop Inc., 3 Lincoln Highway #307, Edison, New Jersey 08820, USA. Tel/Fax: 908-862-6094.

Discover the Hindu Vedas in digital clarity! The latest archaeological findings in the Indus valley would date the hymns on this recording at about 8,000bce, and they are recited in much the same way now as they were when first divinely transmitted. Vedic chants are learned by rote. By a remarkable system of mnemonic checks and the patience and brilliant memories of many generations of Brahmins, they have been preserved in their purity to this day. Sri Rudram is one of the best-known and oft recited hymns. Full of poetical beauty and devotional fervor, Rudram offers salutation to Rudra (Siva), seeks the protection of His drawn bow and prays for forgiveness and the path to salvation. This recording of Sharma and Shastry (previously available on cassette) is the first we've seen appear on CD. Our pranams go to Asia One Stop for this landmark achievement. The holy invocations include: Rudra Namakam Chamakam; Purusha Suktam; Sri

Suktam; Mantra Pushpam; Runa Vimochana; Mangala Stotram and Swasti Vachakam.

KRITHIS TO VINAYAKA

Carnatic vocal by Maharajapuram Santhanam; vocal support by Maharajapuram Ramachandran; mridangam by E.M. Panchapakesan; ghatam by E.M. Subrahmanyam; violin by Sikkil Bhaskaran. 60 minutes, us\$14.99. OMI Music Inc., 71 Rosedale Avenue #A-10, Brampton, Ontario L6X 1K4, Canada. Phone: 905-457-7853, Fax: 905-454-0199.

Here is pure tradition, pure devotion. Sri Santhanam belongs to the sixth direct sishya parampara, disciple generation, of the renowned Saint Thyagaraja. His recent demise was indeed a loss to the Carnatic music world. Happily, he has left us a rich trove of quality recordings such as this one. You will cherish this rare collection of twelve songs of various composers all in praise of Lord Vinayaka (Ganesha). Maharajapuram Ramachandran, Santhanam's son, faithfully follows his father's vocal lead. The composers include Dikshitar, Papanasam Sivan, Purandara Dasa, Mysore Maharaja and Santanam himself. Join in the intimate moments while Santhanam and son carol these celestial songs.

HYMNS FROM THE VEDAS AND UPANISHADS

Vedic chants by Jitendra Abhisheki, tabla by Harihar Rao. 1979, 60 minutes. us\$15.95. By Ravi Shankar Music Circle, P.O. Box 46026, Los Angeles, California 90046, USA.

This is another excellent recording from the little-known Ravi

Shankar Music Circle. Here you will find quintessential Vedic chants such as: Guru Brahma, Sahanav avatu, Purnamadah purnamidam and the Gayatri mantram as well as selections from the Bhagavad Gita and a longer hymn on the greatness of Siva. A most welcome translation is provided which gives a sense of the profundity of the verses and aids in appreciating Abhisheki's meditative style. Abhisheki, born into a priest family in Goa, perfectly articulates all the intricate Sanskrit inflections.

KANDARSASTI KAVASAM

Tamil devotional songs by Isaimamani Seerkazhi S. Govindarajan, Vol. II. 67 minutes, us\$11.95. AVM Audio. International distributors: Prince's Music Service, 116, Serangoon Road, Singapore 0821. Tel: 011-65-291-2414 and Shankar & Co., 30, Woodberry Ave., North Harrow, Middlesex, HA2 6AV, England. Tel: 011-44-1-427-2269.

This is a vintage recording (no date given), but its release on CD is fairly recent. It's a classic worth any amount of attention. The heart and soul is the Kandarsasti Kavasam, a twenty-one minute Tamil prayer praising Lord Murugan and seeking His protection. Murugan devotees commonly recite this prayer daily, and it is a blessing to bring Govindarajan's inspired rendition into the home, especially for festival days. Sri Govindarajan, now deceased, was South India's most popular devotional singer in recent decades. On this disc he evokes the subtle beauty of the Tamil language with power, grace and sincerity. Orutharam Saravanbhava, Per Aadarikkum and Ponne Varuga add to the value. However, the remaining 7 short tracks on the disc are too commercialised and end up being a wasted opportunity to employ Govindarajan's

God-given gift.

CENTRAL CHINMAYA MISSION TRUST LIBRARY

Over 70 cassette tapes of bhajana, Adi Shankara Stotrams and other chants. rs.35 (us\$1.00) each, plus shipping. Write for complete list. Central Chinmaya Mission Trust, Chinmaya Mission, Deenabandhu Devasthanam, CMH Road, Indiranagar, Bangalore 560-038, Karnataka, India. Tel: 011-11-80-541-756.

Presenting the source for your favorite bhajana or Sanskrit stotra. Performed by an ensemble of singers and instrumentalists who play with one mind and heart (the stotras are chanted and sung by Swami Brahmananda), these tapes are a bhakti lover's delight. You will recognize the traditional tunes and lyrics and--even if you are new to them--will quickly find yourself singing along. Hindu devotional singing creates a mood like no other music in the world. These tapes effectively capture the ambiance. Admittedly, the quality of the recordings leaves much to be desired, but the bhakti shines through.