

[To Goddess, with Love](#)

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MANTRA MUSIC

To Goddess, with Love

A Canadian trio solemnize Saraswati on a CD of musical and poetic genius

Radhika Srinivasan, New Jersey

For Ghanshyam Singh Birla, there is nothing more powerfully healing than mantra, music and meditation. "If done with faith," the multi-faceted Birla explains, "the psychic centers of the body can be aroused through chanting, a powerful medium to soothe the nervous system and attract positive influences into our lives." This Vedic scholar turned philosopher and poet is the founder and director of the National Research Institute for Self Understanding, a center of ancient Indian palmistry and astrology based in Montreal, Canada. He aspires to introduce mantra into the mainstream and to promote meditation and healing through spiritual music.

Saraswati Devi, the latest CD of Galaxy Publications and Recordings, an arm of the NRISU, features Birla's original poems set to music, traditional Sanskrit slokas and Birla's sublimely spoken words explaining the "majesty of Saraswati Devi" and the "power of the Saraswati mantra." Saraswati is a devotional tribute to the "Goddess of inspiration and beauty"

delivered with delightful talent and taste by Kala Ramnath on vocal, Narendra Verma on tabla and Aditya Verma on sarod. At the same time, it is an offering of profound and practical Hindu wisdom, both introductory and advanced. The musicians unite brilliantly in their performances, and the recording sparkles. The truly heavenly voice of Ramnath is nectar for the ears. By all counts, Saraswati is a one-of-a-kind audio venture and an all-out success.

Birla's narration, with soft celestial background music, is clear and soothing. He is to be commended for his excellent presentation of the Hindu teachings. For example, he not only avoids the shallow explanations of the Gods and Goddesses commonly put forward, but he offers his own eloquent phrasing. His description of the Hindu trinity is poetic. He narrates, "The single omnipotent and omnipresent Godhead is primarily divided into the trinity of Lords Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Each is responsible for a specific task. Lord Brahma is the creator of the universe. Through His supreme will, He lights the spark that ignites the universe. Lord Vishnu is the sustainer, who upholds the balance of all things within the universe. Lord Siva is the destroyer who, through His fiery dance called the tandava, breaks down old patterns of consciousness, allowing them to be recreated anew. Together these three illustrious forces regulate the unending cycles of creation, preservation and transformation of the cosmos."

Provenance: Born into a family of Vedic astrologers, Birla was inspired early in life by his grandfather, Sri Net Ram Singh Birla, who had deep insight into the ancient science of the heavens. Birla recalls how the memories of his spirit-filled youth created a longing which eventually manifested the

Saraswati CD. "As a young man growing up in India, part of my education was in the Dayananda Mahavidyalaya gurukula, a spiritual academy where every morning before breakfast, students would assemble to chant mantras. It was there that I first learned about the Goddess Saraswati and the mantra recited to invoke Her presence. Years later, it seemed as if Saraswati Herself whispered to me. After working as a personal growth consultant in Canada for over twenty-five years, I was struck by a powerful feeling of nostalgia for those days at the gurukula. As I reflected upon the countless hours spent in prayer and meditation trying to understand the ineffable, I was suddenly overcome with the joy of creative inspiration and found myself writing lyrics to celebrate the beauty and wisdom of Saraswati. I hoped that, with the right music, these lyrics could become songs to inspire others in their own personal growth. For the next two years, circumstances prevented any progress beyond the original lyrics. Then I met Narendra Verma and his son Aditya, two highly regarded musicians who have studied under and performed with some of the most famous and accomplished artists of Indian classical music. On that blessed day, the Saraswati Devi project was born! The album was recorded in Montreal from August to November 1995. We hope that Saraswati brings you as much joy as she has brought to us."

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